

## Developments of Lithuanian National Qualifications Framework

***The Year 2011 was important for the implementation of Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF): in 2011 Government of the Republic of Lithuania has approved amendments to the LTQF Description, National report on referencing the LTQF to the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area was prepared and the findings of the referencing process were discussed in the national conference and public regional consultation events and, finally, in December, 2011 the draft National referencing report was presented to the EQF Advisory group.***

In Lithuania, qualification is understood as readiness for a certain activity. Thus criteria characterising complexity, autonomy and variability of activities for which a person is ready were chosen for describing learning outcomes in LTQF. It was also foreseen that qualifications awarded in Lithuania are competence-based and that they are attributed to the LTQF levels defining functional, cognitive and general competences intended for the performance of activities of similar complexity, autonomy and variability. This choice conditioned the peculiarity of description of LTQF levels. For example complexity of activity corresponding to level IV qualification is described in the following way: *“The qualification is intended for activities consisting of actions and operations in relatively broad areas of activity. The activities are performed by carrying out several or more specialised activity tasks, solutions to which are not always tested or known. Performance of the activities involves the ability to apply factual and theoretical knowledge characteristic of a broad context related to the activity areas”*. LTQF comprises 8 qualifications levels covering all educational sectors, i.e. general education, vocational education and training and higher education. In addition, it is legitimated that qualification *of any level can* be acquired by gaining professional experience or by independent study. The full text of LTQF Description is available at: [http://www.kpmmpc.lt/LTKS\\_EKS/LTQF\\_official\\_translation.pdf](http://www.kpmmpc.lt/LTKS_EKS/LTQF_official_translation.pdf)

Such a peculiarity of the LTQF has both, pluses and minuses, as it emerged. One of the main drawbacks is impeded referencing of LTQF to EQF and, in consequence, to other national qualifications frameworks. Direct comparison is encumbered by linguistic differences, therefore the identification of correspondence between levels is less evident and reliability of referencing may be questioned. These are the remarks received from consultation with stakeholders by e-mail and in regional seminars. Similar comments were given during discussion of draft National referencing report with members of EQF Advisory group. In some cases, the opinion is expressed that permeability between different qualifications levels is not evident, i.e. there are some doubts that implementation of LTQF will effectively influence the development of lifelong learning, what is one of the key EQF aims.

Alongside to the drawbacks mentioned above, implementation of LTQF has already given positive results bringing all educational sectors into a single system. Training in vocational schools and colleges (institutions providing higher non-university level qualifications oriented towards professional activity) was competence-based already years before, whereas general education schools and universities focused on knowledge-oriented education. Universities currently are in the process of preparing methodology for developing and delivering learning outcomes based study programmes. The focus of LTQF on activity has encouraged

selection of research of professional activity to be the first step of this transition. Research of professional activity is carried out in cooperation with employers and graduates and it results in the list of generic and subject specific competences characteristic for foreseen activity. This type of research has renewed attitude of lecturers to university studies. Naming of competences to be developed during one or another subject results in better understanding of meaningfulness of lecturer activity. In addition, teaching methods are assessed in relation to competence development, attitude towards cooperation with other lecturers and communication with students is changing. It is a positive shift from the viewpoint of qualifications system development because at the moment all education sectors, with perhaps partly separation of general education, base education and training process on competences and may easily communicate with each other. In case Lithuanian Qualifications System and its national peculiarities and EQF logic of classifying qualifications will be taken into account, positive outcomes may be expected.

*Source: ReferNet Lithuania*