

National Action Plan for Recognition
Contribution by Nuffic (Dutch NARIC/ENIC)

- 1 Legislation
(In preparation see Eurydice)
- 2 Recognition Practice
- 2.1 Criteria and procedures
(Conform Lisbon recognition convention)

3 Information provision

3.1 Provision of information on recognition

The Dutch NARIC/ENIC (see also section 4) provides information on the procedure for international credential evaluation. A distinction is made in the process between academic recognition and professional recognition. Various websites have been developed to inform holders of foreign diplomas about which body or authority is responsible and what the correct procedure is, e.g.:

- www.nuffic.nl/diplomawaardering
- www.idw.nl
- www.beroepserkenning.nl
- www.leraarin.nl

All of these sites have a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section to explain the documentary requirements, duration and procedures. **The evaluation criteria and the options for lodging an objection against a credential evaluation could be highlighted more directly. This will be reviewed in 2007.** Nuffic's website is currently being redeveloped. This will have consequences for the way in which Dutch NARIC/ENIC provides information to its user groups. Furthermore, Nuffic provides information to higher education institutions about the criteria and procedures for credential evaluation, in accordance with the Lisbon recognition convention, through a variety of ways, including training courses.

3.2 Information package for applicants

When asked, we provide applicants with information on the criteria on which a credential evaluation was based. We do not offer a standard, ready-made package.

4 Structures

4.1 National information centre

Nuffic is the designated NARIC/ENIC in the Netherlands. The Dutch NARIC/ENIC aims to collect and make available information on higher education in other countries in order to improve transparency and to facilitate international credential evaluation. In the Netherlands, NARIC/ENIC is an advisory body. Its key clients in the domestic market include:

- higher education institutions
- the competent authorities for regulated professions
- Centres for Work and Income (for access to the labour market)
- individual applicants

Our services can broadly be grouped into four categories:

- Collecting, ordering, and making available information about higher education in other countries, and evaluating study in a foreign country in terms of the Dutch system within a protected area of the website (extranet). This information enables clients to make their own credential evaluations.
Clients also receive information through the Newsletter. In numerous issues, attention has been paid to the Lisbon convention and its application.
- Personal credential evaluation. Foreign study programmes are analysed using prescribed formats and compared with Dutch programmes. The format includes the Lisbon convention criteria. The evaluation is issued to the client as a recommendation. It has no official status and does not give the holder any entitlements. This is made clear to the holder of the foreign diploma.
- Diploma descriptions. A diploma description is a recommendation on the value of a Dutch higher education programme in other countries.
- A digital portfolio service for clients wanting to enable groups of highly-skilled migrants to create a dossier of their prior work and learning. A credential evaluation or study programme description may also form part of the portfolio. This is then considered objective documentary evidence. Dutch NARIC/ENIC provides this service in response to the Lisbon convention's call to help refugees who do not have the right documents (such as diplomas) to reconstruct their learning.
- Providing tailor-made training for specific clients. Dutch NARIC/ENIC can provide training sessions for its clients, including an online course in comparing study programmes. The training teaches participants to independently produce credential evaluations based on the Lisbon convention.

Dutch NARIC/ENIC has a team of about 25 staff (not all full-time). Staff members are active in various national and international networks, e.g. KBS in the Netherlands, a network of international student counsellors. On the international stage, Dutch NARIC/ENIC is active in the NARIC/ENIC network. It also has links with NVAO, ECA and ENQA (see below).

4.2 Cooperation recognition / quality assurance bodies

Dutch NARIC/ENIC maintains contacts with NVAO (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders), the European Consortium of Accreditation Agencies (ECA), and – largely through the NARIC/ENIC network – ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). These bodies share information on the methods and procedures used. The national accreditation organizations are increasingly working together internationally. And they are making efforts to align their working methods and criteria (indicators). Many of the obstacles encountered are also recognizable from participation in the NARIC/ENIC network. Within this network, the information centres are continually striving to align their working methods and procedures. Dutch NARIC/ENIC takes an active role at the ECA meetings.

Within the NARIC/ENIC network, there is a steady movement towards a single European ‘recognition area’ in which the NARICs/ENICs will automatically recognize each other’s recognition decisions and recommendations. Contacts with European accreditation organizations are hugely important in achieving this because there are parallels to be drawn.

National recognition or accreditation by a valid organization is an important criterion in international credential evaluation. The accreditation decisions are therefore certainly taken into account when evaluating foreign diplomas.

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