Quality Assurance and Mutual Recognition of Degrees
Workshop 1

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The European Dimension of Quality Assurance

Contents of the presentation

- Introduction: Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and its main principles

- Implementation of the LRC

- Recognition and quality assurance in the LRC

- European Area of Recognition - project

- Linking recognition and qualifications frameworks

Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997)

- The only legal text in the EHEA
- Subsidiary texts
- Applies also outside of the EHEA , since some signatories are non European
- Concerns access qualifications, periods of study and final qualifications
- Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee
- ENIC/NARIC Networks
- ENIC/NARIC Centres
- www.enic-naric.net

Lisbon Recognition Convention: Main principles

- Applicants entitled to fair assessment of their qualifications within reasonable time limit

- Transparent, coherent and reliable procedures and criteria used in the assessment

- Recognize unless substantial differences (partial recognition)

- Possibility to appeal

- Burden of proof upon the host country/body making recognition decisions

Subsidiary texts

- Recommendation on International Access Qualifications 1999

- Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (update 2010)

- Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (update 2007)

- Recognition of Joint Degrees 2004

Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks?

Substantial differences

- Recognize unless substantial differences (partial recognition)

- Basic assumption: the existence of a substantial difference is an exception rather than a rule

- Is the difference substantial in relation to function and purpose of the qualification and recognition?

- A difference in formal terms only is not sufficient

- More emphasis on learning outcomes

Implementation of the principles of the LRC

- The legal texts are mainly in place, but implementation remains a challenge

- Recommendations made to higher education institutions based on the analysis of National Action Plans for Recognition (2008):

  - Make the recognition of qualifications part of the internal quality assurance of the institution

  - Draw up institutional guidelines and recommendations for recognition ensuring the implementation of the LRC

  - Ensure implementation of the LRC at the level of faculties and departments

Quality Assurance and Recognition in the LRC

- No direct link to QA
- Indirectly addressed: e.g. obligation for Parties to provide information on the institutions and programs with a view to enabling the competent authorities of other Parties to ascertain whether the quality of the qualifications issued by these institutions justifies recognition in the Party in which recognition is sought
- The LRC does not refer to any specific form of QA

Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (subsidiary document to the LRC)

- Recognition authorities should establish whether the higher education institution (HEI) belongs to the higher education system of the Party

- Where countries have established a QA system including a system of formal assessment of their HEIs and programs, the recognition authority should take due account of the results of the process when evaluating qualifications from such systems

- Where countries have established national QA agencies, or cross-national QA bodies, these should be seen as a valuable information resource

Quality Assurance and Recognition

- Information on QA is a useful tool

- More specific points:

  - special emphasis to QA in the recognition of non-formal and informal learning

  - cross-border qualifications: addressed in the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

European Area of Recognition -project

- Launched in 2010, coordinated by the NL NARIC/NUFFIC

- European Recognition Manual based on LRC and its subsidiary documents and on the existing examples of good recognition practice is being prepared

- Contribution to a joint European Recognition Area: commonly agreed standards and guidelines as well as transparent recognition procedures

- Manual consists of several sub-topics, incl. recommendation for good practice in issues relating to accreditation and QA (mainly focus on status of the institution)

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- EQF- QF Bologna: compatibility and coordinated implementation

- Qualification levels described through learning outcomes

- Learning outcomes describe the achievements of graduates

- Learning outcomes link directly to appropriate assessment criteria

- Quality assurance inherently linked to the European and National Qualifications Frameworks

- Referencing/self-certification processes

Link: recognition, QA and qualifications frameworks

- QFs improve transparency and create common language on both national and international levels

- International co-operation around QF

- Increasing development of a learning outcomes approach

- Descriptors should give explicit and precise information on the learning outcomes: how to write learning outcomes for the purpose of recognition

- Importance of the QA of certification/degree awarding process