

SOLIDAR's input to European Commission's call for evidence on the recognition of qualifications of non-EU nationals

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As acknowledged in the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, facilitating the recognition of prior learning and qualification is key to inclusion of migrants. Ensuring social inclusion means looking beyond simply finding any job; it entails making sure that migrants including refugees get their qualifications recognized, so they can get a job that matches their aspirations and qualifications or pursue education or lifelong learning.

The European Year of Skills provides ideal momentum for a call for mechanisms of recognition of non-Europeans' qualifications that are:

- **Accessible**, with information on different systems made available to third country nationals in a language they understand, with proper counselling offered. SOLIDAR partner Dafni Kek has developed the ProfilPASS, a toolkit for competence assessment aimed at counsellors working with newly-arrived migrants, in the frame of the Erasmus+ SCOUT project.¹
- **Affordable**: Recognition may be a costly process. People may have to pay for homologation or may be required to take complementary trainings or studies to reach the equivalence, which represents a loss of income.
- **Streamlined and context-sensitive**: currently procedures can be very long and burdensome, usually requiring original documents or sworn translation or stamping. Requirements must be eased, especially in cases of people who had to leave their country in an emergency (not having time to take documents with them, impossibility to return to the country, discontinuities in education enrolment or attendance, etc). A good practice here would be to recognize signed declarations or statements made under material and criminal liability before a notary, or public body, as adequate proof.
- **Designed in cooperation** between Member States, EC, Cedefop, and local education institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs) providing training, educational institutions and social partners.

¹ http://scout.profilpass-international.eu/index.php?article_id=127&clang=1

Additionally, an important element playing into the recognition of migrants' skills is the opportunity for them to validate their skills acquired outside of the formal education and training system. **Non-formal and informal learning (NFIL)** is typical of the education and training offered by CSOs. Migrants and especially refugees and asylum-seekers are particularly reliant on CSOs to develop their skills, mainly on account on CSOs filling the gaps in the public reception and integration systems. Validation of NFIL is an issue in general in Europe, but one which affects migrants with a particular acuity. This validation is critical for employability, as it contributes to better matching jobs and skills. The Commission should recommend a better implementation of the 2012 Council Recommendation on Validation of NFIL. The use of microcredentials and open badges is an example of good practice in recognition of NFIL, widely used in the 3rd sector, for instance by SOLIDAR member Ligue de l'Enseignement².

The lack of equivalences between different systems is a crucial challenge. Certain studies, professions, titles certified by any kind of certification outside the EU, are not necessarily recognized in the EU. Recognition of skills is heterogenous even within the EU. The Bologna process is proof that it is possible for Member States to agree on and implement common standards in higher education qualifications – a system of European standards for the recognition of skills should follow the same process.

Lastly, a comprehensive EU labour migration framework must go beyond the short term needs of EU employers and take into account needs of migrant workers across all levels of skills and sectors, with decent work safeguards (e.g. equal treatment; access to social rights like unemployment benefits without unnecessary restrictions), as well as the impact on third countries of this migration of their workers. Lastly, this framework for labour migration must itself be embedded in a global, long-term, rights-based approach to migration for all purposes, including of people who may not be able to work.

SOLIDAR thanks its members and partner [Centre for Peace Studies](#), [La Ligue de l'Enseignement](#) and [Dafni Kek](#) for their input.

² <https://laliguenormandie.org/engagement-des-jeunes/open-badges/>