

Pursuant to the second indent of Article 107(1) and Article 91(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, I hereby issue the following

## **O R D E R**

### **promulgating the Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act (ZSOK)**

I hereby promulgate the Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act (ZSOK), which was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia at its session of 18 December 2015.

No 003-02-10/2015-12

Ljubljana, 28 December 2015

**Borut Pahor**  
President  
of the Republic of Slovenia

## **SLOVENIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1 (content of the Act)**

(1) This Act defines the unified system of qualifications in the Republic of Slovenia as the Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SQF), the placement of qualifications obtained through education, vocational qualifications and supplementary qualifications into the unified system, the referencing of qualifications from the SQF to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), and procedures and competences regarding the placement/referencing of qualifications, the establishment of a National Coordination Point for the SQF and EQF (NCP SQF-EQF) and the keeping of records.

(2) With this Act, all qualifications referred to in the previous paragraph obtained in the Republic of Slovenia shall be placed in the SQF. Qualifications obtained within the territory of the Republic of Slovenia for 25 June 1991 shall also be placed in the SQF. All qualifications shall be classified in the SQF in one of ten levels.

(3) The NCP SQF-EQF shall operate within the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI).

#### **Article 2 (definitions)**

For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

1. supplementary qualification means a qualification that supplements an individual's competence at the level attained and in a specific professional field, and is tied to the needs of the labour market;
2. EQF means the European reference framework that integrates the qualifications systems of different countries and functions as a tool for the comparison of these qualifications;
3. The ENIC-NARIC centre means the national information centre for the recognition of higher education diplomas and certificates that operates within the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport;
4. QF-EHEA means the European reference framework that integrates national frameworks of higher education qualifications;
5. qualification means the result of an assessment and validation process, obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;
6. a level descriptor contains descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences;
7. best fit means the best possible correspondence between the level descriptors in the EQF and those in the national qualifications framework;
8. vocational qualification means a qualification obtained under the national vocational qualifications (hereinafter: NVQ) procedure, under vocational and technical training and development programmes and under study programmes for continuing education;
9. perfect fit means that the level descriptors in the SQF correspond fully to those in the EQF;
10. The SQF means the unified system of qualifications in the Republic of Slovenia for the classification of qualifications into levels with regard to learning outcomes;
11. qualification standard means a description of qualification that determines learning outcomes, the level of the qualification, conditions for obtaining the qualification and procedures for verifying learning outcomes;
12. type of qualification means a group of qualifications that share the same category of qualification, the same qualification level and the same or similar general purpose in terms of further education or employment;
13. learning outcome means knowledge, skills and competences standardised at a specific qualification level;
14. placement of qualifications in the SQF means the process of classifying all qualifications at the appropriate SQF level.

15. referencing the qualifications levels of the SQF to the EQF and the QF-EHEA means determining the correspondence of the SQF level to an EQF and QF-EHEA level.

16. NCP SQF-EQF means the national coordination point for the performance of the tasks under this Act for the needs of the SQF and the EQF;

17. employer means a legal person or natural person who employs a worker on the basis of an employment contract. Employers under this Act do not include schools or other entities whose core activity is education;

18. provider means an entity whose core activity is education and who provides training leading to a supplementary qualification on the basis of a contract with a proposer;

19. proposer means an employer who proposes and generally also provides a supplementary qualification or transfers its provision to a provider by contract.

## **II. PLACEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE SQF**

### **Article 3 (levels of qualifications)**

(1) The SQF consists of ten levels, defined on the basis of learning outcomes. Descriptors for an individual level are defined in Annex 1, which is an integral part of this Act.

(2) The classification of qualifications in the SQF is defined in the table in Annex 2, which is an integral part of this Act.

### **Article 4 (categories of qualifications)**

The SQF includes three categories of qualifications:

- educational qualification, demonstrated by a public document certifying completion of education,
- vocational qualification, demonstrated by an NVQ certificate issued in accordance with the regulations governing NVQs or another document certifying completion of a training or continuing education, issued in accordance with the regulations governing vocational, technical and higher education,
- supplementary qualification, regulated in the manner and according to the procedure defined in this Act and demonstrated by a certificate in accordance with this Act.

### **Article 5 (entry of SQF, EQF and QF-EHEA levels)**

Public documents on the completion of education, supplements to such documents, NVQ certificates, certificates of completion of a training or continuing education programme, and certificates of supplementary qualifications shall include a reference to the level of

the qualification obtained under the SQF and the EQF and, in the case of higher vocational and higher education qualifications, the level under the QF-EHEA.

**Article 6**  
**(process of placing/referencing educational qualifications)**

(1) The placing of education at a specific level in the SQF and its referencing to the EQF and QF-EHEA shall be determined by the education programme or study programme.

(2) Following the adoption of an education programme or study programme, the NCP SQF-EQF shall enter the qualification in the SQF Register.

**Article 7**  
**(process of placing/referencing vocational qualifications)**

(1) The placing of a vocational qualification at a specific level in the SQF and its referencing to the EQF and QF-EHEA shall be determined by the catalogue of standards of vocational knowledge and skills (hereinafter: the catalogue), the vocational and technical training and development programme or the study programme for continuing education.

(2) Following the adoption of a catalogue, the adoption of a vocational and technical training and development programme or the accreditation of a study programme for continuing education, the NCP SQF-EQF shall enter the qualification in the SQF Register.

**Article 8**  
**(process of placing a supplementary qualification in the SQF)**

(1) An application for the placement of a supplementary qualification in the SQF may be submitted, at the CPI, by an employer, a group of employers or by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) as proposer on the form specified by the NCP SQF-EQF and published on its website.

(2) The application shall contain at least the following details:

- the training programme leading to the supplementary qualification,
- needs in the labour market,
- the standard of the qualification,
- a description of the procedure of assuring quality through self-evaluation,
- references in a relevant field of work,
- the provider of the training programme, who provides it on the basis of a contract, if this is not the proposer itself.

(3) The CPI shall assess the completed application to place the supplementary qualification in the SQF and prepare an opinion on the suitability of the application and the training programme.

(4) If the opinion referred to in the previous paragraph is positive, the expert panel referred to in Article 13(2) of this Act shall within one month of receipt of this opinion make a decision regarding the application referred to in the first paragraph of this Article and draft a proposal for the placing of the supplementary qualification in the SQF.

(5) The NCP SQF-EQF shall forward the proposal for the placing of the supplementary qualification in the SQF to the minister responsible for labour, who shall place the supplementary qualification in the SQF by decision.

(6) Following the placing of the supplementary qualification in the SQF, the NCP SQF-EQF shall enter it in the SQF Register.

(7) The supplementary qualification shall be placed in the SQF for a period of five years. Three months before the expiry of the placement of the supplementary qualification, the proposer may submit an application for an extension of the validity of the placement. The procedure for extending the validity of placement is the same as the procedure for placing the supplementary qualification.

### **Article 9** **(issuing of the certificate attesting a supplementary qualification)**

The proposer of a supplementary qualification shall issue the certificate attesting the supplementary qualification and keep a record of certificates issued. The minister responsible for labour shall determine the form of the certificate, which shall be published on the NCP SQF-EQF website.

### **Article 10** **(termination of validity of placement)**

(1) The validity of the placement of a supplementary qualification in the SQF shall terminate:

- if the validity of placement in the SQF Register expires;
- if the proposer undergoes a change of status or ceases to perform the activity to which the awarding of the supplementary qualification is tied;
- if it is established by a final decision of the inspectorate responsible for education that provision of the programme leading to the supplementary qualification deviates significantly from the decision referred to in Article 8(5) of this Act;
- if the proposer fails to commence the provision of training leading to the supplementary qualification or fails to transfer the provision of training leading to the supplementary qualification to a contracted provider within one year of the placing of the supplementary qualification in the SQF Register;
- at the request of the proposer.

(2) In the cases referred to in the previous paragraph, the minister responsible for labour shall issue a decision on the termination of validity of the placement of the supplementary qualification in the SQF.

### III. REFERENCING SQF LEVELS TO THE EQF AND QF-EHEA

#### Article 11

#### (referencing SQF levels to the EQF)

(1) The levels of qualifications in the SQF shall be referenced to the EQF as follows:

SQF	EQF
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	
6	5
7	6
8	7
9	8
10	

(2) In the table in the previous paragraph:

- SQF levels 1, 2 and 3 are equivalent to EQF levels 1, 2 and 3;
- SQF levels 4 and 5 are equivalent to EQF level 4;
- SQF levels 6, 7 and 8 are equivalent to EQF levels 5, 6 and 7;
- SQF levels 9 and 10 are equivalent to EQF level 8.

(3) In the referencing of SQF levels to the EQF referred to in the first paragraph of this article, it shall be considered that SQF levels 4 and 5 are a best fit with EQF level 4, that SQF level 9 is a best fit with EQF level 8 and that SQF level 10 is a perfect fit with EQF level 8.

#### Article 12

#### (referencing SQF levels to the QF-EHEA)

(1) The levels of qualifications in the SQF shall be referenced to the QF-EHEA as follows:

SQF	QF-EHEA
6	Short cycle
7	First cycle
8	Second cycle
9	Third cycle
10	

(2) In the table in the previous paragraph:

- SQF level 6 is equivalent to the QF-EHEA short cycle;
- SQF level 7 is equivalent to the QF-EHEA first cycle;

- SQF level 8 is equivalent to the QF-EHEA second cycle;
- and SQF levels 9 and 10 are equivalent to the QF-EHEA third cycle, where SQF level 9 is equivalent to the QF-EHEA third cycle on the basis of the best-fit principle.

(3) In the referencing of SQF levels to the QF-EHEA referred to in the first paragraph of this article, it shall be considered that SQF level 9 is a best fit with the QF-EHEA third cycle and that SQF level 10 is a perfect fit with the QF-EHEA third cycle.

#### **IV. NCP SQF-EQF**

##### **Article 13**

##### **(competences of the NCP SQF-EQF)**

(1) The NCP SQF-EQF shall have the following tasks:

1. to oversee the development of the SQF and its referencing to the EQF,
2. to provide access to information about the SQF, EQF and QF-EHEA on its website,
3. to provide information on and promote the SQF and EQF,
4. to lead the process of referencing the SQF to the EQF,
5. to lead the process of placing supplementary qualifications in the SQF,
6. to prepare technical material and coordinate the work of key stakeholders in referencing national qualifications to the EQF via the SQF,
7. to cooperate with the competent international authorities (European Commission, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, etc.),
8. to cooperate in the network of national EQF contact points,
9. to publish the SQF Register on its own website,
10. to maintain the SQF Register and links to the EQF website;
11. to define the application form for the placement of a supplementary qualification in the SQF,
12. to prepare draft criteria for the placing of supplementary qualifications in the SQF,
13. to issue confirmations of SQF and EQF levels for NVQs,
14. to provide technical and administrative support for the work of the expert panel of the NCP for the EQF,
15. to perform other tasks in accordance with law.

(2) The NCP SQF-EQF shall have an expert panel consisting of seven members and appointed by the minister responsible for labour, as follows:

- three members at the proposal of the ministry responsible for labour,
- one member at the proposal of the ministry responsible for education,
- one member at the proposal of the ministry responsible for the economy,
- two members at the proposal of the Economic and Social Council (one representing employers and one representing employees).

(3) The members of the expert panel referred to in the previous paragraph shall be appointed for a period of four years. An individual member may be reappointed, but not more than twice consecutively. In the performance of their tasks and the adoption of decisions, the members of the expert panel shall observe the principle of prevention of conflicts of interest and the principle of impartiality. To this end they shall sign a special declaration by which they undertake to observe the principles defined in this paragraph.

(4) The expert panel of the NCP SQF-EQF:

- defines criteria for the placement of supplementary qualifications in the SQF,
- prepares a proposal for the placing of a supplementary qualification in the SQF,
- monitors the process of development of the SQF, EQF and QF-EHEA, and
- performs other tasks necessary for the referencing/placement of qualifications.

## **V. PROVISION OF FUNDS**

### **Article 14 (funding)**

The ministries responsible for education and labour shall provide the funds necessary for the operation of the NCP SQF-EQF. The amount of these funds shall be determined in the financial plan of the public institution referred to in Article 1(3) of this Act.

## **VI. THE SQF REGISTER AND THE RECORD OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED**

### **Article 15 (The SQF register and the record of certificates issued)**

(1) For educational qualifications, the SQF Register shall contain the following information:

1. name of qualification;
2. type of qualification;
3. category of qualification;
4. type of education;
5. duration of education;
6. the number of credits allocated to programmes of secondary vocational and technical education, higher vocational education and higher education;
7. conditions for the enrolment of an individual in a specific programme leading to an educational qualification;
8. ISCED subject area;
9. SQF level;
10. EQF level;
11. QF-EHEA level (higher vocational and higher education qualifications);
12. learning outcomes;
13. assessment and completion of education;
14. education providers; and
15. possibility of progression to further education.

(2) For vocational and supplementary qualifications, the SQF Register shall contain the following information:

1. name of qualification;
2. type of qualification;
3. category of qualification;
4. period of validity of the provision of the supplementary qualification;
5. conditions for obtaining the qualification;
6. ISCED subject area;



7. SQF level;
8. EQF level;
9. QF-EHEA level (higher vocational and higher education qualifications);
10. learning outcomes;
11. assessment and completion of education;
12. proposers of supplementary qualifications; and
13. providers (for vocational qualifications)

(3) The NCP SQF-EQF shall publish the Register referred to in the first and second paragraphs of this Article on its website.

- (4) The record of certificates issued referred to in Article 9 of this Act shall contain:
- the name of the supplementary qualification;
  - the date of validity of the placing of the supplementary qualification in the SQF;
  - the date of implementation of the training programme;
  - the serial number of the issue of the certificate;
  - details of the provider;
  - date of issue of the certificate.

#### **Article 16** **(provision of information for the SQF Register)**

The National Education Institute and the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education shall provide the NCP SQF-EQF with the data necessary for the entry of a qualification in the SQF Register on the form defined by the director of public institution referred to in Article 1(3) this Act and published on the website of this public institution.

#### **Article 17** **(storage of data)**

The Register and the record referred to in Article 15 of this Act shall be stored permanently.

### **VII. PAYMENT OF COSTS OF THE PROCEDURE FOR PLACING A SUPPLEMENTARY QUALIFICATION IN THE SQF**

#### **Article 18** **(payment of costs)**

(1) Costs of the procedure for placing a supplementary qualification in the SQF mean the costs of conducting the procedure and the costs of the expert assessment of the proposer's application and shall be paid by the proposer of the supplementary qualification.

(2) The amount of these costs and the method of payment shall be determined by the council of the public institution referred to in Article 1(3) of this Act.

## VIII. SUPERVISION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT

### Article 19

#### (competence of the inspection authority)

Supervision of the implementation of this Act shall be performed by the inspectorate responsible for education.

## IX. PENAL PROVISION

### Article 20

#### (fine)

(1) A fine of between EUR 50 and EUR 5,000 shall be imposed on a proposer who is a natural person, and a fine of between EUR 200 and EUR 10,000 on a legal person acting as a proposer, who:

- fails to provide a training programme in accordance with the decision of the minister referred to in Article 8(5) of this Act,
- issues a certificate for a supplementary qualification that is not entered in the SQF Register referred to in Article 8(6) of this Act,
- fails to keep a record of issued certificates of supplementary qualifications in accordance with Article 9 of this Act.

(2) In the cases referred to in the previous paragraph, a fine of between EUR 40 and EUR 5,000 shall also be imposed on the accountable person of a legal person acting as proposer.

## X. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

### Article 21

#### (harmonisation of the establishing act)

The legal act establishing the public institution referred to in Article 1(3) of this Act shall be harmonised with the provisions of this Act within two months of the entry into force of this Act.

### Article 22

#### (harmonisation of implementing regulations)

The minister responsible for education shall harmonise the provisions of the Rules on the diploma supplement (UL RS 56/07 and 39/12), the Rules on forms of public documents in elementary education (UL 44/08, 32/09, 88/13), the Rules on public documents in higher vocational education (UL RS 83/08, 30/10) and the Rules on forms of public documents in secondary education (UL RS 44/08, 37/09, 71/09, 34/10 and 44/12) with the provisions of this Act within three months of its entry into force.

### Article 23

**(harmonisation of the implementing regulation and appointment of the expert panel)**

Within three months of the entry into force of this Act, the minister responsible for labour shall:

- harmonise the provisions of Rules on the form of the public document on national vocational qualifications – certificate and substitute certificate (UL 79/10 and 1/12) with the provisions of this Act and to find the form of the certificate attesting the supplementary qualification,
- appoint the expert panel referred to in Article 13(2) of this Act.

**Article 24  
(tasks of the NCP SQF-EQF and the expert panel)**

Within three months of the entry into force of this Act, the NCP SQF-EQF shall:

- establish the SQF website, which shall be linked to the EQF website,
- define the application form for the placement of a supplementary qualification in the SQF and publish it on the NCP SQF-EQF website.

**Article 25  
(obtaining information on the SQF, EQF and QF-EHEA level)**

For public documents on the completion of education issued before the entry into force of this Act, an individual may obtain information on the SQF, EQF and QF-EHEA level free of charge through the procedure for the validation of education at the ENIC-NARIC centre; for public documents on vocational qualifications, this information may be obtained from the NCP SQF-EQF.

**Article 26  
(entry into force and application)**

This Act shall enter into force on the fifteenth day following its publication in *Uradni list Republike Slovenije* [the official journal] and shall begin to be applied six months after entering into force.

No 602-01/15-10/16  
Ljubljana, 18 December 2015  
EPA 804-VII

National Assembly  
of the Republic of Slovenia  
**Bojana Muršič**  
Vice-President