Skills Alliance
for Ukraine

Recognition of Professional Vocational Qualifications of Ukrainian Refugees: EU Framework and Practices in Germany, Czechia and Ukraine

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Disclaimer

The analysis, results and recommendations in this report represent the opinion of the author(s) and are not necessarily representative of the position of the Skills Alliance Secretariat, hosted by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Abbreviations

BBiG	*Berufsbildungsgesetz* Vocational Training Act
BIBB	*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
BMZ	*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BQFG	*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen* Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act
BVaDig	*Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz* Vocational Training Validation and Digitisation Act
CA	Chamber of Agriculture
CC	Cahmber of Crafts
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CRA	Competent Recognition Authorities
DHKT	*Deutscher Handwerkskammertag* German National Chamber of Skilled Crafts
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
HWO	*Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks* Crafts Code
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IHK FOSA	IHK FOreign Skills Approval
IW	*Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft* German Economic Institute
NQA	National Qualifications Authority Ukraine
NQF	National Qualifications Framework Ukraine
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OZG	*Gesetz zur Verbesserung des Onlinezugangs zu Verwaltungsleistungen* Act to Improve Online Access to Administrative Services
PflBRefG	*Pflegeberufreformgesetz* Act on the Reform of Nursing Professions
PflGB	*Gesetz über die Pflegeberufe* Act on the Nursing Professions
S&TMP	Skills and Talent Mobility Package
URC	Ukraine Recover Conference
VET	Vocational Education and Training
ZDH	*Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks* German Confederation of Skilled Crafts

1. Background

The vocational education and training (VET) system in Ukraine has undertaken extensive reform efforts in the last years making vocational education and training more demand-oriented, gender-responsive and inclusive. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, these reform efforts have continued, but they have been significantly hampered by the precarious security situation, the exodus of vocational training staff, interrupted cooperation with companies and the continuing inadequacy of infrastructure for digital and hybrid learning formats. The poor security situation makes it difficult to hold face-to-face classes in vocational training institutions and to carry out practical learning phases in companies. State funding for education and vocational training has been reduced.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine continue their efforts to advance VET reform, maintain VET programmes, reduce barriers to access and promote the transition from vocational education and training to the labour market. This is also taking place in line with Ukraine's accession negotiations with the EU, which formally began with the first Intergovernmental Conference on 25 June 2024.

The 2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2024) in Berlin on 11-12 June was a continuation of an annual series of high-level political events dedicated to the swift recovery and long-term reconstruction of Ukraine beginning in London in 2017 as the Ukraine Reform Conference. The key goal of the URC2024 was to mobilise continued international support for recovery, reconstruction, reform, and modernization of Ukraine. URC2024 focused on four thematic dimensions one of which, inter alia, addressed the mobilisation of human capital for reconstruction (*Human Dimension – Social Recovery and Human Capital for the Future of Ukraine*)[1]. Against this background, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched the *Skills Alliance for Ukraine* at the URC2024.

The Skills Alliance is a joint initiative of 79 donors, their implementing organisations, international and civil society organisations, and businesses. Its goal is to support the Ukrainian government's efforts in vocational education and training, establish a dialogue between members and the government, and mobilise additional funding. In doing so, it creates synergies between existing and new initiatives to promote vocational education both in Ukraine and in EU member states[2].

The alliance pursues **five objectives**, which are implemented in subgroups:

1. **Provision of suitable re-/upskilling programmes** for people in the working age, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable groups, in Ukraine, as well as Ukrainians living abroad, with a focus on reducing barriers for return and reintegration.
2. **Strengthening the cooperation with the private sector** in a flexible and mutually beneficial manner to increase the knowledge about labour market needs and reduce the current skills mismatch.
3. **Addressing special needs and ensuring inclusion** of women, youth, people with disabilities, elderly, veterans, temporarily displaced Ukrainian abroad and vulnerable

[1] https://www.urc-international.com/past-conferences/old-home
[2] See also the Skills Alliance website: Skills Alliance for Ukraine.

groups to facilitate their economic empowerment through skills, training and employment paying special attention to fair work and ethical employment and training programmes.

4. **Facilitating Ukraine's EU integration** by improving the mutual recognition of qualifications, and by aligning standards with EU requirements.
5. **Access to uninterrupted vocational and higher education and training** providing skills needed for recovery and reconstruction; thereby creating perspectives for the future, especially for Ukrainian youth.

Subgroups facilitate in-depth technical exchange on working level between the members. Four subgroups have been established:

(I) Upskilling and vocational training

(II) Addressing special needs and ensuring inclusion

(III) Vocational training in host countries and mutual recognition of qualifications

(IV) (Vocational and higher) education (covered by SG on Education).

2. Assignment, assessment of tasks and implementation approach

2.1 Assignment

To provide conceptual support to Subgroup III, a review document was commissioned to present the status of recognition of professional vocational qualifications[3] on European Qualification Framework (EQF) levels 3 to 5 for Germany, Poland, Czechia, and Ukraine. The intended aim of the document was to assess which professional qualifications from Ukraine are recognised/not yet recognised in above EU member states and vice versa. The assessment was supposed to focus on four economic sectors: construction, logistics, agriculture and services.

2.2 Assessment of tasks

During the research, it quickly became apparent that there are no standard recognition procedures within and between the countries included in the study, not even in same economic sectors.

In addition, it turned out that CARE Poland, representing the Skills Alliance in Poland and a member of the *Skills Alliance for Ukraine*, had initiated a separate comprehensive national study on recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Poland for high demand sectoral labour markets. A summary of selected processes on recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Poland is therefore not included in this document.

Despite numerous attempts, suitable discussion partners in Czechia could not be identified. Chapter 5 is therefore based on publicly available information from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Czechia.

[3] In the context if this document the term 'professional vocational qualification' refers to defined learning outcomes achieved on levels 3 to 5 of the EQF.

This document is thus limited to presenting the European framework for recognition of professional vocational qualifications and summarising the German recognition procedures for partial and full professional vocational qualifications for which mainly Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Chambers of Crafts, and Chambers of Agriculture are procedurally responsible.

2.3 Implementation approach

For implementation of the assignment the following research instruments were applied:

- literature review
- interviews
- secondary data.

(Online) Interviews were held with:

- CARE Poland
- Center for Social and Economic Research, Poland
- Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Saxony (*Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen*), Germany
- Chamber of Crafts Brunswick-Lunenburg-Stade (*Handwerkskammer Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Stade*), Germany
- Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB), Germany
- German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (*Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks* – ZDH)
- German National Chamber of Skilled Crafts (*Deutscher Handwerkskammertag* – DHKT)
- IHK Foreign Skills Approval (IHK FOSA)
- Prof. Dr. Tetiana Semigina, Academy of Labour, Social Relations and Tourism, Ukraine
- Ms. Tetiana Vahina, Senior Credential Evaluation Advisor, National Information Centre of Academic Mobility, ENIC Ukraine
- Dr. Snizhana Leu-Severynenko, independent expert on education and workforce development, national co-coordinator for Erasmus+ project "Beyond Europe with Micro-credentials"

3. EU framework on recognition of professional vocational qualifications

Since the late 1990s, the recognition of foreign qualifications by countries within the EU has played an important role in supporting skills mobility. The Council of Europe's Directive 2005/36/EC (*Directive 2005/36/of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualification*) provided the initial basis for recognition of professional vocational qualifications, guaranteeing the freedom to move country for work and the freedom to provide services in the EU. However, as each state has the right to make entry into a profession and the practising of that profession dependent on specific qualifications, the EU Recognition Directive defines regulations for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications for regulated professions[4].

[4] https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/pro/eu-recognition-directive.php#:~:text=The%20EU%20Directive%20on%20the,the%20European%20Union%20(EU).

Several subsequent Council and European Commission recommendations have extended the scope of recognition to other types of qualifications. However, Directive 2005/36/EC remains the primary instrument underpinning recognition processes[5].

In recent years, the emergence of significant skills gaps in EU labour markets has led to an increased focus on the links between recognition and skills mobility. In 2023, the European Commission (EC) published the Recommendation on the Recognition of the Qualifications of Third-Country Nationals as part of its Skills and Talent Mobility Package (S&TMP)[6]. This Recommendation calls on EU countries to provide easier and faster recognition of the qualifications of appropriately skilled individuals from non-EU countries to enable them to access jobs in key sectors within the EU.

The 2023 Recommendation focuses on the importance of data for and about recognition. Among other aspects, it highlights that the competent recognition authorities (CRAs) responsible for recognition in each EU country should have access to reliable data to enable them to make recognition decisions, and that data about those decisions should be shared with other EU countries[7].

The European Training Foundation (ETF) has undertaken a range of initiatives that provide support for the international recognition of professional vocational qualifications, including the development of national qualifications databases in some of its partner countries. One intended use of these databases is to facilitate international recognition of each country's professional vocational qualifications by allowing access to the information needed for recognition. However, for this aim to be achieved, it is important to ensure alignment between the information provided by non-EU countries and that required by the CRAs in EU countries. This alignment is made complicated by the fact that, in each EU country, there may be many different bodies responsible for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications, and each may have different information needs[8].

In conclusion, it must be noted that the EU's role in the recognition of professional vocational qualifications is limited to providing recommendations and supportive frameworks. However, the authority to decide on the recognition or non-recognition of professional vocational qualifications remains with its member states' national authorities.

4. Summary of selected processes on recognition of vocational qualifications in Germany

4.1 Legal framework

The legal framework for the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications in Germany is governed by a combination of federal laws and sector-specific or state-level laws and rules. The main federal laws are the Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen* – BQFG), the Crafts Code (*Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks* – HWO)

[5] Qualification Data Needs to Support Recognition of non-EU Country Vocational Qualifications, Report European Training Foundation 2025
[6] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/01187cba-6407-4afa-add0-296b29f0dcfa_en?filename=C_2023_7700_1_EN_ACT_part1_v9.pdf
[7] see ETF report above
[8] see ETF report above

and the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG). They set the frame for recognition of professional vocational qualifications for skilled crafts and industrial, technical and commercial occupations. Besides these laws, the Act on the Nursing Professions (*Gesetz über die Pflegeberufe* – PflGB) and the Act on the Reform of Nursing Professions (*Pflegeberufreformgesetz* – PflBRefG) mainly set the frame for professional vocational qualifications in the nursing sector. In addition, the Vocational Training Validation and Digitisation Act (*Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz* – BVaDiG) and the Act to Improve Online Access to Administrative Services (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung des Onlinezugangs zu Verwaltungsleistungen* – OZG) play a role in governing and processing recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications in Germany. Other sector-specific or state-level laws and rules rather define required professional qualifications on higher qualification levels of the EQF (e.g. for professions in the fields of health, law, pharma, teaching, social work).

The Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (BQFG)[9]

The BQFG is a so-called 'framework law'. On the one hand, it comprises the Vocational Qualifications Act itself. On the other hand, it contains amendments to around 60 professional laws and regulations for around 450 unregulated and regulated professions.

The Recognition Act, which came into force on 1 April 2012, is intended to facilitate the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications in Germany. From the Act, everybody who obtained her/his professional vocational qualifications abroad has a legal right to an individual assessment of the equivalence of her/his professional vocational qualifications with a German reference profession. The Act standardises and expands the procedures and criteria for the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications. It thus improves the chances of foreign skilled workers finding employment in their trained profession on the German labour market.

Regulated professions are occupations whose practice is linked to the use of specific professional titles. A positive result of the equivalence assessment is therefore a prerequisite for professional licensing. Regulated professions include, for example, academic and non-academic health professions and professions in the legal field. European law already provided extensive regulations for recognition in this area before the BQFG, but only for qualifications from other EU countries. The BQFG now extends the scope to third countries as well.

In the case of non-regulated professions, the practice of the profession is not necessarily linked to formal recognition. Nevertheless, the equivalence assessment may be worthwhile in certain circumstances, for example if the certificate of equivalence improves job prospects or enables a higher pay scale classification. Non-regulated professions include around 350 occupations that require training under the dual system. These are classic apprenticeship occupations. For non-regulated professions, the BQFG established for the first time a general right to an equivalence assessment (see above).

The Crafts Code (HwO)

The HwO plays a central role in the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications for skilled crafts. It works in conjunction with the above Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act to provide a standardised, transparent procedure for assessing whether foreign qualifications are equivalent to those required in Germany for a skilled trade. The responsible

[9] https://www.statistik.rlp.de/fileadmin/dokumente/monatshefte/2013/September/09-2013-857.pdf

Chamber of Crafts (*Handwerkskammer*) conducts the assessment, comparing the content and duration of foreign vocational education and training, professional experience, and additional certificates with the German reference qualification, typically the journeyman's and master craftsman's examination. The assessment determines if the foreign qualification is fully equivalent, partially equivalent (with identified gaps), or not equivalent at all. For regulated professions recognition is often mandatory for practice/self-employment, for non-regulated professions in the craft sector the recognition is optional but may be beneficial (see above).

The Vocational Training Act (BBiG)

The BBiG plays a central role in the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, albeit within the broader legal framework of the BQFG. The BBiG regulates dual vocational training in Germany for numerous industrial, technical and commercial occupations. The BBiG is the relevant specialist law for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications that correspond to these German training occupations. It determines which occupations are trained in the dual system and specifies the content requirements and examination regulations. However, the actual procedure for the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications is regulated in the BQFG. For the dual training occupations regulated by the BBiG, the BQFG is the central legal basis for the recognition procedure. The BBiG itself does not contain any independent provisions on the recognition procedure but is supplemented by the BQFG. The competent authorities (e.g. Chambers of Industry and Commerce) use the BQFG to check whether a foreign qualification is equivalent to a German reference occupation under the BBiG.

The Vocational Training Validation and Digitisation Act (BVaDiG)

The BVaDiG was introduced to enable the recognition and certification of professional skills acquired independent of a formal German vocational qualification – for example, through professional experience abroad or informal learning. The aim is to compare these skills with a German professional vocational qualification and to officially certify professional competence. Validation can improve the career prospects of immigrant workers and skilled professionals whose foreign qualifications are not directly recognised. It offers a low-threshold opportunity to demonstrate professional skills even in the absence of formal documents or certificates, which is particularly relevant for people from crisis regions or with non-comparable education systems. The procedure avoids written examinations and can incorporate existing work results, which is particularly advantageous for people with language barriers or a lack of evidence. Previous recognition procedures under the BQFG usually required formal proof of vocational education and training. The BVaDiG closes this gap by also considering non-certified qualifications and professional experience. Overall, though, the BQFG remains the central basis for the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications. It should be noted that the BVaDiG does not explicitly refer to the recognition of professional vocational qualifications obtained abroad.

4.2. Institutional framework

Recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Germany on EQF level 3 to 5 in Germany is mainly processed by competent sector chambers: the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Chambers of Crafts, and the Chambers of Agriculture.

Recognition Procedures Chambers of Commerce and Industry

With the entry into force of the BQFG, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) decided to largely centralise procedures for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications. To this end, the organisation 'IHK FOreignSkillsApproval (IHK FOSA)' was established on 1 April 2012 as a public-law corporation. 76 of the 79 CCIs in Germany currently have recognition procedures handled centrally by IHK FOSA. Only CCIs in Hanover, Braunschweig and Wuppertal carry out the recognition procedures still by themselves.

Centralisation of recognition procedures enables the pooling of regional and language expertise and caters for the implementation of recognition procedures in accordance with uniform procedural principles. CCIs expect that this centralisation will result in high-quality decision making overall. The statutory decision-making period for recognition procedures is one month for the preliminary examination and, once the application is complete, three months for the determination of equivalence. Upon receipt of the application, the documents submitted are checked for completeness and the application requirements are verified. If any information is missing, IHK FOSA informs the applicant in writing. Applicants also receive a fee notice.

The equivalence assessment procedure is then carried out and, if equivalence is recognised, the decision of equivalence is issued. According to federal statistics, the actual duration of the recognition procedure for non-regulated professions, which include the professions for which IHK FOSA is responsible, is 69 days on average. The length of the procedure for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications of Ukrainian refugees does not differ from the length of recognition procedure for professional vocational qualifications of citizens from other non-EU countries. IHK FOSA does not work with specific cooperation or information partners in Ukraine. Instead, IHK FOSA has built up its own in-house assessment expertise over years.

Recognition Procedures Chambers of Crafts

Following the entry into force of the BQFG, Chambers of Crafts (CCs) did not opt for centralisation of recognition procedures. Instead, CCs believed that applicants can be provided with better advice and support, and receive recognition decisions more quickly, through the competent regional CCs. However, the CCs introduced starting from 2012 a system of 'lead chambers' to pool country-specific expertise. The Chamber of Crafts Brunswick-Lunenburg-Stade is the 'lead chamber' for Ukraine. Applications for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications for craft trades have, however, continue to be submitted to the regional CCs. Lead chambers only have an advisory function in the CC system. They build up and expand information and documentation collections on "their" respective countries, bring about fundamental decisions and thus ensure consistency in decision making on the recognition of professional vocational qualifications. In a few exceptional cases, lead chambers have in the past implemented recognition processes on behalf of other chambers, particularly smaller chambers. Lead chambers are primarily the point of contact for CCs when country-specific professional vocational qualifications are not already listed or documented in the BQ portal.

The BQ portal[10] is maintained by the German Economic Institute (*Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft* – IW) on behalf of the German Federal Government. The BQ portal helps to better evaluate and assess foreign non-academic professional vocational qualifications. This central

[10] https://www.iwkoeln.de/institut/projekte/bq-portal.html

online knowledge and work platform offers employees of relevant authorities (in particular, Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Chambers of Crafts, Chambers of Agriculture and other chambers/qualification recognition bodies) information on foreign vocational training systems and professional vocational qualifications, as well as on suitable procedures and methods for assessing them. Practical guides and examples show how professional vocational qualifications obtained abroad can be assessed for equivalence with German professional vocational qualifications.

Since 2012, the CC Brunswick-Lunenburg-Stade has created around 300 Ukrainian job profiles with relevant information and documentation on the BQ portal. It has also supported 310 applications for recognition of professional vocational qualifications for skilled trades as the lead chamber. In 304 of these cases, professional vocational qualifications were recognised in part or in full. Overall, in 2022 111 recognition procedures were initiated by Ukrainian nationals at German CCs, 250 in 2023 and 229 from January to June 2024. CCs assume that the relatively low number of applications is primarily due to the following reasons: (i) Most of the professions that fall within the remit of the CCs are unregulated occupations. No formal recognition of professional vocational qualifications is thus required to work in these occupational fields. Recognition is generally only necessary if a master craftsman's certificate is mandatory for setting up a craft business in the occupational field. (ii) Formal recognition of professional vocational qualifications does not play a role in job seeking or paid remuneration. (iii) Traditionally, craft trades in Ukraine tend to be practised by men. However, following the full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukrainian men were and are largely prohibited from leaving Ukraine.

The average duration of the review process at CCs for Ukrainian nationals, provided that the applicant submits complete documentation, is between 2 and 4 weeks.

Recognition Procedures Chambers of Agriculture[11]

Since 1 January 2025, all recognition procedures for the 14 professions considered ‘green professions’[12] in Germany have been centralised at the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture. Until then, the procedures were distributed across all existing chambers of agriculture or, in federal states where there is no Chamber of Agriculture (CA), were handled by the responsible regional authorities (district offices, etc.). From summer 2025, the procedure is to be fully digitalized. Applications can then only apply for recognition of professional vocational qualifications when they have a full set of required documents available to be uploaded. In contrast to the previous procedure a recognition process cannot be initiated with only partial documentation of achieved qualifications abroad.

There was no average processing time for applications under the past ‘analogue’ recognition procedures, as the length of the procedure depended on the completeness of the documentation. With the new digital recognition process the application process is supposed to take approximately 3-6 weeks until a decision is made. Decisions on the recognition of foreign professional vocational qualifications will also be processed digitally and send electronically to applicants (email).

The CA Lower Saxony received 5 applications from Ukrainian refugees for recognition of professional vocational qualifications in 2020, 2 in 2021, 3 in 2022 and none in 2023 and 2024.

[11] Information based on interview with Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture on 21st March 2025.
[12] https://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/landwirtschaft/gruene-berufe/gruene-berufe14.html

The CA Lower Saxony is not aware (even anecdotally) of any other regions and respective CAs in Germany where there have been more procedures.

Although the profession of “housekeeper” is considered a “green profession” in Germany, and is traditionally practised by women in Ukraine, and many refugees from Ukraine are women, the number of recognition procedures for “green professions” is significantly low.

4.3 Findings

A few general findings can be made:

a) Although there are legal requirements for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Germany, these only provide a general framework. The recognition of partial or full professional vocational qualifications is, as a matter of fact, an individualised process that varies depending on the professional sector (e. g. skilled crafts, industry and commerce, agriculture) and is subject to different (legal) requirements in these sectors. In this respect, there are no uniform recognition processes for partial and full professional vocational qualifications for EQF levels 3 to 5. Furthermore, there are no agreements between Germany and Ukraine on the mutual recognition of professional vocational qualifications for the afore-mentioned EQF levels. As a matter of fact, there is not even a structured cooperation between respective recognition bodies in Germany and Ukraine. The same appears to be the case for Czechia and Poland.

b) In Germany, most of the approximately 330 recognised dual-system occupations (BIBB, as of 1 October 2024) are not considered regulated professions. Recognition of partial or full qualifications is therefore not necessary to take up employment in these occupations. In certain sectors, a master craftsman's certificate is required to set up one's own business. Only in this case there is a final need for recognition of corresponding qualifications.

c) Only few applications for recognition of partial or full professional vocational qualifications have been submitted by Ukrainian citizens in Germany since the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine in 2014. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, these numbers have even tended to decline. Possible reasons for this are manifold: (i) Many Ukrainian refugees hold tertiary education degrees or incomplete qualifications due to study disruptions. The latest data show that 76% of women and 71% of men who have fled Ukraine have completed higher education qualifications (BA/BSc and above), while 5.9% of the women and 8% of the men have incomplete higher education qualifications.[13] (ii) A large number are also of secondary school age and may be intending to enlist in higher education programmes where possible.[14] (iii) Also, lower numbers of applications may be related to the ban on Ukrainian men leaving Ukraine that came into force in 2022. However, although the number of female refugees from Ukraine to Germany increased since 2022, there has not been any significant increase in recognition of partial or full professional vocational qualifications in occupations traditionally more common among women in Ukraine, such as domestic service occupations or female specific craft trades. Apparently, Ukrainian refugees do not appear to regard the recognition of partial or full professional vocational qualifications instrumental in supporting them entering the German labour market or achieving higher pays.

[13] Perelli-Harris et al., 2023[5]
[14] https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/11/recognition-of-prior-learning-for-ukrainian-refugee-students_91c1a56d/09936722-en.pdf

5. Summary of process on recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Czechia[15] [16]

In the Czech Republic, recognition of professional vocational qualifications is generally only required for regulated professions – those that are specifically governed by law and require certain credentials to practice (e.g. doctors, nurses, architects). For unregulated professions, there is no formal requirement to have vocational qualifications officially recognised to work. Employers in these fields typically assess vocational qualifications on their own, based on CV, diplomas, and work experience[17].

According to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, there are approximately 330 regulated professions in Czechia[18], many on that list require qualifications above level 5 of the EQF. On EQF levels 3 to 5 some of the professions fall into the category of regulated professions, typically those related to a craft trade or the public health, safety, or education sector[19]. The overwhelming majority of professions in the Czech Republic are thus unregulated given the vast number of possible occupations and the dynamic nature of the labour market. This means that for most jobs, there are no legal requirements for specific professional vocational qualifications, and it is up to employers to decide on the suitability of a candidate's credentials.

Recognition of a professional vocational qualification in the Czech Republic focuses on assessing the knowledge and skills of a specific person, with this knowledge and skills being possible to prove by a document of formal qualification (education and preparation) but also by a document of an actual performance of the relevant activity or other document. The outcome of the process of professional recognition is a decision as to whether the person in question has sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to perform the specific profession or activity.

The area of recognition of professional qualifications for the purposes of practising a profession had not been regulated in the Czech Republic until 1st May 2004. In particular, the need for thorough regulation of the principles for the free movement of persons in accordance with the requirements of the European Union with the aim of free claims to the labour market of the European Union led to the acceptance of Act No. 18/2004 Coll., On the Recognition of Professional Qualification and Other Eligibility of Citizens of Member States of the European Union and Some Citizens of Other States and on the Amendment of Certain Acts (Act on Recognition of Professional Qualifications), which took effect on the day of the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union.

Bodies in charge of recognition are ministries or other central administrative authorities of the Czech Republic and professional chambers. Individual recognition bodies that receive applications for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications or the declaration of temporary or occasional provision of services or that issue professional qualifications certificates are responsible for the recognition. They also provide information to applicants about specific requirements for the performance of a regulated profession that they oversee.

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15 Chapter 5 mainly cites the information available on the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic on the subject of 'recognition of professional qualifications. Institutions and/or individuals could not be identified for qualified interviews and provision of additional information.
16 https://msmt.gov.cz/file/64405/; here: Recognition_of_foreign_education_brochure_EN.pdf
17 https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/information-assistance/recognition-qualifications
18 https://msmt.gov.cz/eu-and-international-affairs/databaze-regulovanych-povolani
19 https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/czechia-u3

Information about what regulated professions the recognition bodies are in charge of as well as requirements for professional qualifications for the performance of specific regulated professions are available in the Database of Regulated Professions of the Czech Republic[20]. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the coordination body for the recognition of professional vocational qualifications.

6. Summary of process on recognition of professional vocational qualifications in Ukraine

Ukraine's system for recognising foreign professional vocational qualifications for regulated professions operates under a defined legal framework, with processes involving document authentication, institutional checks, and equivalence assessment.

The system is governed by Order No. 504 of May 5, 2015 (MES). Order No. 504 does apply to secondary, vocational and higher education credentials.[21]

Professional vocational qualifications are evaluated by qualification centres under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Centres receive accreditation from the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) in Ukraine. The number of accredited Qualified Vocational Certification Centres currently stays at approximately 170. Holders of Qualified Vocational Certification Centres can be vocational schools and training centres, universities, NGOs, companies and any other bodies which fulfil the accreditation requirements of the NQA.

Specific professions (e.g. drivers, healthcare, railway) require assessments via sectoral certification bodies accredited by the NQA. These bodies evaluate practical skills, compare it to Ukrainian standards, and issue national professional certificates. However, a significant number of sectoral validations of professional qualifications happens outside the NQA

The recognition process usually consists of 6 different steps:

1. **Submit Required Documents:** diploma, transcript, accreditation info, translation to Ukrainian, apostille/legalization, ID and consent forms
2. **Authentication & Legitimacy Check:** verification of the issuing institution's accreditation, programme validity, and genuineness of the document
3. **Equivalence Assessment:** Compare syllabus, volume of training (hours), content overlap (e.g. 75% match often expected) to Ukrainian occupational standards
4. **Additional Requirements (if needed):** may require exams, supplementary courses, or supervised internships as conditions for full recognition
5. **Issuance of Certificate or Refusal**
6. **Appeals Process** (if required)

[20] https://uok.msmt.cz/uok/ru_list.php?lang=en&dl=en
[21] https://mon.gov.ua/en/ministry/services/recognition-of-foreign-documents?utm_source=chatgpt.com