



REMOVING OBSTACLES TO RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

- Conclusions of 5 Nov -

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- *There are significant differences in quality of institutions, programmes and qualifications in our region. Hence, they should be treated differently.*
- *Quality assurance is crucial for future activities related to recognition. In some countries of the region, the quality assurance system is not sufficient to assure trust in all national qualifications (e.g. in case of some private HEIs).*
- *Some countries should make more efforts to use the European Standards and Guidelines in full. Countries in SEE are in different stages of development of their NQF. We should all invest efforts into referencing of NQFs to EQF which is a key prerequisite for automatic recognition.*



Automatic recognition

- *Automatic recognition is feasible, but we should define it in more detail (based on the the Bucharest Communiqué: ‘automatic recognition of comparable degrees for further studies; and on the Yerevan Communiqué which extends it to the recognition for professional purposes).*
- *Majority of countries in SEE Europe already have elements of automatic recognition in the recognition process (in some countries it is already in the legislation (e.g. Macedonia in case of universities on the the Shanghai List). This kind of automatic recognition should be improved and harmonised among our countries.*
- *Automatic recognition should be exclusive (not universal) and based on trust.*
- *The system-level recognition should start with cooperation on standards/criteria. Diverse opinions on whether ESG criteria are enough (some propose the elaboration of additional criteria).*



Register/database of quality-assured qualifications

- *Additional QA requirements/criteria could be elaborated (diverse opinions). They would serve as the basis for a register/database of qualifications and HEIs that comply to these criteria.*
- *We should use our own register/database of quality-assured qualifications (to be created following the criteria jointly developed by all SEE countries) and not international lists such as the Shanghai List since their focus is on research and they are not relevant for the assessment of qualifications.*
- *Additionally, we need such a register because not all NQFs have been referenced to the EQF.*



Recognition for the purpose of further study

- *Some countries believe that automatic recognition would not be feasible in case of recognition for the purpose of further study (opinions are diverse).*
- *On the other hand, some countries already have a sort of automatic recognition for the purpose of further study (the example of Slovenia: two main criteria are the quality of institution that issued a previous qualification and whether this qualification allows access to HE in the country of origin). In this case the trust is based on the institutional quality.*

The role of ERI SEE

- *ERI SEE should serve as a platform for cooperation, but the policy input should come from a pool of experts of ERI SEE countries representing ministries of education, ENIC/NARIC offices and HEIs.*
- *ERI SEE should be also used as a funding mechanisms for seed money, e.g. one seminar on recognition per year. However, once the permanent ERI SEE Secretariat is established (2016), ERI SEE should become a grant applicant for large-scale projects (e.g. within the Erasmus+).*
- *This is the general direction ERI SEE should take, but its impact depends on the active participation of all ERI SEE countries.*



GENERAL CONCLUSIONS (1)

- *Regional cooperation in education should be enhanced and formalised. This may be done within the framework of an Erasmus+ project proposal to be concluded with the ministerial conference/summit and the adoption of Joint Declaration.*
- *Cooperation of Nordic countries - NORRIC - represents a valuable example of good practice of the framework for regional cooperation. It should be explored further as a model of cooperation for SEE countries. There is a need for increased communication and mobility (notably mobility of teachers). It will increase mutual trust.*

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS (2)

*ERI SEE countries have different viewpoints on **the automatic recognition:***

- *in some countries automatic recognition already exists (bureaucratic in nature, positive decisions in great majority of cases)*
- *a few countries doubt that it would be possible in case of recognition for further study (the decision is on HEIs)*
- *majority of countries believe that it would be possible on the basis of the quality (substance) upon fulfilling certain pre-conditions.*

- *The concept of automatic recognition will be explored in detail within the Joint application for E+ project to be submitted by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Slovenia in Feb 2016. Serbia is also interested but cannot confirm before internal consultations.*
- *RCC is also interested (in the status of associated partner).*