



# European recognition of diplomas

## Yuverta Lifelong Learning works internationally with European Qualifications Framework

**What is your diploma worth abroad? This is not always clear, because each country has its own educational structure with its own curriculum, and the name of the qualification is also different. What is vocational school level 4 worth in Spain? Or in Finland? How do you compare content knowledge and levels? A European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has been defined for this purpose. Yuverta Lifelong learning works together with training centres and commercial parties inside and outside the Netherlands to make this framework more widely known.**

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On every diploma there is a stamp of which people often do not know what it means. It is an indication of the level your degree has within the EQF. In the context of the increasing internationalisation of education, the EQF is a useful tool to determine how your level is qualified in other countries and whether your chosen further education or training is appropriate in terms of level. In 2021, Yuverta initiated a project to get a better picture of the EQF to make lifelong development easier, also at European level. This project is called European Platform for Urban Greening (EPLUG). Sijske Ouderkerken is manager of the Green Hotspot Houten, part of Yuverta, and regional captain of EPLUG.

Ouderkerken: 'Urban greening is an increasingly important topic, with many issues to be faced, while the knowledge to solve certain situations is also lacking. As Yuverta, we thought it

would be great if we shared that knowledge with the business community. Not just from the Netherlands; there is also a lot of knowledge abroad that is now difficult to share. That is why we submitted a well-founded application to Erasmus+. From our 100 points, 92 were awarded; that means EPLUG is an Erasmus+ project. We do not do this on our own. Besides the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Spain, the Czech Republic and Romania are involved, and each region participates in the project with an educational organisation and a partner from the business world. This helps us to look at a topic from different angles, not just from the educational perspective. For the Netherlands, the partners are Koninklijke Ginkel Groep and Katapult. The latter is good at public-private partnerships, also between countries. In addition, the European Landscape Contractors Association (ELCA) is involved.'



International Urban Greening Week

According to Ouderkerken, biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being due to greenery are the themes the project focuses on. 'At the same time, where possible, we also involve employees, employers, students, pupils and lateral entrants in this project. In the Netherlands, we have created master classes for this purpose, for example on climate adaptation.'

### Exchange of people and knowledge

The idea behind the EPLUG platform is not only to exchange knowledge, but also people. For example, Dutch colleagues regularly go to Finland to learn more about soil. 'This platform makes that easier, because everyone participating has something to do with urban greening.' The EPLUG project runs for four years, two and a half of which have now passed. Several goals and desired outcomes have been formulated.

### The goals are:

- Identifying current needs in the field of urban greening.
- Creating a training and experience centre, to address learning needs when it comes to ecosystem knowledge and skills, especially in vertical green landscaping.
- Co-creating a relevant, innovative and attractive curriculum on biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being in the urban green environment.



Sijske Ouderkerken is regional captain of the European Platform for Urban Greening

- Strengthening the green education column.
- Translating scientific results into practical tools for green professionals across Europe.
- Improving the relevance and image of VET programmes (the European name for vocational education) in the field of urban green landscape architecture.

### The intended outcomes are:

- Six centres of vocational excellence, all connected through one platform.
- A training offer for continuous professional development for teachers in secondary vocational education.
- Innovative curricula for students and staff on urban greening.
- Development of an experience centre around vertical greenery.
- Virtual and blended learning methods for students and staff.

Ouderkerken continues: 'Because we now know each other, it is relatively easy to develop great things. For instance, a podcast on biodiversity is being recorded and in April, 17 European students were in the Netherlands. In the same period, a group of students in Finland worked together on a case study. They learn a huge amount from an international experience,

even if it lasts a bit shorter. Our dream is that pupils, students, lateral entrants, teachers and so on will soon be able to choose where to do their in-depth training, for example in Finland to learn more about soil life. This requires the European Qualifications Framework. That has eight differing levels: primary education, first-level secondary education, partial secondary or secondary education, completed secondary education, vocational post-secondary education, bachelor, master and doctorate.' The top Urban Green Development course offered by Yuverta LLO in master classes can be classified at level 4/5. It is now also partly offered in English, making the course accessible to international participants.

EPLUG runs for another year and a half. During this time, Ouderkerken hopes to achieve with the platform that Yuverta courses at levels 2, 3 and 4 have learning-based outcomes, so that it is clear what a person should know and be able to do in the field of urban greening after completing the course. 'This also gives room for the flexibilisation of education we are facing. We were already doing this, but now we are taking it up with our business partners, including European ones. We expect to have the curricula for levels 3 and 4 ready in September. The aim is to eventually be able to implement this abroad as well.'

The information above is just a small part of everything EPLUG is involved in. More info can be found at [www.platformurbangreening.eu](http://www.platformurbangreening.eu).



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