

# CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON THE SKILLS PORTABILITY INITIATIVE

CEI-Bois contribution

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## 1. Introduction

The European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois) represents 22 European and National organisations from 16 countries and is the body representing the industrial European wood sector: more than 160,000 companies employing 930,000 workers in the EU. Moreover, CEI-Bois has been recognised by Eurofound as the most representative European employer organisation in the woodworking sector.

CEI-Bois welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the European Commission's work on the Skills Portability Initiative. As representatives of Europe's woodworking industries, we wish to underline the importance of a well-functioning internal market where labour mobility can take place efficiently, predictably and with a high level of trust between Member States. The initiative touches on key issues for the industry's skills supply and competitiveness.

## 2. General comments

CEI-Bois considers the existing regulatory framework for the recognition and portability of qualifications to be well designed at its core. The main challenges do not lie in the structure of the system, but rather in its complexity, varying national implementation and limited user-friendliness.

CEI-Bois therefore encourages the European Commission to prioritise simplification, harmonisation and improved implementation, rather than introducing new rules or parallel systems.

## 3. Improved use of existing EU tools

Instruments such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), national qualification frameworks (NQFs), Europass and ESCO provide a solid foundation for transparency and comparability. However, their potential is not yet fully realised.

CEI-Bois recommends that the European Commission:

- strengthen the requirements for consistent and up-to-date national implementation;
- ensure that national qualification frameworks are complete, digitally accessible and linked to the EQF;
- improve the user-friendliness of EU platforms for qualification information.

A more uniform implementation would significantly assist employers in interpreting and assessing foreign qualifications.



#### **4. Need for good practices and targeted information sharing**

CEI-Bois sees a clear need for the European Commission to:

- identify and disseminate good practices from Member States that have successfully digitalised and streamlined their processes;
- carry out information and communication initiatives targeted at employers, education providers and workers regarding the possibilities for skills mobility.

Many barriers arise from a lack of awareness of existing tools and processes. Improved information dissemination can provide immediate positive effects.

#### **5. Language barriers as an obstacle to mobility**

Language issues are one of the most concrete obstacles to labour mobility. Differences in language and terminology create uncertainty among employers and complicate labour market matching.

CEI-Bois encourages the European Commission to:

- strengthen linguistic clarity in qualification descriptions;
- promote the use of common European competence taxonomies;
- support the development of sector-specific terminology and language resources.

Measures in this area are essential to improving the practical portability of skills.

#### **6. Increased mutual trust between Member States' systems**

For portability to function, a high level of mutual trust between Member States' education systems, quality assurance mechanisms and regulation of professions is required.

The Commission should therefore:

- strengthen cooperation on quality assurance;
- promote transparency in the structure and level architecture of education systems;
- support common standards for digital certificates and validation processes.

More harmonised trust between systems is crucial for employers to make well-informed decisions.

#### **7. Strengthened national NQFs**

National qualification frameworks are central to comparability and transparency. CEI-Bois sees a need to:

- ensure that all Member States have operational, comprehensive and digitally accessible NQFs;
- include micro-credentials and validated informal competences in a structured manner;
- improve the connection between NQF and EQF to facilitate cross-border understanding.

A strengthened NQF landscape is a prerequisite for portability to function in practice.

#### **8. Alignment of substance of training**

The Skills Portability Initiative can be supported as long as the actual substance learned under each national training programme, degree or qualification is aligned. We cannot have a system where, on paper, applicants are mutually capable, but one qualification covers a lot more than another.

#### **9. Conclusion**

CEI-Bois supports the Commission's ambition to improve labour mobility and strengthen the EU's competitiveness. At the same time, we wish to emphasise that simplification, harmonisation and improved implementation of existing systems should be the main focus. By strengthening the



application of already established tools, improving information flows and increasing trust between Member States' education systems, the EU can achieve significant improvements without increasing the administrative burden for companies or workers.