



# Social partnership in developing occupational qualification standards in Estonia

Maris Vaht

Estonian Qualifications Authority



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks

Kutsete süsteemi arendamist toetab  
Euroopa Liit



Kutsekoda

# Estonian Qualifications Authority (1)

- ***Kutsekoda*** is a support structure for the national occupational qualifications system
- **Occupational qualification** means a qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work based learning
- **Established in 2001** based on Occupational Qualifications Act
- **Foundation** in private law (established by five institutions representing the Government, employers and employees)



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Estonian Qualifications Authority (2)

Founders:

- Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Estonian Confederation of Employers and Industry
- Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation
- Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions
- Ministry of Social Affairs

Subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Research



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Estonian Qualifications Authority (3)

- *Kutsekoda* is:
  - organising and coordinating the activities of SSCs and working groups (developing occupational qualification standards)
  - providing counselling and assistance for awarding bodies
  - keeping the [register of occupational qualifications](#)
- NCP for the EQF implementation
- *Europass* centre
- EPALE centre



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Occupational qualifications system

Main processes are:

- Development of occupational standards
- Awarding of occupational qualifications



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Institutions involved in quality and qualifications system

- **Ministry of Education and Research** <http://hm.ee/en>:
  - Strategic management of the system
  - Keeping the register of formal education qualifications
  - Licensing of education and training providers
- **Estonian Qualifications Authority** (*Kutsekoda*)  
<http://kutsekoda.ee/en/kutsekoda>
- **Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education** (EKKA) <http://ekka.archimedes.ee/en/>
- **Foundation *Innove*** <http://www.innove.ee/en>



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Periodes of Development (1)

- 1991 – Estonia regained independence; Soviet type qualifications system was abolished
- 1991-1997 – deep restructuring of all aspects of social life (economy, education, ...); development of general legal framework
- 1997 – employers' organisations initiated the development of occupational (vocational, professional) qualifications system



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda

# Periodes of Development (2)

- 2001 – Parliament adopted the Occupational Qualifications Act; 5-levels occupational qualifications framework, institutional structure
- 2001 – Estonian Qualifications Authority (*Kutsekoda*) was established as support structure for the occupational qualifications system
- 2004 – Estonia joined the European Union and NATO
- 1998-2008 – bottom-up development process of the occupational qualifications system



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks





# Periodes of Development (3)

- 2007 – Aim: Develop sustainable, flexible, internationally compatible **competence based qualifications system** meeting the needs of lifelong learning persons, knowledge based society and economy
- 2008 – Parliament adopted new Occupational Qualifications Act; 8-levels qualifications framework compatible with European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), competence (learning outcomes) based approach
- 2009 – *Kutsekoda* appointed as National Coordination Point (NCP) for EQF implementation



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Periodes of Development (4)

- 2009-2011 – referencing Estonian National Qualifications Framework (EstQF) to EQF
- 2009-.... – development of competence based occupational qualification standards (about 600)
- 2014 – preparation of new development programme OSKA (extension of the occupational qualifications system for skills anticipation)
- 2015 – launching of OSKA Programme (OSKA analyses the needs for labour and skills necessary for Estonia's economic development over the next 10 years)
- 2015 – updating of the EQF referencing report



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda

# Guiding Principles

- **Social partnership** of the labour market stakeholders (Government, employers' organisations, employees' organisations) is of crucial importance
- **National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a backbone** of the national qualifications system (NQS)
- **Development** and implementation of the NQS is a **process**
- Developing and implementing the **NQF is a driver** of the process



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Professional Councils (1)

In Estonian occupational qualifications system the labour market is divided into 14 sectors (on the bases of statistical classification of economic fields in Estonia) and each sector is managed by a professional council.

- The titles and occupational areas of professional councils are determined by the Government
- Institutions represented in professional councils are nominated by the Ministry of Education (10-20 institutions)
- Persons representing these institutions are nominated by the EQA.
- Typically institutions represented in professional councils are:
  - employers organizations of the sector;
  - trade unions of the sector;
  - professional associations of the sector;
  - education and training institutions;
  - responsible ministries.



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda

# Professional Councils (2)

1. Business Services and other Business Activities
2. Architecture, Geomatics, Construction and Real Estate
3. Services
4. Forestry
5. Health Care
6. Social Work
7. Engineering, Manufacturing and Processing
8. Transport and Logistics
9. Energy, Mining and Chemical Industry
10. Food Industry and Agriculture
11. Information Technology and Telecommunication
12. Security Services
13. Culture
14. Education

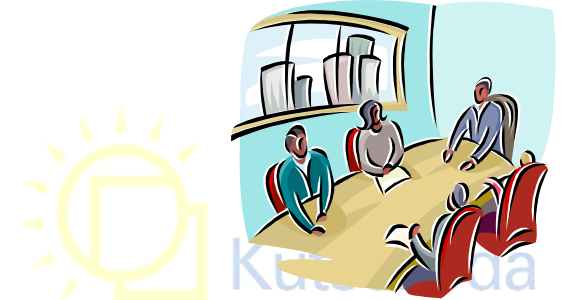
**The board of chairmen of professional councils coordinates cooperation**



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Awarding of occupational qualifications

... is the assessment of conformity of the competence of a person applying for an occupational qualification with the requirements specified in the occupational standard.

## Principles

- **competence based approach:** bases for assessment of occupational qualification are real skills and knowledge
- is voluntary, unless otherwise prescribed by law
- assessment is separated and independent from teaching
- takes place on the basis of person's application
- assessment is for a fee



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda

# Awarding Bodies (1)

- Awarding body is a legal entity nominated by professional council as a result of public competition
- Awarding body establishes Occupational Qualifications Committee(s) (OQC) for awarding one or several qualifications of the sector
- OQC has the right to establish suitable number of Assessment Committees
- Typically **institutions** represented at OQC are:
  - Employers organizations of the sector
  - Professional associations of the sector
  - Education and training institutions



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda

# Awarding Bodies (2)

- **Functions:**
  - to develop and approve the procedure for the assessment and award of occupational qualifications
  - to establish and approve the calculation of costs related to the issue of occupational qualification certificates
  - to organize assessment
  - to issue occupational qualification certificates



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda



# Involvement of stakeholders/social partners

- From the beginning
- In all levels/in different roles
- Supporting legislative background
- Giving the responsibility
- The same goal for all stakeholders



Europa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



# Lessons learnt

- Involve stakeholders (government, employers, employees) in a balanced way
- Clearly define conceptual framework
- Standard is an agreement between stakeholders
- Concentrate attention to the quality of assessment and certification processes
- ...



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks





# Thank you for your attention!

[www.kutsekoda.ee](http://www.kutsekoda.ee)

[maris.vaht@kutsekoda.ee](mailto:maris.vaht@kutsekoda.ee)



Euroopa Liit  
Euroopa Sotsiaalfond



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



Kutsekoda