

VISIT OF THE NSDA TO THE CNCP

Paris, 28-30 June 2016

The programme of the visit was as follows:

	Persons met	Institutions	Main topic addressed
28 June am	Mrs Brigitte Bouquet	CNCP	Sectoral qualifications and international sectoral qualifications: how the French system takes into account sectoral qualifications (with and without level) The widening of the EQF to third countries
pm	Matteo Sgarzi, Head of Mission- International Relations Mr Georges Asseraf	CEREQ President of CNCP	Research on qualifications in France and possible cooperation with India Main missions of CNCP How CNCP cope with the registration of sectoral qualifications
29 June am	Mr Eppstein CNCP Register manager	CNCP	The French Register of qualifications and Inventory of qualifications
pm	Mrs Sabine Weger, Researcher in the <u>Dpt of Competitivity</u> <u>Mr Jacques Bahry</u>	Handicraft Chamber (APCMA) AGEFOS PME (Association of Small and Medium PMEs – cross sectoral)	The role of the Chamber in the making and the promotion of qualifications in handicraft How SMEs use qualifications. The functioning of a cross-sectoral SSC
30 June am	Mrs Corina Effrim, Consultant Mr Sacha Hoyau, Consultant	CNCP	Case studies in processing of qualifications files
pm	Mr Sainte Marie Mrs Brigitte Bouquet	UPIM (Professional Union of Metal Industry) CNCP	Sectoral qualifications: the case of metal industry Summary of the visit

The objective of the visit was to focus on the key challenges that an agency of qualifications is facing and it is foreseen by the MoU signed between the CNCP in France and the NSDA. A first visit of a French representative of the CNCP to Delhi took place in October 2015.

The sessions took place in English. All sessions were very technical and covered common areas identified in the preparation of the visit. The visit was obviously too short to cover all topics in depths, but it provided a good geography of the CNCP missions and the way they are dealing with them. PPT were presented in each sessions and have been forwarded to the NSDA after the end of the visit.

The main topics (in term of strategic load) which were addressed are the following:

- The presentation of the processing of the qualification file and the registration in the Register has been a key moment of the visit. It showed the paramount importance given to the evidence of needs, and the problem of assessing it in an accurate way. A long discussion took place on this topic as the NSDA was looking for a reliable tool to measure such evidence. The conclusion was that the most reliable tool is the statistical proof coming from the labour market. A training programme can only pretend to an inclusion in the Register as a qualification after three years of implementation. The experience of the Consultant in reading through the applications is essential.
- The distinction between the Register and the Inventory was underlined, as the CNCP register separately the qualifications with a level (in the framework) and the qualification without a level (in the Inventory). The sectoral qualifications, as presented by the Metal Industry representative, were mostly without level in the NQF. This issue is mitigated by the massive size of the Metal Industry which gives their sectoral framework of qualifications prevalence over the national framework.
- The CEREQ which is the French Centre for Research on Qualifications presented the role of this institution in the screening of useful vs outdated qualifications and in prospective qualifications. The CEREQ showed a real interest in working with the NSDA in the future, as it is part of its mission is to promote the French qualification system. It was agreed that they would be invited in a forthcoming conference.
- It was clarify from the start that the CNCP is not dealing with the informal sector. This was confirmed in particular at the Chamber of Handicraft, the point being that these qualifications needs before all to be formally recognized.
- The discussion on the new EQF Recommendation was not fruitful because there is nothing really new on the topic. There will be a new Recommendation. Mrs Bouquet was very explicit on why the new Recommendation was a problem for the Member States and it has to do with the false hopes that the new Recommendation might create. The EQF has proved inside Europe that most NQF are not viable, and in particular it has not put an end to corruption (buying diplomas) nor yet raised the level of mutual trust.

- The importance given to RPL in the French system puzzled the CNCP guests since all qualifications in the framework are by law accessible through RPL, and it is even a condition to be registered. The lack of time has prevented an in-depth discussion but it looks obvious that the NSDA could not follow this track (although the NSDA qualification file foresees this condition).
- The issue of a cross-sectoral SSC seems to have been a major learning of the visit. Mr Bahri, the representative of the AGEFOS PME, explained how his organisation promotes training for its members for all sectors. They have a regional setting (21 offices) and they have training advisors who help SMEs to analyse their training needs in the light of the companies development. But such organisations are mainly training funds collecting the levy on gross annual wage bill foreseen by the law (1%), the so-called legal obligation. Without such a law, cross-sectoral SSCs are almost impossible. Cross-sectoral organisations are many in France and cross sectoral authorities are strong (e.g. COPAREF, cross-sectoral joint committee for employment and vocational training) mainly for social dialogue purpose. Individual SSCs would be too weak to this avail.
- A tension in France between quality assurance and certification is looming out. A new QA agency has just being created in France and the CNCP feels under threat to be overcome by this agency. Mrs Bouquet did not express this in this way, but it is clear that the CNCP is under pressure to preserve its areas of expertise and its missions related to the certification process as they do not control the whole QA process, in a context when the EU is pushing towards QA (through the EQF and EQAVET).

As said before, the visit was too short to cover in depth all topics. The issue of the determination of levels was not enough discussed for lack of time nor was discussed continuing education (adult education) which is very important in France in the wake of lifelong learning. It would have been useful to address the TVET legal setting and the funding of TVET and in general to provide a broader picture of the French TVET system. But there was no time for that.

Mrs Bouquet presented (off the record) the new French qualification Framework with 8 levels. It is still work in progress carried out by the CNCP.

The idea of a new longer mission to the CNCP by a couple of NSDA Consultants was envisaged, for the latter to work side by side with the officers in charge of the registration of the qualifications. This particular topic requires several week of awareness-raising, as the exercise is so specific that it cannot be learnt in theory only. It is overall an exercise in communication. It is the know-how more than the knowledge which makes a difference, since in any case a qualification is the result of a consensus and especially the levelling.

In summary, the visit has been useful because the two agencies have a lot in common and therefore a lot to share. The NSDA has seen in concrete practice an illustration of the process of registering a qualification in the Register. They need more of the same of the future.