Recognition of foreign qualifications

Guide for recognition specialists

Riga, 2002
RECOGNITION
OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

Written by Andrejs Rauhvargers

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  (Finnish Ministry of Foreign affairs)

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List of acronyms

LLL – lifelong learning
DS – Diploma Supplement
RCP - Draft Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications
TE – Transnational education
CoE - Council of Europe
WG – working group
MS – Member State
HE – Higher Education
HEI- higher education institutions
RCP – Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures
INTRODUCTION

Usually one faces recognition issues when moving across borders – either when returning home after studies abroad or when moving to another country to continue studies or to work there. Depending on the purpose – further studies or work – there are two main cases of recognition: academic and professional. Although in both cases the purpose is an acknowledgement of a foreign qualification, the approach is different – in academic recognition the evaluators’ main task is to assess whether the applicant is capable of continuing studies in the chosen direction and at the chosen level, while in professional recognition it should be found out whether the knowledge and professional skills of the applicant are sufficient to pursue a particular profession in the receiving country\(^1\).

This guide provides basic information and knowledge regarding academic and professional recognition – the political background, the legal instruments as well as the practical procedures for recognition. It is basically meant as an introduction and reference for recognition specialists in Latvia, but it may also be found useful by Latvian professional associations, ministries in charge of particular regulated professions, higher education institutions, and, finally, recognition specialists in other countries.

The guide contains a comparison of academic and professional recognition, description of international legal tools in each kind of recognition, as well as the list of regulated professions in Latvia.

GENERAL; REGULATIONS REGARDING THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS IN LATVIA

General regulations regarding the recognition of the education documents issued abroad are laid down by the Article 11.1 of the Education law. According to it:

The recognition of the education documents issued abroad as well as expertise of the documents certifying academic degrees acquired abroad is made based on the application from the owner of the document certifying education or academic degrees, respective educational institutions, state institutions, employers or professional organizations. The expertise of the education documents acquired abroad or documents certifying academic degrees acquired abroad shall be implemented by the Academic Information Centre.

As a result of the expertise of the educational credential, a statement is issued to the applicant where it is declared to which of the Latvia’s educational credentials the applicants foreign one or can be equalled.

The decision upon the recognition of the foreign credential is based on the certification from the Academic Information Centre and the decision is made:

1) for the continuation of studies – by the institution of higher education, where the owner of the education document wishes to continue studies. The institution of higher education may implement additional expertise or set additional requirements;

2) for employing in the professions, where the professional operation or the education needed for it are not regulated by law or other regulatory acts – by the employer;

3) for professional operation in the professions, where the professional operation or the education needed for it are regulated by law or other regulatory acts – by the institutions determined by the respective law or other regulatory acts;

4) for continuation of education in the primary and secondary stage of education – by the Ministry of Education and Science.

ACADEMIC VS. PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION – DIFFERENCES AND SYNERGIES

Qualifications may serve a wide range of purposes, some examples of which are:

- general access to higher education;
- restricted access to higher education (i.e. access restricted to certain parts of the higher education system, such as certain technical studies);
- general access to further studies at a given level (such as doctoral studies or second degree studies);
- restricted access to further studies (e.g. access to further technical studies);
- access to professional training;

\(^1\) The latter is very important since the character of some professions (e.g. skiing instructor, tourism guide, forester and even gravedigger) can be quite different in different countries.
(f) general access to the labour market (i.e. as a qualification for a wide range of positions at a given level);
(g) access to a specialized area of the labour market;
(h) access to a regulated profession.

However, there are two main cases of recognition depending upon the purpose for which recognition is sought. **Academic recognition** is the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purpose of further studies. In academic recognition evaluators’ main task is to assess whether the applicant is capable of continuing studies in the chosen direction and at the chosen level. **Professional recognition** is the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purpose of employment in a certain profession. In professional recognition it should be found out whether the knowledge and professional skills of the applicant are sufficient to pursue a particular profession in the receiving country.

It is quite possible, that the same qualification in the same country can be recognized for one of these purposes but not (or not completely) recognized for the other.

Due to the principal difference in purpose, academic and professional recognition are dealt with by different legal acts (national and international) and carried out by different bodies, see table below.

**Table 1. Academic vs. professional recognition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic recognition (for further studies)</th>
<th>Professional recognition (for employment purposes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulated by:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Regulated by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International conventions,</td>
<td>National legislation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral or multi-lateral agreements among states,</td>
<td>EU directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operation programmes in education</td>
<td>Documents adopted by international professional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment carried out by:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment carried out by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Academic recognition information centres (ENIC and NARIC),</td>
<td>employers, governmental bodies, professional bodies, (often upon advice by ENIC/NARIC centres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision taken by:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decision taken by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
<td>Employers (in non-regulated professions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National recognition bodies (some countries)</td>
<td>Professional or governmental bodies (in regulated professions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the purpose of the two kinds of recognition is different and although the outcome can be different, it is not difficult to notice that both have much in common. And, since the general aim should be to both stimulate the mobility of students and the workforce within Europe, the synergies between academic and professional recognition should be used as much as possible.

The EU Commission “Communication on the synergies of academic and professional recognition” further divides the academic and professional recognition in each of the two sub-cases, see Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Sub-cases of academic and professional recognition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic recognition</th>
<th>Professional recognition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative academic recognition</strong> - the applicant has completed studies for a full qualification (degree, diploma) in one country, and applies for studies for the next subsequent qualification in another country.</td>
<td><strong>De jure professional recognition</strong> – recognition for professional purposes in regulated professions i.e. in those cases in which either the education leading to a profession or the pursuit of the particular professional activity are regulated by legal acts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic recognition by substitution</strong> i.e. recognition of applicant’s studies abroad (e.g. within the framework of EU education programmes in order to substitute a part of the programme of studies in the host country.</td>
<td><strong>De facto professional recognition</strong> – recognition of a foreign qualification for professional purposes in those cases where the professional activity or the appropriate education is not regulated by legal acts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above Communication stresses the similarities between cumulative academic recognition and de facto professional recognition. In both cases it is recognition of full qualifications. If the particular profession is not regulated by any national laws or EU directives, the final recognition decision lies with the employers. In the recent years the employers have in many cases demonstrated their interest in using holders of foreign qualifications – in order to internationalize their businesses and to bring fresh ideas to the appropriate fields. However, the employers need assistance in assessing the foreign qualifications - simply because they are not familiar with foreign education systems and it is therefore difficult for them to compare the foreign qualifications with the ones earned in the home country. This is the point where the European recognition networks ENIC and NARIC and individual ENIC/NARIC centres can be very helpful – knowing the foreign education systems and being familiar with the qualifications they can advise the employers in the matters of de facto recognition. This aspect becomes particularly important within the context of the Bologna Declaration. Twenty-nine countries have declared to create a European higher education space and they have taken the obligation to ensure that by 2010 even the first degree of university-type higher education should be “spendable on the European labour market”. The Bologna Declaration is a real challenge for the European recognition networks that have to develop tools and mechanisms to be fully ready for advising employers on the matters of de facto recognition.

Another challenge to the European recognition specialists is recognition of non-traditional qualifications since it is likely that the role and importance of lifelong learning should continue growing, especially within the context of the process initiated by the Bologna Declaration.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION – LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR APPLICATION

Lisbon Convention
The main international legal instrument for academic recognition is the Council of Europe- UNESCO joint “Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region” (the Lisbon Convention) adopted April 11, 1997 in Lisbon. The UNESCO Europe region is larger than the geographical Europe, therefore the Convention has been signed not only by European states, but also by the USA, Canada and Israel. Some non-European countries have acquired the right to sign the Lisbon Convention as successors of the former Soviet Union.

The Lisbon Convention replaces six former conventions of the Council of Europe and UNESCO in the recognition field and it covers academic recognition of access qualifications to higher education, higher education qualifications and study periods.

Compared to the previous conventions, the Lisbon Convention substantially changes and stimulates recognition of qualifications. One should however take into account that the Convention as a legal document is not always easy to read and should therefore be studied together with its explanatory report, where the ideas behind the legal text are explained in more detail.

From equivalence to recognition
All the previous conventions stress the “equivalence” of qualifications. Taking into account the wide diversity of the education systems, teaching methodologies, textbooks and other teaching aids, different duration of practical placements and different role of thesis in the study workload, different understanding of the divide between “university” and “non-university” higher education in different countries, two qualifications awarded in two different countries (and often just by two different institutions in the same country) today cannot, even in principle, be “equivalent”. This is the reason why the Lisbon Convention is about ‘recognition” and not “equivalence”. When signing and ratifying the Lisbon Convention, a state has to fully agree to the principle, that it will have to recognize a foreign qualification of the same level, even if it has not been earned in exactly the same way unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the foreign and the appropriate host country qualification.

Substantial differences
Qualifications of approximately equal level may show considerable differences in terms of content, profile, and learning outcomes (see chapter Draft Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures below). In the pure academic recognition sense, substantial differences mean that the differences between the foreign qualification and the appropriate host country qualification are so big, that the applicant is unable to follow the chosen route for further studies to which holders of the appropriate host country qualification are admitted.

For the cases where the differences are proved to be substantial the Draft Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures encourage the competent authorities to seek if alternative, partial or conditional recognition is possible.
It is important to note, that the Convention stipulates, that it is the duty of the Party or institution undertaking the assessment to demonstrate that the differences in question are substantial\(^2\).

**Decisions upon recognition**

In most States Parties to the Convention the final decision in the academic recognition lies with the higher education institutions in which the applicants seek admission for their further studies. Mechanisms of cooperation between the HEI and the ENIC centre of the appropriate Party can be different. Most countries report, that the recognition statement issued by the ENIC/NARIC centre formally has the status of an advice to the HEI, but in practice, when making recognition decisions, the HEI usually follow this advice. In some countries, however, the decision-making power in recognition is given to a state institution, which may at the same time be the ENIC centre of that country.

**Role of information provision**

The spirit of the Lisbon Convention strongly relates recognition firstly, to mutual trust among the Parties and, secondly, to provision of adequate information by each Party. It was evident before adoption of the Lisbon Convention, that lack of relevant information was one of the main obstacles for recognition. The Lisbon Convention establishes a framework for information provision. Apart from the applicant’s own responsibility to provide all relevant information, it also establishes a duty for the institutions having issued the qualifications to provide, upon request, relevant information to the holder of the qualification, to the HEI, or the competent authorities of the country in which recognition is sought. In order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications, each State Party to the Convention has to ensure that adequate and clear information on its education system is provided. The most important required information issues are even listed in the Convention, especially encouraging use of the Diploma Supplement, which in its final form has been designed by a joint working party established by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The Convention stipulates also that for provision of relevant information each Party shall establish or maintain a national information centre and that these centres form the European Network of National Information Centres on academic mobility and recognition (the ENIC Network).

**Implementation of the Lisbon Convention**

Main instruments for implementation are the Intergovernmental Convention Committee and the ENIC network. While the Intergovernmental Committee has the power to adopt additional texts to the Convention, the ENIC network implements the Convention through its everyday activities in recognition and information provision. As well, the ENIC network identifies the needs of new recognition-related activities and undertakes such activities. ENIC working parties also elaborate drafts of the Convention supplementary documents.

**Diploma Supplement (see AnnexIII)**

The Joint European Diploma Supplement has been designed as a tool that aids both academic and professional recognition. The DS is in fact a standardized format for provision of relevant information, which should be issued together with the qualification (degree, diploma, certificate, etc.). It has been elaborated by a joint EU, Council of Europe and UNESCO working party and tested in a Europe-wide pilot project in 1998. The main features of the DS standardized format are the following:

- information regarding the level of the qualification, the type and status of the awarding institution and the programme followed by the applicant is described;

- the above information is given in such a way that it does not contain any value judgments or indications regarding possible recognition or equivalence in other countries. Rather, it provides sufficient information to academic and/or professional recognition bodies, foreign HEI or employers for the purpose of objective assessment and decision upon recognition;

- the information regarding workload, contents and results, is provided together with important additional information, e.g. grading scale applied, thus easing the work of recognition authorities. Where ECTS is used, ECTS transcript can replace this part of the Diploma Supplement;

- the function of the qualification within the national framework is clearly stated, both as to admission to further studies and to the professional status of the holder;

\(^2\) In other words, it is not the responsibility of the applicant to prove that the differences are not substantial. If the substantial differences have not been clearly demonstrated by the body undertaking the assessment, the applicant has his/her rights to appeal.
the information is organized in such a way that it is possible to locate the qualification in question within the framework of the national education system of the country where the qualification has been issued. For this reason a short description of the education system of that country is included.

As was evident from the results of the European pilot project, the DS is widely appreciated by the HEI, ENIC/NARIC centres, employers’ organizations, Thematic networks etc. Since approval of the DS by the three international organizations, many countries have undertaken activities towards the introduction of DS. The wide introduction of DS is also seen as one of the tools for the successful implementation of the Bologna Declaration.

Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures

At its second meeting in Riga in 20001 the Intergovernmental Committee of the Lisbon Convention approved the Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (RCP). The Recommendations serve as a subsidiary text to the Convention. The draft was originally prepared by an ENIC working party at the end of 1997 and updated by an ad hoc working party in spring 2000 to take into account the developments, after adoption of the Lisbon Convention, such as the findings of the ENIC working parties on refugee qualifications and on transnational education. Wherever it was possible, the ad hoc WP made efforts to adapt RCP to new principles laid down by the Bologna Declaration.

As regards assessment procedures, RCP lays down several general principles such as transparency, coherence and reliability, avoiding unnecessary translations, authentification of documents, special measures in the case of refugees. These are all important in the view of avoiding unnecessary complicated procedures that might in some cases per se make it impossible for the applicant to receive a recognition within his or her available limits of time and resources. However, RCP also provides a more detailed view at the assessment criteria.

The issue of substantial differences is elaborated in detail in view of substantial differences in learning outcomes, in access to further activities, in key elements of the programme (stressing that comparability of programme elements should be analyzed only with a view to the comparability of outcomes and access to further activities, and not as a necessary condition for recognition in their own right) and, finally, differences in the quality of programme/institution.

It is stressed in RCP that wherever a full recognition is impossible due to substantial differences, the competent authority should look for possibilities of granting an alternative recognition that could be one of the following:

(i) recognition of the foreign qualification as comparable to a qualification of the host country, but not to that indicated by the applicant;
(ii) partial recognition of the foreign qualification;
(iii) full or partial recognition of the foreign qualification subject to the applicant successfully taking additional examinations or aptitude tests;
(iv) full or partial recognition of the foreign qualification at the end of a probationary period, possibly subject to specified conditions.

After adoption by the Convention Committee, the RCP should become a useful tool ensuring that the same procedures and criteria are being used throughout Europe. With the Bologna process progressing, RCP should become more and more useful also for the “de facto” professional recognition which often includes a phase of “academic recognition for professional purposes” where the employer seeks advice from the academic recognition bodies.

UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Transnational education is a relatively new and rapidly expanding development. It is defined as all types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a state different from the state in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

Development of transnational education has its positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, when high quality education becomes available on a transnational basis, it is a good option for the learners and a challenge for the national systems to become more flexible and to develop faster. In addition, education provision via Internet, for which no national borders exist, is likely to expand very rapidly, especially within the context of LLL. On the other hand, quite a few countries, Parties to the Convention report a growing number of institutions/programmes of unknown quality operating transnationally in their territories. It is reported that quite often the provision of transnational programmes lacks any transparency and that it is very difficult to obtain any information. At the same time, there sometimes is evidence available, that transnational institutions/programmes may have substantially lower access requirements\(^3\), or issue “easy” qualifications.

\(^3\) Compared to admission requirements of the “receiving” country, but sometimes also with the “mother” institution.
The need to address the issue of transnational education was raised by both sides of this development. The Lisbon Convention, in principle, applies to the recognition of foreign qualifications or qualifications conferred “in another Party”, and it as such is not directly applicable to the qualifications delivered through transnational education. The issue regarding recognition of qualifications delivered transnationally by institutions that belong (in the full sense) to a national education system of another Party of the Convention is the easier part of the problem and can be partly solved within the framework of the Convention. Apart from that, there is an additional question regarding recognition of qualifications awarded by those programmes/institutions, which, in fact, do not belong to any national system.

In order to find solutions for the recognition of TE qualification, an ENIC WP on Transnational Education was set up which elaborated the Draft Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education. The basic principle of the Code is simple – to lay down requirements, which a provider of TE has to comply with in order to ensure, that the qualifications issued will be assessed in accordance with the stipulations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

These requirements basically include: requirements for transparency and information provision upon request from the receiving country’s authorities, obligations to comply with the legislation of both the sending and receiving countries, requirements for proficiency of the staff involved in provision of transnational education, as well as requirements regarding the student workload.

According to the Code, it is the responsibility of the awarding institution to maintain the quality and standards of the programmes delivered through TE. The awarding institution is also responsible for the information provided by the agents in its name.

The Code will serve as a guide for the TE providers who wish to see their qualifications recognized in the receiving countries, and it will encourage the receiving countries to recognize such TE qualifications, which are provided in compliance with the Code.

Guidelines for the recognition of refugee qualifications

It is sad to recognize, but the issue on refugees, which unfortunately has never lost its importance on the world scale, has become increasingly important in Europe in the past decade. A successful integration of refugees certainly requires recognition of their qualifications. Instead, numerous refugees are today unemployed or obliged to restart education or training already completed in their home country and recognition difficulties are often one of the key issues in their integration.

The Lisbon Convention (Art VII) sets a duty to its Parties to take all feasible and reasonable steps to develop procedures for assessment of refugee qualifications with a view to their access to higher education, further HE studies or employment “even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence”.

The report of the Danish Refugee Council “Assessment and Recognition of Refugees’ Qualifications in the European Community” (1998) identified a number of recognition-related problems. The assessment of a refugee qualification calls for a different approach than that normally used by credential evaluators. Instead of assessing a qualification on the basis of a well documented file, credential evaluators often have to assess refugee qualifications on the basis of incomplete – or entirely missing – information about both the individual qualification and the system from which it hails.

The working party of the CoE elaborated “Draft guidelines for the recognition of refugee qualifications” which can be used by Parties of the Lisbon Convention to fulfil their duty set out in Art. VII.

Some of the main issues of the Guidelines are the following. In the case of missing documented information credential evaluators are encouraged to also accept supporting evidence, such as teachers’ statements about the followed educational training, a published list of registered students, student IDs, students’ index, transcripts, admittance to State Examinations, professional status.

Taking into account that in the case of refugees, time has an especially high value, the Guidelines encourage evaluators to make all efforts in speeding up the assessment so that refugees don’t miss the beginning of the academic year. Refugees should be able to obtain an advisory statement that can be used as a reliable tool in job searching, career guidance, etc. In the cases where there are substantial differences between the

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4 I.e. the other Party to the Convention monitors the transnational provision of its programmes thus ensuring that the quality of provision and qualification requirements do not differ substantially from those qualifications offered within that other Party.

5 receiving country – the country in whose territory TE programme(s) are provided.

6 awarding institution – the institution whose qualifications are being awarded upon completion of a TE programme (in another country)
qualification held by a refugee and the local one, suitable adaptation courses to bridge the gaps and shortfalls should be encouraged to avoid starting from scratch.

The WG proposes use of a “background paper” – a valuable practical tool for the credential evaluator to reconstruct the educational background of the refugee and for the refugee to affirm his or her academic achievements towards other evaluating bodies, like universities and employers, in order to gain access to further studies or an appropriate job.

The background paper contains two parts: (1) An overview of the claimed educational background with the available documents and supporting evidence and (2) A checklist, based upon the Diploma Supplement model, that can be used by the credential evaluator to add more relevant information.

The checklist uses the clear and precise information provision model, developed in the Diploma Supplement and proved in the Europe-wide pilot project. It is likely that with the wider introduction of the Diploma Supplement in Europe, European HE institutions and employers will become more and more familiar with the information format applied, therefore they should also feel comfortable using the background paper as a similar format for presentation of (the partly documented) refugee’s qualifications.

**Academic recognition of foreign qualifications in Latvia**

In Latvia, academic recognition of foreign qualifications is regulated by the Article 11.1. of the Education law and Articles 84 and 85 of the Law on Higher Educational establishments.

The final decision regarding the recognition of a foreign degree/diploma is taken by that higher education institution, in which the applicant is willing to continue his/her studies.

The Law stipulates higher education institutions take their decision upon advise of the Latvian Academic Information centre (Latvian member of the European recognition networks ENIC and NARIC). Academic Information centre assesses the foreign degree/diploma and issues a statement which serves as a recommendation for the higher education institutions and can be also presented to the potential employers in non-regulated professions.

**Academic Information centre Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications in Latvia**

These recommendations are based upon the adopted by the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications

1. Holders of foreign qualifications must have adequate access, upon request, to an assessment of their qualifications.
2. The provisions referring to the assessment of foreign qualifications shall apply also, to the assessment of periods of study.
3. Procedures and criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications should be transparent, coherent and reliable, and they should periodically be reviewed with a view to increasing transparency, taking account of developments in the education field and eliminating requirements leading to undue complications in the procedure.
4. In the assessment of foreign qualifications concerning higher education, the international and national legal frameworks should be applied in a flexible way with a view to making recognition possible.
5. Where, after thorough consideration of the case, the competent recognition authority reaches the conclusion that recognition cannot be granted in accordance with the applicant's request, alternative or partial recognition should be considered.
6. In all cases where the decision is different from the recognition requested by the applicant, including in cases where no form of recognition is possible, the competent recognition authority should inform the applicant of the reasons for the decision reached and his or her possibilities for appealing against it.
7. The result of recognition recognition is issued in a form of statement addressed either to the holder of qualification, or to whom it may concern.
8. While the aim of assessments should be to assess applicants’ foreign qualifications in qualitative terms, it is realised that quantitative criteria will have to be used to a certain extent. Their use should, however, be limited to cases where quantitative criteria are relevant to quality and may supplement qualitative criteria.

**Assessment procedures**

9. Academic information centre, should provide applicants with the information on the procedures and criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications concerning higher education. This information should automatically be given to all applicants as well as to persons making preliminary inquiries about the assessment of their foreign qualifications.
10. The time normally required to process recognition applications, counted from such time as all relevant information has been provided by applicants and/or higher education institutions, should be specified to applicants. Applications should be processed as promptly as possible, and the time of processing should not exceed three months.

11. Academic information centre should provide advice to individuals enquiring about the possibilities and procedures for submitting formal applications for the recognition or assessment of their foreign qualifications. As appropriate, in the best interests of the individual, informal advice should also be provided in the course of, as well as after, the formal assessment of the applicants’ qualifications, if required.

12. Academic information centre should draw up an inventory of typical recognition cases and/or a comparative overview of other education systems or qualifications in relation to that of their own country as an aid in making recognition decisions consistent. If necessary, for the benefit of applicants, information and individual advice could be made available to applicants also afterwards.

**Information on the qualification for which recognition is sought**

13. The responsibility for providing information on the qualification for which recognition is sought is shared by applicants, higher education institutions at which the qualifications in question were awarded and the competent recognition authority undertaking the assessment as specified in the Lisbon Recognition Convention, in particular in its Articles III.3 and III.4. Higher education institutions are strongly encouraged to issue a Diploma Supplement in order to facilitate the evaluation of the qualifications concerned, in particular by credential evaluators and potential employers.

14. In cases where refugees, persons in a refugee-like situation or others for good reason cannot document the qualifications they claim, credential evaluators are encouraged to create and use a Background Paper giving an overview of the qualifications or periods of study claimed with all available documents and supporting evidence.

**Translation**

15. Academic information centre should accept documents without translation, if they are in English, German or Russian language. Translations may be required if the original document is in other languages than the aforementioned ones. In all cases when the translation is submitted, the applicant has to present the original qualification.

16. As a rule, titles of foreign qualifications should be provided in the original language, without translation.

**Verification of the authenticity of documents**

17. In view of the increasing occurrence of falsified diplomas and other documents, verification of the authenticity of documents is becoming increasingly important. Such verification seeks to establish:

- (i) whether the documents in question are genuine, i.e. whether they have been issued by the institution indicated in the document and whether they have not subsequently been unlawfully altered by the applicant or others; and
- (ii) whether the documents in question have in fact been rightfully issued to the applicant.

18. While the need to establish the authenticity of documents as a part of the assessment procedure is therefore very real, this need should nonetheless be balanced against the burdens placed upon applicants. The basic rules of procedure should assume that most applicants are honest, but they should give the Academic Information centre the opportunity to require stronger evidence of authenticity whenever they suspect that documents may be forged. While certified photocopies of documents will be sufficient in most cases, Academic Information centre should be in a position to require original documents where this is considered necessary for the purpose of detecting or preventing the use of forged documents.

19. In the case of refugees, displaced persons and others who for good reasons, and in spite of their best persistent efforts, are unable to document their claimed qualifications, it should be considered whether alternative ways of recognising these qualifications may be found. Such measures should be adapted to the circumstances of their recognition application and could include ordinary or specially arranged examinations, interviews with staff of higher education institutions and/or the competent recognition authority and sworn statements before a legally competent authority.

**Assessment criteria**

**Status of the institution**

20. In view of the wide diversity of higher education institutions and of the developments in transnational education, the status of a qualification cannot be established without taking into account the status of the institution and/or programme through which the qualification was awarded.

21. Academic information centre should seek to establish whether the higher education institution belongs to the higher education system of a State party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and/or belonging to the European Region. In the case of qualifications awarded by higher education institutions established through transnational...
arrangements, the credential evaluator should analyze these arrangements on the basis of the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the provision of transnational education.  
22. Some countries have established a system of formal assessment of their higher education institutions and programmes. When evaluating qualifications from such systems, Academic information centre should take due account of the results of the formal assessment process.

Assessment of individual qualifications

23. Before undertaking the assessment, the competent Academic information centre should establish which national and international legal texts are relevant to the case, and whether these require any specific decision to be reached or procedure to be followed.
25. The assessment should also take into account past practice in similar recognition cases, in order to ensure consistency in recognition practice. Past practice should be a guide, and any substantial change of practice should be justified.
26. The assessment of a foreign qualification should identify the qualification in the Latvian education system which is most comparable to the foreign qualification, taking into account the purpose for which recognition is sought. In the case of a qualification belonging to a foreign system of education, the assessment should take into account its relative place and function compared to other qualifications in the same system.
27. Qualifications of approximately equal level may show considerable differences in terms of content, profile and learning outcomes. In the assessment of foreign qualifications, these differences should be considered in a flexible way, and only substantial differences in view of the purpose for which recognition is sought (e.g. academic or de facto professional recognition) should lead to partial recognition or non-recognition of the foreign qualifications.
28. Recognition of foreign qualifications should be granted unless a substantial difference can be demonstrated between the qualification for which recognition is requested and the relevant qualification of Latvia. In applying this principle, the assessment should seek to establish whether:
   (a) the differences in learning outcomes between the foreign qualification and the relevant qualification of Latvia are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted;
   (b) the differences in access to further activities (such as further study, research activities, the exercise of gainful employment) between the foreign qualification and the relevant qualification of Latvia are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted;
   (c) the differences in key elements of the programme(s) leading to the qualification in comparison to the programme(s) leading to the relevant qualification of Latvia are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted;
   (d) Academic information centre can document that the differences in the quality of the programme and/or institution at which the qualification was awarded in relation to the quality of the programmes and/or institutions granting the similar qualification in terms of which recognition is sought in Latvia are too substantial to allow the recognition of the foreign qualification as requested by the applicant. If so, the assessment should seek to establish whether alternative, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted.
29. Where formal rights attach to a certain foreign qualification in the home country, the qualification should be evaluated with a view to giving the holder comparable formal rights in Latvia, in so far as these exist and they arise from the knowledge and skills certified by the qualification.
30. The recognition of qualifications issued several years ago may be more problematic than the recognition of recent qualifications. To what extent a qualification is outdated will depend on the field concerned as well as the activities undertaken by the applicant since the qualification was issued. In general terms, older qualifications should be recognised along the same lines as similar qualifications issued in Latvia. It may be considered whether relevant work experience may compensate for updated qualifications.
31. Academic information centre should be encouraged to focus on the learning outcomes and competencies, as well as the quality of the delivery of an educational programme and to consider its duration as merely one indication of the level of achievement reached at the end of the programme. The assessment process should acknowledge that recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, different forms of access to higher education, double degrees and life-long learning will all shorten the duration of some academic qualifications without diminishing the learning outcomes and a decision not to grant recognition should not be motivated by duration alone.
32. The assessment of a foreign qualification should focus on the qualification for which recognition is sought. Previous levels of education should be considered only where these levels have a serious bearing on the
outcome of the assessment and should, as far as possible, be limited to qualifications of a level immediately preceding the qualification for which recognition is sought.

33. In undertaking the assessment, Academic information centre should apply their know-how and best professional skills and take note of all relevant published information. Where adequate information on the learning outcomes embodied in the qualification is available, this should take precedence in the assessment over consideration of the education programme which has led to the qualification.

**The outcome of the assessment**

34. According to the Latvian law and practice, the outcome of the assessment of a foreign qualification may take the form of a statement to the applicant or to whom it may concern (e.g. current or prospective employers, higher education institutions etc.) providing a comparison of the foreign qualification with similar qualifications in Latvia, without being a formal recognition decision. Such statement serves as a recommendation to the above institutions when taking the final decision upon recognition of the applicants’ qualification.

35. The ENIC Network as well as competent authorities should elaborate models for standardised assessment statements at European and/or national level. To facilitate international recognition, assessment agencies should use these standardised statements as far as possible.

36. Where recognition cannot be granted according to an applicant's request, Academic information centre should, as far and as precisely as possible, assist the applicant in identifying remedial measures the applicants may undertake in order to obtain recognition at a later stage.

**SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION IN LATVIA**

(see graphic outline on next page)

In the following, a schematic outline will be given of the recommended procedure for the assessment of foreign qualifications or periods of study in Latvia. This is intended as a summary checklist. In practice, the sequence of the steps outlined may vary, or several steps may be taken simultaneously.

**Step 1**

Receipt of the inquiry or application by Academic information centre.
Acknowledgement of receipt; information to the applicant about procedures and criteria.

*Proceed to step 2.*

**Step 2**

Academic information centre verifies whether all necessary information is supplied.
*If no: AIC gathers further information from the applicant or higher education institution(s)*
*If yes: proceed to step 3*

**Step 3**

AIC verifies whether the applicant's qualification is authentic, and whether the documents submitted have in fact been rightfully issued to the applicant.
*If no: (i.e. the qualification is false): recognition refused.*
*If yes: proceed to step 4.*

**Step 4**

AIC verifies whether the institution and/or programme having issued the qualification is recognized as belonging to a system of higher education. In the case of transnational education, AIC verifies whether the awarding institution complies with the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.
*If no: recognition would normally not be granted.*
*If yes: proceed to step 5.*

**Step 5**

AIC assesses the foreign qualification, taking into account:

(i) the purpose for which recognition is sought;
(ii) formal regulations
   (a) Latvian laws
   (b) international Conventions, directives, Recommendations, good practice, etc.
(iii) past practice in similar cases;
the content of the qualification, to the extent that this completes items (i) - (iii); information and advice from other ENICs, higher education institutions or other sources. Academic information centre should seek to answer questions such as:

(a) are the differences in (targeted or achieved) learning outcomes so substantial that the foreign qualification cannot be fully recognised? If so, is it possible to grant alternative or partial recognition?
(b) are the differences in the further activities for which the foreign and the home country qualifications prepare so substantial that full recognition is not possible? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?
(c) are the differences in key elements of the programme leading to the qualification so substantial in relation to similar programmes in the host country that full recognition cannot be granted in view of the purpose for which recognition is sought? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?
(d) is the quality of the programme or the institution at which the qualification was earned so different from similar programmes or institutions in the host country that full recognition is not possible? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?

**Step 6**

The assessment statement on the foreign qualification is issued (the outcome of the assessment). According to the Latvian laws and practice, it is in the form of advice to another institution, which will then make the decision; and is issued as a statement to the applicant or to whom it may concern (e.g. current or prospective employers, higher education institutions, etc.).

*If positive decision* by (i) or (ii): recognition granted, applicant satisfied.

*If negative decision:* the reason(s) for the decision should be clearly stated and the applicant informed of his or her possibilities for appeal.

The applicant may:

(a) accept the verdict;
(b) appeal the verdict.
SCHEMATICAL OUTLINE OF THE RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE 
FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION

**Step 1**
Receive application

**Step 2**
Verification of whether all necessary information is supplied.
If no: gather information
If yes:

**Step 3**
Verification of whether qualification is authentic
If no: recognition refused
If yes:

**Step 4**
Verification if institution and are recognized
If no: recognition normally not granted
If yes:

**Step 5**
Assessment of the foreign qualification
taking into account:
(i) the purpose for which recognition is sought;
(ii) formal regulations (laws, conventions, directives)
(iii) past practice in similar cases;
(iv) the content of the qualification,
to the extent that this complements items (i) - (iii);
(v) information and advice from other ENICs, 
HE institutions, etc.

**Step 6**
Issue assessment statement of the qualification

Decision negative: reasons for decision should be clarified, applicant may appeal

Decision positive: recognition granted, applicant satisfied

Receipt of the inquiry or application by the competent recognition authority. Acknowledgement of receipt; information to the applicant about procedures and criteria.

Gather further information from the applicant or higher education institution(s)

Verification of whether the applicant's qualification is authentic, and whether the documents submitted have in fact been rightfully issued to the applicant.

In the case of transnational education, verification of whether the institution complies with the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.

The assessment should seek to answer questions such as:
(a) are the differences in (targeted or achieved) learning outcomes so substantial that the qualification cannot be fully recognised?
(b) are the differences in the further activities for which the foreign and the home country qualifications prepare so substantial that full recognition is not possible?
(c) are the differences in key elements of the programme leading to the qualification so substantial that full recognition cannot be granted in view of the purpose for which recognition is sought?
(d) is the quality of the programme or institution at which the qualification was earned so different from similar programmes or institutions in the host country that full recognition is not possible?

If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?

Depending on national laws and practice, this may take the form of:
(i) advice to institution, which will make the decision;
(ii) a decision;
(iii) a statement to the applicant or to whom it may concern.

If decision is negative, the reason(s) for the decision should be clearly stated and the applicant informed of his or her possibilities for appeal.
The applicant may:
(a) accept the verdict;
(b) appeal the verdict.
PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Political background
Since the Treaty of Rome (1957), every citizen of a Member State of the European Union (EU) has been free to practise a profession, provide services or set up a business in any other Member State. There may be no discrimination on the basis of nationality. The 15 EU countries, plus the other three countries that belong to the European Economic Area (EEA) (Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland), together make up the Single Internal European Market, which is characterized by the free movement of persons, services, capital and goods.
The countries that form the Single Market all have their own education systems and national diplomas. For a person who wishes to practise a profession in another Member Country, it can be a problem that a qualification recognized in one country is not always automatically recognized in the other country.
The Sectoral directives and the General System directives are aimed at making certain professions more accessible in other EU and EEA countries. Latvia, among other EU candidate countries, has adapted its legal system in order to implement the EU directives for professional recognition.

REGULATED AND NON-REGULATED PROFESSIONS
The recognition of qualifications for professional (employment) purposes depends largely on the answer to the question if the profession in question is or is not regulated in the host country.
The profession is regulated if the national legislation of the host country stipulates that the take up or pursuit of this profession in question is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of laws, regulations or administrative provisions, to the possession of evidence of education and training (or an attestation of competence).
It is up to each country, which professions it chooses to regulate and which not. In most cases national legal systems regulate those professions, in which a low-grade or improper action of a professional can cause threat to life or health, or possible material or moral loss. Most countries regulate a number of professions related to medicine and pharmacy, veterinary, architecture and building, law, transport, etc. Most countries regulate also the profession of hairdresser, while e.g. teaching or engineering professions may be regulated in some countries but not regulated in others. Some countries have chosen to regulate very specific professions: skiing instructor, church organist and even gravedigger.
If a profession is not regulated, formally a holder of a foreign qualification does not have to seek any recognition. It is the employer who takes the real decision regarding employment of a holder of foreign qualification. If the employer fully trusts the foreign qualification in question, he may well take a decision to employ the holder without any additional assessment of his qualification. In practice however the employer usually wants to be sure that the foreign qualification is useful, compared to the level of learning outcomes, specific knowledge and skills required for the corresponding home qualification. For this reason the employers frequently seek advice from those institutions, which carry out academic recognition. This leads to the “academic recognition for professional purposes” or “de facto” professional recognition which is becoming more and more important within the process initiated by Bologna Declaration (see chapter below).
If a profession is regulated, the state nominates competent authorities, which take the decisions upon recognition of foreign qualifications for the purposes of take up and pursuit of the profession in question. Apart from assessment of the foreign education credential, the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purposes of take up or pursuit of a regulated profession involves checking if the professional has fulfilled a whole set of additional requirements for taking up the profession in his/her home country. This may involve practice periods upon completion of the education/training programme, testing of a specific knowledge or skill required for the pursuit of the profession, in some cases membership of professional organizations.
While protecting customers, consumers, patients etc. from low quality professional services, the national legislation in the field of regulated professions may well create unnecessary difficulties for professionals holding other countries’ qualifications. In order to facilitate free movement, which is a fundamental right of an EU citizen, the EC has adopted directives dealing with the recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications for the purpose of the pursuit of regulated professions.
The European Commission first tried to use Sectoral directives to regulate access to each regulated profession separately. The Sectoral directives call for far-reaching harmonization of study programmes in terms of content.
and duration. It did succeed for certain professions (doctor, dentist, nurse, midwife, pharmacist, architect, veterinary surgeon and lawyer).

But negotiating the necessary agreements for each profession proved so difficult and time-consuming (the directive for architects took 17 years to finalize, for example) that effort shifted to a search for a general system for mutual recognition. The result was the directives of the General System. This system is based on the premise that the programmes of study and training through which people in the various Member States prepare themselves for a particular regulated profession are in principle of equal validity. As long as certain minimum conditions are met, completion of any of these programmes should provide access to the same regulated profession in any Member State. In no way are study programmes harmonized in advance.

The EU directives in the field of professional recognition apply to EU member states, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. EU candidate countries are preparing their national legislation so as to apply these directives from the moment of accession.

**SECTORAL DIRECTIVES**

The EC has adopted sectoral directives regarding the recognition of qualifications in the professions of doctor, dentist, nurse of general care, midwife, pharmacist, veterinary surgeon, architect and lawyer. The Sectoral directives make it possible for persons trained in one Member State to practise their profession in another Member State after their names have been included in the appropriate professional register.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Directive No</th>
<th>Adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>doctor</td>
<td>93/16/EEC</td>
<td>05 Apr 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurse of general care</td>
<td>77/453/EEC</td>
<td>27 Jun 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dentist</td>
<td>78/687/EEC</td>
<td>25 Jul 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>midwife</td>
<td>80/155/EEC</td>
<td>21 Jan 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pharmacist</td>
<td>85/432/EEC</td>
<td>16 Sep 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veterinary surgeon</td>
<td>78/1027/EEC</td>
<td>18 Dec 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>architect</td>
<td>85/384/EEC</td>
<td>10 Jun 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lawyer</td>
<td>98/5/EC</td>
<td>16 Feb 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sectoral directives establish that:

- the education and training necessary for the pursuit of the profession in question is harmonized throughout EU;
- the recognition of qualifications covered by sectoral directives in EU is automatic.

“Harmonization” of education and training does not mean that the programmes leading towards the qualification in question should be identical. Each of the sectoral directives stipulates the minimum requirements, which should be followed. The scope of issues to be harmonized varies substantially between different sectoral directives. For instance, according to the doctors’ directive mainly the duration of basic medical training and specialized training in different specialties should be harmonized. In contrast, however, the dentists’ directive also contains the list of courses, which should be included in the dentists’ training programme. This difference is not by hazard. Listing of courses stresses that the directive is about “dentists” who are trained separately from doctors from the very beginning of their education and not about “stomatologists” who are trained in some member states as one of the sub-specialties of doctors – i.e. the training of a “stomatologist” in its initial phases is identical to the training of a doctor. The same could be said about the architects’ directive. This directive stipulates the presence of subjects such as drawing, history of arts and history of architecture to establish a difference between a professional who has been trained as an architect and a civil engineer practicing in architecture, as is allowed in some member states.

At accession of new member states, their training in professions covered by sectoral directives is assessed by European-level professional organizations. The new member state will enjoy automatic recognition of its professionals in other member states after the annex to the appropriate directive is amended by the name of the profession in question in its national language and a list of education institutions entitled to award the professional qualification in the new member state.

7 nurse of general care. General systems’ directives cover other nursing professions.
EU DIRECTIVES ESTABLISHING A GENERAL SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

As already mentioned above, there are certain conditions which limited the further preparation of sectoral directives. Firstly, it is generally accepted that even with a greater level of integration, the member states should have the possibility to keep their national education systems, whereas harmonization of training for regulated professions works in the opposite direction. Secondly, the drafting process and seeking agreement from all member states is a labour- and time-consuming process. Because of these and other reasons, two directives have been adopted which establish a general system for recognition: Directive 89/48/EEC of 21 December 1988 “On a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years’ duration” and Directive 92/51/EEC of 18 June 1992 “On a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training to supplement Directive 89/48/EEC”.

A third directive was added to the system in 1999: 99/42/EC. This replaced several directives related to liberalization and Transitional Measures.

While Directive 89/48/EEC covers the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded upon completion of a course of at least 3 years’ duration, the Directive 92/51/EEC covers recognition of:

- diplomas (NB! – the definitions of diploma in 89/48/EEC and in 92/51/EEC are different) awarded upon completion of at least one year (but less than three years) of higher education studies;
- certificates – documents issued after completion of a secondary vocational course or a course of vocational training after completion of general secondary education,
- attestation of competence - evidence of qualifications that does not necessarily involve formal training but can be awarded upon assessment of personal qualities, aptitude or knowledge and fulfils all the necessary conditions for take up or pursuit of a regulated profession in home MS.

Application of Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC

There are some important points that should be noted regarding the general system(s).

1. Like in the case of academic recognition (see page 7), the general system directives require to recognize qualifications of other member states unless substantial differences can be demonstrated.

2. One has to note however, that, although recognition of the texts of directives mention diplomas (89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC) or certificates (92/51/EEC), the definition of diploma (certificate) is quite different form the usual understanding of diploma as an education credential.

A diploma (certificate) in the understanding of EU general systems’ directives is a document or set of documents including documented evidence of completing a course of education PLUS (where appropriate) additional professional training completed after the course of education so that it altogether “shows that the holder has the professional qualifications required for the taking up or pursuit of a regulated profession” in the home country. In other words, the general system is about recognition of the full set of evidence that the holder is qualified to take up/pursuit of a regulated profession in the home MS rather than about recognition of just education credentials.

3. It is important to note that in some cases the professionals holding a full qualification in their home countries, can be faced with recognition difficulties because there are substantial differences among the character of profession in home and host countries. These differences in character of professions can be caused by geographical, historical, cultural differences, so sometimes the actual question is: is it the same profession you are seeking recognition for?

4. The intention behind the directives is that everyone should have the right to practice his/ her profession in all EU/EEA countries. However, there are certain conditions (see Annex II for details):

- if the profession is regulated in the host country, but not in the home country, the host country can require that the person has pursued the profession for two years within the last 10-year period;
- if the education and training in the home country has been one year shorter, than in host country, a professional experience can be required;

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8 For the purposes of taking up/ pursuit of a regulated profession.
9 Therefore the distinction between diploma (89/48) and diploma (92/51) will be noted in the further text where appropriate.
10 In the case of Directive 92/51/EEC also of attestation of competence
12 Directive 89/48/EEC also of attestation of competence
13 e.g. some agricultural professions can be substantially different in northern and southern countries, a profession of skiing instructor is substantially different in mountain countries to that in flat countries, profession of tourism guide depends very much on the cultural and historical background of the country etc. 
14 Professional experience = “the actual and lawful pursuit of the profession concerned in a Member State”.

Professional experience can be required if the education and training in the home country has been one year shorter than in the host country.
- if there are substantial differences in the content of the education and training, an aptitude test or adaptation period (maximum three years’ duration) may be required.

5. It may well happen, that for pursuit of the same profession different level diploma/certificate is required in the home and host MS. For instance the requirements for paramedical professions in different states may range from higher education (diploma as defined in Directive 89/48/EEC) through short higher education courses (diploma as defined in Dir. 92/51) to secondary vocational education (certificate as defined in Directive 92/51). The Directive 92/51 also lays down regulations for the recognition and application of possible additional requirements in these cases (see scheme in Annex III).

6. If substantial differences between study programmes are claimed, the burden of proof rests with the competent authority responsible for granting admission to the profession in question. A person who has qualified for a particular profession in one Member State cannot simply be denied access to the same regulated profession in another country.

7. It must be stated emphatically that admission to a regulated profession is not a guarantee of a job. A person is merely granted access to the labour market for a particular profession in a particular country. Normal job applications follow, with all the uncertainty that this entails.

The possible additional requirements are summarized in Table IV.
Table IV. Summary of possible additional requirements for recognition when applying Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and training of the applicant has no substantial differences to that required in the host member state</th>
<th>Additional requirements for recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) profession is regulated also in home member state and the applicant has fulfilled all requirements to take up and pursue the profession</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) home member state does not regulate the profession</td>
<td>Pursuing profession in the home member state for 2 years fulltime or equivalent time part-time within the last 10-year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) education and training has taken place (mainly) in a “third country” i.e. outside EU</td>
<td>The holder should have three years’ professional experience certified by the MS which recognized third-country diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host member state requires a longer training period than the home MS</th>
<th>Additional requirements for recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) the shortfall lies within “duration of ... studies and/or to a period of probationary practice ... ending with an examination”</td>
<td>Applicant has to provide evidence of professional experience, that may not twice exceed the shortfall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) the shortfall relates to professional practice acquired with the assistance of a qualified member of the profession</td>
<td>Applicant has to provide evidence of professional experience, that may not exceed the shortfall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There is a substantial difference between the education and training of the applicant and that required in the host MS</th>
<th>Additional requirements for recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicant should complete an adaptation period not exceeding three years or take an aptitude test(^{15})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession in the host MS comprises one or more regulated professional activities more than in the home MS, and that makes a substantial difference in training</th>
<th>Additional requirements for recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To complete an adaptation period not exceeding three years or take an aptitude test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{14}\) Professional experience = “professional experience: the actual and lawful pursuit of the profession concerned in a member state”.

\(^{15}\) Host MS must give the applicant the right to choose between an adaptation period and an aptitude test except for professions whose practice requires precise knowledge of national law is an essential aspect of the professional activity. In the latter case the host MS may stipulate either an adaptation period or an aptitude test.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host MS requires diploma as defined in 89/48</th>
<th>applicant holds a diploma as defined in 92/51</th>
<th>To complete an adaptation period not exceeding three years or take an aptitude test on the choice of host MS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host MS requires a diploma as defined in 92/51</td>
<td>applicant holds a certificate and profession is regulated in applicant’s home MS</td>
<td>To complete an adaptation period not exceeding three years or take an aptitude test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host MS requires a certificate</td>
<td>a) applicant holds diploma 89/48 or diploma 92/51</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) applicant holds certificate from other MS that regulates the profession</td>
<td>Recognition if no substantial differences can be demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) applicant holds a certificate from other MS that does not regulate the profession</td>
<td>Evidence of 2 years of professional experience is also required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) applicant has no formal evidence of education/training but has pursued profession for 3 years in a MS that does not regulate the profession</td>
<td>Usually adaptation period not exceeding 2 years or aptitude test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 The requirement for 2 years professional experience can not however be applied if the certificate is awarded upon completion of a regulated education and training

17 The requirement for 2 years professional experience can not however be applied if the certificate is awarded upon completion of a regulated education and training
RECOGNITION SCHEME UNDER GENERAL SYSTEMS' DIRECTIVES

The scheme below shows how professionals holding different levels of qualifications of “home” member state (A) are recognized in “host” member state (B).

Example. An x-ray technician from MS (A) holds (according to the requirements of MS (A)) a diploma of a 2-year higher education course, i.e. a diploma (92/51) and moves to MS(B). Recognition depends on the requirements for the same profession in MS (B):

a) pursuit of the same profession in MS (B) also requires a diploma (92/51). Diploma from MS (A) is recognized if there are no substantial differences in education and training.

b) pursuit of the same profession in MS (B) also requires completion of a secondary vocational education course, i.e. a certificate. Diploma from MS (A) is recognized automatically.

c) pursuit of the same profession in MS (B) requires a 3-year higher education diploma, i.e. a diploma (89/48). As can be seen from the scheme, an adaptation period or an aptitude test can be applied.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional qualification required for pursuit of a profession in MS (A)</th>
<th>Professional qualification required for pursuit of the same profession in MS (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma (89/48) (at least 3 years of HE studies)</td>
<td>Diploma (89/48) (at least 3 years of HE studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma (92/51) (at least 1 year of HE studies)</td>
<td>Diploma (92/51) (at least 1 year of HE studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate (secondary VET)</td>
<td>Certificate (secondary VET)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing profession for 3 years (no evidence of education/training)</td>
<td>Pursuing profession for 3 years (no evidence of education/training)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- recognition
- recognition if there are no substantial differences
- adaptation period or aptitude test

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18 Provided that they satisfy requirements for pursuit the profession in the “home” member state

On 7 June 1999 the European Union established a directive that can be seen as a supplement to the First and Second Directives of the General System and is therefore being called the Third Directive. It is meant to make it easier for citizens of EU countries to provide services or take up residence in another Member State. The directive mainly concerns vocational education that leads to self-employment or admission to occupations and trades for which the law specifies that a person qualifies through practical experience. The main feature of this directive is the importance assigned to practical experience alongside the necessary education and training. The Member States are supposed to have introduced this directive by 31 July 2001 at the latest. The directive lists a large number of activities in which a person may engage as either an independent practitioner or an employee.

The recognition mechanisms of the third directive are comparable to those of the first two directives of the General System. The host country may not simply refuse someone on the grounds of insufficient qualifications. If comparison reveals substantial differences, the host country must offer the applicant a choice between undergoing an adaptation period or taking an aptitude test. The host country may also require this if its own nationals are required to have knowledge of specific national regulations and their application.

In certain cases the host country may require its own nationals to possess general and specialized knowledge of how to run a business and/or provide certain services before they are allowed to do so. In such cases, if individuals have been engaged in the same activities for some years in their own country, they are on those grounds presumed to possess the necessary knowledge. The number of years depends on the activity in question, the job, and the qualifications that the person has earned in the home country.

PROCEDURES IN LATVIA

Anyone who wishes to come to work in Latvia in a regulated profession must submit a request to the appropriate competent authority asking for recognition of his/her credentials. This is the competent authority responsible for the profession in question. Often this is a government ministry but it can also be a professional association or an agency to which a ministry has delegated the task of implementing the directive. The authorities in Latvia are listed in Annex VII together with the professions for which they are responsible.

The processing of a request for admission to a regulated profession begins as soon as all the required documents have been handed over. Which documents are required depends on the country and on the type of profession. The competent authority responsible for the regulated profession in question makes this decision. Ordinarily the following documents are required: a completed application form (usually in the language of the host country), personal identification, and a certified copy of the diploma and transcript or list of grades. Other documents that might be required include evidence of having completed one or more periods of practical training, evidence of professional experience, a health certificate, and a certificate of good conduct. Translations of the main documents may have to be provided.

The competent authority must take a decision within four months of receiving the request and the complete set of required documents. The decision can have any of three outcomes:

- **Direct admission.** The person’s diploma is accepted as qualification for the regulated profession in the host country and is considered equivalent to the diploma required of its own nationals.
- **Admission after a further requirement is met.** (see table IV) If the study programme associated with the particular diploma differs substantially from the programme in the host country in terms of either duration or content, individuals must show that they have had sufficient professional experience to offset the shorter period of study or they must either
undergo an adaptation period or pass a test to compensate for the difference in content. When this requirement has been met, the person is admitted to the profession.

- No admission. The person has not been educated or trained for the profession in question, or this training has taken place at such a level that meeting an extra requirement will not be enough to qualify this person for the profession.

If the profession is regulated in the host country but not in the country where the person obtained his/her qualification, the person can be asked to show that a certain amount of experience practising the profession has been obtained before the competent authority in question will consider the case.

The competent authority must indicate how it arrived at its decision to recognize a diploma and grant a person admission to the profession or not. It must also indicate what the possibilities for appeal are. A person who is not satisfied with a decision can take the case to a national court of appeal.

The competent authority is allowed to charge a fee to cover the costs of the recognition procedure. The amount must be in proportion with the work involved.

In each country of the EU and EEA an information centre has been set up to give information about the implementation of the directives. Anyone intending to go to another country to work is wise to get in touch with the information centre in that country first. The centre can say whether the profession the person hopes to practise is regulated, and if so, under which directive it falls. It can also refer a person to the appropriate competent authority and provide general information about the procedure.

EUROPEAN RECOGNITION NETWORKS – ENIC AND NARIC AND THEIR ROLE OF THE IN ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

ENIC network of the Council of Europe and UNESCO

The Lisbon Convention stipulates that the national academic recognition information centres form the European Network of National Information Centres on academic mobility and recognition (the ENIC Network). The ENIC centres in their everyday work co-operate both bilaterally and as a network. ENIC centres provide information ranging from descriptions of national education systems to ad hoc information upon request regarding concrete qualifications. ENIC network identifies urgent recognition problems. ENIC working parties then carry out specific studies and prepare drafts of international documents supplementing the Lisbon Convention. ENIC centres serve a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, national and foreign universities, employers, national and foreign individuals.

NARIC network of the European Union

National recognition information centres of the EU member states, EEA and EU candidate countries simultaneously participate in the EU NARIC network. NARIC centres have their specific functions within the EU context such as ensuring recognition aspects within the Socrates programme, promotion of ECTS. In most EU/EEA and candidate countries the NARIC centres serve also as contact points where the citizens can receive information and consultations regarding the EU directives on recognition in regulated professions.

Role in academic recognition

The national role of ENIC/NARIC centres in most countries is giving advice to universities who have the decision–making power regarding recognition. The ENIC/NARIC centres have experience in verifying if the documents presented by the applicant are authentic, if the higher education institution that has awarded the qualification and the programme is recognized in the home country. ENIC/NARIC centres have a huge experience and knowledge in foreign education systems, therefore, they are able to locate the qualification in question within the national education system of the country where the qualification has been issued and then further to assess if the qualification is suitable for the purpose for which recognition is sought. Although in most countries, the ENIC/NARIC statement is officially a recommendation, most countries report that universities usually follow this recommendation.

Present role in professional recognition

In the case of regulated professions, ENIC/NARIC centres are not involved in de jure recognition. However, in a number of countries they provide information on EU general system directives and also on sectoral directives. Some countries report that the competent recognition bodies seek advice or ask for information from NARIC centres.

As regards de facto professional recognition, it is more and more frequent that employers seek advice from ENIC/NARIC centres before they decide to employ or reject a holder of a foreign qualification. It is
likely, that the involvement and role of ENIC/NARIC centres in recognition for professional purposes will become increasingly more important within the Bologna process.

RECOGNITION AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

A series of hypotheses and questions have been formulated in a recent document, “Recognition issues in the Bologna process,” discussed by the ENIC and NARIC networks at their annual meeting on 22-24 May 2000 in Brussels. These are intended to stimulate further developments of recognition issues in the Bologna process. Some of the hypotheses/conclusions are given below.

The legal framework for recognition is largely in place. The backbone of this framework is the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the EU Directives on recognition for professional purposes. Nevertheless, while the framework may be in place for qualifications belonging to national systems, further work may still be needed with respect to the recognition of non-traditional qualifications and qualifications that are not rooted in national systems. A good start in this respect has been made through the draft Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.

We are reaching the limits of what can be regulated through legislation. This hypothesis is linked to the assumption that legislation is only useful to the extent that it can be implemented or enforced. Implementation, or, at least enforcement, presupposes that states or supra-national bodies have a minimum authority in the matter. Is this authority sufficiently clear with regard to some new developments, like transnational education or other new forms and types of education, for legal measures to be a viable form of regulation?

The further development of European standards will be increasingly important. These standards will most likely not be binding legal instruments but standards which countries or institutions may adhere to or implement on a voluntary basis. This does not mean that they are less important in practice, as there may be consequences for those who do not adhere. Instruments for standard setting may range from Recommendations adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee to codes of good practice. It seems reasonable to assume that developing good practice in various areas of recognition may be particularly important in the years to come, and an area in which the ENIC and NARIC Networks could play a considerable role.

It is likely that such standards will always stimulate to emphasize on assessment of learning outcomes rather than contents and way of learning as such.

More emphasis should be put on assessing learning outcomes and competencies. This is not to say that this aspect is absent today. In fact, there has already been encouraging development in this direction. However, this development will need to be taken further. Learning outcomes describe the more or less traditional objectives of the curriculum or the educational process, whereas competencies describe the actual skills and abilities of the graduate. How can learning outcomes and competencies be described and compared? If we are to move further toward a direct assessment of learning outcomes and competencies, alternative standards will have to be developed.

There will be an increasing number of applications for the recognition of non-traditional qualifications. This has to do with changes in the way knowledge and skills are developed and conveyed i.e. changes in teaching and learning. The traditional classroom or campus will be the setting for a smaller proportion of the overall education effort. More education will be delivered through the Internet, through transnational arrangements, through a combination of traditional and non-traditional learning, through the recognition of prior learning and on a different time scale.

Recognition will become an increasingly important issue for the labour market. It can reasonably be argued that the main distinction is not that between academic and professional recognition, but between de jure professional recognition (i.e. recognition for access to regulated professions) and all other forms of recognition. If the labour market is increasingly an international one, it follows that recognition for the purpose of access to the non-regulated part of the labour market will also be increasingly important. Employers will increasingly need reliable information on foreign qualifications. Credential evaluators will therefore increasingly be faced with issues of de facto professional recognition, which will require a further development of their skills and, in some cases, a change of attitudes. ENICs and NARICs should play an important role in providing such information, in training employers in recognition issues and practices and in working with employers to define their needs with regard to recognition.

19 Prepared by Sjur Bergan, Head of the Higher Education and Research Division of the Council of Europe, Secretary to the Higher Education and Research Committee (CC-HER) and Co-Secretary of the ENIC Network., Jindra Divis, Head of the Recognition Department of NUFFIC (Dutch ENIC/NARIC), Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvian ENIC) - President of the ENIC Network.
There will also be an increasing need to assess the overall qualifications of individuals, particularly with a view to the labour market. For example, in the Netherlands, this kind of assessment is being studied in the framework of a national discussion, encompassing government authorities, social partners and education institutions.
Annex I. Reference documents


EU DIRECTIVES IN THE FIELD OF REGULATED PROFESSIONS

Directives establishing general systems for recognition of professional qualifications

Amended by 394L0038 (OJ L 217 23.08.94 p.8); 395L0043 (OJ L 184 03.08.95 p.21); 397L0038 (OJ L 184 12.07.97 p.31); Derogation in 397D0042 (OJ L 017 21.01.97 p.38)

SECTORAL DIRECTIVES

Architects 385L0384 / OJ L 223 21.08.85 p.15 / 85/384/EEC: Council Directive of 10 June 1985 on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services
Amended by 390L0658 (OJ L 353 17.12.90 p.73)


mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of the formal qualifications of practitioners of dentistry, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services
Amended by 381L1057 (OJ L 385 31.12.81 p.25); Amended by 389L0594 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.19); Amended by 390L0658 (OJ L 353 17.12.90 p.73)

Amended by 389L0595 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.30)
2) 377L0452 /OJ L 176 15.07.77 p. /. Council Directive 77/452/EEC of 27 June 1977 concerning the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of the formal qualifications of nurses responsible for general care, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of this right of establishment and freedom to provide services
Amended by 389L0595 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.30); Amended by 390L0658 (OJ L 353 17.12.90 p.73)

Amended by 389L0594 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.19)
Amended by 380L1273 (OJ L 375 31.12.80 p.74); Amended by 389L0594 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.19); Amended by 390L0658 (OJ L 353 17.12.90 p.73)


Amended by 389L0594 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.19)
Amended by 381L1057 (OJ L 385 31.12.81 p.25); Amended by 389L0594 (OJ L 341 23.11.89 p.19); Amended by 390L0658 (OJ L 353 17.12.90 p.73)

Lawyers 1) 377L0249 / OJ L 078 26.03.77 p.17 / 77/249/EEC: Council Directive of 22 March 1977 to facilitate the effective exercise by lawyers of freedom to provide services
2) 398L0005 / OJ L 077 14/03/98, p. 36/. Directive 98/5/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 1998 to facilitate practice of the profession of lawyer on a permanent basis in a Member State other than that in which the qualification was obtained)

OTHER EU DIRECTIVES CONCERNING REGULATED PROFESSIONS
Amended by 396L0047 (OJ L 235 17.09.96 p.0001-0005).; Amended by 397L0026 (OJ L 150 07.06.97 p.0041-0043)
2) 396L0026 / Council Directive 96/26/EC of 29 April 1996 on admission to the occupation of road haulage operator and road passenger transport operator and mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates
and other evidence of formal qualifications intended to facilitate for these operators the right to freedom of establishment in national and international transport operations.


ANNEX II

Education Law of the Republic of Latvia

Article 11.1. Recognition of education documents issued abroad in Latvia

(1) The recognition of the education documents issued abroad as well as expertise of the documents certifying academic degrees acquired abroad is made based on the application from the owner of the document certifying education or academic degrees, respective educational institutions, state institutions, employers or professional organizations. The expertise of the education documents acquired abroad or documents certifying academic degrees acquired abroad shall be implemented by the Academic Information Centre.

(2) The expertise of the submitted documents determines:

1) the education document issued in Latvia or the academic degree conferred in Latvia, to which the education document issued abroad or the academic degree conferred abroad corresponds or can be equalled;
2) what additional conditions are to be fulfilled to equal the education document issued abroad or the academic degree conferred abroad to an education document issued in Latvia or academic degree conferred in Latvia, if the education document issued abroad or the academic degree conferred abroad does not meet the requirements of any education document issued in Latvia or academic degree conferred in Latvia.

(3) As a result of the expertise of the document, the person, who had applied for it, receives a certification about the education document issued in Latvia or academic degree conferred in Latvia, to which the education document issued abroad or the academic degree conferred abroad corresponds or can be equalled.

(4) The decision on the recognition of the education document based on the certification from the Academic Information Centre shall be made:

1) for the continuation of studies – by the institution of higher education, where the owner of the education document wishes to continue studies. The institution of higher education may implement additional expertise or set additional requirements;
2) for employing in the professions, where the professional operation or the education needed for it are not regulated by law or other regulatory acts – by the employer;
3) for professional operation in the professions, where the professional operation or the education needed for it are regulated by law or other regulatory acts – by the institutions determined by the respective law or other regulatory acts;
4) for continuation of education in the primary and secondary stage of education – by the Ministry of Education and Science.

(5) Academic Information Centre is the institution established by the Ministry of Education and Science, which shall implement the expertise of the education documents and documents certifying academic degrees issued abroad as well as other functions related to the recognition of education documents and international exchange of information.
ANNEX III DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

The Diploma Supplement

This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original accompanying qualification. It should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

1 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION
1.1 Family name(s):
1.2 Given name(s):
1.3 Date of birth (day/month/year):
1.4 Student identification number or code (if available):

2 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION
2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language):
2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification:
2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (in original language):
2.4 Name and status of institution (if different from 2.3) administering studies (in original language):
2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination:

3 INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION
3.1 Level of qualification:
3.2 Official length of programme:
3.3 Access requirements(s)

4 INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED
4.1 Mode of study:
4.2 Programme details:
4.3 Components (e.g. modules or units studied), and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained:
   (if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here)
4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance:
4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language):

5 INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION
5.1 Access to further study:
5.2 Professional status (if applicable):

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
6.1 Additional information:
6.2 Further information sources:

7 CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT
7.1 Date:
7.2 Signature:
7.3 Capacity:
7.4 Official stamp or seal:

8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
   (N.B. Institutions who intend to issue Diploma Supplements should refer to the explanatory notes that explain how to complete them.)
Guidance for Those Creating Diploma Supplements

The following guidelines, explanatory notes and glossary are designed to help the production of concise and effective supplements. They result from the work of a joint European Commission - Council of Europe UNESCO/CEPES working group that in 1997-1998 piloted and evaluated the Diploma Supplement. The guidelines make strong recommendations concerning the principles and good practice behind effective supplements and the explanatory notes give further detailed advice to higher education institutions who create supplements. The guidelines and notes are available, along with the supplement outline, in all EU/EA languages and Russian. A range of good practice examples of completed Diploma Supplements can be found by contacting the European Commission, DG22 (http://europa.eu.int/en/com/dg22), the Council of Europe (http://culture.coe.fr) or UNESCO/CEPES (http://www.cepes.ro). The Diploma Supplement is a product of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon 1997. It was further tested as part of the Phare Multi-Country Project, Recognition of Higher Education Diploma and Study Credit Points Across Borders.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:
It is strongly recommended that supplements should conform with the following principles and practices:

1. The brief explanatory note (at the head of the sample supplement) should be reproduced as part of each completed Diploma Supplement, in order to guide universities, employers and other potential users of the information.

2. Institutions should follow the structure and sequence of information carefully developed and tested by the pilot project. Various customised versions were tested and found not to be as clear and user-friendly. In the cases where sections were omitted altogether, these supplements were invariably found to be ineffective. Great care needs to be taken in compiling supplements in order to avoid imprecise, missing or confused information. Over-long and over-complicated supplements should be avoided. They irritate those who receive them. Avoid information overload and present information as concisely as possible. The examples of good practice supplements show how this can be done. The use of a transcript clearly helps provide detailed information in a concise way.

3. In combination with the credential itself, the supplement should provide sufficient information to enable the reader to make a judgement about the qualification and whether it is appropriate for the purpose for which the holder seeks to use it (e.g. for access to an academic programme, exemption from part of a programme, employment/right to practise a profession, etc.). It is not designed to replace a curriculum vitae but to provide additional information.

4. The supplement should always be accompanied by the original qualification as supplements normally have no legal validity. The existence of a Diploma Supplement does not guarantee the status of an institution, its awards, or whether it is recognised as part of a national higher education system. However, it should contain information on these aspects.

5. The supplement should always have the name and title of the qualification, the name and status of the institution awarding/administering it, and the classification of the award all presented in the original language. Incorrect translations mislead those making judgements about qualifications. Transliterations are permissible in the case of scripts other than the Latin alphabet.

6. Supplements should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

7. The production of supplements is best done centrally and not devolved to different parts of academic institutions. This keep costs down and minimises variation in content and approach.

8. Institutions should take appropriate action to minimise the possibility of forgery and misrepresentation of their supplements.
9. Information on the higher education system (section eight) should be kept to a two-page maximum. Where possible, information could include diagrams and charts to aid clarity. As a part of the pilot diploma supplement project, finalised versions of this information are to be produced for each country with the help of national ENICs/NARICs (national information centres), Ministries and Rectors’ Conferences.

10. It is best to issue supplements automatically at the time the qualification is completed. This is preferable to retrospective issue which becomes more difficult as programmes and educational awards are subject to continuous evolution and change. It is particularly important that section eight of the supplement describes the national higher education structure in force at the time the qualification was awarded.

11. Great care should be taken with translations and terminology as many problems exist in this area. In order to overcome these, it is essential that the original language is used where indicated in the supplement. In addition, the glossary of terms associated with the supplement has been specifically produced to overcome linguistic confusions. Supplements should be produced in whatever language(s) institutions think appropriate.

12. Where they exist, institutional, regional and national quality assurance systems should include Diploma Supplements in their activities. This will help ensure the quality of supplements.

13. Supplements are designed to be used with sensitivity. The evaluation of qualifications from another country should concentrate on the competence, experience and knowledge acquired, recognising that ‘fair recognition’ and not exact equivalence should be sought.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:
(The numbers below refer to the numbered sections in the Diploma Supplement.)

1 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION
1.1 Provide the full family or surname.
1.2 Include all given/first names.
1.3 Indicate day, month and year of birth.
1.4 This should identify the individual as a student enrolled on the particular programme which is covered by the Diploma Supplement. A national or State personal identification number could be included for those countries that have such systems of identification.

2 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION
2.1 Give the full name of the qualification in the original language as it is styled in the original qualification e.g. Kandidat nauk, Maîtrise, Diplom, etc. If the qualification is a dual award this should be stated. Indicate if the award confers any nationally accepted title on the holder and what this title is e.g. Doctor, Ingénieur etc. Indicate if the title is protected in law.
2.2 Show only the major field(s) of study (disciplines) that define the main subject area(s) for the qualification e.g. Politics and History, Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Molecular Biology etc.
2.3 Indicate the name of the institution awarding the qualification. This is often, but not always, the same as the institution administering the studies and delivering the programme (see 2.4 below). Qualifications may be delivered by a sub-contracted institution that has been given a ‘franchise’ or some type of ‘accreditation’ by a senior competent authority. This might be the state, a university or a professional institution. Sometimes the senior authority may be a foreign institution. If this is the case it should be indicated here. Also indicate the status of the awarding institution: Private/Independent, Private and State recognised, State, and if applicable who it is accredited by etc. Finally, indicate the general national educational classification of the awarding institution e.g. University, Fachhochschule, Professional Body, Technical College, Grande Ecole etc. If there is a difference between the awarding institution and the institution delivering the qualification indicate the status of both.
2.4 This refers to the institution which is responsible for the delivery of the programme. In some cases this can be different from the institution awarding the qualification (see 2.3 above). Also indicate the status of the institution delivering the studies: Private/Independent, Private and State recognised,
State, and if applicable who it is accredited by etc. Finally, indicate the general national educational classification of the administering institution e.g. College of Higher Education, Private Institute etc.

2.5 Indicate the language(s) by which the qualification was delivered and examined.

3 INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION
3.1 Give the precise level of qualification and its place in the specific national educational structure of awards (explained and cross-referenced to the information in section eight). The local educational framework should be explained, e.g. University Undergraduate/Postgraduate, Baccalaureate + x years etc. Include any relevant information on ‘level indicators’ that are nationally devised and recognised and which relate to the qualification.

3.2 Explain the official duration of the programme in weeks or years and the actual workload including information on any major sub-components i.e. practical training. Preferably, the workload should be expressed in terms of total student effort required. This consists of the normal designated time on the programme including taught classes and private study, examinations etc. This can be expressed as x hours per week for x weeks, or just by using the normal local description of the length e.g. one year full-time study.

3.3 List or explain the nature and length of access qualification(s) or periods of study required for access to the programme described by this Diploma Supplement e.g. Bachelor Degree, Baccalaureate etc. This is particularly important when intermediate studies are a prerequisite to the named qualification.

4 INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED
4.1 The mode of study refers to how the programme was undertaken e.g. Full-time, Part-time, Intermittent/Sandwich, Distance, including Placements etc.

4.2 If applicable, provide details of the regulations covering the minimum standards required to secure the qualification, e.g. any compulsory components or compulsory practical elements, whether all elements have to be passed simultaneously, any thesis/dissertation regulations etc. Include details of any particular features that help define the qualification, especially information on the requirements for successfully passing it. If available, provide details of the learning outcomes, skills, competencies and stated aims and objectives associated with the qualification.

4.3 Give details of each of the individual elements or parts of the qualification and their weighting.

4.4 Provide information on the grading scheme and pass marks relating to the qualification e.g. marks are out of a possible 100% and the minimum pass mark is 40%. Tremendous variations in grading practices exist within and between different national higher education institutions and countries. A mark of 70% in some academic cultures is highly regarded whilst in other countries it is regarded as average or poor. Information on the use and distribution of grades relating to the qualification in question should be included.

4.5 If appropriate, indicate the overall classification for the final qualification i.e. First Class Honours Degree, Summa Cum Laude, Merit, Avec Distinction etc.

5 INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION
5.1 Indicate if within the country of origin, the qualification normally provides access to further academic and/or professional study, especially leading to any specific qualifications, or levels of study e.g. access to Doctoral studies in Hungary. If this is the case, specify the grades or standards that have to be obtained to allow progression. Indicate if the qualification is a terminal (end) award or part of a hierarchy of awards.

5.2 Give details of any rights to practise, or professional status accorded to the holders of the qualification. What specific access, if any, does the qualification give in terms of employment or professional practice and indicate which competent authority allows this. Indicate if the qualification gives access to a ‘regulated profession’.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 Add any additional information not included above but relevant to the purposes of assessing the nature, level and usage of the qualification e.g. the qualification involved a period of study/training in another institution/company/country or, include further relevant details about the higher education institution where the qualification was taken.

6.2 Indicate any further useful information sources and references where more details on the qualification could be sought e.g. the department in the issuing institution; a national information centre; the European Union National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC); the Council of Europe/UNESCO European National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC).

CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT

7.1 The date the Diploma Supplement was issued. This would not necessarily be the same date the qualification was awarded.

7.2 The name and signature of the official certifying the Diploma Supplement.

7.3 The official post of the certifying individual.

7.4 The official stamp or seal of the institution that provides authentication of the Diploma Supplement.

INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Give information on the higher educational system: its general access requirements; types of institution and the qualifications structure. This description should provide a context for the qualification and refer to it. A standard framework for these descriptions together with actual descriptions should be available for many countries. These have been created as a result of this project and with the co-operation of the relevant National (European Union and European Economic Area) Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), European (Council of Europe/UNESCO) National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC), Ministries and Rectors' conferences.

Footnotes:
(1) For further details see the ECTS Users' Guide published by the European Community (http://europa.eu.int/en/com/dg22).
(2) Under the April 1997 Lisbon Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on The Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (http://culture.coe.fr), signatories are committed to making arrangements for providing such information.

GLOSSARY:
Definitions and usage of terms vary from country to country. To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding this glossary aims to cover all the main terms used in the papers associated with the Diploma Supplement initiative. It is partly based and fully consistent with the definition used in the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION refers to the recognition of courses, qualifications or diplomas from one (domestic or foreign) higher education institution by another. Usually this is sought as a basis for access to further new study at the second institution (cumulative recognition) or, as recognition allowing some sort of exemption from having to re-study elements of a programme (recognition with advanced standing). A further type of academic recognition is recognition of studies taken elsewhere in another institution that replace a comparable period of study at the home institution. This (recognition by substitution) operates under the European Credit Transfer System ((ECTS) mobility scheme (see ECTS).

ACCESS (to higher education) refers to the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education. Access is distinct from admission, which concerns the individuals' actual participation in the higher education programme concerned.

ACREDITATION is the process by which one higher education institution gains authority to award, and/or gains recognition of, its qualifications from another senior competent authority. This might be the State, a government agency or, another domestic or foreign higher education institution (see FRANCHISE). The term has its origins in the American system and is used in some European countries in the same way as 'recognition'.
ADMISSION the act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme.

ASSESSMENT i) (of institutions or programmes) the process for establishing the educational quality of a higher education institution or programme; ii) (of individual qualifications) the written appraisal or evaluation of an individual's foreign qualifications by a competent authority; iii) (of individual students) the actual testing of a student's ability and skills within a programme (e.g. by examination).

AWARD this is used synonymously with qualification.

COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY a body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

COURSE a part of a programme of studies that is normally self-contained and assessed separately. Complete study programmes are normally composed of several courses.

CREDENTIAL a term sometimes used to refer to a qualification (see QUALIFICATION).

CREDENTIAL EVALUATOR the individual who makes a judgement on the recognition of foreign qualifications (see COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY).

CREDIT the 'currency' providing a measure of learning outcomes achieved in a notional time at a given level. Usually associated with credit-based modular courses (see ECTS).

DE FACTO RECOGNITION refers to situations of unregulated professional recognition, such as where no national legal authorisation to practice a particular profession exists or is required. This is the most problematic area of professional recognition (see PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION).

DE JURE RECOGNITION refers to the recognition of the right to work in a specific (European Union or European Economic Area) country in a legally regulated profession (e.g. medical doctor). These situations are subject to various European Union Directives whereby if a citizen is a fully qualified professional in one Member State, he or she has a right to be recognised as a professional in another Member State, including the right to use the relevant professional title (see REGULATED PROFESSION, PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION).

DIPLOMA here refers to any qualification/credential. There is a possibility of confusion here. In some educational systems the term refers to a specific category or type of qualification. It is not being used in this restricted sense here.

ECTS the European Credit Transfer System (developed by the European Commission). This is a system based on ECTS credits (workload), designed to facilitate mobility, credit transfer and the international recognition of periods of study completed abroad (see ACADEMIC RECOGNITION).

ENIC European (Council of Europe/UNESCO) National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility.

FRANCHISE the situation where an institution agrees to authorise another institution (nationally or internationally) to deliver an approved programme whilst normally retaining overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. However, significant variations in franchise relationships exist.

FIELD OF STUDY the main disciplines or subject areas of a qualification.

HIGHER EDUCATION all types of courses of study, or sets of courses (programmes), training, or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to its higher education system. Higher education builds on the level of competence, knowledge and skills generally acquired through secondary education (see HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY). Higher education normally comes after secondary education in time and is normally offered through higher education programmes at higher education institutions. However, it should be noted that higher education institutions may give courses of study that are not higher education level. Conversely, institutions which are not considered as belonging to the higher education system may offer some higher education programmes. The exact definition of higher education and higher education institutions vary from country to country. For example, in some countries, nursing is considered to be a field of higher education, whereas in other countries, nursing is considered to be part of post-secondary education without being higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION an establishment providing higher education and recognised by the competent authorities as belonging to its system of higher education (see HIGHER EDUCATION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY).

LEARNING OUTCOMES the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and tested by the successful completion of a unit, course or whole programme of study.

LEVEL the place of a qualification in the higher education system. Normally, a national hierarchy of qualifications exists. The number of levels of higher education qualifications vary between countries and/or kinds of higher education (see LEVEL INDICATORS).

LEVEL INDICATORS these can range from any general information on the role of the qualification to highly detailed specific statements about the nature, skills and competencies associated with the successful completion of parts or all of a qualification (see LEVEL).

**MODULE** a separate and coherent block of learning. Part of a modular programme of studies where the curriculum is divided into a range of similar sized segments.

**NARIC** National Academic Recognition Information Centre (European Union and European Economic Area). Some NARICs also have responsibilities for professional recognition.

**PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION** refers to the right to practise and the professional status accorded to a holder of a qualification. In the European Union recognition for professional purposes is defined as the legal act by which a competent authority in a host Member State recognises that the qualifications obtained by an applicant in another Member State are suitable for the pursuit on its territory of a professional activity whose practice is legally regulated (see **REGULATED PROFESSION, DE JURE RECOGNITION, DE FACTO RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION**).

**PROGRAMME OF STUDY** a set of courses, the various components of which complement and build on each other in order to provide the student with a higher education qualification (see **HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and COURSE**). ‘Programme’ also denotes the academic fields of study and requirements that collectively define the qualification (see **FIELD OF STUDY**).

**QUALIFICATION** i) higher education qualification: any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme; ii) qualification giving access to higher education: any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme and giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to higher education (see **HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY**). Also termed as any higher education award given for the successful completion of a programme of learning; a generic term that refers to the wide variety of higher education qualifications at different levels and across different countries.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE** refers to the internal and external processes by which the quality of academic provision is maintained.

**RECOGNITION** a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities. An assessment of individual qualifications. Such assessment may be any kind of statement on the value of (in this case) a foreign qualification. Recognition refers to a formal statement by a competent recognition authority acknowledging the value of the qualification in question and indicating the consequences of this recognition for the holder of the qualification. For example a qualification may be recognised for the purposes of further study at a given level (academic recognition), or for the use of a title, or for the exercise of employment purposes (professional recognition) (see **COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY, QUALIFICATION, ACADEMIC RECOGNITION and PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**). Recognition can also refer to the accreditation of a higher education institution by another authority (see **ACCREDITATION**).

**REGULATED PROFESSION** refers to professions in the European Union and European Economic Area whose practice is regulated in some way by law or administrative rules (see **DE JURE RECOGNITION**).

**TRANSCRIPT** an official record or breakdown of a student's progress and achievements. Many credit-based education systems employ detailed transcripts that show the credits and grades for units undertaken (e.g. ECTS Transcript of Records).

**VALIDATION** the process by which a recognised awarding institution judges that a programme of study leading to a qualification is of appropriate quality and standard. This can be a programme of its own or that of a subordinate institution (see **FRANCHISE**).
## Annex IV: Contact points for professional recognition in EU/EEA

(for updates please consult http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/qualifications/contact.htm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Directives 89/48, 92/51 and 99/42</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irene Kosnopfl</td>
<td>Margit Möslinger-Gehmayr</td>
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<td>Stubenring 1</td>
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<td>Fax: 43-1-71100.2366</td>
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<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:irene.kosnopfl@bmwa.gv.at">irene.kosnopfl@bmwa.gv.at</a></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:margit.moeslinger-gehmayr@bmwa.gv.at">margit.moeslinger-gehmayr@bmwa.gv.at</a></td>
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<th>Belgium</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chantal KAUFMANN</td>
<td>Erwin MALFROY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Directrice générale adjointe</td>
<td>Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ministère de la Communauté française</td>
<td>Departement Onderwijs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction générale de l'enseignement non obligatoire et de la recherche scientifique</td>
<td>H. Consciencegebouw, Toren A7</td>
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<td>C.A.E., 6ième étage - Bureau 6539</td>
<td>Koning Albert II laan 15</td>
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<td>Boulevard Pachéco, 19 - bte 0</td>
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<td>B - 1010 BRUXELLES</td>
<td>Tel.: 32-2-553.98.19</td>
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<td>Tel.: 32-2-210.55.77</td>
<td>Fax: 32-2-533.98.05</td>
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<td>Fax: 32-2-210.59.92</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:erwin.malfroy@ond.vlaanderen.be">erwin.malfroy@ond.vlaanderen.be</a></td>
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<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:chantal.kaufmann@cfwb.be">chantal.kaufmann@cfwb.be</a></td>
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<td>Morten OVERGAARD CVUU</td>
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<td>National Board of Education</td>
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France

Joëlle PRUVOST  
Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la recherche et de la technologie  
Bureau DRIC B3  
Rue de Grenelle 110  
F - 75007 PARIS  
Tel.: 33-1-55.55.65.90  
Fax : 33-1-45.44.57.87  
E-mail : joelle.pruvo@education.gouv.fr

Germany

Dr. Holger Conrad  
Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen im Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK)  
Lennéstraße 6  
D-53113 Bonn  
Tel. +49 (0)228 501 0  
Fax +49 (0)228 501 229  
E-mail : zab@kmk.org

Greece

Directive 89/48
Ms Despina Andritsou  
Head of Section of Recognition of Professional Qualifications  
Ministry of National Education & Religious Affairs  
Panepistimiou 67.  
GR - 105 64 ATHENS  
Tel: 00-30-10-3243923  
Fax: 00-30-10-3316651  
E -mail: srpq@otenet.gr  
website: http://www.srpq.gr

Directive 92/51
Mr Christos Gardiklis  
Director of professional rights and degree equivalence  
OEEK (Organization for vocational education and training)  
Ethnikis Antistaseos 41  
GR - 142 34 N. Ionia, ATHENS  
Tel: 00-30-10-2709141  
Fax: 00-30-10-2715921  
E -mail: tm.isotimion@oeek.gr  
website: http://www.oeek.gr

and

Mr George Mikros  
Head of Section of Degree equivalences  
OEEK (Organization for vocational education and training)  
Ethnikis Antistaseos 41  
GR - 142 34 N. Ionia, ATHENS
Ireland
Mr Sé GOULDING
Department of Education
International Section
Apollo House
IRL - DUBLIN 2
Tel.: 353-1-873.47.00
Fax: 353-1-872.92.93
E-mail: gouldings@educ.irlgov.ie

Italy
Armanda BIANCHI CONTI
Presidenza Consiglio Ministri
Ministerio Coordinamento Politiche Communitarie
Via Giardino Theodoli 66
I - 00186 ROMA
Tel.: 39-06-67.79.53.22
Fax: 39-06-6779.5295 / 39-06-6991.435
E-mail: A.BianchiConti@palazzochigi.it

Luxembourg
Jean TAGLIAFERRI
Professeur-attaché
Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle
Rue Aldringen, 29
L - 2926 LUXEMBOURG
Tel.: +352-487.51.39
Fax: +352-478.51.30
E-mail: tagliaferri@men.lu

Netherlands
L.A. DE BRUIN
Informatiescentrum Richtlijn / Algemeen Stelsel - IRAS
Postbus 29777
NL - 2502 LT DEN HAAG
Tel.: 31-70.426.0390
Fax: 31-70.426.0395
E-mail: lbruin@nufficcs.nl

Directive 92/51
Paulina KRIJNEN
COLO
Bredewater 8
Postbus 7259
NL - 2701 AG ZOETERMEER
Tel.: 31-79.352.26.00
Fax: 31-79.351.54.78
Portugal

 Directive 89/48

Manuela PAIVA
Núcleo Pedagógico
Ministério da Educação
Departamento do Ensino superior
Av. Duque d’Avila, 137 - 4ô Esq
P - 1000 LISBOA
Tel.: 351-1-54.60.70
Fax : 351-1-57.96.17

Spain

Félix HAERING PEREZ
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura
Consejería Tecnica de Títulos de la Unión Europea
Paseo del Prado 28
E - 28014 MADRID
Tel. 34-91-506.56.18
Fax : 34-91-506.57.06
E-mail : Felix.Haering@educ.mec.es

Sweden

Karin DAHL BERGENDORFF
National Agency for Higher Education Box 7851
S - 10399 STOCKHOLM
Tel.: 46-8-56.30.86.63
Fax : 46-8-56.30.86.50
E-mail: Karin.Dahl.Bergendorff@hsv.se

United Kingdom

Directive 89/48 and 99/42

Mrs Nicola McLAUGHLIN
Department of Trade & Industry
Bay 212
Kingsgate House
66-74, Victoria Street
UK - LONDON SW1
Tel.: 00-44-20-7215-4405
E-mail : nicola.mclaughlin@dti.gov.uk

and

Mrs Marie YOUNG
Department of Trade & Industry
Bay 212
Kingsgate House

Directive 92/51

Mrs. Carol ROWLANDS
Department for Education and Employment
Room E4b
Moorfoot
UK - Sheffield S1 4PQ
Tel.: 44-114-259.41.51
Fax : 44-114-259.44.75
E-mail : carol.rowlands@dfee.gov.uk
66-74, Victoria Street  
UK - LONDON SW1  
Tel.: 00-44-20-7215-8360  
Fax : 00-44-20-7215-4489  
E-mail : marie.young@dti.gov.uk  

---  

EEA Countries  

**Iceland**  
Hördur LARUSSON  
Ministry of Education  
Sölvhalsgötu, 4  
IS - 150 REYKJAVIK  
Tel.: 354-5-60.95.91  
Fax : 354-5-62.30.68  
E-mail: Hördur.larusson@mrm.stjr.is  

**Liechtenstein**  
Hans Peter WALCH  
Herrengasse 2  
FL - 9490 VADUZ  
Liechtenstein  
Tel.: 41-75-236.67.58  
Fax : 41-75-236.67.71  
E-mail: HansPeter.Walch@sa.llv.li  

**Norway**  
Luna LEE SOLHEIM  
Senior Executive Officer  
Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs  
P.O. Box 8119  
N - 0032 OSLO  
Tel.: 00-47-22-24-7923  
Fax : 00-47-22-24.27.33  
E-mail: lls@kuf.dep.no  
or: leo@kuf.dep.no
ANNEX V. LIST OF REGULATED PROFESSIONS IN LATVIA
(is adopted by Cabinet, will be inserted as soon as English names of professions will be clear)

ANNEX VI LIST OF INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS FOR REGULATED PROFESSIONS
(is adopted by Cabinet, will be inserted as soon as English names of institutions will be checked)

ANNEX VII LIST OF COMPETENT INSTITUTIONS FOR REGULATED PROFESSIONS
(is NOT yet adopted by Cabinet, will be inserted after adoption and translation)