

Lifelong learning in Europe: Implications for NQF and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Ernesto Villalba

- 1. What is the added value of validation in the context of lifelong learning?**
- 2. What is validation of non-formal and informal learning in a lifelong learning perspective?**
- 3. How is Europe creating a common approach for validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe?**
- 4. What are the validation mechanism and who validates?**
- 5. Concluding reflections**

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Always learning

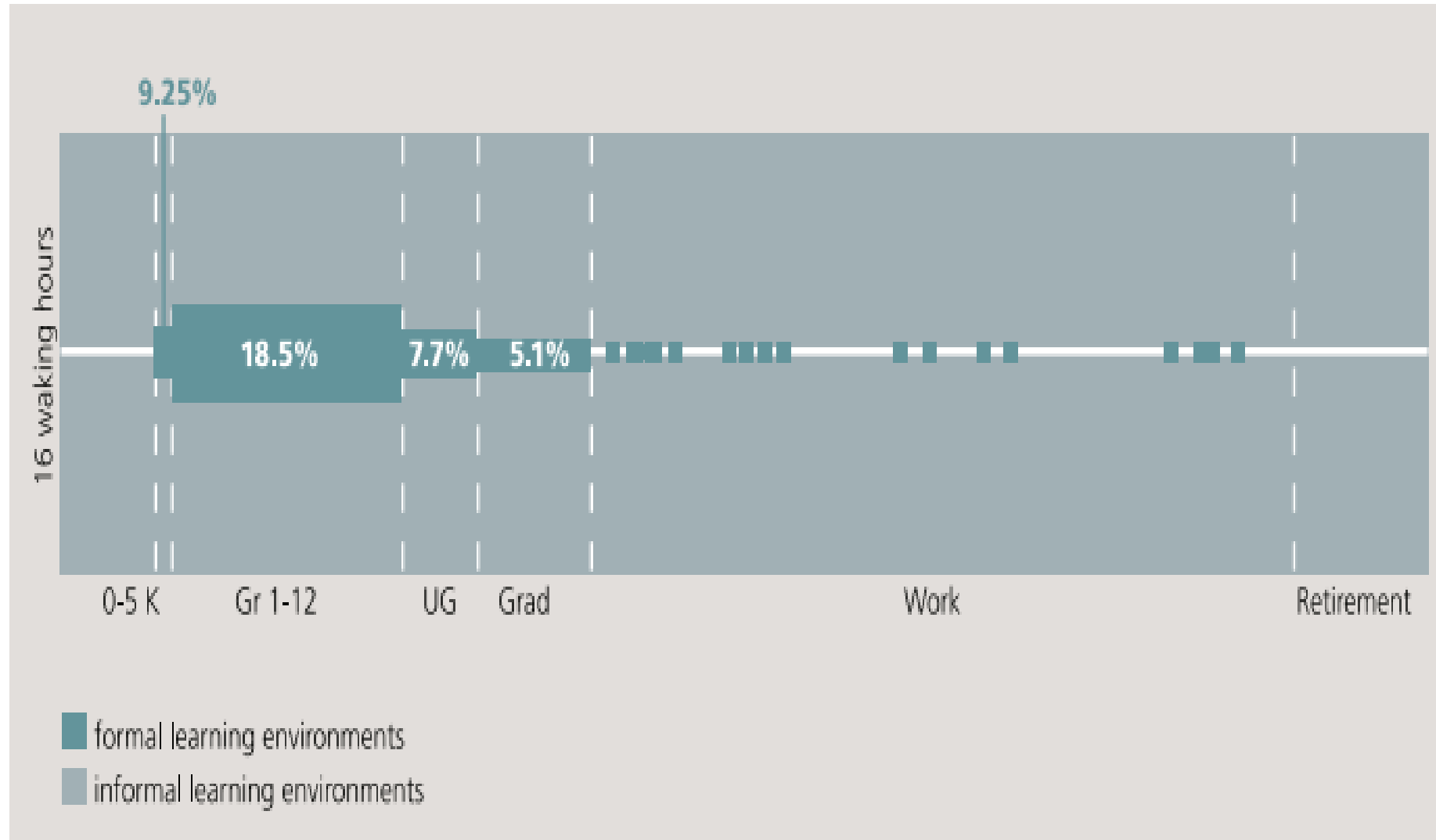
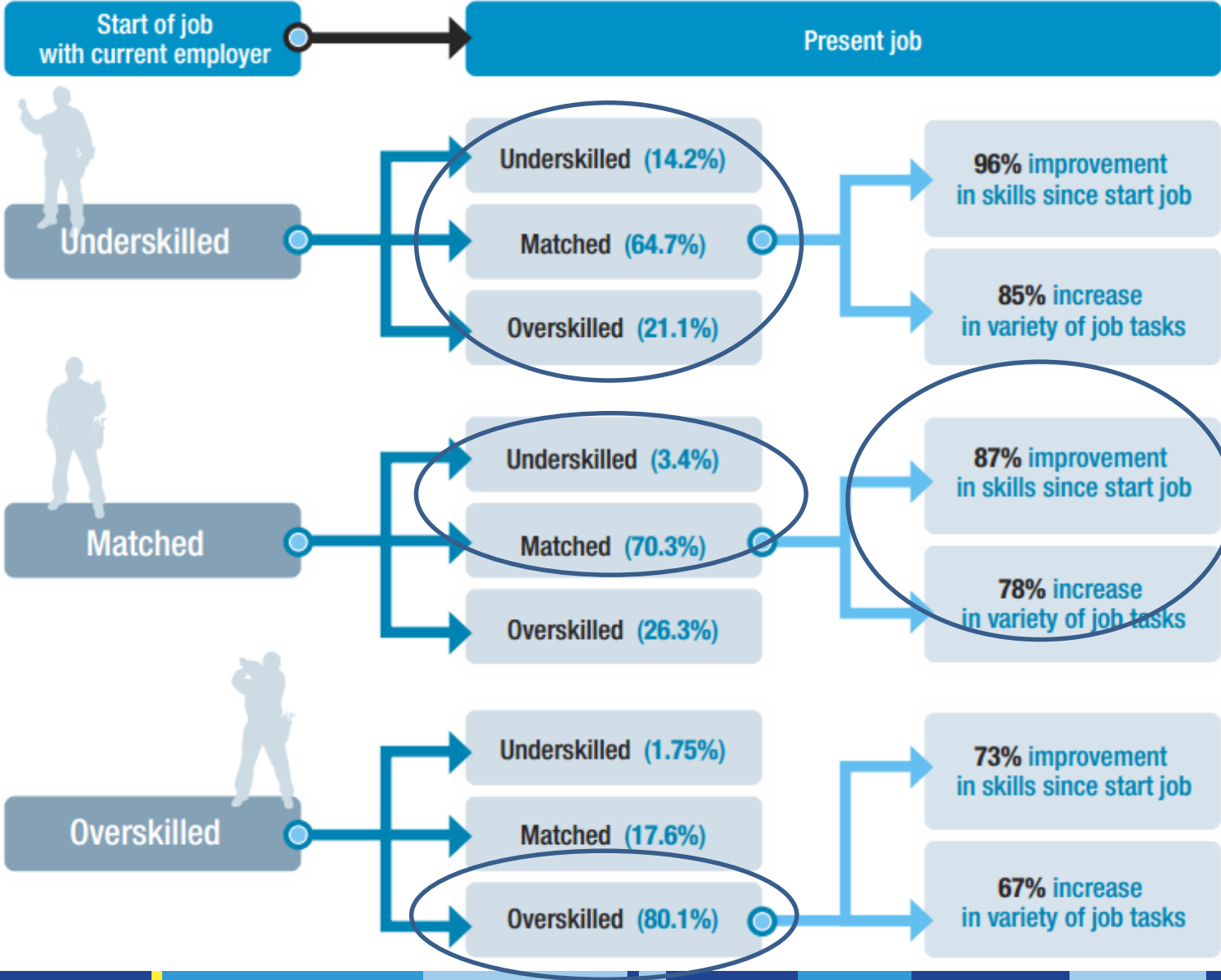


Figure 1. Estimated time spent in formal and informal learning environments
(LIFE Center: Stevens, R. Bransford, J. & Stevens, A., 2005)^a

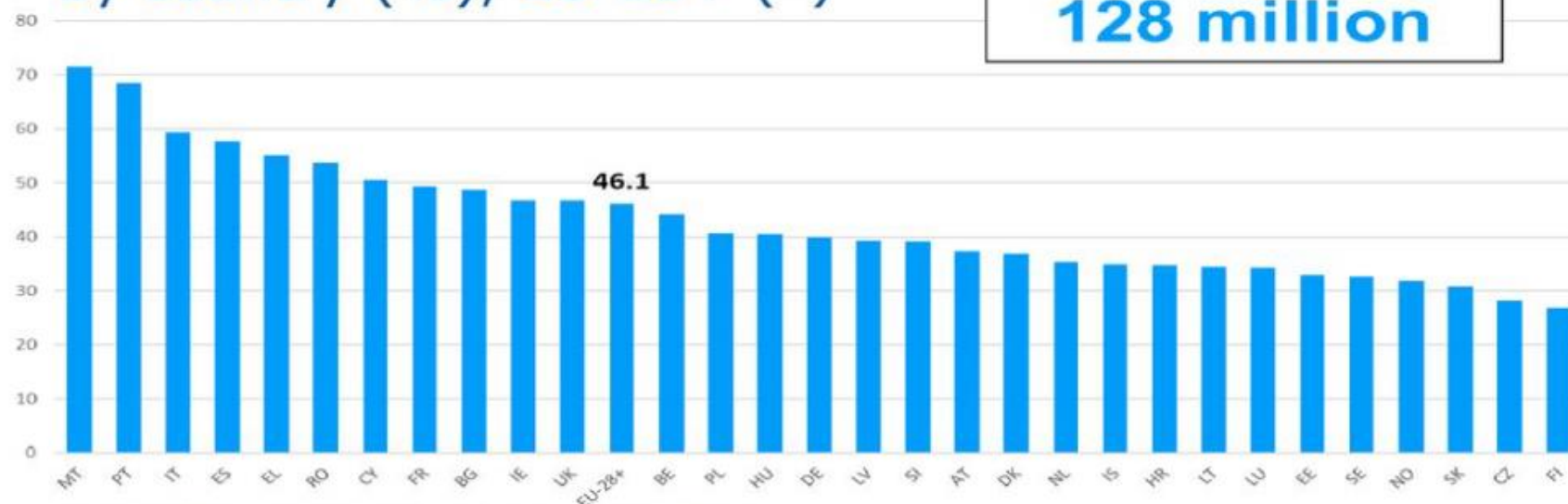
Skills matching – tapping into talents pools



Source: Cedefop ESJ survey

Upskilling and reskilling

Estimated adult population with potential for upskilling by country (%), EU-28+ (*)



(*) EU-28+ = EU-28 plus Iceland and Norway.

Source: Cedefop calculation based on LFS 2016, CSIS 2015, OECD PIAAC 2012, 2015.



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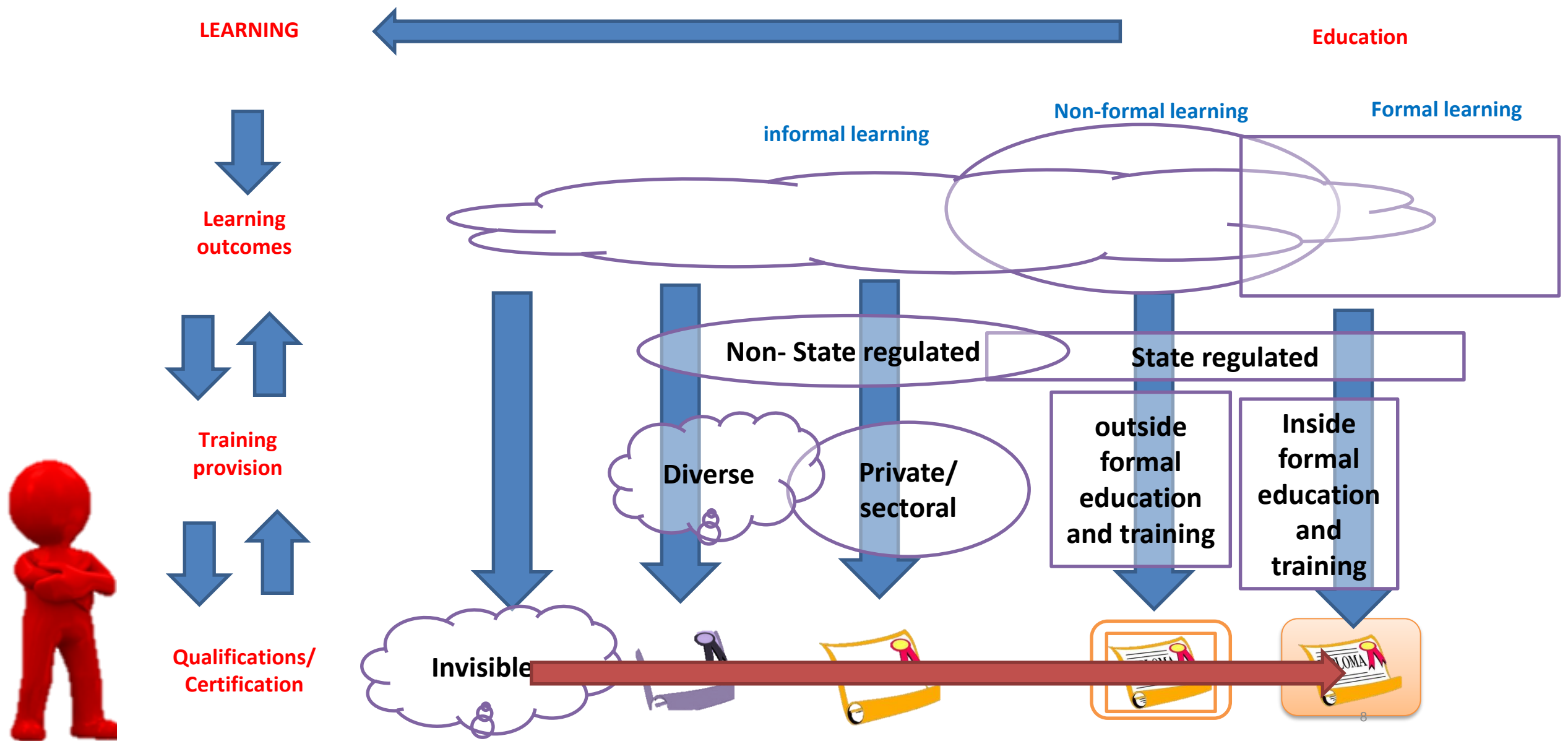
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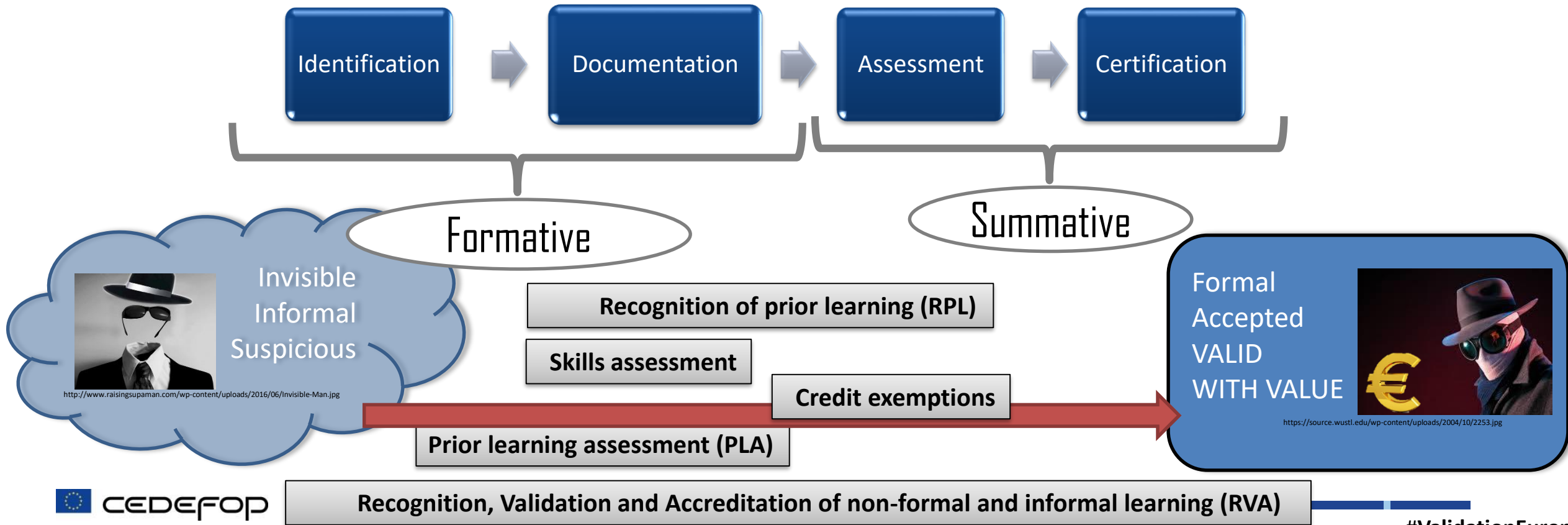
Outside FORMAL education?



VALIDATION and its objectives

of non-formal and informal learning

Validation means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard



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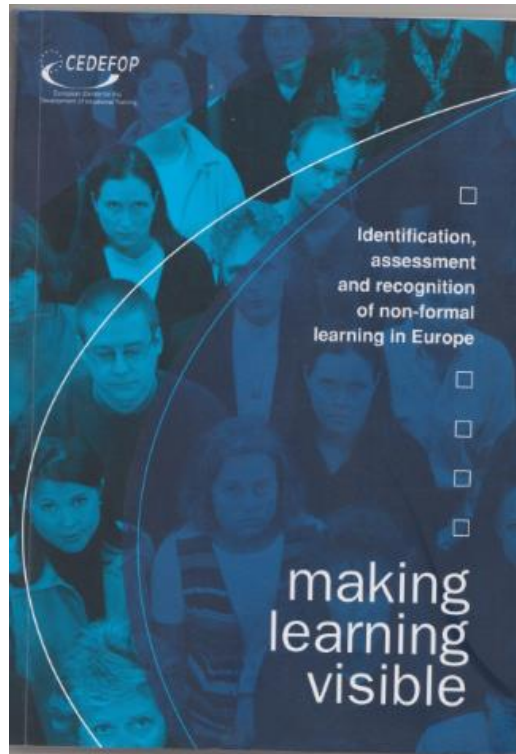
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Cedefop working on validation for more than 20 years

In **2000** Cedefop published the seminal work: *Making learning visible*



2019 publishing the last inventory

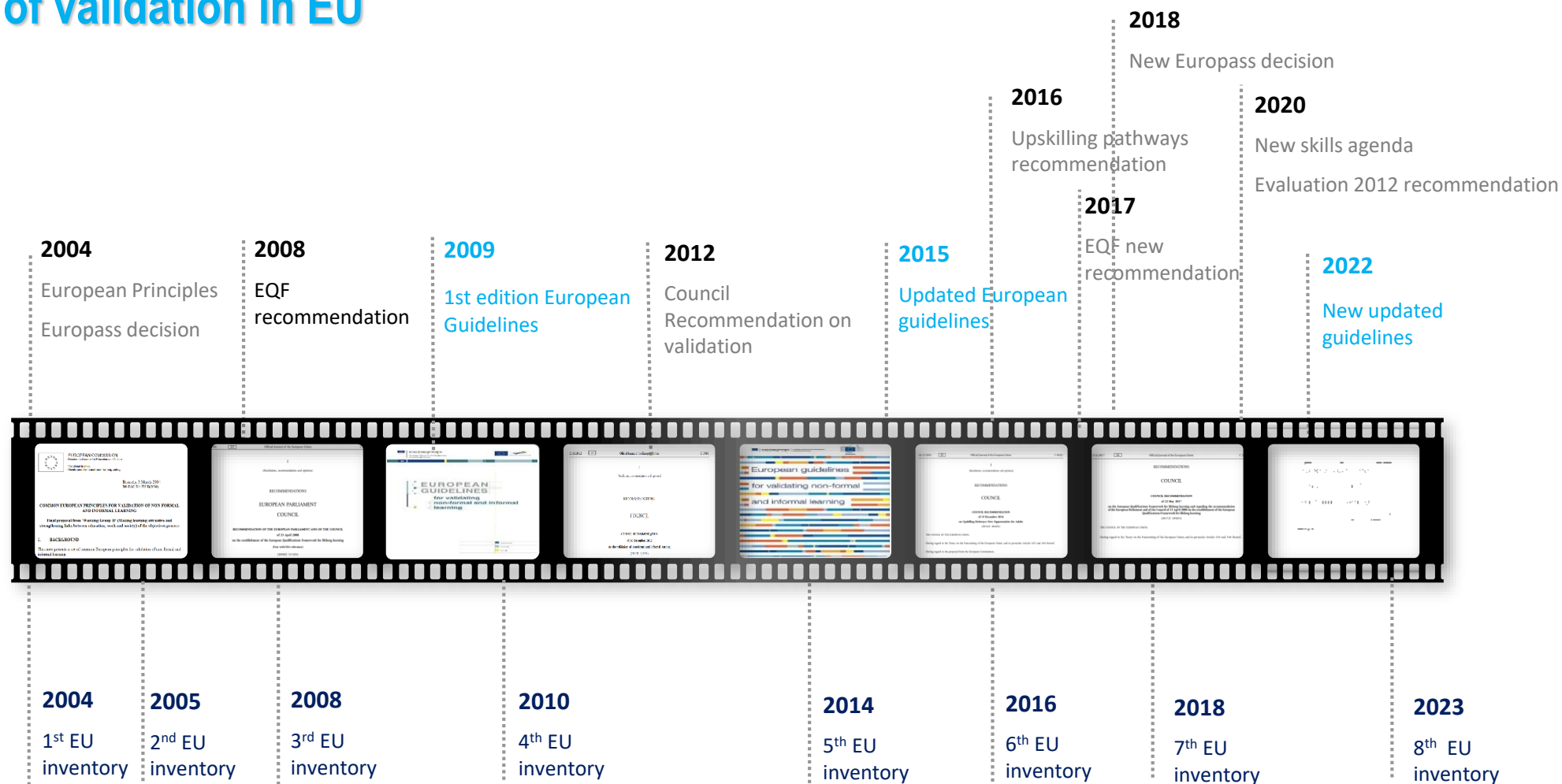


www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/themes/qualifications-credentials>



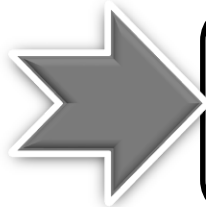
Storyline of validation in EU



Council recommendation 2012: Member States and the Commission

Arrangements in place by 2018

European Qualifications Framework advisory group
given the overall control



The Commission should provide support for the
implementation

by using the expertise of Union agencies, in particular **Cedefop**, and by reporting on the situation with regard to the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the annual report on the development of National Qualification Frameworks.

Update Guidelines and Inventory

**SWD – Evaluation of the
Recommendation 2020**

European Guidelines 2009

1. The centrality of the individual
2. Objectives of validation (4 phases)
3. Information, guidance and counseling
4. Stakeholder coordination
5. Links to national qualification frameworks
6. Standards and learning outcomes
7. Quality assurance
8. Professional practitioners
9. Validation in context
10. Validation tools



European Guidelines 2009

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→ Reviewed in 2015



**They work together with the
EUROPEAN INVENTORY**

1. The centrality of the individual

2. Objectives of learning
3. Learning outcomes
4. Learning environments
5. Links to national qualification frameworks
6. Standards and learning outcomes
7. Quality assurance
8. Validation of non-formal and informal learning
9. Validation of learning
10. Validation tools

1

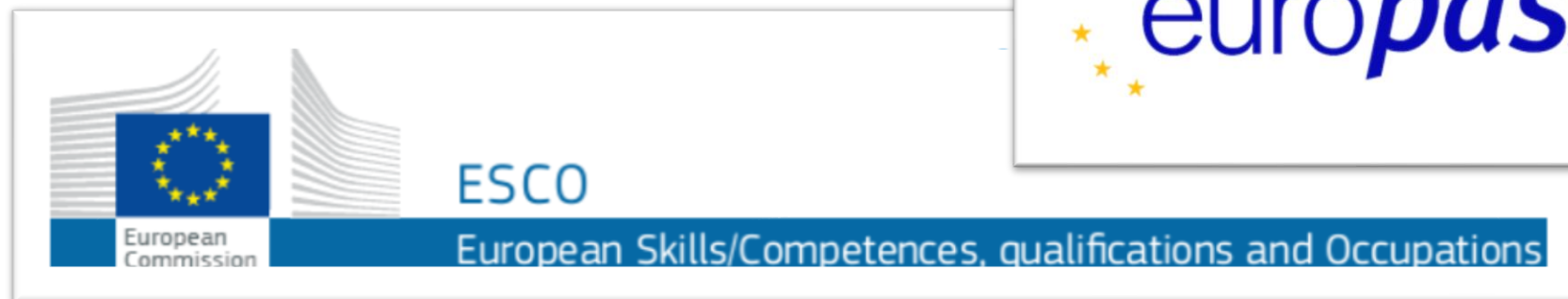
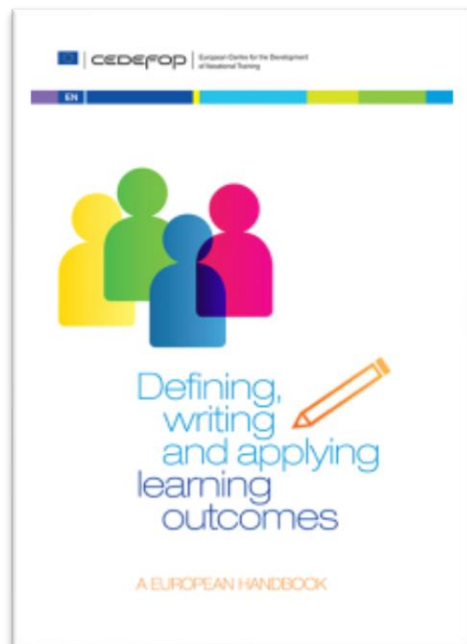
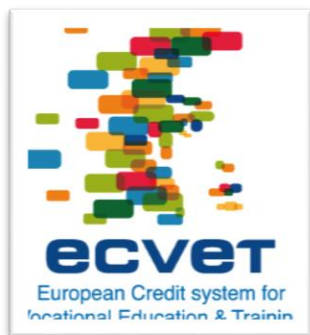
All learning, irrespective of where and when it takes place, is valuable for the individual and for society.

2

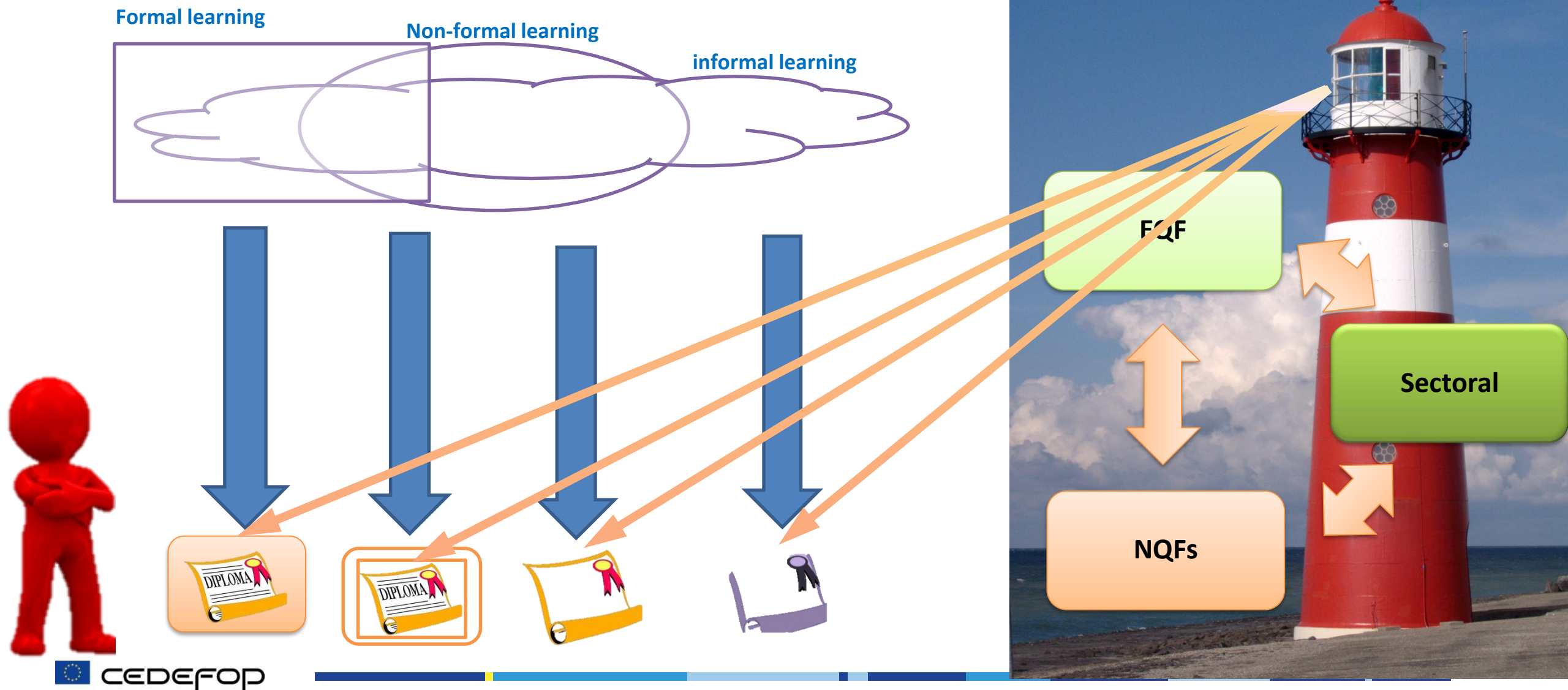
Formal education needs to be complemented by validation of non-formal and informal learning.

**They work together with the
EUROPEAN INVENTORY**

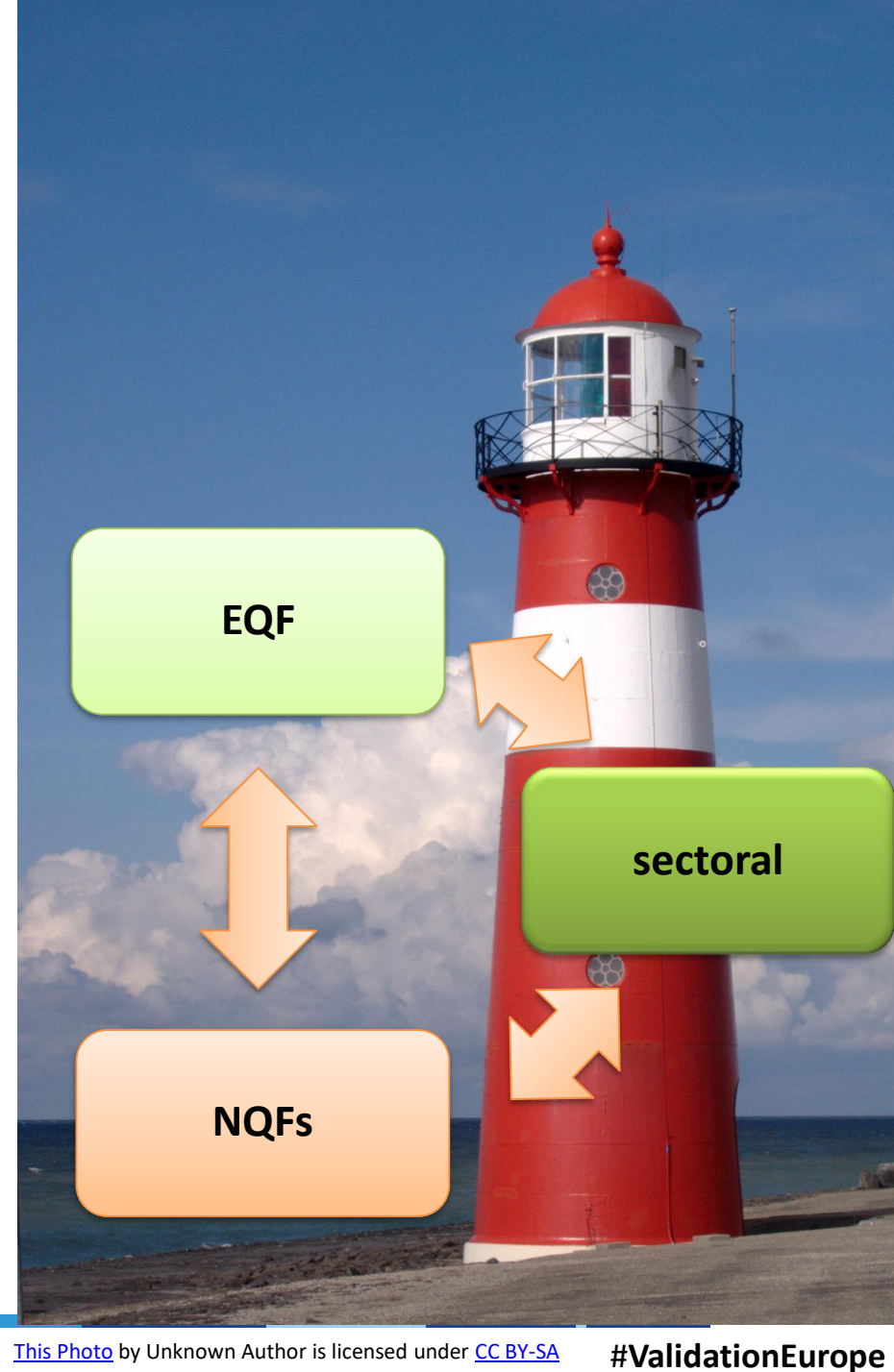
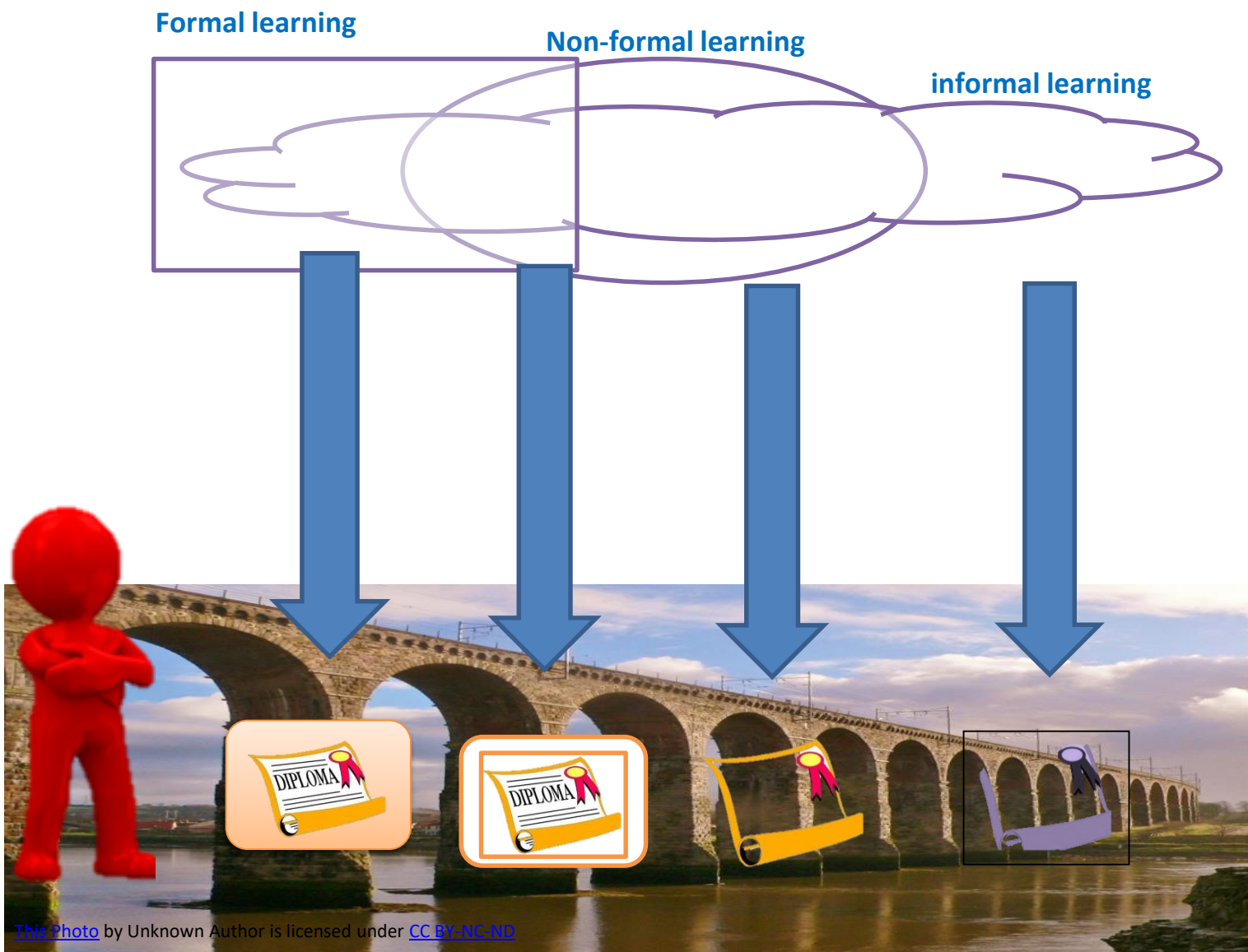
European transparency tools



5. National qualification systems and frameworks



5. National qualification systems and frameworks



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CEDEFOP

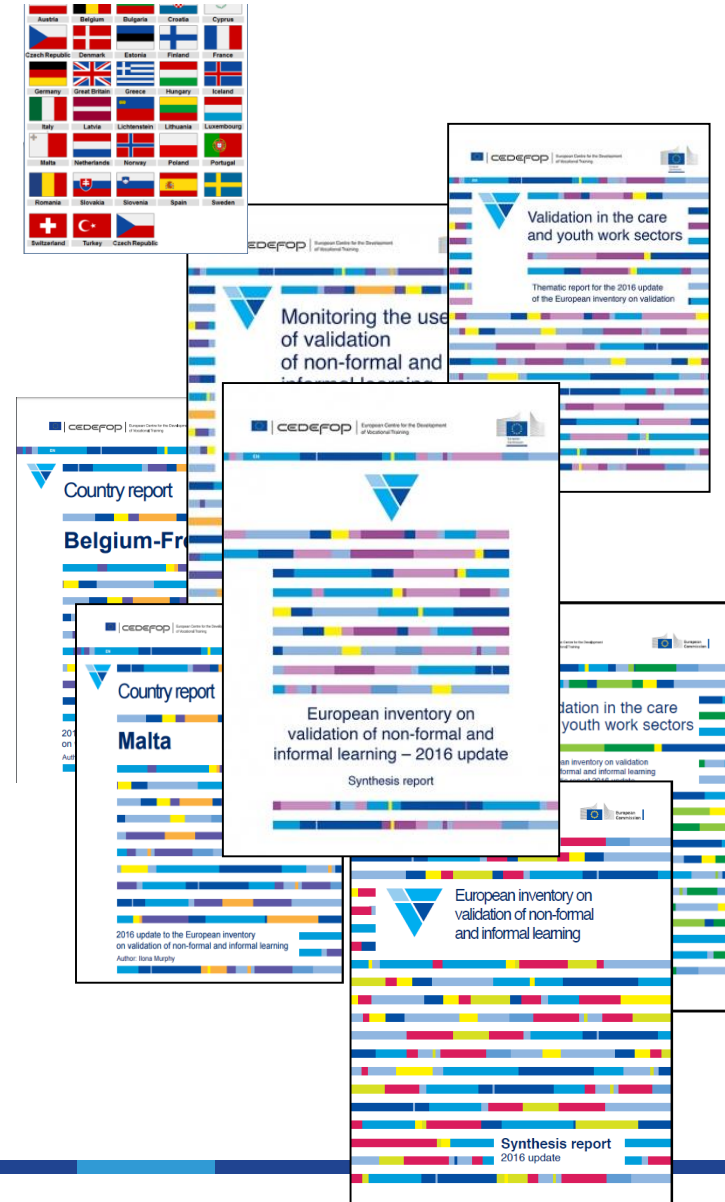
European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training



A rich source of information

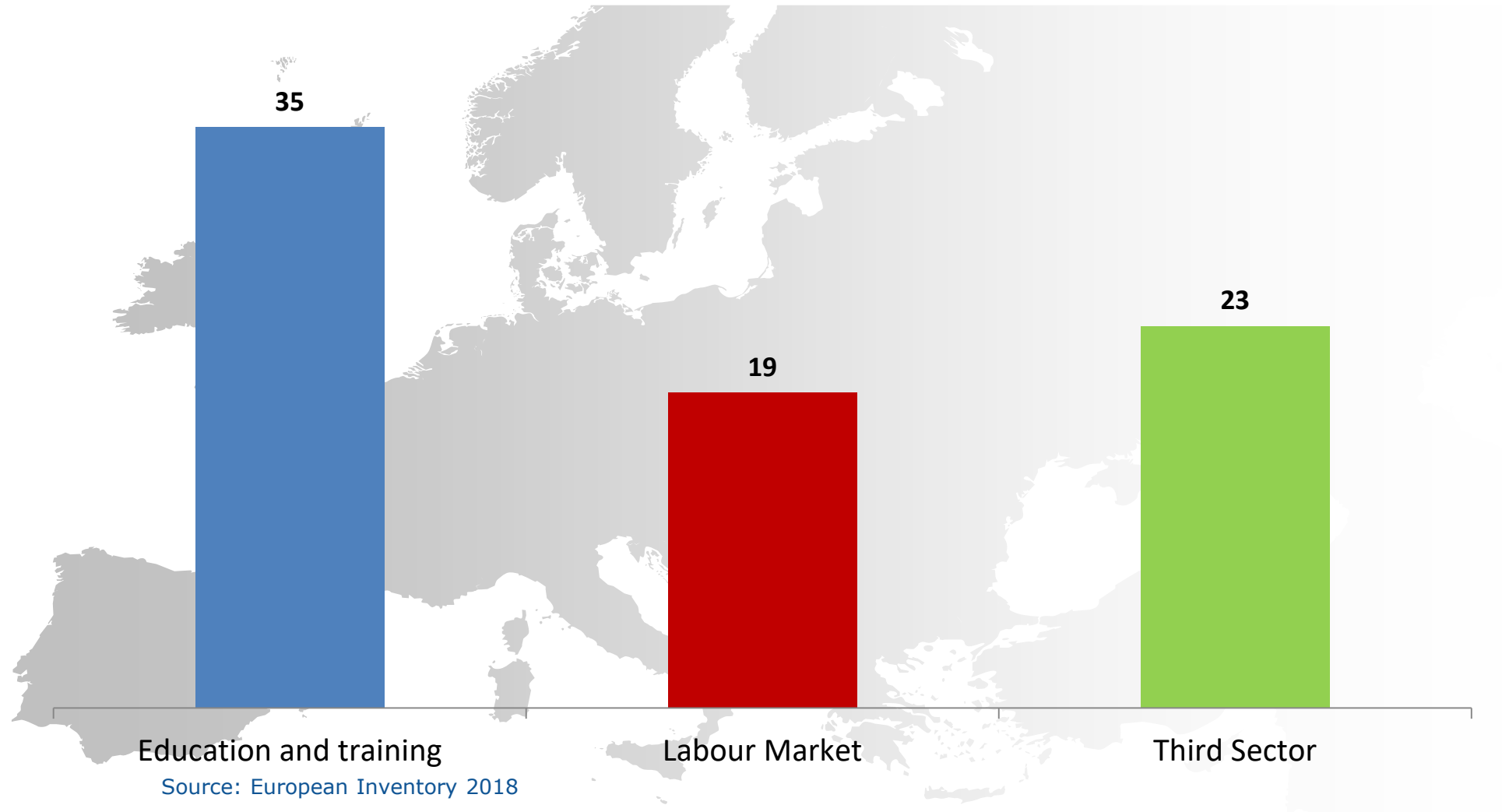
- 39 country reports (covering 36 countries)
- Providing detailed information by sector
 - ✓ Sub-sector of education
 - General Education
 - IVET
 - CVET
 - Higher education
 - Adult education
 - ✓ Labour market
 - ✓ Third sector
- Thematic studies
- International country cases
- A synthesis of main findings

www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation/inventory



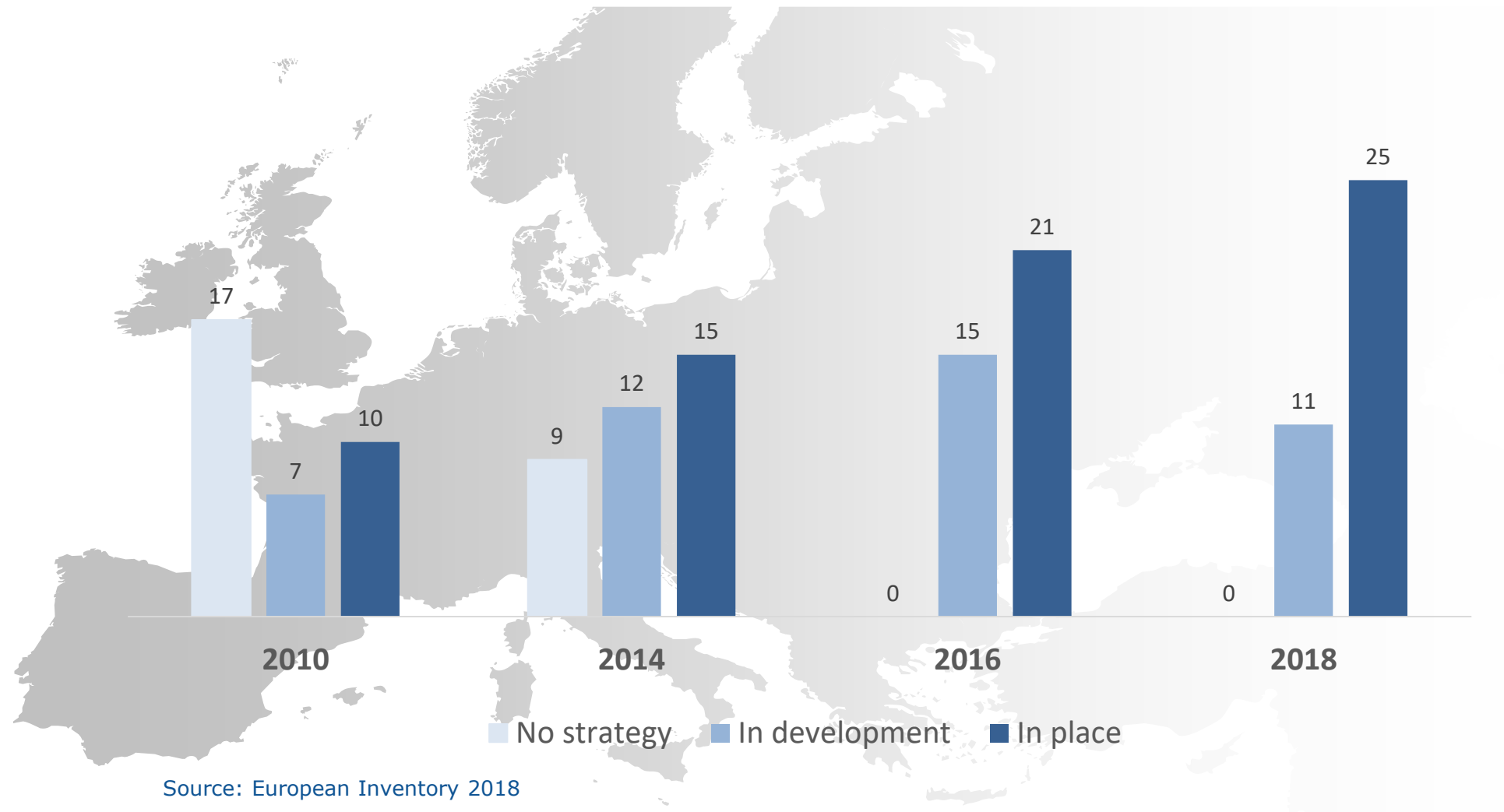
Validation in Europe

Number of countries with validation arrangements



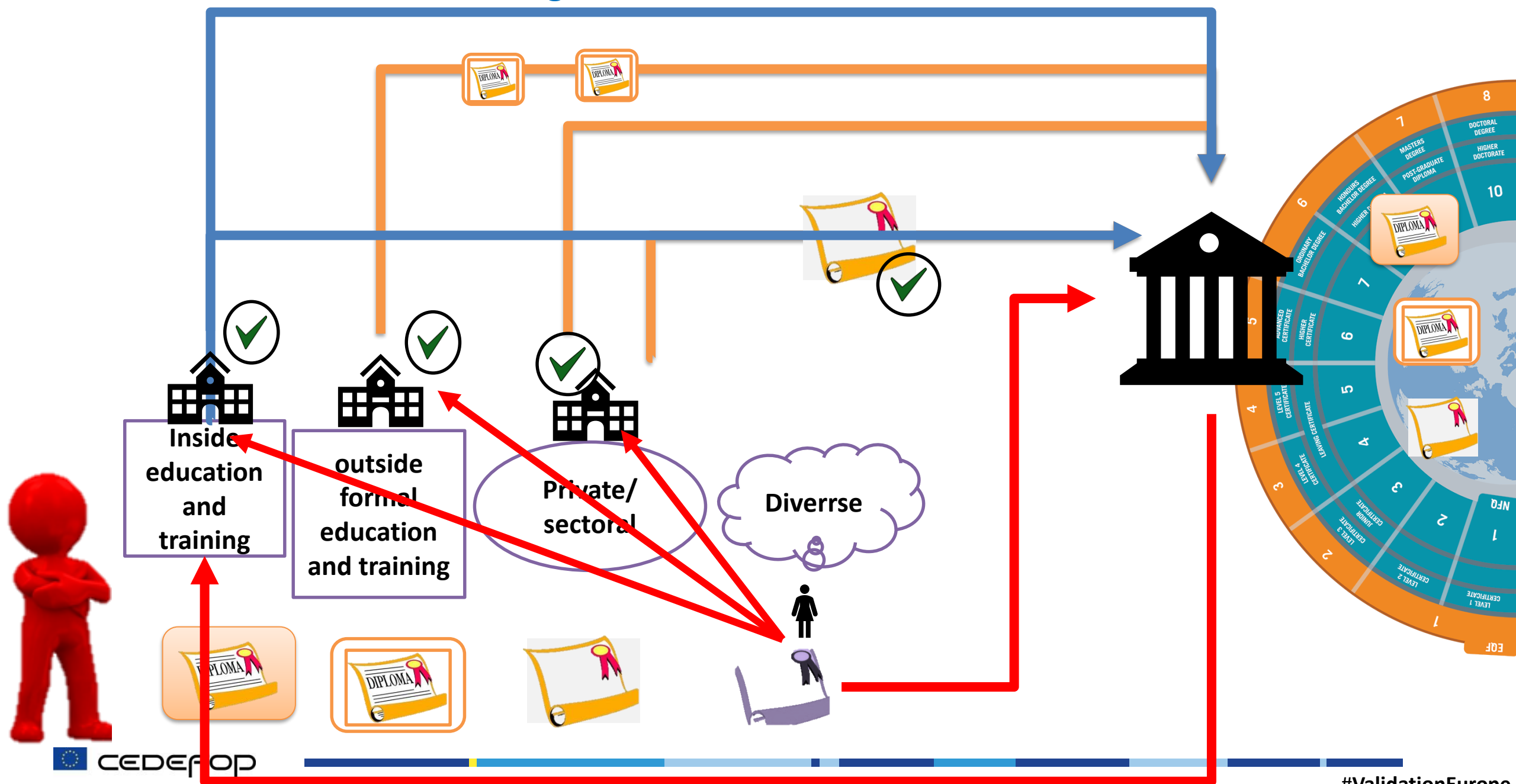
Validation strategies

Number of countries with validation strategies



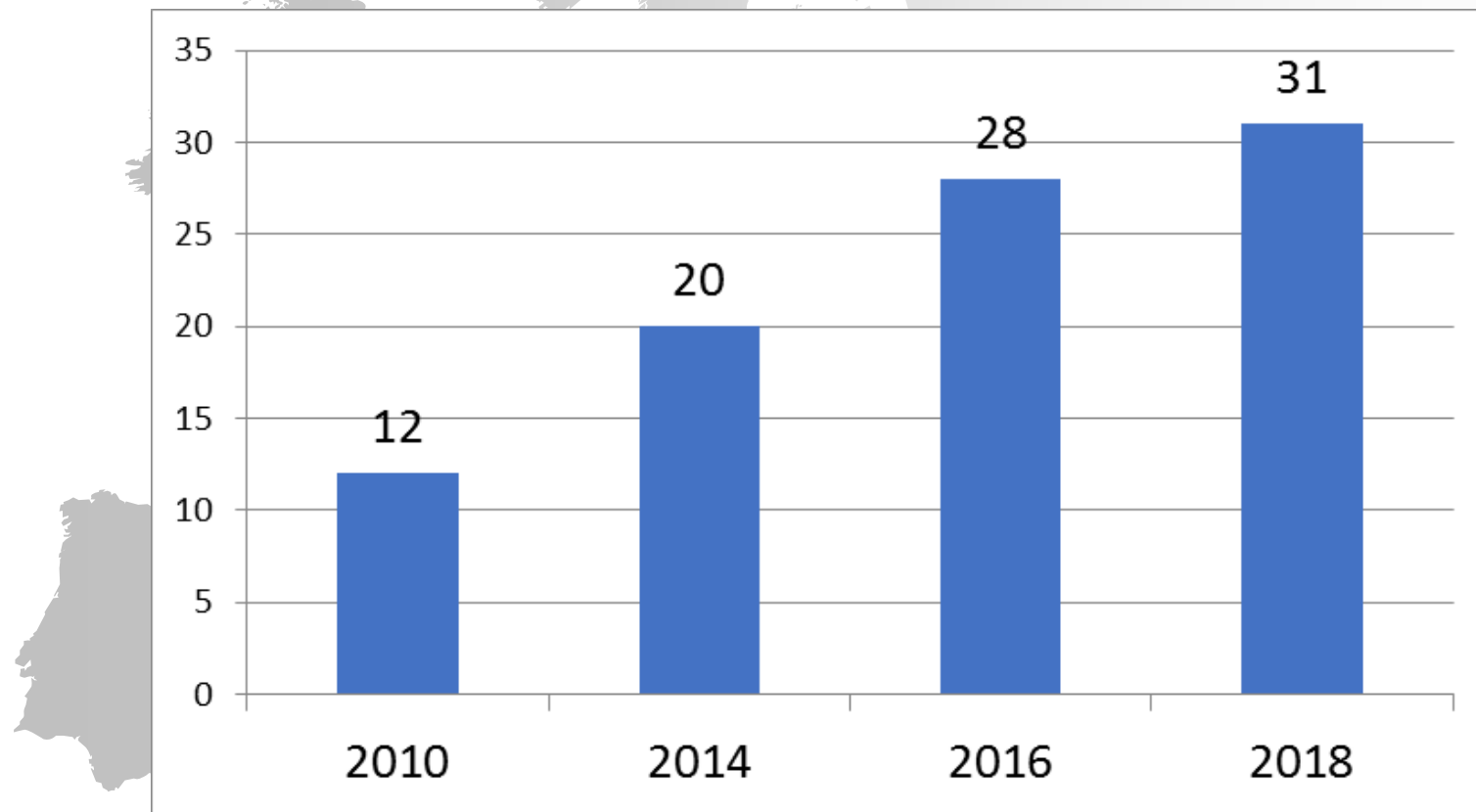
Source: European Inventory 2018

Inclusion of other form of learning into the NQFs?



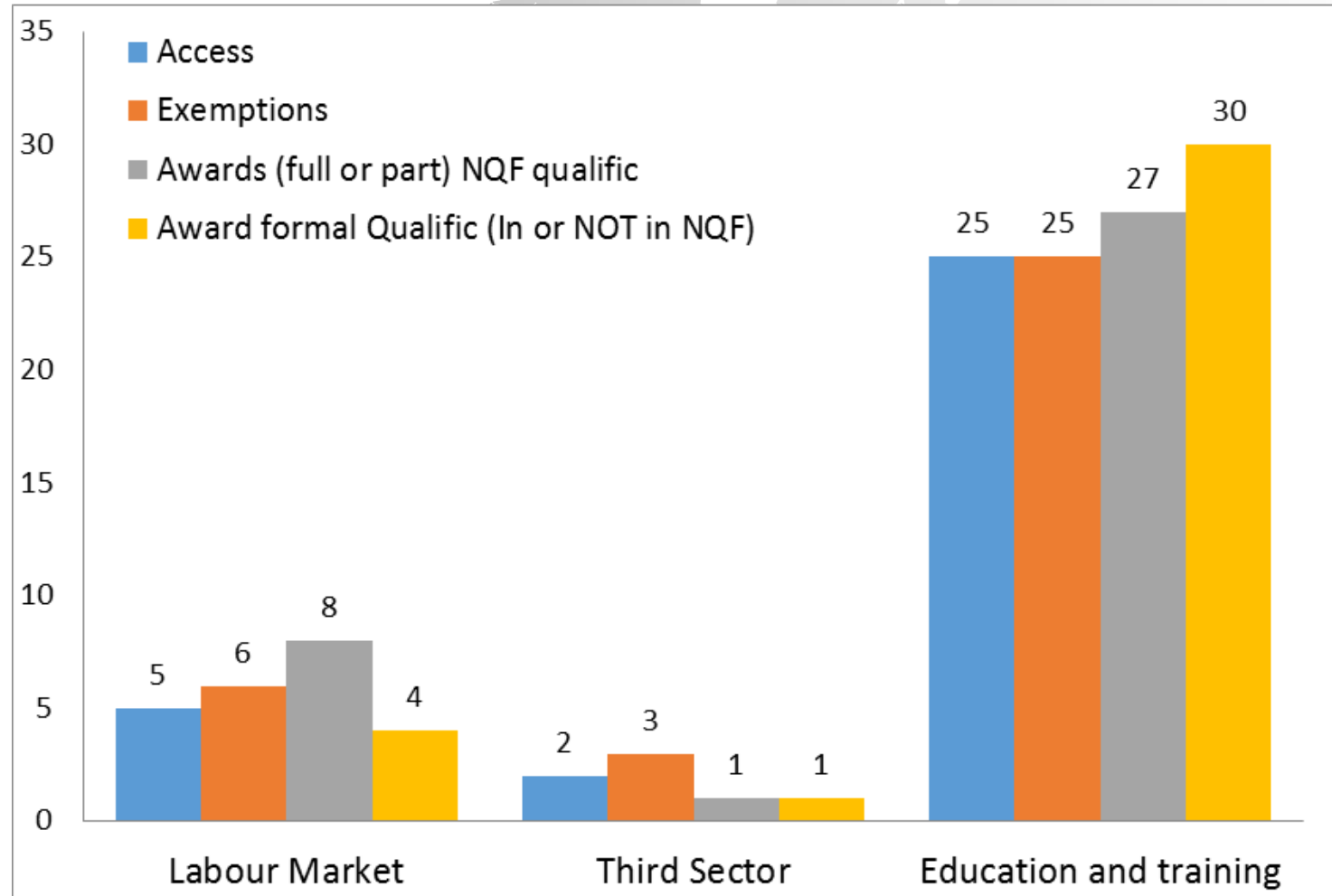
Linking Validation to NQFs

Number of countries in which it is possible to access/ acquire a NQF qualification through validation



Source: 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

Linking Validation to NQFs



Source: 2018 European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

Towards comprehensive frameworks



Most design as **comprehensive** frameworks

The **coverage of NQFs** is growing:

- General education qualifications included in Germany
- Regulated further VET included in a number of countries, new professional awards included in Ireland
- Regional qualifications in Italy (4.000 +) now included in the registry of regional qualifications in Italy

Opening up towards qualifications awarded
outside formal education and training
systems



Inclusive and comprehensive NQFs – challenges

Qualifications are **currencies** and have a value only if they are trusted – how do we protect and strengthen **trust, quality and relevance** while opening up NQFs?



Qualifications from formal system and those awarded outside the formal system may have different **purposes** or differ in **format** and **content**



→ what are **criteria** for inclusion or exclusion?

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Challenges in developing comprehensive NQFs

1

System level

2

Procedures and actors

3

Criteria for inclusion

1

System level

How do we define the system?

- How do we assure the **coherence** of the system?
- **Who** determines the **levelling** and assures quality?
- **Similar** or **separate** than the formal qualifications (or automatic)
- Procedures for
 - Approval of the **awarding** body
 - Inclusion of the **qualification**
 - **Validation**
- **Relationship** between qualifications clear?
- What is the **value** of the qualifications if too many are in?
- How do the **final users** navigate if too many qualifications?

2

Procedures and actors

How do we do it? Who?

- What **awarding body**?
 - Legal status (training provider, NGOs, employers)
 - Permanence/renewal/update
 - Expertise/ personnel
 - External quality assure?
 - Internal quality assurance
 - Expected vs. actual learning outcomes?
- Who **accredits**? (centralised, decentralised)
- **Ownership** of the qualification (public, private)
- **Coherence** of qualifications: links to existing qualifications; how similar/different
- **Costs** for inclusion
- **Legal basis**
- **Stakeholder involvement**

3

Criteria for inclusion

What makes a qualification NQF material?

- **Learning outcomes** precondition
- Which are the requirements to the **learning outcomes**?
 - Format
 - Level of detail
- In relation to **what standards**? Should qualifications explicitly link to occupations and the labour market?
- Should qualifications be of a **minimum size** (workload)?
- Should qualifications be possible to acquire through **validation**?

Some final reflections



How do we assure the **coherence** of the system?



How to make sure all **stakeholders** involved?



Do we have the adequate **standards**?



Do we have adequate **tools**?



Are we providing adequate **resources** and training?

THANK YOU!



@Cedefop_EU

#ValidationEurope

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/validation>



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