

### Aim of the study

- What are international qualifications?
- What international qualifications are awarded in Latvia?
- What is the role of international qualifications in the Latvian education and labour market?
- Should we include the international qualifications in the Latvian Qualifications Framework?
- How to include the international qualifications in the Latvian Qualifications Framework?

### Latvian Qualifications Framework

EQF level	Number of qualifications
Level 1 (Lower secondary education)	1
Level 2 (Upper secondary education)	1
Level 3 (Tertiary education)	1
Level 4 (Tertiary education)	1
Level 5 (Tertiary education)	1
Level 6 (Tertiary education)	1
Level 7 (Tertiary education)	1

### Steps of the study

- Analysis of literature
- Interviews with organizations/institutions awarding international qualifications in Latvia
- Pull of personnel management specialists and representatives from sectors
- Discussions with stakeholders (conference)
- Report on the study including a proposal for the Ministry of Education and Science
- Distribution of the results

### Done so far...

- Analysis of literature and sources
- 14 interviews with the representatives from:
  - Education centres
  - Examination centres
  - Higher and general education institutions
- 9 participants of the poll representing:
  - Personnel management specialists
  - Sectoral Expert Councils

## Initial results



### SECTORS OF INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS COVERED BY RESEARCH



### Features of international qualifications

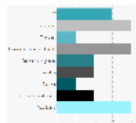
- Organisations/institutions/corporation developing international qualifications
- Global recognition
- Specific requirements (standards) of international qualifications
- Organisations/institutions (taking decision about) awarding international qualifications
- Purpose of using international qualifications
- Requirements for education and testing centres dealing with international qualifications
- Integrity into formal education (full qualifications, modules)

### Particular aspects for quality assurance

- Initial status of the recipients of international qualifications
- Competence
- Self-assessment
- External quality assurance
- Accredited practice experience

### Particular aspects for quality assurance II

- Further steps in quality assurance, distribution of provisions, and requirements stipulated by the developers of international qualifications
- Regular visits of developers
- Behavioural indicators (representatives of developers) for exams
- Methods of marking of results and quality of (exam) evaluation procedure and results, self-assessment reports, documentation
- Evaluation of resources (including HR) and equipment (simulation)
- Evaluation of candidates' integrity and personal quality
- "Secret buyer"



### Standards for Qualifications

- Standardized requirements for applicants (LOs)
  - Standardized exams
  - Link with the needs of a sector (actual)
  - Standardized or recognized study materials/staff
- Set by:
- developer of international qualification
  - self
  - international organisations/institutions (EU, ISO)
  - local occupational standards

### Admission requirements:

- self-assessment
- formal education level
- work experience
- combination of education and work experience
- level of previously obtained international qualification

### Examination

- High standards:
- strict requirements from the developer
  - exams are often recorded
  - verification of identity
  - certified moderator of the exam
  - bases for cheating
- Testing methods:
- online tests
  - case studies
  - practical tests
  - combination of test and practical task

### Documents proving international qualification

- Certificate + certificate supplement
  - Certificate + ECTS (integral part of formal education programme)
  - Diploma/certificate + relevant formal education qualification
  - Double diploma
  - Additionally – document outlining regulations for the use of a quality brand
- Who does maintain the data base?  
Who does enter the data?

### Recognition

### Re-certification

### Advantages of international qualification holders in education and labour market

- Facilitates international labor force mobility
- Wider recognition, competitiveness and opportunities in the global labour market
- Exemptions of study periods
- Clearly described, common and well known requirements (standards) for qualification
- Great preparatory – more focused, specific and flexible education and examination process
- Concrete, deep, up to date and practical skills in work field and practice
- Good environment for exams

### Disadvantages of international qualification holders in education and labour market

- High standards vary with the sector and status of provider (examination centres, education centres, education institutions)
- High requirements to obtain international qualifications
- Recognition is needed
- Not always international qualifications are recognized in formal education (pathway), in labour market (by potential employers, in procurement and project applications)
- International qualifications are not understood outside the sector
- Poor language skills can limit chances to use the qualification

### Respondents' suggestions for improvement

- International qualifications should be recognized in the formal education – refer to it when formal education qualifications
- International standards and requirements used in formal education holders is transferable as well as in recruitment of employees in labour market
- Detailed and precise rules ensure providing international qualifications should be described and regulated (both in formal education and employment programmes can be used)
- The process should be involved in the sector (stakeholders concerning practical education policy)
- Change together in the way, how employer can have fair of when looking an employee having a certain international qualification

### Conclusions I

- Definition of international qualifications is not clearly formalized
- Interpretation of the term "international qualifications" varies with sector and providers' status
- The importance of international qualifications varies in the global labour market
- In some sectors employers in Latvia have limited information about international qualifications
- High QA standards – the only way to keep the reputation

### Conclusions II

- International qualifications can be very well integrated in formal education (formal level)
- Providing international qualifications gives chance to participate in international contexts
- Specific requirements often accreditation process to obtain chance to provide international qualifications
- Advantages and disadvantages of international qualification holders varies with sector and providers' status
- International qualifications provision in Latvia is well identified, especially in private sector, but there is no overview of the international qualifications offered

### Questions for your discussion

- How do we include international qualifications in the EQF?
- What is the most appropriate way to include international qualifications in the EQF?
- Connections in the formal education – equal to the international qualifications
- International qualifications as support of formal education system
- Incorporating the international qualifications systems to the EQF and EQF-MS



# The international qualifications in Latvia: Initial results of the study

**Gunta Kinta & Rihards Blese**  
Academic Information Centre –  
Latvian National Coordination Point for EQF

International Conference  
«Opening up the National Qualifications Frameworks for international qualifications»  
14 November 2014, in Riga

Co-financed by  
the European Union:



# Aim of the **study**

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- What international qualifications are awarded in Latvia?
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- How to include the international qualifications in the Latvian Qualifications Framework?

# Latvian Qualifications Framework

Latvian education	LQF and EQF level
Doctoral studies	8
Master's studies (HE studies at least 5 years)	7
Bachelor's studies (HE studies at least 4 years)	6
College education (2-3 years)	5
General and vocational secondary education Vocational education (arodizglītība)	4
General and vocational basic education	3
General basic education for students special needs	2
General basic education for students severe special needs	1

# Steps of the study

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# Done so far...

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- 9 participants of the poll representing:
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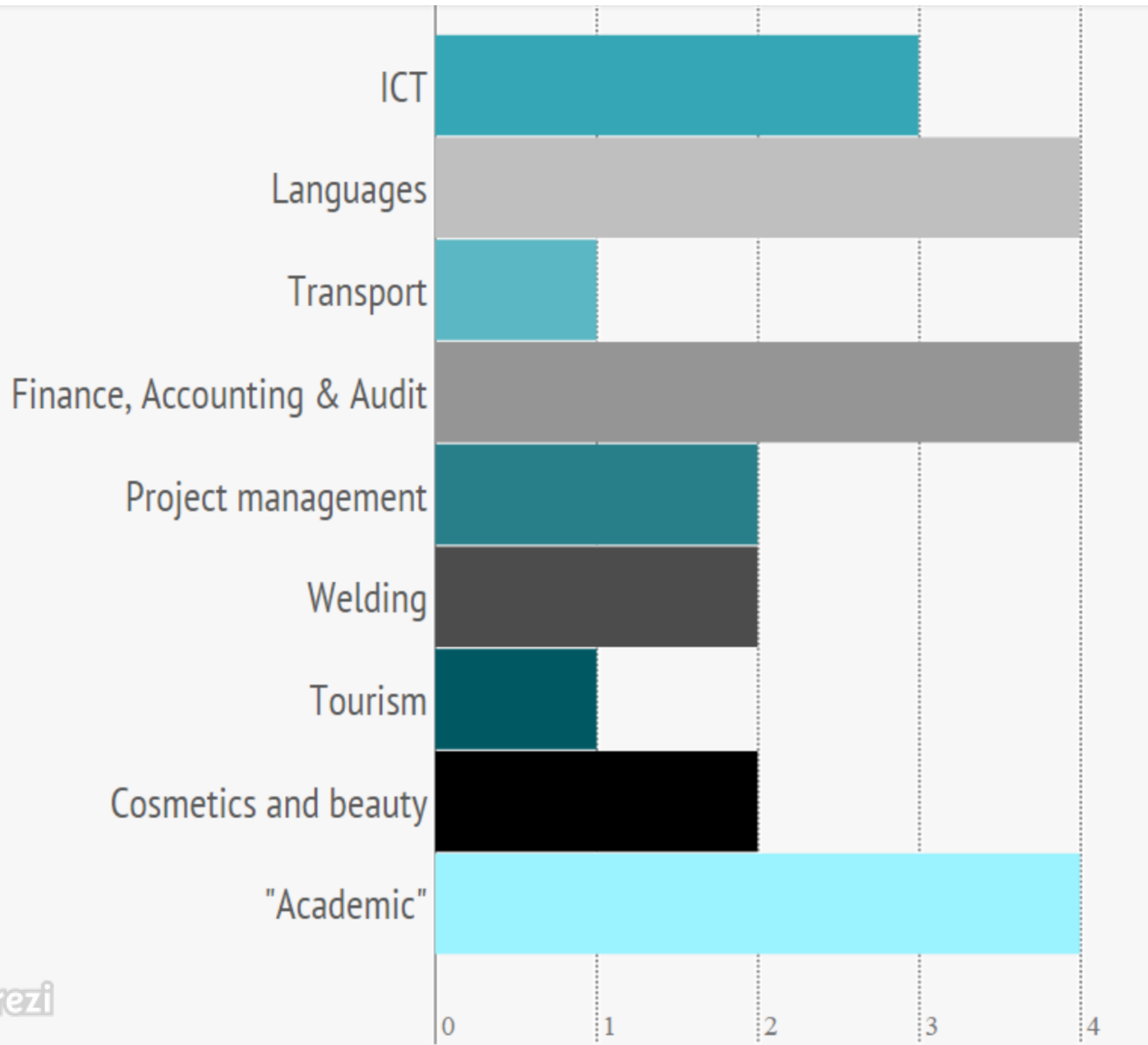
# Initial results

# SECTORS OF INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS COVERED IN RESEARCH

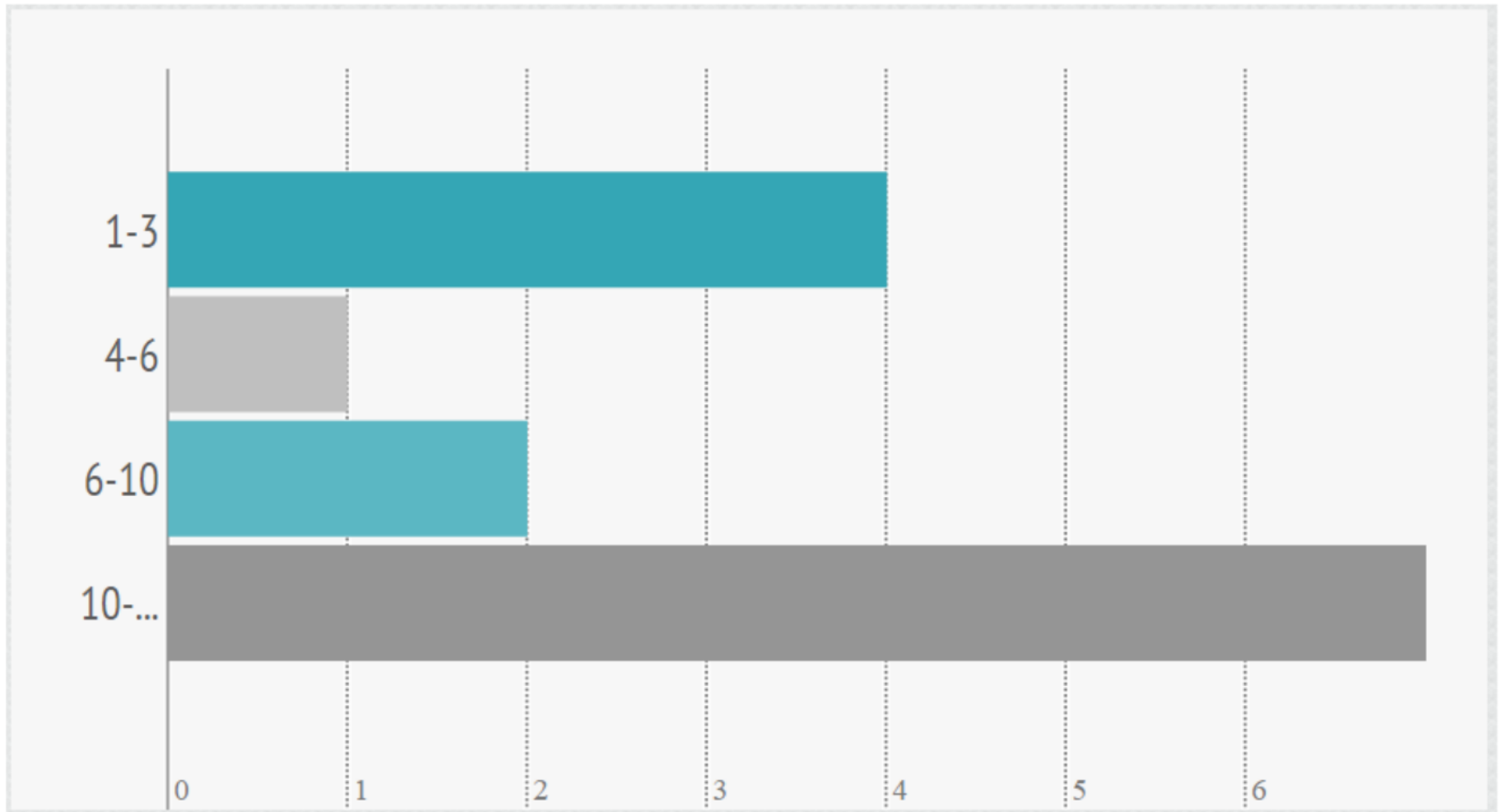
In absolute numbers







# Experience with international qualifications (years)



# Definition



# Features of international qualifications

- Organisation/institution/corporation developing international qualifications
- Global recognition
- Specific requirements (standard) of international qualifications
- Organisation/institution [taking decision about] awarding international qualifications
- Purpose of using international qualifications
- Requirements for education and testing centres dealing with international qualifications



- Integrity into formal education (full qualifications, modules)



# Particular aspects for **quality assurance**

- **Initial visits** of the developers of international qualifications
  - resources
  - staff
  - internal quality assurance
- **Reputation**, previous experience



## Particular aspects for **quality assurance** II



**Further steps** vary with sector, the status of providers, and requirements stipulated by the developers of international qualifications:

- regular visits of developers
- external assessors (representatives of developer) for exams
- remote monitoring of results and operation (examination procedure and results, self-assessment reports, documentation)
- evaluation of resources (including HR) and equipment (simulators)
- evaluation of candidates' integrity and personality
- "secret buyer"

# Standards for Qualifications



- Standardized requirements for applicants (LOs)
- Standardized exams
- Link with the needs of a sector (actual)
- Standardized or recognized study materials/staff

Set by:

- developer of international qualification
- law
- international organisations/institutions (EU, ISO)
- local occupational standards

## Admission requirements:

- self-assessment
- formal education level
- work experience
- combination of education and work experience
- level of previously obtained international qualification





# Examination



## High **standards**:

- strict requirements from the developer
- exams are often recorded
- verification of identity
- certified moderator of the exam
- bans for cheating

## Testing **methods**:

- online tests
- case studies
- practical tasks
- combination of test and practical task

# Documents proving international qualification



- Certificates + certificate supplement
- Certificate + ECTS (Integral part of formal education programme)
- Diploma/certificate + relevant formal education qualification
- **Double diploma**
- Additionally – document outlining regulations for the use of a quality brand

Who does maintain the **data base**?

Who does enter the data?

Recognition



Re-certification

# Advantages of international qualification holders in education and labour market



- Facilitates international labour force mobility
- Wider recognition, competitiveness and opportunities in the **global** labour market
- Exemptions of study periods
- Clearly described, common and **well-known requirements** (standard) for qualification
- Short programmes - more focused, **specific** and flexible education and examination process
- Concrete, deep, up-to-date and **practical skills** to work fast and precise
- Good environment for exams

# Disadvantages of international qualification holders in education and labour market



- N!B! Disadvantages vary with the sector and status of provider (examination centre, education centre, education institution)
- High **expenditures** to obtain international qualifications
- **Re-certification** is needed
- Not always international qualifications are **recognized** in formal education (pathway), in labour market (by potential employers, in procurements and project applications)
- International qualifications are not understood **outside the sector**
- **Poor language skills** can limit chances to use the qualification

# Respondents' suggestions for improvement



- International qualifications should be **recognized in the formal education** – referenced to relevant formal education qualifications
- International standards and criteria should be **used in formal education** (where it is possible) as well as in **assessment of employees** in labour market
- Education and examination centres providing international qualifications should be identified and registered (public **list of providers** and programmes/ examinations per sector)
- The providers should be involved in the **social dialogue** concerning national education policy
- Change legislation in the way that employee can have **day off** when having an exam or training to obtain international qualification

# Conclusions I

- Definition of international qualifications is not clearly formulated
- Interpretation of the term «international qualification» varies with sector and providers' status
- The importance of international qualifications rises in the global labour market
- In some sectors employers in Latvia have limited information about international qualifications
- High QA standarts - the only way to keep the reputation

# Conclusions II

- International qualifications can be very well-integrated in formal education (forms differ)
- Providing international qualifications gives chance to participate in international seminars
- Systemic improvements after accreditation process to obtain chance to provide international qualifications
- Advantages and disadvantages of international qualification holders varies with sector and providers' status
- International qualifications provision in Latvia is well-developed, especially in private sector, but there is no overview of the international qualifications offered







# Questions for your discussion

- Should we include international qualifications in the NQFs?
- What is the most appropriate way to include international qualifications in the NQFs?
  - Examinations in the formal education – equal to the international qualifications
  - International qualifications as a part of formal education system
  - Referencing the international qualifications systems to the LQF and EQF, etc.