



Peer learning activity

A shift towards automatic recognition of higher education access qualifications: practice and expectations

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Current status, policies and developments on automatic recognition in Europe

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LRC recognition vs automatic recognition

Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC):

Recognition of qualifications unless substantial differences can be shown through the assessment procedure.

Automatic recognition:

Recognition of comparable qualifications with no formal assessment procedure. A qualification is recognised automatically.

Definitions of automatic recognition

EHEA Pathfinder Group definition (2015) – *“Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access).”*

EU Council Recommendation (2018): ... it is “... necessary to achieve automatic mutual recognition for the purpose of further learning without having to go through a separate recognition procedure, so that a higher education qualification acquired in one Member State is automatically recognised at the same level for the purpose of accessing further studies, ... “

Willing in the EHEA

Bucharest communique (2012) – The need to remove obstacles and to work together towards the automatic recognition.

Yerevan communique (2015) – It is determined to achieve the EHEA where automatic recognition has become a reality by 2020.

Paris communique (2018) – In order to further develop mobility and recognition across the EHEA, we will work to ensure that HE qualifications are automatically recognised.

Rome communique (2020) – We will ensure automatic recognition within the EHEA, so that students, staff and graduates are able to move freely to study, teach and do research.

Current practices in the EHEA

Four types of automatic recognition:

- Legally binding **bilateral or multilateral agreements**.
- Legally binding national level **unilateral lists of qualifications**.
- **Mutual declarations** (statements/recommendations/etc) not legally binding.
- **De facto practices**. Automatic recognition in practice with no legally binding regulations.

The platform for automatic recognition

Since 1999, there have been extensive reforms in higher education systems and harmonisation within the Bologna Process:

- creation of common **European Higher Education Area**;
- higher education based on **three main cycles** – Bachelor-Master-Doctor;
- use of comparable **quality assurance mechanisms**;
- **ECTS**;
- **Diploma Supplement**;
- **European Qualifications Framework**, and **QF-EHEA**;
- **reference of national qualifications** to the European frameworks;
- harmonisation of **recognition procedures**.

The principle of automatic recognition

- Automatic recognition of a degree should lead to the **automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification** of a certain level.
- A qualification from one EHEA country should be **recognised at the same level anywhere else** in the EHEA.
- ‘A Bachelor is a Bachelor is a Bachelor’.
- **Qualifications giving access to higher education** (upper-secondary level certificates) should be included to the system of automatic recognition.

The concept of automatic recognition (I)

Automatic recognition of higher education qualifications

- Applies to **system-level recognition**: a holder of a Bachelor's degree has a right to hold the degree and have access to a Master's programme;
- shall not apply to a recognition of qualifications of a specific programme;
- for admission to a Master's programme, a Bachelor's degree in a certain field of study may be required.
- Automatic recognition – **no assessment procedure**, but there is still a need to investigate the status of awarding institution, and whether the degree is authentic.

The concept of automatic recognition (2)

Automatic recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education

- Qualification giving access to higher education in the home country, gives access to higher education in the other countries of EHEA;
- Access to higher education is not an admission to higher education;
- holder of an upper-secondary level certificate has a formal right to be a candidate for a HE programme;
- This does not release the candidate from the obligation to fulfill the admission requirements.



Thank you!