


# Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Decision	2007/0234(COD) Procedure completed
Vocational training: comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States (repeal. Decision 85/368/EEC)	
Subject 4.40.07 Recognition of diplomas, equivalence of studies and training 4.40.15 Vocational education and training	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs		20/11/2007
		PSE <a href="#">ANDERSSON Jan</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>PETI</b> Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>CULT</b> Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	<a href="#">Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)</a>	<a href="#">2891</a>	25/09/2008
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Sport and Culture</a>	FIGEL' Ján	

Key events			
05/11/2007	Legislative proposal published	<a href="#">COM(2007)0680</a>	Summary
15/11/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
02/04/2008	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
04/04/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	<a href="#">A6-0132/2008</a>	
20/05/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/05/2008	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	<a href="#">T6-0200/2008</a>	Summary
25/09/2008	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
22/10/2008	Final act signed		
22/10/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/10/2008	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information
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Procedure reference	2007/0234(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 150-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/6/55818

### Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	<a href="#">COM(2007)0680</a>	06/11/2007	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	<a href="#">CES0280/2008</a>	13/02/2008	ESC	
Committee draft report	<a href="#">PE400.561</a>	03/03/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A6-0132/2008</a>	04/04/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">T6-0200/2008</a>	20/05/2008	EP	Summary
Draft final act	<a href="#">03640/2008/LEX</a>	22/10/2008	CSL	

### Additional information

National parliaments	<a href="#">IPEX</a>
European Commission	<a href="#">EUR-Lex</a>

### Final act

[Decision 2008/1065](#)  
[OJ L 288 30.10.2008, p. 0004](#) Summary

## Vocational training: comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States (repeal. Decision 85/368/EEC)

**PURPOSE:** to repeal Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States of the EC.

**PROPOSED ACT:** Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**CONTENT:** The current proposal forms part of the simplification programme within the Commission Legislative and Work Programme for 2007, which aims to simplify the regulatory environment for business and other stakeholders. The Commission considers that Council Decision 85/368/EEC is redundant and should therefore be repealed for the following reasons:

- implementation of the Decision has not been effective in achieving the comparability of vocational qualifications for the benefit of workers seeking employment in another Member State.
- the methods and approach used to describe and compare qualifications provided for in Decision 85/368/EEC differ from those currently applied in education and training systems;
- the Decision is superseded by the adoption of the Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

Council Decision 85/368/EEC introduced a system for the comparability of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications. In practice the system proposed by the Decision proved cumbersome and implementation at best partial. Procedures for defining job descriptions and comparing qualifications, involving the Commission, Cedefop and Member State experts, were established. However, a report prepared for the Commission in 1990 detailed the difficulties in this process and acknowledged the slow pace of progress - by 1990 data on the comparability of qualifications had been published for only 5 of the 19 specified sectors, covering 66 occupations. The process of recording, describing and comparing qualifications had proven slow and unwieldy.

The Decision also proved too inflexible to adapt to changing needs. Although it referred to the need to adapt to new situations brought about by technological change, the Commission, Cedefop and the Member States came to accept that the centralised approach chosen, and the constant and rapid evolution of qualifications, soon made the published information out of date. The 1990 report had emphasised that the system would only be effective if used by Member States. In reality the work carried out at the European level had little impact at the level of national and sectoral stakeholders.

For all these reasons, implementation of the activities specified in the Decision was soon abandoned.

The European Qualifications Framework, or EQF, will seek to replicate the broad objective of the 1985 Decision, in aiming to facilitate the comparison of qualifications and thereby the mobility of workers. In comparing the two, the Commission points out that the 1985 Decision took a top-down approach requiring intensive co-operation between experts from different countries to update the list, amend descriptions of occupations and qualifications, and add new qualifications. The fact that only a limited field of occupations was covered reflects the impracticality of such an approach.

The EQF adopts a voluntary and decentralised approach where the Community provides a common reference point while detailed decisions are left to competent bodies at national and sectoral level. The arrangements envisaged for the referencing work within countries are not unduly burdensome. Countries relate their levels of qualifications to the EQF, so that any qualification falling within a particular level in their national framework or system can be given an EQF level rating. The EQF thus provides a common language to describe and understand qualifications. The national decisions on placing qualifications in the EQF levels are then submitted to the EQF Advisory Group which ensures the quality of the process. The EQF thus addresses the limitations of the 1985 Decision at two levels: by focusing on improving the transparency of qualifications, and by introducing a decentralised approach for co-operation more appropriate to the increasing complexity of qualifications in Europe. While the EQF will be the instrument which most closely pursues the aims and functions the 1985 Decision could not fulfil, there are other instruments and measures at European level which promote transparency and increase transferability of qualifications. These include Europass, the European Credit Transfer System for higher education (ECTS), the 2004 Council Conclusions on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the Ploteus portal.

Lastly, the Commission points out that the mutual recognition of qualifications in the area of regulated professions is ensured by Directive 2005/36/EC.

## Vocational training: comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States (repeal. Decision 85/368/EEC)

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The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the report by Jan ANDERSSON (PES, SE) approving unamended, under the simplified procedure, the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council repealing Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States of the European Community.

## Vocational training: comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States (repeal. Decision 85/368/EEC)

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The European Parliament adopted by 527 votes to 10, with 34 abstentions, a legislative resolution approving, under the first reading of the codecision procedure, the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council repealing Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States of the European Community.

The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Jan ANDERSSON (PES, SE) on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

## Vocational training: comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States (repeal. Decision 85/368/EEC)

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**PURPOSE:** to repeal Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States.

**LEGISLATIVE ACT:** Decision No 1065/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council repealing Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between the Member States of the European Community.

**BACKGROUND:** Council Decision 85/368/EEC introduced a system for the comparability of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications. It aimed to give workers an opportunity to make better use of their qualifications to obtain access to employment in other Member States. The system defined in the Decision sought to achieve this by defining practical job descriptions in specified occupations, readable across the Community, and so provide firms, workers, and public authorities with the necessary information on the comparability of qualifications obtained in various Member States. The Decision called for the Commission and Member States to cooperate in drawing up Community job descriptions for specific occupations or groups of occupations, and then match vocational training qualifications recognised in the Member States with these agreed job descriptions. The Decision also required countries to designate a coordination body to gather and disseminate information on comparable vocational qualifications.

In practice, however, the system proposed by the Decision proved cumbersome and implementation at best partial. The Commission and Member States concentrated initially on the occupational qualifications of skilled workers. As a first step, 219 VET qualifications in 19 sectors were designated (the 19 sectors were chosen to reflect occupations whose workers were most likely to move to other countries). However, the process of recording, describing and comparing qualifications had proven slow and unwieldy. Moreover, the Decision proved too inflexible to adapt to changing needs and the Commission and Member States came to accept that the centralised approach set out in Decision 85/368/EEC, and the constant and rapid evolution of qualifications, soon made the published information out of date and the system, as a whole, almost impossible to apply.

For all these reasons, implementation of the activities specified in the Decision was soon abandoned. Its application is therefore rendered useless given the recently adopted initiatives taken at EU or inter-governmental level to increase transparency, support transfer and facilitate the valuing of learning outcomes (in particular, the European Qualifications Network [see [COD/2006/0163](#)], which seeks to replicate the broad objective of the 1985 Decision, in aiming to facilitate the comparison of qualifications and thereby the mobility of workers).

CONTENT: the only objective of the Decision is therefore to repeal Council Decision 85/368/EEC on the comparability of vocational training qualifications between Member States, under the Commission's programme to simplify legislation.

The repeal of this text is consistent with the Lisbon agenda, in particular the Better Regulation strategy and the need to simplify the regulatory environment for business and other stakeholders.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 19 November 2008.