



Official Bologna process conference

IMPROVING THE RECOGNITION SYSTEM

of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area

Riga, University of Latvia, December 3-4, 2004

OPENING ADDRESS

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Dear conference participants!

It is a great pleasure for me to receive such an important event as the official Bologna seminar on recognition in the European Higher Education Area in Riga and in Latvia.

The goals of the Bologna process can only be achieved, if we will manage to ensure that qualifications awarded in each part of the European Higher Education Area will be recognized for both further studies and employment in the entire European Higher Education Area.

I dare to consider that the honour and the opportunity to hold this seminar in Riga are deserved. Latvia has traditionally been active in the recognition field – both at home and internationally. Latvia is among the first Bologna countries that have fully implemented two substantial recognition-related points of the Berlin communiqué of 2003. Firstly, already since the beginning of this year in Latvia each graduate receives a Diploma Supplement – both in Latvian and English languages. Secondly, the quality assurance system with participation of foreign experts participate in each particular assessment visit, in Latvia was established in 1996 and the first accreditation round was completed in 2002. At the moment a working group is elaborating a new-type qualifications framework for Latvia where the qualifications will be described by their level, workload, learning outcomes and profile.

Internationally Latvia has been active in recognition field both through activities in the ENIC and NARIC networks and the International committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, as well as through organizing of and participating in international projects.

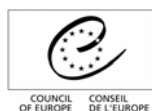
Today we are happy to receive 180 participants from 49 countries. As the external dimension has a paramount importance for the Bologna process, we are especially happy to see participants from a number of European countries that are not – at least for now - parties of the Bologna process. For the success of Bologna process it is very important how the reforms in Europe influence the Worlds view on European diplomas. We have participants from countries outside Europe, namely from Canada, Mexico and the USA. The views of these participants are very interesting to this conference.

From the international legislation point of view the recognition issues seem to be well addressed. The Lisbon Convention and the further documents inn the legal framework it created, as well as the EU directives in of professional recognition form a solid ground to solve recognition issues. Yet, for success of Bologna process recognition is not any longer just a legal statement or a formal issue. Reaching Bologna goals requires viewing of recognition in a broader perspective as finding a further way of the holder of foreign qualification in host country's education and/or employment system.

Our seminar will look at recognition of degrees and credits in conjunction with other main Bologna process aspects – quality assurance, learning outcomes, new-type qualifications frameworks, labour market, establishing of joint degrees and spreading of transnational education.

I am sure that the results of your work will be a substantial input to improving the recognition system in Europe.

I wish the participants good luck and a nice stay in Riga!



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towards the European higher education area

bologna process