

Project "e-Marine", a New Approach for Port and Maritime Activities

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ABSTRACT: An important problem our days is to recognize the knowledge, the skills and the competencies wherever it might be acquired. Most European countries are currently developing and implementing methods, institutions and systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

1 EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The Commission adopted on 5 September 2006 a proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF).

The EQF will provide a common language to describe qualifications which will help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems. The adoption of the proposal follows almost 2 years of consultation across Europe.

In May 2005 at the Bergen Conference of the European Ministers Responsible for higher education, was adopted a framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) comprising three cycles, generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. The need was stressed to ensure complementarities between this EHEA arrangement and a similar framework to be developed for lifelong learning.

EQF shift the focus from learning inputs to learning outcomes and the intended results are:

- supports a better match between the needs of the labor market (for knowledge, skills and competences) and education and training provisions;
- facilitates the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- facilitates the transfer and use of qualifications across different countries and education and training systems.

During the last 20 years regarding the problem of comparability of diplomas it was a huge change. First of all they identified only the result of identically educational programs; after that they accepted equivalence of the educational programs. Recognition of the educational programs was an important step to the credit transfer system.

The core element of the European Qualifications Framework is a set of eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do - their 'learning outcomes' - regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired.

Before Bologna process Romania had only five reference levels!

As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses:

- general and adult education,

- vocational education and training,
- higher education.

The eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications from those achieved at the end of compulsory education to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training.

- Training and Education;
- Continuous education;
- Life long learning;
- Life wide learning;

shows the importance gave to this problem by the national and European experts. Ján Figel appreciated that:

“The EQF will help to solve that problem: it will make different national qualifications more understandable across Europe, and so promote access to education and training. Once adopted, it will increase mobility for learning or working. We believe the EQF is a key initiative in creating more jobs and growth, helping people in Europe to face the challenges of a globalizing, knowledge-based world economy.”

The draft recommendation foresees that Member States relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF (by 2009).

The establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning is a stage of implementation of Community Lisbon Program. It will established a system for the comparability of vocational educational and training (VET). In these respect a total of 219 VET qualifications in 19 sectors were compared. But, due to the centralized approach and the constant and rapid evolution of the qualifications

The results proved resource-intensive and unsustainable due to the centralized approach and the constant and rapid evolution of the qualifications. The work carried out at the European level had little impact at the level of national or sector or stakeholders level.

For this reason a solution is introducing a decentralized approach for cooperation which reflects the increasing complexity of qualifications in Europe.

2 HARMONIZATION OF MARITIME & PORT OCCUPATIONS STANDARDS

The ships are manned by seamen from 140 or so countries, speaking even more numerous languages and dialects.

Seafarers are of a great variety of backgrounds and ambitions, but most are exploited and defenseless at work.

The industry is reluctant to adopt human value based management.

Symptomatic of the shipping industry’s commercial performance and operational incompetence is the wide differences in wages paid to its workers doing the same job.

They are 300 separate pay scales apply to 50 different nationalities of seafarers.

Labor market conditions that exist in maritime industry run the risk of operating at standards that ignore both personal management and human resource management models

The operation of merchant shipping is governed by comprehensive rules and conventions developed by national and international authorities.

Regulation of the technical aspects of shipping can only achieve part of the objective of safe and pollution-free ship operations.

The master is responsible for safety of each ship and crew, the overall responsibility for the administration and safe operation of each ship rests with the owner.

Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism appreciated that: “People in Europe too often face obstacles when they try to move from one country to another to learn or work, or when they want to build upon previous education or training.”

3 POLICIES OF THE UNION

Directive 2005/36/EC provides for a system of automatic recognition of qualifications for professions with harmonized training requirements;

For other regulated professions (around 800 professions) the system is based on mutual recognition;

It imposes legally binding obligations on Member States’ authorities.

Mutual recognition is the aim of the Directive 1996/26/EC on access to the occupation of road haulage operator and road transport operator.

4 “E-MARINE“, EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES & PORT COMMUNITY

The Information Society (IS) will have an important impact on education, culture, economy and worldwide trade.

After 2000, EC set up precise objectives for the future development of necessary measurements for a well-balanced IS implementation.

The Romanian policy for LL education sets the improving of quality and the encouragement full access to continuing, vocational training and permanent acquirement of aptitudes and abilities.

“e-Marine” project started in January 2006 and will end in December 2007 being promoted by Constantza Maritime University in order to improve the people’s capacity to adapt to the market needs for maritime and port activities.

The project provides opportunities for critical issues and developments in MET to be discussed and resolved in academic and practical ways.

It develops an appropriate system for evaluation of the maritime skills and knowledge that will assure:

- imperative requirements for specific marine activities and for the training in marine activities: VET for crews on board of ships and people involved in harbor works.
- fast development of the technologies for ships and the requirements imposed for specific training by IMO.
- creation of appropriate and advanced products for specific training in marine activities, compatible with the specific requirements of EU & IMO.
- intensive needs to train and re-train worldwide dispersed seafarers.
- important requirements regarding the training and re-training of the port workers.
- important VET requirements in the marine fields for the unemployed people and for people submitted to re-conversion.
- needs of the integration of the Internet based training / e-Learning for crews on board of ships, by creation of the adequate Virtual Centre.
- happy compliance between Internet facilities and possibilities to face the dispersion of the crews on board of ships.
- needs of the continuous training of the crews on board of ships and of the port workers in synchronism with the advancement of technologies in the marine fields.
- exploitation of the high level of employment possibilities offered by the port activities, and the needs to prepare people for such activities,

- needs to use the employment opportunities offered by activities in ports and on board of ships,
- large possibilities to contribute to solve unemployment issues in the region,
- needs to respond to the increasing of the competitive levels in marine qualification.

The partnership is coordinated by Constantza Maritime University and it includes:

- Maritime Faculty or Catalonia Technical University;
- Harbor School Foundation from Constanta;
- Institute of Projects for Automations SA, Bucharest;
- ONECO Sevilla, Spain,
- FRAREG Italy;
- Diakrisi, Greece.

The e-Marine project started in March 2006 and will finish in December 2007. Its final product is a web-based Maritime Centre, a database of various Maritime and Port activities teaching and learning materials and seven standards training for port activities and a centre for evaluation of competences.

The e-Marine material can be used online in the college classroom, in distance learning and for self-study purposes.

The project has been partly funded by EU Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Those interested in it are welcome to visit the web-page of the project <http://e-marine.org>

5 CONCLUSIONS

- The Leonardo da Vinci Project “e-Marine” offers to all people involved in maritime or port activities a platform with all the necessary information.
- The standardization of the qualifications standards could be the first step through a unique scale for salary in maritime and port activities in the European countries ;
- The centre for evaluation for nonformal activities will be the first in port activities in Romania.

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