



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme

# Wood Workers Abroad

*Is there a solution for the mobility of  
Wood Workers in Europe?*





## Problems to be tackled

Under the title 'wood worker' there are a numerous range of different European professions, professional qualifications and also qualification frameworks – joiners, cabinet makers, carvers, wood finishers, furniture makers et cetera. These qualifications vary from one country to another and even under the same title the contents of the curriculum of a professional qualification and therefore also the skills and competences of the graduated wood workers are different to each other. It is difficult to compare these skills and competences even for vocational education and training professionals, and the employers are, understandably, even more confused with the number of different titles and competence profiles. This has led to several obstacles and hindrance in developing mobility among workers in wood and furniture industry. It is also preventing the development of true general labour market for wood workers in European Union.

## Aim of the project

Currently throughout the European Union, the qualifications of the wood and furniture sector are being developed, as well as the systems of recognition, both via the formal (realization of courses) and via non-formal (professional experience) recognition. Depending on the countries, the definition of the qualifications level is different, as well as the recognition systems.

This project aims to share knowledge, experiences and good practices in those aspects related to the qualifications in terms of obtained units of learning, for the industry of the wood and furniture sector of the participating countries. These comparative analyses will contribute to bring together everything that today is coincidental in the participating countries as well as the distinctions that exist between them, to thereby promote the mobility of workers in the European Union and to the development and implementation of the European qualification system in this sector.

## Countries involved

The partnership is constituted by 5 partners from 5 different countries:

### Centro De Formação Profissional Das Indústrias Da Madeira E Mobiliário (Portugal)



CFPIMM is the Vocational Training Centre for the Wood and Furniture Industries. Being the sole institution, with national coverage, responsible for the recognition of qualifications in the wood and furniture sector, has long experience in preparation of training offer for the sector. CFPIMM was created by protocol celebrated between the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training - IEFP, and the Association of Portuguese Wood and Furniture Industries - AIMMP.







## Asociación de Investigación y Desarrollo de las Industrias del Mueble y Afines (Spain)



AIDIMA is a private, non-profit, with legal personality and of national level R&D association. It was set up in 1984, to satisfy wood & furniture sector needs. It's recognized by CICYT (Scientific & Technological Research Centre) as a Research Association & Innovation & Technology Centre, ranked the 20th. The Association has the aim of contributing to increase the competitiveness of the Spanish furniture, wood, packaging and related sector, primarily in those aspects related to innovation, R+D+i, quality, training, information, safety and, generally, management improvement, especially in design, manufacture, marketing and export strengthening.

## Istituto Secondario d'Istruzione Superiore "G. Meroni" (Italy)



Technical and Vocational Institute of the wood-furniture sector for the training of technicians and supervisors with 792 students enrolled. The Institute releases three-year qualifying and five-year diploma.

## Etelä-Savon Koulutus Oy (Etelä-Savon Ammattiopisto)(Finland)



Etelä-Savon Ammattiopisto (South Savo Vocational College) maintained and legislated by South Savo Education Ltd, is a multidisciplinary college with over 8500 students annually. There are nearly 2500 students (youth) in formal institutional vocational training, about 6000 students in adult training and over 750 students in apprenticeship training. The number of teaching and supporting staff is over 500.

The main motivation for this project is to produce a comparative analysis of the key qualifications, existent in the participating countries, in the wood and furniture sector, in order to promote and to facilitate the mobility of wood workers in European Union. This comparative analysis will allow knowing better what are the requirements for the individuals to enter or progress within an occupation in the different countries of this partnership, and what kind of methodologies are used to recognize and to validate the competences that workers possess, and the ones they need to access a certain qualification of the sector.

The interest is to map possible gaps between the same qualifications in different countries, promoting a common language for transparency, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes of the wood workers abroad.



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## Amledo & CO. AB (Sweden)

# Amledo & Co.

Amledo & Co is a private company with clients in the field of VET and social dialog particular in the wood and furniture sector, ref. Mr Henrik Smedmark, manager of training and education at Trä- och Möbelföretagen (TMF). With our team of experienced consultants we deliver high quality consultancy solutions in Human Resource, Research, Marketing and Public Relations with focus on Training and Education in dialog with Social partners, intermediary bodies, enterprises and VET.







## Outcomes and Results

### First difference:

When the project participating countries presented their situation in the area of qualifications, it is noted that in each of them, the methodology used is different:

- In the case of Spain and Portugal, we found that there are two systems: the Vocational & Education Training System under the Ministry of Education, with degrees aimed primarily at young students, who subsequently will be inserted in the labour market or will continue their studies; and the Qualifications System, aimed at unemployed or active workers and skills recognition process. In both countries, there is recognition among the units of competency of both systems.
- However, in the case of Finland and of Sweden, it is different. In these cases, the Qualifications System is obtained directly from Vocational & Education Training System; it has not developed a parallel Qualifications System.
- In the case of Italy, the Ministry is currently in the initial process of defining the Qualifications System.

### Second difference:

It was decided to select that training or qualifications to collect those activities that substantially are developed in each of the participating countries, making an abstraction to what would be considered as existing professional profiles in all countries:

- Cabinet maker
- Joiner
- Finisher

At the time of starting the comparison between the learning objectives of each of these figures, which will be compared between the participating countries, another problem that has emerged is the educational system, which is different in each country:

- In the case of Spain, the training contents are focused on specific content, there are no training on horizontal issues, as this training is delivered in the mandatory training.
- That is not the case in the rest of the participating countries, where the training involves a specific part related to the corresponding productive sector and elsewhere horizontal language training, computer science, mathematics, etc.

Given this difficulty, it was decided:

- In the case of countries that have developed a Qualifications System, Spain and Portugal, Learning Outcomes from the Qualifications System will be used for the analysis.
- In those countries where there is no a Qualifications System, learning outcomes from the Vocational & Education Training System will be used for the analysis.

### Third difference:

For those countries that have not developed a specific Qualifications System, studies carried out are aimed at training Joiners (due to the massive timber construction and the forestry sector) and or Cabinet Makers (due to the furniture making) as in Sweden, or only Joiners (due to the massive construction in wood the forestry sector) as in Finland, so it is difficult to obtain some common conclusions for all project Partners. However, the conclusions are that:

- Among the Qualifications related to the profile of Cabinet Maker, there is much similarity between all participating countries.
- Among the Qualifications related to the profile of Finisher, there is only similarity between Spain and Portugal, being practically the same.
- Where there are more differences with the qualifications is regarding the profile of Joiner, due to the characteristics of the countries. In Finland and Sweden, it is the most popular one, due to the tradition of timber construction, which is not the same situation in other countries such as Spain and Italy.





## Recommendations

The main result of the project is the recommendation to establish an additional European vocational educational qualification for a European joiner, which is alike in all EU countries. The recommendation is based on the problems detected by the partnership and the increasing need for smoother mobility among joiners in the wood and furniture industry. It will be a professional qualification that gathers relevant competences comprising of joiner, installer of wood and carpentry, and these professions are in high demand by small, medium and large wood related business. By creating a Euro Joiner profile and certificate, wood workers can have their competences recognized in all European Union member states. A transnational professional recognition streamlines the recruitment process that facilitates companies' ability to compete in the global market place and give joiners a stronger position in the European Union labour market.

