

APPENDIX 1

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR RECOGNITION- POLAND

Guidelines for national action plans to be elaborated under the Bologna Process, proposed by the ENIC Bureau, the NARIC Advisory Board and the Bureau of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee

1. Legislation

1.1 Lisbon Recognition Convention

The Lisbon Recognition Convention was ratified by Poland and came into force on 1st May 2004.

1.2 Review of national legislation relevant to recognition

There are three regulations concerning recognition of foreign educational credentials: one with regard to school certificates, the second concerning diplomas of completion of studies and the last one dealing with recognition of diplomas conferring scientific degrees. All the three have been changed recently due to the current transformations of the systems of higher education that have been taking place in Europe and beyond it.

1.3 Bilateral or regional recognition agreements

During the past few years Poland has signed several agreements dealing with the issue of recognition of foreign credentials for academic purposes. Currently, Poland is a party to such agreements with the following countries: Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Ukraine. They all are in conformity with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

2. Recognition practice

2.1 Criteria and procedures

- a. Overview of the practice of competent recognition authorities in applying the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and Periods of Study.

The recommendations are applied in Poland.

- b. Overview of the time required to process applications for recognition and measures to improve this time.

According to our new regulations on nostrification, the time limit within which the recognition decision should be taken is three months, counting from the moment when the applicant submits all necessary and required documents. If during the

recognition procedure substantial differences are detected, the time required to make recognition decision is not set. The same rule does not apply to recognition of scientific degrees as duration of this procedure is not specified.

2.2 Joint degrees

- a. Overview of the legal provisions concerning the recognition of joint degrees.
- b. Amendments to remove legal obstacles or to establish legal provision favouring the recognition of joint degrees.
- c. Beyond legal provision, suggestion of policy measures to ensure the recognition of joint degrees.
- d. Overview of double and multiple degrees and policy measures to encourage the recognition of such degrees.

The Law on Higher Education allows several HEIs, including foreign institutions, to provide joint degree programmes and award joint diplomas. Joint diplomas may be awarded upon completion of first-cycle, second-cycle and long-cycle programmes. Joint degrees are promoted by the National Agency for Lifelong Learning Programme and the Team of Bologna Promoters.

2.3 Overview of institutional practice

Polish ENIC/NARIC centre, that is Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, has organised several conferences, and last year also workshops addressed to Higher Education Institutions in Poland, informing about recognition procedures and principles that are recommended by Lisbon Convention. Bureau has also made several surveys by questionnaire among recognition bodies, that is Higher Education Institutions, whose findings were used later during the conferences and workshops to show good and bad practise in applying recognition regulations by Higher Education Institutions.

Consider what measures have been or should be taken to allow national authorities to know

- a. whether higher education institutions and other competent recognition authorities comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and with national laws;
- b. what measures could be taken if given institutions or authorities were shown consistently not to apply the Convention and/or relevant national laws.

2.4 Transparency tools for recognition

- a. Plans and timetable for the implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

ECTS has been introduced in Poland on the basis of the Regulation of 3 October 2006. As of 1 January 2007, all HEIs are required to introduce ECTS.

The national ECTS system is based on student's workload and is linked with learning outcomes. ECTS is not used for doctoral programmes

- b. Plans and timetable for the implementation of the Diploma Supplement
As from 1 January 2005 the Diploma Supplement was issued to all graduates of HEIs operating on the basis of the Higher Education Act previously in force. Since 1 September 2005 it has been issued to all graduates, in the Polish language, without

any extra costs. The DS is designed in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and it is issued together with a HE diploma. An additional copy of the DS may be issued in a widely spoken EU language.

3. Information provision

3.1 *Provision of information on recognition*

Polish ENIC/NARIC centres has got its own Polish-English website which is going to be up-dated within the next few months. Most information is available also in English (without some laws and regulations) and the website contains some materials about the system of education in Poland including names of documents issued and certificates or diplomas awarded within it.

- a. Measures taken or envisaged to improve the provision of information on recognition criteria and procedures and on the national education system;
- b. The timetable envisaged for such measures;
- c. The bodies or institutions responsible for the measures;
- d. The state of electronic provision of information on recognition;
- e. Whether the national information centres establish and maintain their own web pages, linked to the ENIC-NARIC Web site.

3.2 *Information package for applicants*

Polish ENIC/NARIC apart from its own website on which the recognition procedures are described has got also leaflets and other materials available at its office. Higher education institutions, which nostrify foreign higher education diplomas, provide information on their own.

- a. The extent to which information packages are provided for applicants by higher education institutions and other competent recognition authorities and,
- b. If needed, how practice could be improved.

4. Structures

4.1 *National information centre*

Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange is a state institution reporting to the minister responsible for higher education. The Bureau is the contact point for the EU directives of general system of recognition of professional qualifications Bureau issues opinions on foreign educational credentials to individuals, students, employers, higher education institutions and others. These opinions contain only information on the level and status of the given credential in the country of its origin. Bureau takes part in study visits during which information concerning recognition procedure and higher education systems is shared. It also invites foreign experts to conferences and workshops organised for Higher Education Institutions. It closely cooperates with other ENIC/NARIC national centres.

functioning of the national information centre (ENIC/NARIC), e.g. with regard to:

- a. The formal status of the centre;
- b. Legal competence (e.g. advisory or decision making; academic, de jure professional, de facto professional recognition);
- c. Staff and budget;
- d. Capacity building in terms of expertise and service to the public;
- e. Networking and cooperation at national level and internationally.

4.2 Cooperation recognition/quality assurance bodies

There is a very loose cooperation between the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange and the Polish State Accreditation Commission. Both organisations take part in the same initiative (ECA).

In 2003 the State Accreditation Committee (SAC) applied for membership of ENQA and was granted observer status. Due to the change of criteria and rules for the admission of new members in ENQA, a new application will be submitted this year (2007). The representatives of the SAC take part in most seminars held by ENQA.

Between 14 and 16 February 2005, the SAC organised an international conference on "Cooperation between accreditation committees/agencies". The conference was officially included in the calendar of the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

The SAC has been a member of the Central and East European Network of Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (CEEN) since the beginning of its existence. In December 2005 the SAC became a member of the ECA. It also plans to submit an application for the membership in INQAHE.

In 2004 the SAC signed a cooperation agreement with the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA), and in 2005 started to co-operate with the German Federal Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Akkreditierungsrat).

Representatives of the SAC take part in conferences and seminars on the quality of education organised by UNESCO, OECD, the World Bank and other organisations. Furthermore, the SAC has applied for a Polish grant for the project "Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions in the European Higher Education Area", which will enable it to finance research in this area and to increase the number of accreditation projects undertaken jointly with other European institutions interested in cooperation in the area of quality assurance.

- a. Information exchange between the bodies responsible for recognition and quality assurance;
- b. Discussion of and agreement on working methods between these bodies;
- c. Use of information on the outcomes of quality assessments in the recognition of qualifications;
- d. Use of membership of international networks and associations in recognition (e.g. ENIC and NARIC Networks) and quality assurance (e.g. ENQA) for the mutual benefits of both bodies.