



## **Contribution to the online call for evidence – Evaluation of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning**

Samaritan International (SAM.I.) considers that the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a very important referencing framework, which removes obstacles from worker mobility through cross-border comparability and recognition of qualifications and thus promotes the Single European Labour Market.

Already in 2016, Samaritan international called in its position paper “Single European First Aid – Cross-Border first responders” for a cross-border recognition of qualifications. First Aid qualifications are not only an important requirement for professions with a responsibility for workplace safety, but also an expression of civic engagement and a substantial contribution to public safety and a resilient society.

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Framework Directive 89/391 EEC establishes First Aid as an important element to improve the safety and health of workers at work and requires the employer to designate an adequate number of qualified workers. Furthermore, both the Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and the Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides request First Aid measures to be included in trainings or in the compilation of the products’ safety data sheets. In addition, the European Youth Strategy sets the target that all professionals working with young people should be provided with quality mental health First Aid training.

While First Aid skills have been established in European legislation as a work-relevant qualification, these qualifications are still predominantly nationally regulated and an officially recognised European standard for First Aid qualifications, including AED (automated external defibrillator) usage, does not exist. In a European labour market, this can impose additional burden and costs on workers who must retake training courses in the country of their prospective workplace, despite already being educated in First Aid. In addition, the non-recognition across borders might discourage people from engaging in training courses and from practicing this form of civic engagement.

The integration of First Aid qualifications into the EQF based on established and accepted standards, such as the European Resuscitation Council guidelines, could pave the way towards cross-border recognition. To facilitate this cross-border recognition and enable the integration into the EQF, the quality of First Aid courses should be described by learning results.

Despite predominantly focusing on secondary and post-secondary degrees and diplomas, the EQF is designed with sufficient flexibility to also map smaller scale qualifications. Several Member States and other participating countries have already explicitly extended the scope of their National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) to qualifications awarded outside the formal education system and to non-regulated supplementary qualifications.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8611\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8611_en.pdf)



**Therefore, Samaritan International strongly believes that the EQF should play a stronger role in facilitating the cross-border recognition of First Aid qualifications.**

Such recognition would remove unnecessary burden from workers in need of the possession of a valid First Aid certification and create an additional incentive for people to proactively acquire First Aid skills, which are essential skills of civic engagement in contribution to public safety.

More info:

<https://www.samaritan-international.eu/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SAMARITAN-INTERNATIONAL-EC-First-Aid-Single-European-First-Aid.pdf>

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