

## **EUExcert Association of Portugal discuss National qualifications standards and certification of competencies**

In March 30<sup>th</sup> the National node of EUExcert Association of Portugal met in Coimbra to discuss the National qualifications standards and certification of competencies of the workers involved in manufacture of commercial explosives and fireworks in Portugal. In order to establish a comparison with UK occupational standards related to explosives processing were collected the following UK occupational standards:

- Monitor and control explosives processing
- Carry out small scale processing for explosive substances and or articles
- Design the scale-up process for explosive substances and/or articles
- Prepare explosives process materials
- Solve explosives process problems
- Supervise explosives processing
- Supervise the preparation of the explosives processing operation
- Supervise the shutdown of explosives processing.

The Portuguese legislation regulated to manufacturing, storage, trade and use of explosives and fireworks was analysed in the point of view of the qualifications and certification of competencies of the employees involved with manufacturing. The Portuguese Standard Occupational Classification published in 2010 June 1<sup>st</sup> was explored to identify jobs related to explosive or fireworks manufacturing. The National Catalogue of Qualifications (NCQ) was also examined to identify education and training areas related with explosives. The catalogue has 39 areas established and describes 255 qualifications framed in a range between level 1 and level 8 (Figure 1). There is no education and training area related with explosives in the NCQ and only a job related to fireworks manufacturing was identified in the Portuguese Standard Occupational Classification. The Portuguese legislation applied to explosives and fireworks factories required a Technical Responsible (TR). This TR needs to:

- Supervise explosives/fireworks processing confirming that the process is running within the process parameters
- Comply with health and safety, environmental and other relevant regulations, legislation and guidelines
- Confirm that the correct operating instructions have been issued
- Confirm that all the equipment remains in a safe and functional condition
- Conduct the disposal of explosives end-of-life or explosives wastes.

The qualifications required for the TR of an explosive manufacture are higher than its required for a fireworks manufacture.

The Portuguese Catalogue of Qualifications describes for each job the context and the main activities to do. The referential training recommended to each job is organised according scientific, technological and practical training. And the recognition, validation and certification of competencies of workers are referred to these referential training.

Next meetings of the National node of EUExcert Association of Portugal will be dedicated to survey the different jobs of the employees in the explosives and fireworks factories and to assess the tasks and competencies recommended for each job.

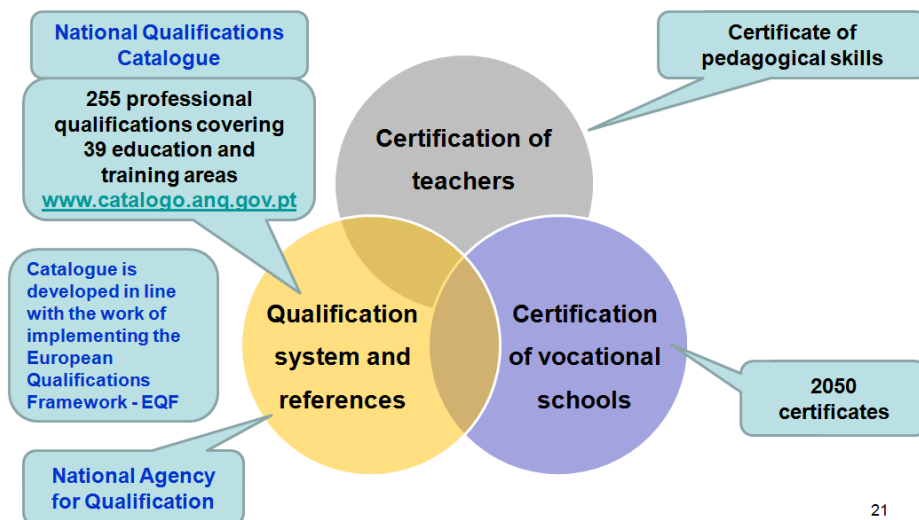


Figure 1. Portuguese qualification and certification system.



The **2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Explosive Education and Certification of Skills** will be held at Hotel Açores Lisboa, in Lisbon, Portugal, **21<sup>st</sup> September 2011** ([www.euexcert.org](http://www.euexcert.org)). The conference addresses all people occupied and active in the sector of explosives (explosives, propellants and pyrotechnics) from Governmental Agencies, Education Institutions, Employers and Employees Societies, Public and Private Companies in Military and Civil areas. The main topics are:

- Education and vocational training in explosives sector
- Legislation on qualifications and certification competencies in explosives sector
- Evaluation and assessment of competence development
- Health & Safety programs in explosives sector
- Applications of information and communication technologies in education and training
- Understanding stakeholders' roles in explosives sector.

Additional topics are:

- Risk assessment in explosives industry
- Accident investigation in explosives industry
- Life-cycle of munitions and explosives and recovery.

This conference is very convenient for all are planning to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> EFEE Conference on Explosives and Blasting that will be held in hotel Corinthia in Lisbon from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September ([www.efee.eu](http://www.efee.eu)). This conference has in parallel an exhibition of materials, technologies and software used in blasting.