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# Achievements and problems in recognition in the European Higher Education Area

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# What is recognition?

- Recognition is correct positioning of a foreign qualification in the host country's education system or labour market

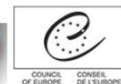


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# Who decides on recognition?

- Qualifications for academic purposes – ENIC/NARIC centre (advice) -> HEI(decision)
- Qualifications for employment purposes –
  - Employer (non-regulated professions)
  - Competent authority for the particular profession (regulated professions)
  - ENIC-NARIC centres as national contact points
- Study periods – higher education institutions



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# What is needed for recognition?

- International legal framework
  - Lisbon Recognition Convention
  - EU Directive 2005/36/EC
- Information on qualification and educational systems
- Trust



# ETS 165 Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention “The Lisbon Recognition Convention”

***Signed*** : 53 states – including Australia,  
Canada, Israel, New Zealand, USA

**Ratified:** 51 states

**Not yet ratified:** Canada, USA,

**Not yet signed:** Greece



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# Basic principles of the LRC

- Recognition of comparable level qualifications if no substantial differences are evident,
- Applicant has the right to fair recognition,
- If there is a substantial difference, the burden of proof is on the recognition authority
- Mutual trust among states (based on QA)
- Information provision – on educational systems and on individual qualifications



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# Legal framework of the Lisbon Convention

- Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997)
- Code of good practice in the provision of **transnational education** (2001)
- Recommendation on the recognition of **joint degrees** (2004)
- Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures (2001 **revised 2010**)



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# Information on qualifications and educational systems

- ENIC/NARIC centres in all countries of the EHEA
- Joint European Diploma Supplement
- ECTS



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# Trust and information on quality

- Establishing quality assurance systems in all countries
- European Standards and guidelines in QA
- ENQA
- European Quality Assurance Register



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# Learning outcomes

## change the whole approach to recognition

### Previous approach – comparing:

- duration of studies
- graduate's formal rights regarding further studies or employment,
- key elements of the programme

### Contemporary approach – comparing learning outcomes, i.e. in what the holder

- knows,
- understands
- and what he/she can do



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# Qualifications frameworks describe qualifications in terms of

- level,
- workload,
- learning outcomes
- profile

Qualifications frameworks are being developed at national level and

An overarching qualifications framework has been is prepared at European level



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# Some too optimistic beliefs

1. “When all countries ratify the LRC, recognition in Europe will become easy”
2. “When all countries provide the information on institutions and qualifications, recognition in Europe will become easy”
3. “When all countries introduce quality assurance, recognition in Europe will become easy”
4. “When all countries introduce outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, recognition will become automatic”
5. “When all countries include institutional recognition procedures among the issues covered by quality assurance, recognition will improve.



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# Issues/ Challenges/ Problems



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# The legal (?) issue

- We don't need to amend national legislation as LRC as international treaty overrides national legislation"
- "We can't prescribe universities to follow the LRC..."
- We can't ask universities of their recognition procedures"
- "In our country universities are **autonomous** and they decide recognition cases as the



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# The “terminology” (?) issue

- In some countries legislation still mentions “equivalence” or “nostrification” instead of “recognition”
- Is it just outdated terminology?



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# Development of the recognition concepts in Europe

- *Nostrification* – the foreign qualification is identical to the one it is compared with,
- *Equivalence* – the foreign qualification can replace the home prototype in all aspects,
- *Recognition* – the foreign qualification has no substantial differences with regard to the purpose for which it is going to be used,
- *Acceptance* – the foreign qualification is inferior to the prototype but not so much that differences can not be compensated



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# Institutional awareness

Are we sure all of those making recognition decisions

- Are aware of the LRC
- Know the principles of the LRC
- Are aware of the supplementary legal texts of the LRC
- Have heard of internationally accepted good practices?

Is all that clear to all –  
rectors – administration – programme  
directors – individual staff members?



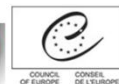
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# Study periods are not always properly recognised

- Refusing recognition at all
- Recognising study period but with lesser credits,
- Recognising study period but only as elective courses



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# Different attitudes

*Maximally positive:*

“is the foreign qualification really so bad that I cannot recognize it (fully or at least partially)?

*Maximally negative:*

“is the foreign qualification really so good that I cannot find a way to turn it down?



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# Reverse subordination

- Advice of ENIC/NARC + decision at HEI  
or
- Advice of HEI and ENIC/NARIC - decision taken by the ministry

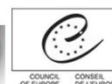


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## 2 stages in recognition- but which?

Stage I	Stage II
recommendation	recognition decision
level recognition	recognition for further studies
level recognition	recognition of comparability
recognition for further studies	establishing equivalence
establishing equivalence	issuing host country's diploma

# What further actions?

To ensure equal treatment of the applications for recognition across the EHEA we must use the information in Naps for further discussion with a view of

- Moving towards more coherent recognition criteria and procedures across Europe,
- Clarifying terminology,
- At national level - identifying the cases where the criteria and procedures used should actually be adapted to be in line with the principles of LRC legal framework and improve national recognition practices



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# Things to do

- Get the principles of convention “down” to individual academics
- Spread good practice across Europe,
- Fully implement European Register on Quality Assurance,
- Ensure that all courses and qualifications are linked to learning outcomes
- Implement qualifications framework
- And work with attitudes, attitudes, attitudes....



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# The discussions of the conference therefore cover

- How stakeholders see recognition
- Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks
- Recognition and Quality assurance
- Recognition of credits,
- Recognition for labour market
- Discussion of the Recognition Manual
- Legal issues of recognition
- Recognition between EHEA and other parts of the world



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**Thank you for your attention!**



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