



Envisioning the future of IQ – Steps ahead

**Koen Nomden, European Commission, DG EMPL (Skills and
Qualifications)**

Main drivers of the New Skills Agenda for Europe

- 1. Persistent levels of low skilled workers*
- 2. Digital transformation*
- 3. Ageing and shrinking workforce*
- 4. Important influx of refugees, asylum seekers & migrants*
- 5. Skills mismatches*

NEW SKILLS AGENDA FOR EUROPE

Quality & relevance of skills

1. Upskilling Pathways

2. Key Competences Framework

3. VET as a first choice

4. Digital Skills and Jobs coalition

Visibility and comparability

5. Revision of EQF

6. Skills profile tool for 3rd country nationals

Skills intelligence

7. Revision of EUROPASS

8. Analysis of brain drain

9. Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills

10. Initiative on graduate tracking

International qualifications: drivers

- *Digitisation, automation, robotisation*
- *Globalisation (leading to more international standards)*
- *Quest for both highly specialised skills and 21st century skills*

Evidence on I(S)Q

- *Study on international sectoral qualifications, frameworks and related initiatives*

Carried out for the Commission by ICF International and 3S (2015-16)

- *URL:*
ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16568&languageId=en

Research questions



- 1 What are the different types of initiatives related to international sectoral qualifications and how common across countries are they?
- 2 How mature are these initiatives?
- 3 How are these initiatives managed/ governed and what are the organisations involved?
- 4 What is the relationship to national qualifications frameworks and the ambition to link to the EQF?
- 5 Do the initiatives have explicit quality assurance policies in place and if so what are they?
- 6 What are the problems and challenges of these initiatives and what potential solutions can be identified?
- 7 What are the implications of the state of play of international sectoral qualifications for the EQF? What are the possibilities for linking this type of initiatives to the EQF?

Study methodology

- 800 organisations identified
- Websites of 426 reviewed
- 165 responses
- 81 organisations answered they managed ISQs and related initiatives
- 30 NCPs answered

Examples of IQ (not EWF)

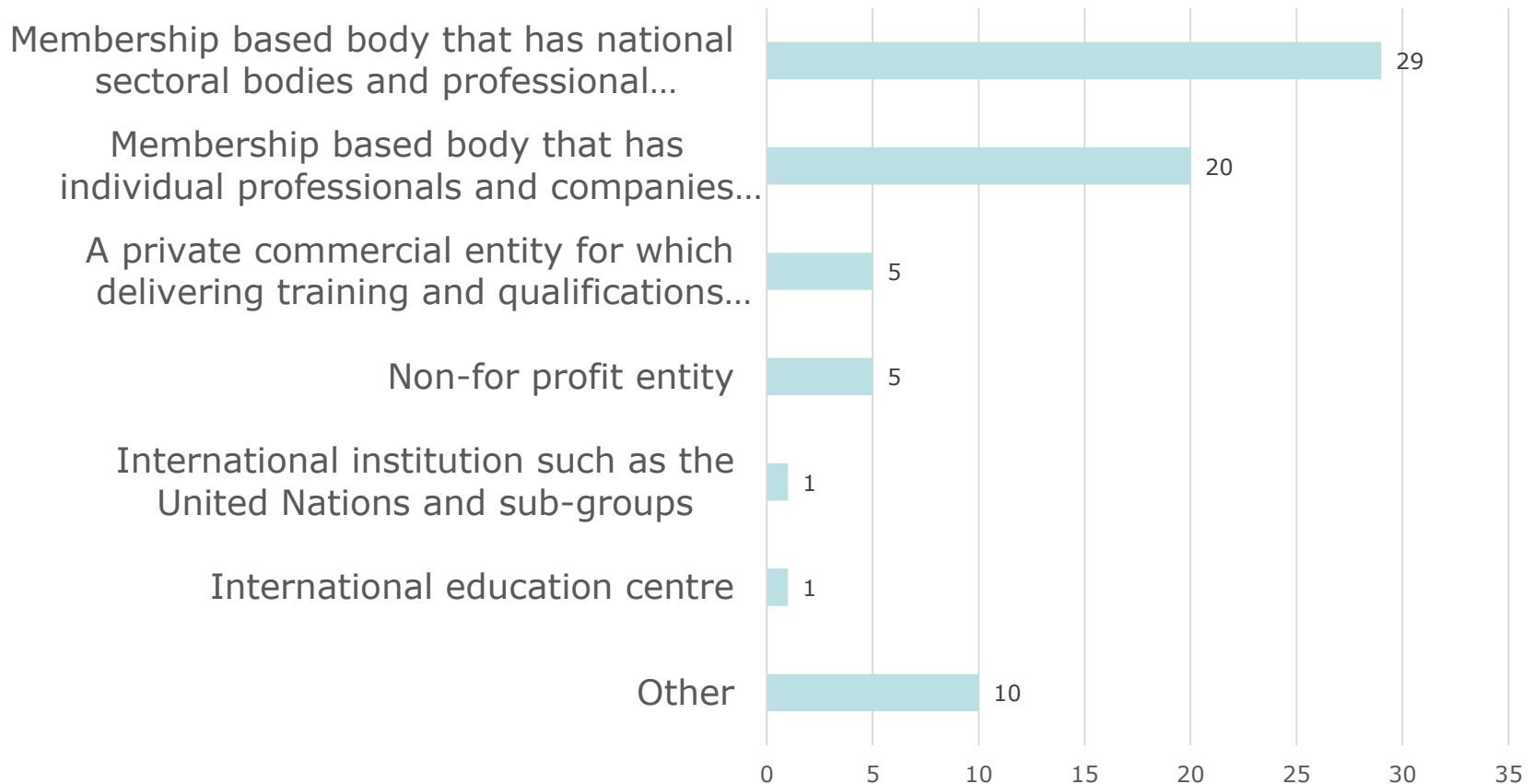


International sectoral:	
Single qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the European Building Expert offered by AEEBC - Association of European Building & Construction Experts the European First Aid Certificate developed by the European Committee for First Aid Education
Suite or family of qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the qualifications offered by the Association Montessori Internationale: Courses for Montessori Teachers and assistants (6 qualifications) the certificates and qualifications offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (6 qualifications)
Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the European Chainsaw Certificates: Common qualification standards for chainsaw users throughout Europe were developed by the EFESC-European Forestry and Environmental Skills Council the European Qualification Standard for employees in the insurance industry: developed by Eficert-European Financial Certification Organisation
Qualifications framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Sectorial Qualification's Framework for Coast Guarding; Frontex Sectorial Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding Humanitarian action qualifications framework

Types of organisations in charge



Type of organisations in charge of the initiatives (nbr of org)



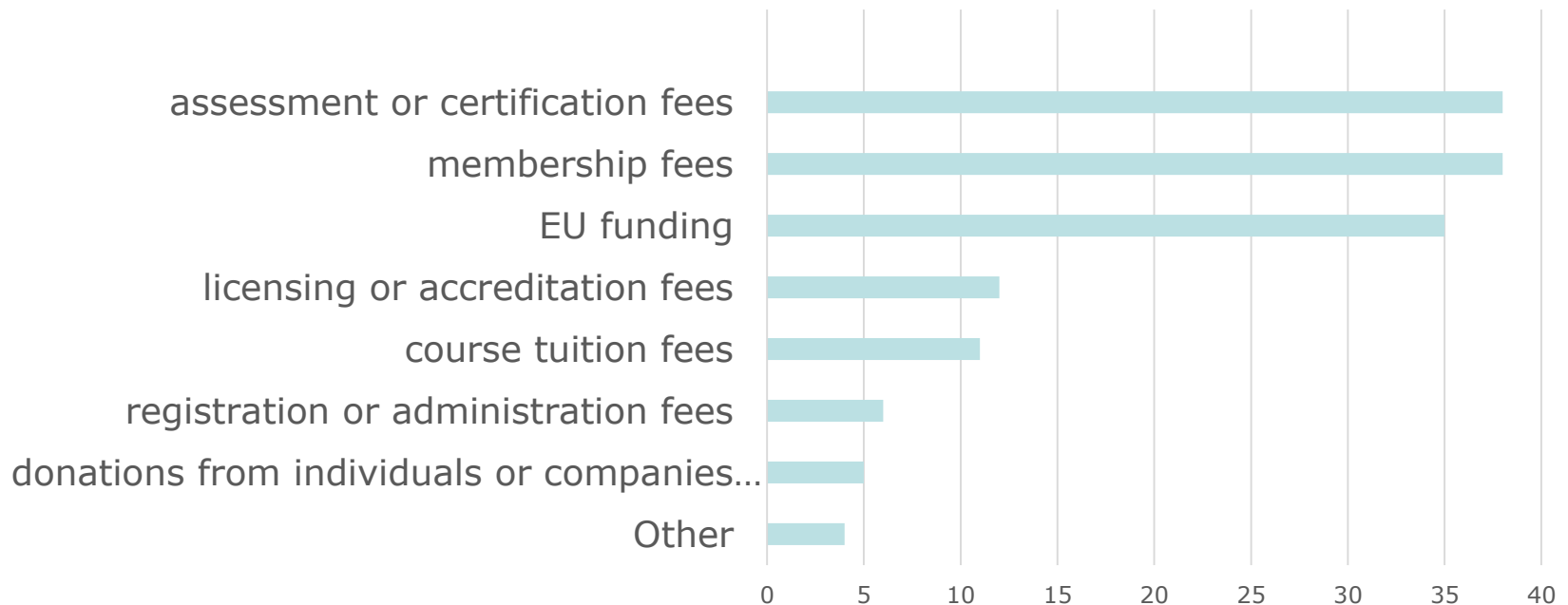
Governance and funding



Updating to ensure relevance:

- **Most org. have such arrangements**
- **Who does it: committees or expert groups**
- **Regularity varies but often 2-3 years**

Funding sources (nbr of org)



Openness of NQFs

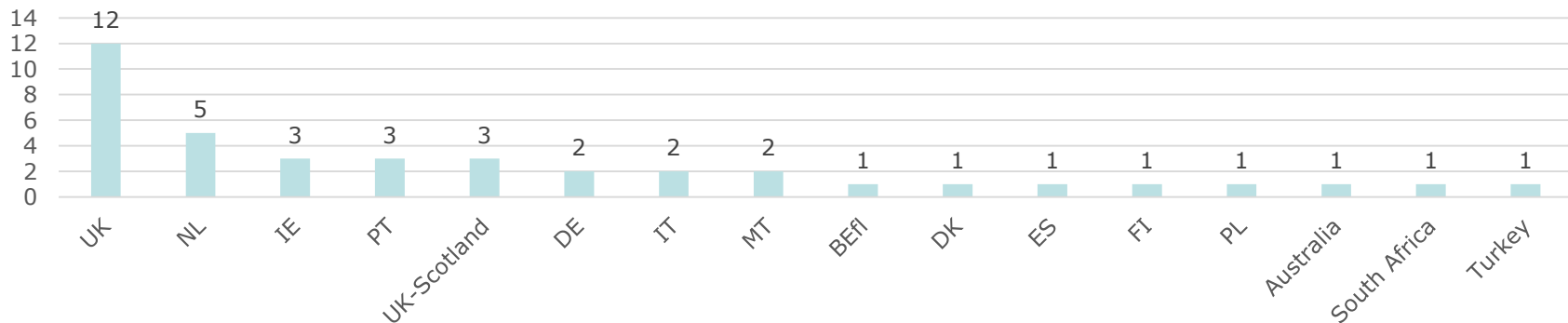


Openness of NQFs (based on NCPs answers)

- **9 countries confirmed having procedures that enable linking ISQs to their NQFs (BG, BIH (under development), FR, LT (under development), NL, PT, SI, SK, UK-EWNI, UK-SC)**
- **In Ireland such procedure on hold**
- **Slovenia it is technically possible but no explicit procedure**
- **No procedures for linking other initiatives than qualifications**

Linkage with NQFs

- **25 initiatives analysed in depth are linked to an NQF**
 - 11 directly (i.e. ISQs is in the NQF); and
 - 14 indirectly (the standard/ competence framework is basis for national qualifications which are in an NQF)



Reasons for linking to the EQF



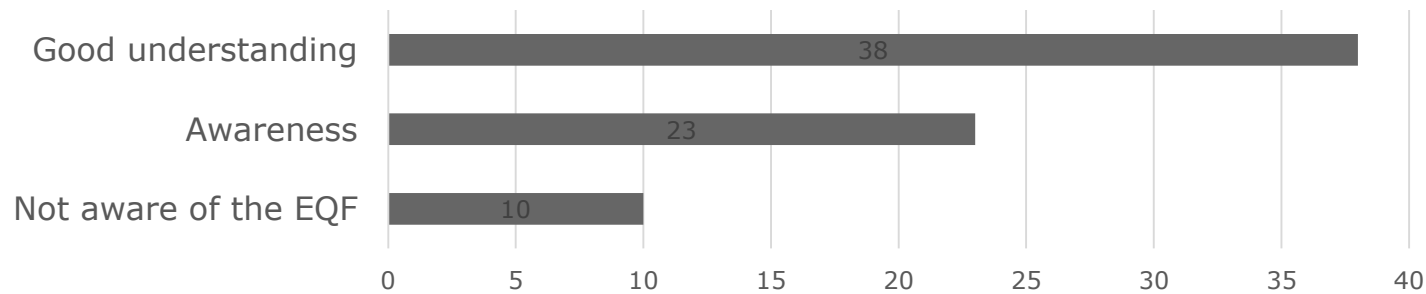
- *Clarity on equivalency of ISQs with other qualifications in a country and thus enhance their standing in the national context;*
- *Improve opportunities for holders of ISQs in terms of progression in the education and training system or positions at the labour market;*
- *Improved recognition to increase demand for the ISQ and to encourage providers including programmes for achieving ISQ in their training offers;*
- *Enhanced recognition through inclusion in an NQF would also provide access to public funding for learners aiming at achieving the respective ISQ.*
- *Note: some organisations reference to NQF because **interested in displaying EQF levels***

Relationship with EQF

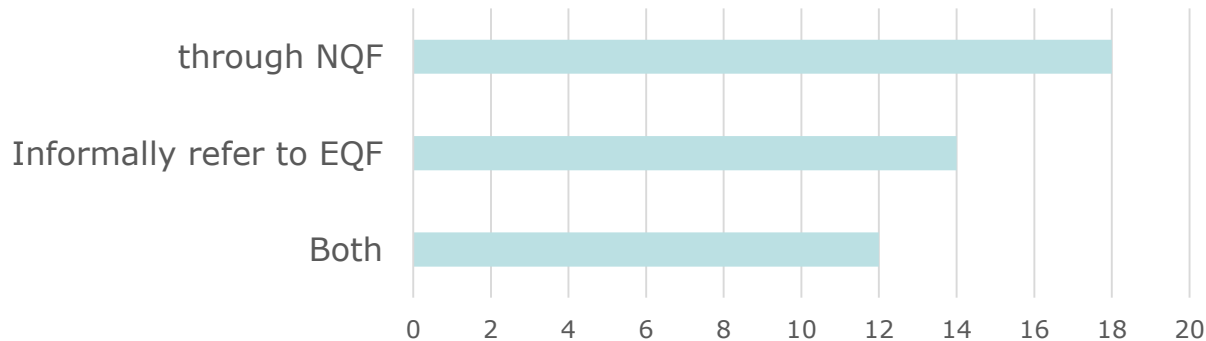


Interviewees had good level of awareness of the EQF

Level of awareness of the EQF (nbr of interviewees)



Half of the initiatives already refer to the EQF



Learning outcomes and QA



- *Learning outcomes are commonly used for ISQs and standards – basis for course objectives and assessment*
- *LO less commonly used for explicit level descriptors in frameworks BUT – learning outcomes of a qualification are nevertheless used to decide on which level a qualification should be placed*
- *Most organisations state they have explicit QA procedures BUT great variety in practice.*
 - **Some organisations had extensive systems in place, which included reviewing course content, inspecting provider premises and examining the experience and skills of teachers**
 - **Other organisations employed less detailed approaches.**

Conclusions on links with EQF

- *There is 'appetite' for creating a link with the EQF among most organisations interviewed*
- *The basic principles underpinning EQF (use of learning outcomes and quality assurance) are present in most initiatives (though QA varies greatly)*
- *Many initiatives already display EQF levels – including informally (without a reference to an NQF)*

EQF: institutional basis

- *EQF Recommendation (2017) based on articles 165 & 166 TFEU*
- *Voluntary process and tool*
- *Governance:*
 - **EU level: EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG)**
 - **National level: grants for participating countries**
- *28 EU MS + 11 additional European countries*

What is the EQF?

- *8-Level framework, covering all types and all levels of qualifications to which NQFs or national qualifications systems are referenced*
- *Defined in terms of learning outcomes*
- *A translation grid for qualifications across countries*
- *Fully compatible with the QF of the European Higher Education Area*

What NOT?

- *The EQF is **does not** include qualifications*
- *It **does not** provide automatic European wide-recognition*
- *It is **not** about European standards*
- *It is **not** about harmonising education and training systems*

Other recommendations to Member States:

Qualifications with an EQF level to be in accordance with:

Common principles for quality assurance

without prejudice to national quality assurance principles that apply to national qualifications

Promote links, where appropriate, **between credit systems** and **NQFs**, taking into account:

Common principles on credit systems

without prejudice to national decisions to (i) make use of credit systems and (ii) relate them to national qualifications frameworks or systems.

Results of the referencing to be **publicly available** and ensure that **information** on qualifications and their learning outcomes is **accessible and published** using common **data fields**

Recommendations to COM, in coop with MS and SH in the context of the EQF AG

Support the setting up of voluntary procedures on the **levelling of international qualifications**

Companies – Sectors - Organisations



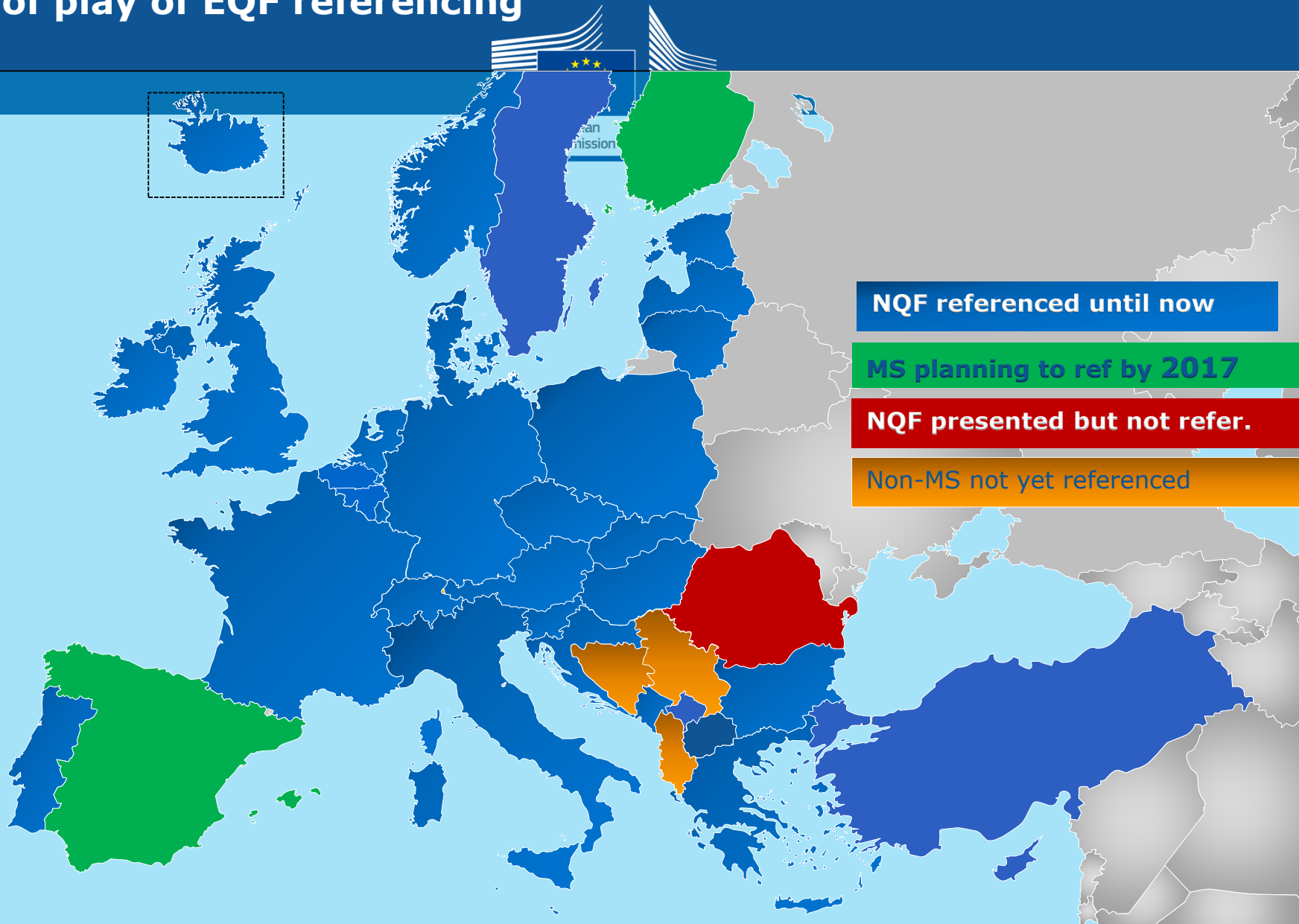
Information exchange and consultation between MS on those procedures to ensure **consistency**

Current state of EQF implementation

(October 2017)

- *39 countries participate in the EQF process*
- *33 (25 EU + 8 non EU MS have referenced)*
- *+ 1 country (in discussion with EQF)*
- *21 countries indicate EQF levels on certificates, and/or Europass supplements and/or qualification databases*

State of play of EQF referencing



Current and future challenges

- *Important impacts of the EQF so far, but challenges remain:*
 - *Full implementation of the learning outcomes approach*
 - *Bringing the EQF closer to learners, workers, employers*
 - *Consistency in referencing across countries*
 - *Non-formal qualifications and international qualifications*
 - *International dimension*

감사합니다 Natick
Danke Ευχαριστίες Dalu
Grazie Thank You Köszönöm
Tack
Спасибо Dank Gracias
谢谢 Merci Seé
ありがとう

Obbrigado