

# **ENIC NETWORK (COUNCIL OF EUROPE/UNESCO) NARIC NETWORK (EUROPEAN COMMISSION)**

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7 – 8 June 2004  
Room 9, Council of Europe Headquarters, Strasbourg

## **REPORT ON THE WORKING PARTY ON INFORMATION STRATEGY TO THE ENIC AND NARIC NETWORKS**

Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education – Higher Education and Research Division) of the Council of Europe, UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) and Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, Unit for Higher Education

### **Item 5.1**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present report is submitted by the Working Party on Information Strategy to the joint ENIC/NARIC meeting to be held in Strasbourg on 7 – 8 June 2004. Its aim is to propose and outline an information strategy for the Networks as well as individual centres with a view to improving for improving their ability to provide accurate and comprehensible information to a wide range of target groups.

The report consists of several parts, and the Networks are invited to consider these in the following ways:

- The **overarching report** provides the context for the proposals submitted by the Working Party and may also be read as an explanatory memorandum to the draft Code of good practice. It is suggested that the Networks *consider the main points* made in the report and that they also consider the possibility of *adopting the report as an explanatory memorandum* to the Code;
- The **Code of Good Practice** (Appendix 1) is submitted to the Networks for *adoption*. It is intended to guide the Networks as well as individual member centres in their most important task: providing information on recognition;
- The **list of frequently asked questions** (Appendix 2) is submitted for *discussion and approval*. It is intended to have a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, it is a generic list that ENICs/NARICs could use in their own work, and that it could be published on the ENIC/NARIC web site. On the other hand, it could serve as a model that ENICs/NARICs could adapt to their own national context, which would make the list more concrete and useful to enquirers who already have a specific country or education system in mind. In adapting the list to their specific circumstances, ENICs and NARICs should translate the list into their own national language(s) as well as providing their adapted list in at least one widely spoken foreign language;
- The **list of questions prospective students and other interested parties should ask of education providers** (Appendix 3) is intended as a “check list” to raise awareness among students, parents, employers and others about important elements that should be considered before one invests time and money in a higher education programme, and to help avoid some of the potential pitfalls. Like the list of frequently asked questions, this list is submitted for *discussion and approval*, and it is intended to have a two-fold purpose as, on the one hand, a generic list that could be published on the ENIC/NARIC web site and used by national centres, on the other hand as a basis for lists to be adapted by member centres to their own national contexts and be published in their own national language(s) as well as provide their adapted list in at least one widely spoken foreign language;
- The **fact sheets for information centres** (Appendix 4) is intended as a guide for member centres in elaborating information sheets or leaflets that would allow each centre to provide – through the Internet as well as in print format – easily accessible information on specific topics adapted to their national context. It should be taken as guidelines on what national

centres could and should aim to do. This document is submitted to the Networks for *discussion and approval*.

Attention is also drawn to the fact that the Networks will be invited to approve an ENIC/NARIC Charter. This Charter has a different function and scope than the present report on information strategies in that the Charter covers the whole range of activities undertaken by ENICS and NARICs, whereas the present report focuses on one of these, albeit an important one: the provision of information. In this area, however, the present report gives considerably more detail than the Charter.

## BACKGROUND

Information provision on recognition is at the core of the activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks, yet little explicit consideration has been given to this issue over the past few years. Indeed, information is so much part and parcel of the activities of the Networks – hence their names – as well as of individual centres that it seems to have been taken for granted and not considered a topic of explicit discussion. There has been an increasing awareness that such a discussion is required, and the 2003 ENIC/NARIC meeting (Vaduz, 18 – 20 May) identified information provision and development as one of the three key topics for which an ENIC/NARIC Working Party should be appointed, with the other two being an ongoing dialogue with the quality assurance community (in particular ENQA) and the UNESCO/CEPES proposal to establish a database for transnational education.

Following the Vaduz meeting, a Working Party was established to suggest an information strategy to the 2004 Network meeting. A list of the members of the Working Party will be found in Appendix 5. The present document constitutes the report by the Working Party, submitted for consideration by the Networks. The report consists of different parts, and the scope and suggested outcome for each part of the report is outlined in the Executive Summary.

Some attention had already been given to the issue of information provision and strategies before the Vaduz meeting. Thus, at the seminar on Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process, organized by the Council of Europe and the Portuguese authorities in Lisboa on 11 – 12 April 2002, one of the sessions was devoted to the discussion on information, which concluded that while there is no lack of information, there is a notable lack of targeted and reliable information. The session was introduced by Stephen Adam, from a user's perspective, and Chantal Kaufmann, from an information provider's perspective<sup>1</sup>.

The ENIC and NARIC Networks have also established a working group (ELCORE)<sup>2</sup> focusing on the more specific aspect of electronic information and communication. The experience of the ELCORE Group has also contributed to make visible the need for a feasible, common information strategy for the networks. The ELCORE group now functions as a sub-group of the Working Party on Information Strategy. In a slightly different vein, the PHARE Multi Country Programme drew up Operational Guidelines for National Information and Recognition Centres in Europe, a line of action that is now being continued through the proposed ENIC/NARIC Charter. A first discussion on this draft charter was held at the NARIC meeting in Bruxelles on 12 –13 January 2004, and a revised version will be submitted to the 2004 ENIC/NARIC meeting. The ENIC/NARIC Charter will have a wider scope than the report of the Working Party on Information

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<sup>1</sup> Both presentations are included in the book published on the basis of the seminar: Sjur Bergan (ed.): *Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process* (Strasbourg 2003: Council of Europe Publishing).

<sup>2</sup> The Electronic Core information on Recognition (ELCORE) working group has been developing and maintaining the enic-naric.net website & listserv since 2000. Canada, Lithuania and Norway are the core members of the group, in which the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO/CEPES also participate. The United Kingdom participated in the group until autumn 2003.

Strategy, as it will cover the whole range of activities of the centres, but to the extent that both texts address the information strategies of the centres, coherence between them must of course be ensured.

## CONTEXT

The need for information in modern, complex societies is undisputed – in fact, these societies are often labelled “information societies”. Nor is the contention that, in general terms, there is lack of information. Rather, the point of departure of the Working Party has been that there is an overflow of information, and that the available information is unsatisfactory because it is insufficiently targeted. The problem that needs to be addressed, therefore, is not a lack of information *per se*, but a lack of targeted, reliable and adequate information.

When considering information on recognition, it should be kept in mind that this topic covers a vast field – in terms of both geographical coverage and the complexity of its target groups. The fact that precise information can be of considerable importance to individuals in their professional or academic progression attaches particular importance to information provision.

This implies that information should:

- be meaningful to the users and respond to their needs;
- recognize that different users or user groups have different information needs and seek to provide information that is relevant to each group without overburdening them with irrelevant information;
- be accessible in terms of content, language and style (i.e., *inter alia*, avoid unnecessary complications or specialized language);
- be accurate (i.e., *inter alia*, be factually correct and also avoid oversimplification – implying that a balance needs to be struck between accessibility and accuracy);
- originate from –and as far as possible be provided by – the competent authority closest to the source of information (the subsidiarity principle - e.g. information on a given education system should be provided by the authority competent for that system);
- be up to date;
- be easily available, in printed and/or electronic form;

Some information may also need to be conveyed orally or electronically to specific target groups, in a way that would allow discussion and exchange of view, or a dialogue with a view to clarification of certain issues (e.g. information seminars, policy development seminars, networking).

## TERMINOLOGY

There are two aspects to the issue of terminology. On the one hand, as indicated above, unduly technical or complicated terminology may make the information less accessible to many readers. This is an important consideration; yet it must be weighed against the

need to provide accurate and precise information. This delicate balance is further developed later in this report.

The other aspect of the terminology issue is the need for information providers to define key terms and then actually use these terms in the sense that they have defined them. This is important because the same terms may be used in different meanings in different countries or even in different contexts. This is of course not a phenomenon specific to higher education policies or the recognition of qualifications – cf. the different meaning of the term “first floor” in different parts of the English speaking world<sup>3</sup> – but since recognition relies on a number of technical terms with precise – but often differing – meanings, it is important to define the use of terms.

One example of a specialized term that carries different connotations in different part of the European Region is the term accreditation. In most European countries, this is seen as one particular form of quality assurance, leading to a legal decision on the status of a higher education institution or programme. Alternatively, accreditation can be seen as the legal consequence of quality assurance. In other words, most European countries tend to see quality assurance as the generic term, which may or may not include or lead to accreditation, depending on national laws and practice. In the United States, accreditation means the status of public recognition that an accrediting agency grants to an educational institution or program that meets the agency's standards and requirements. The term “accreditation”, as well as a series of related terms such as “accrediting agency”<sup>4</sup>, “institutional accrediting agency” or “programmatically accrediting agency”, are defined by Federal law. Accreditation and accrediting agencies are regulated by the U.S. federal government for certain purposes, especially to assure the quality of the U.S. higher education institutions and postsecondary vocational education institutions that can be attended by U.S. citizens and permanent residents using federal student assistance funds. While accreditation may be federally regulated, it is not performed by the government but rather by independent accrediting agencies.

The Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention as well as the EU Directives on professional recognition define a number of key terms in the context of these legal texts. While countries are encouraged to use these terms in the same sense in their national contexts, the definitions are binding only for the texts themselves, and countries may use terms in a different sense in their national legislation or practice. Individual ENICs and NARICs should provide definitions or indications on usage of terms that are important in their national contexts, and the definition thus given should be the one in actual use in the country in question. Where usage has been modified over time, this should also be indicated.

## TARGET GROUPS

As indicated above, it is generally recognized that effective information provision, especially in a situation of information overload, has to be tailored to specific target

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<sup>3</sup> Meaning the level at which one enters a building in the United States, but the floor above in the United Kingdom, where entry level is referred to as the ground floor.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as “a legal entity, or that part of a legal entity, that conducts accrediting activities through voluntary, non-Federal peer review and makes decisions concerning the accreditation or preaccreditation status of institutions, programs, or both.”

groups. A very obvious example is that one would not provide the same kind of information to political decision makers as one would to an individual who applies for recognition of a specific qualification.

Who, then, are the main target groups for information on recognition? The following have been identified at various times:

- Ministries or, in more general terms, public authorities responsible for higher education;
- Public authorities responsible for other sectors, e.g. employment policies, careers services;
- Higher education institutions, but this target group alone may need to be specified and segmented further to reflect the specific needs of institutional decision makers, foreign student advisers, admissions officers, etc.;
- Students planning to study abroad;
- Holders of foreign qualifications;
- Holders of national<sup>5</sup> qualifications wanting to use these abroad;
- Employers;
- Parents;
- Refugee agencies and organizations;
- Professional organizations;
- Other ENICs/NARICs;
- The press.

However, even if it were possible to establish a complete list of possible target groups for information provided by the ENICs/NARICs – as networks or as individual centres – this would not necessarily be of immediate help in elaborating an information strategy. For this, it would seem necessary to identify the *main* – rather than *all* – target groups.

The Working Party suggests that the *main target groups* are:

- individual holders of qualifications;
- public authorities (typically – but not limited to – Ministries responsible for higher education);
- quality assurance agencies;
- higher education institutions and bodies (typical examples of the latter would be Rectors' conferences or similar structures and mobility and exchange agencies);
- employers
- professional organizations
- ENICs/NARICs

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<sup>5</sup> In this context, “national” is shorthand for qualifications issued in the framework of the higher education system within which the ENIC/NARIC operates.

## TYPE OF INFORMATION

Broadly speaking, the information provided by ENICs and NARICs would seem to fit into one of two categories:

- ***system information***, which refers to information relevant to a broad category of recipients and concerning the characteristics of an education system as a whole or a part thereof. Typical examples would be general information on the degree structure or qualifications framework of a given country or general conditions for obtaining student support.
- ***information on individual qualifications*** or other kinds of information relevant to one specific individual. Examples corresponding to the ones listed for system information would be information on how a specific qualification relates to the degree system or qualifications framework of a given country, or the possible eligibility of a specific person for student support. It may of course be argued that, ultimately, this information will be the outcome of an assessment of an application, but potential applicants may seek this kind of information to assess their chances and see whether it would make sense for them to submit a formal application.

This is of course a very rough categorization and it will be necessary to be more specific about what kind of information is needed. Before proceeding to do so, however, it may be of interest to seek to match the main target group and the kind of information they require.

## TARGET GROUPS AND TYPES OF INFORMATION

A first match of the two categories could look something like this:

| TARGET GROUP                             | Needs system information | Needs inf. on individual qualifications | Receives information     | Provides information        |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Public authorities                       | X                        | (x)                                     | X (on foreign education) | X (on own education system) |
| Quality assurance agencies               | X                        | (x)                                     | X                        | X                           |
| HEIs and bodies                          | X                        | X                                       | X                        | X                           |
| Individual holders of qualifications     | (x)                      | X                                       | X                        | (x)                         |
| Employers and professional organizations | X                        | X                                       | X                        | X                           |
| ENICs/NARICs                             | X                        | X                                       | X (on foreign education) | X (on own education system) |



In the above table, X denotes that the target group in question needs or provides this type of information on a regular basis, (x) that it does so occasionally.

Two categories may warrant some further explanation. Public authorities comprise any public body responsible for higher education, or aspects thereof. The most typical example is the Ministry of Education, but there are several other examples, such as attestation commissions, regional authorities, directorates or other similar bodies (such as the Finnish Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) or the Turkish YÖK) or other bodies such as a University Grants Commission. However, it is suggested that quality assurance agencies be identified as a separate target group, as they are independent from public authorities – like Ministries – with an oversight function for the education system.

Higher education institutions and bodies refer, obviously, to higher education institutions but also to bodies such as Rectors' conferences. Mobility and exchange agencies such as the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) probably also come under this category.

This rough overview, however, needs to be developed further, and again with a view to indicating the main type of information needed by the various target group rather than anything near the complete range of information needed. It should also be kept in mind that the overview is established with a view to guiding the ENICs and NARICs in their role as information providers

The main information need of *public authorities* responsible for higher education is likely to be system information, but it would be worthwhile trying to specify these needs. They are likely to include information on:

- higher education legislation – in particular the legal provision for recognition and quality assurance;
- statistics;
- qualifications framework/degree system;
- quality assurance (methods and results);
- what institutions<sup>6</sup> are a part of any given higher education systems;
- basic concepts and instruments for recognition;
- procedures and provision for the recognition of foreign qualifications;
- contact details and legal status of competent authorities of other countries.

Public authorities are much less likely to need information on specific qualifications or individual diplomas, but the need could arise in unpredictable ways, for example if there were to be a case of forged qualifications or if the body responsible for student finance had either refused to support students studying at a recognized institution abroad or on the contrary provided funds for study at a non-recognized institution and the students thus supported would not have their qualifications recognized on their return home. In this case, public authorities are likely to need precise and reliable information very fast, and the ENIC/NARIC is likely to be the body they will turn to for this information.

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<sup>6</sup> Possibly also programs, but there seems to be some movement, for reasons of cost and efficiency, away from program assessment toward institutional assessment.

While *quality assurance agencies* have been identified as a separate target group, their needs for information are roughly similar to those of public authorities. In addition, it should be underlined that there should be well established and regular contacts between ENICs/NARICs and quality assurance agencies, as ENICs/NARICs will often need to obtain information about the quality of a specific qualification to determine if this degree is recognizable. In these cases, quality assurance agencies could be information providers for ENICs/NARICs.

Also, ENQA as a network as well as individual quality assurance agencies may need information from ENICs/NARICs about degrees or programmes that are evaluated by national/regional QAAs to define whether this QAA has high enough quality standards.

*Higher education institutions and bodies* are likely to need both main kinds of information, but the information is likely to be needed by different actors within the institution. The institutional leadership will most likely need system information, whereas admissions officers and student advisers will most likely have a greater need for information on individual qualifications. It might therefore make more sense to consider the information needs of specific groups within the institution than to try to devise an overall information strategy for higher education institutions and bodies.

*Individual holders of qualifications* as well as those planning to earn qualifications will most likely need information only on individual qualifications, and most likely only on their own. The system information they are likely to need is so intimately linked to their own qualification (such as where it fits into the higher education system of the sending and receiving country) that it seems artificial to seek to identify the system information they might need. It could be argued that they need information on the system and procedures for the recognition of qualifications, but this is again linked to their own qualification. It may be worth recalling that the Recommendation on criteria and procedures recommends that all applicants be provided with such information – as well as with information on the possibilities for appeals – as a part of an information packet acknowledging receipt of their application.

*Employers* are likely to need both major kinds of information, but the group is not a homogenous one and different employers may have quite different needs. A large company employing many people with foreign qualifications will probably seek to build up its own information base on various education systems, whereas a small employer who rarely receives an application from someone with a foreign qualification is likely to seek information on the specific qualification when this rare event occurs. The former group will need system information on specific countries as well as specific information on individual qualifications, whereas the small employer who only receives the occasional application from someone with foreign qualifications is unlikely to be concerned with system information.

The needs of *professional organizations* may also be somewhat diverse. A professional organization with advisory or even decision making powers, e.g. in the recognition of qualifications giving access to a given regulated profession, is likely to need precise and detailed information on the education system and individual qualifications for the profession in question but is less likely to need or want information on other parts of the system. It will need detailed information concerning the profession(s) for which it is responsible, including legal regulations. Its information needs may or may not be restricted to specific professions, and it is likely to require information on the international recognition framework, such as the EU Directives on professional recognition and the Lisboa Recognition Convention.

*ENICs/NARICs* are likely to need both kinds of information, and the systems information needed is most likely to relate to the qualifications framework of their own and foreign countries.

## WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION?

As with most information provision, a dilemma exists derived from the need for information being comprehensive vs. it being easily comprehensible. This issue is particularly thorny in the case of recognition in that legal provisions are often involved and that the information provided may be of great importance to both an individual and admitting institutions. For example, information provided can be used in two ways, i.e. for an individual to demonstrate that his/her qualifications are relevant for a specific job or admission to a specific study program, but equally it forms part of a decision making process for the employer/admitting institution.

In some cases, the information given may also be subject to legal challenges if provided orally or if written without the necessary *caveats*. An example of this is the United Kingdom, where the national agency acts as the only official source of information but the information provided is advisory in nature in recognition of the autonomous status of employers and academic institutions.

The most complete or at least authoritative information may be found in legal texts. However, simply receiving a copy of the relevant legal texts may not be of great help to applicants. Tailored explanatory documents will in general be much more useful to the different target groups, e.g. fact sheets.

A compromise solution may be to provide simplified information with the necessary legal disclaimers and to refer to or even include the relevant legal texts. However, while this may keep information providers out of courtrooms – not an unimportant goal in itself - it may not necessarily contribute to transparency. For efficient and transparent provision of information, there seems to be little alternative to tailor made information targeted to specific group, which is why it is important to clearly identify the main target groups for ENICs and NARICs and their respective needs.

There is, of course, also a question of the form in which information should be provided. While provision of information in electronic form has many advantages, including easy and inexpensive delivery and easy update, it should be kept in mind that some information seekers will not be in a position to make use of information provided electronically. A need for information provided through “classical” print will therefore subsist, and it would also seem important that ENICs/NARICs build up and maintain adequate information channels and networks with a range of target group, including:

- key people in public bodies, e.g. Ministries;
- quality assurance agencies;
- higher education institutions (e.g. admissions officers, student advisers);
- student organizations;
- professional organizations;
- employers organizations;
- media.

On the one hand, such relevant groups should receive targeted information throughout the year. On the other hand, they should also organize information meetings and seminars for key target groups. An example of good practice in this respect is the national seminars organized regularly by many ENICs and NARICs and targeted primarily at higher education institutions.

## OUTCOMES

The present report will focus on four main outcomes:

In Appendix 1, a *draft code of good practice in the provision of information* by national information centres on recognition. The code is intended to guide the centres in their work on this particularly important aspect of their activities, and it refers both to minimum services that should be offered by all and to other services that should be offered by centres according to their particular situation. This Code is submitted for **adoption**, and it is suggested that the overarching report be adopted as an explanatory memorandum to the Code.

In Appendix 2, a list of *frequently asked questions* with generic answer, which it is intended to include on the ENIC/NARIC Web site. This list could also be used by individual centres, which should be encouraged to adapt it to their specific context and provide answers applicable to their situation. In doing so, they should however, also refer to the “generic” list that will be placed on the Web site and encourage enquirers to seek further specific answers applicable to the countries in which they have a particular interest. This document is submitted for **discussion and approval**.

In Appendix 3, a list of *questions prospective students and other interested parties (e.g. employers) should ask of education/service providers*. This is a particularly important issue. Students and other interested parties are often unaware of the most important questions they should ask of any education provider. The failure to ask the right questions can result in wasted time, money and effort, particularly when unscrupulous providers purvey bogus and unrecognised qualifications. This document is submitted for **discussion and approval**.

In Appendix 4, a *fact sheet for national information centres*, outlining information

that should be readily available at national centres. This document is submitted for **discussion and approval**.

In Appendix 5, a *list of the members of the Working Party*.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DRAFT CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

#### **Information on recognition**

Information is of key importance in making the European Higher Education Area a reality by 2010, so that students and those who already hold higher education qualifications may move as freely as possible within as much of Europe as possible. At the same time, information on recognition is equally important in ensuring acceptance of qualifications from European countries in other areas of the world as well as fair recognition of qualifications from other regions in Europe. Information on recognition is also of crucial importance in a number of other contexts, including for further study within the European Region or outside it, for access to regulated professions and for employment in the non-regulated parts of the labour market.

The main problem facing credential evaluators and others called upon to assess or otherwise make use of foreign qualifications is not lack of information per se, but lack of authoritative, adequate, relevant, well targeted and easily available information.

A key function of the ENICs/NARICs is to provide accurate, reliable, authoritative and easily accessible information on their own and foreign higher education systems and on the recognition of qualifications.

The present Code of Good Practice aims to offer guidance to national information centres as well as to the ENIC and NARIC Networks in fulfilling this important task. It also aims to indicate to higher education policy makers and other interested parties what might be expected of ENICs/NARICs and the two Networks as a whole. The Code should be read in conjunction with the report on information strategies elaborated by a Working party appointed for this purpose [and adopted by the ENIC and NARIC Networks on 8 June 2004].

#### **The role of national information centres**

The national centres should be the principal providers of authoritative information on recognition, in particular on:

- the higher education systems and qualifications of the country in which they are located;
- the recognition of foreign qualifications in the country in which they are located;
- foreign education systems, to enquirers in the country for which they are responsible;

The national information centres should either be in a position to answer enquiries (“one stop”) or refer the enquirer to the appropriate body that could provide an authoritative answer (“two stop”).

At international level, the national information centres should represent their country in the ENIC and NARIC Networks.

### **Terminology**

In providing information, ENICs and NARICs should explain their use of specialized terminology and define technical terms that are important in the context of the information provided and/or differs significantly from common international use of these terms.

### **Standards of information provision**

National centres should consistently aim to provide information that is of high quality, i.e. both accurate, adequate and relevant to the user.

In general terms, the information provided by national centres should:

- be meaningful to the users and respond to their needs;
- recognize that different users or user groups have different information needs;
- seek to provide information that is relevant to each group without overburdening them with irrelevant information;
- be accessible in terms of content, language and style (i.e., *inter alia*, avoid unnecessary complications or specialized language);
- be accurate (i.e., *inter alia*, be factually correct and also avoid oversimplification – implying that a balance needs to be struck between accessibility and accuracy);
- originate from –and as far as possible be provided by – the competent authority closest to the source of information (the subsidiarity principle - e.g. information on a given education system should be provided by the authority competent for that system);
- be up to date.

### **Target groups**

Each national information centre should give careful consideration to the main target groups for its activities and, as far as possible, adapt the information it provides to the needs of the individual target group.

While allowance should be made for the diversity of national situations, the key target groups are likely to include:

- individual holders of qualifications;
- public authorities (typically – but not limited to – Ministries responsible for higher education);
- quality assurance agencies;
- higher education institutions and bodies, such as Rectors' conferences or similar structures
- mobility and exchange agencies;

- employers;
- professional organizations;
- other ENICs/NARICs.

### **Type of information**

National information centres should be in a position to provide information on both higher education systems and qualifications frameworks and on the status of individual institutions, programme and qualifications.

Within each broad category of information, national centres should seek to identify the precise information that is most likely to be of interest to each of the main target groups.

### **Information dissemination**

Information centres should use a variety of means to provide information to various target groups. Information should be provided by all appropriate means, including:

- information technologies, in accordance with internationally accepted standards;
- printed information sheets, leaflets and booklets;
- interviews and articles in appropriate journals, newspapers and other media;
- other means of promotion, as appropriate.

Information centres should, as far as possible, provide standardized information adapted to the needs of specific target groups. This information should be provided in the appropriate national language(s) as well as in at least one widely spoken foreign language.

In addition to written information provided electronically or in printed form, national information centres should seek direct contact with the main stakeholders through participation in relevant fairs and similar events as well as by organizing information meetings and seminars for relevant target groups.

In elaborating information material, national centres should make full use of the material elaborated by the ENIC and NARIC Network, and the web sites of individual national centres should provide adequate links to the ENIC/NARIC web site.

In particular, national information centres should post or provide prominent links to the overview of “Frequently Asked Questions” and the overview of “Questions Every Student Should Ask of Higher Education Providers” provided through the ENIC/NARIC Web site and, where relevant, provide translated and/or adapted versions of these documents

### **Networking and information exchange**

National information centres should seek to establish regular contacts with their main organized target groups, such as Ministries, higher education institutions, student



organizations, employers and their organizations, quality assurance agencies, student loan and grant authorities, immigration authorities and others. Where pertinent, the national centres should seek to establish networks of stakeholders and cooperation partners for regular exchange of information.

### **The ENIC and NARIC Networks**

The ENIC and NARIC Networks should provide the most important forum for the exchange of information on the recognition of qualifications within the European Region. Information should be exchanged through the formal meetings of the Networks, through the means of communication established within the Networks – in particular the ENIC/NARIC Web site and list server – and through bilateral contacts between member centres.

The ENIC and NARIC Networks should seek to support the national centres in their provision of information within their particular context, especially by developing and providing information of relevance to the Networks as a whole and by encouraging the exchange of competence and examples of good practice among national centres.

## APPENDIX 2

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Frequently Asked Questions: A Model

##### Background

As explained in the report from the ENWIS Working Party, the present document is intended to be a model that individual centres are invited to use, after adjusting it to their national and jurisdictional contexts, to develop or expand their own set of frequently asked questions, for use on their Web site and in their day-to-day activities.

It will also be adapted for use on the ENIC-NARIC Web site, to provide generic answers to its visitors, and hopefully better direct them in the steps they should take to accomplish what they want to do.

##### The questions

A review of actual questions received through the ENIC-NARIC site or posted on some National Centres' Web sites shows that most questions are variations on relatively few questions. The list presented here attempts therefore to reduce the number of questions as much as possible to make it easier to find the desired information more quickly.

The list is obviously not exhaustive; centres will want tailor it to their needs.

##### The answers

The answers proposed here as models have been written with the ENIC-NARIC Web site in mind. They are therefore very general and refer often to the centres. Centres will need to provide more detailed and more targeted answers.

Each generic answer is made up of the following elements, as applicable:

- 1) An explanation: the text of the answer itself;
- 2) What to expect: a short description, or a list, of what will most likely be asked of the individual, how long the process will be, what the costs may be, etc.;
- 3) What to avoid: things to be cautious about, steps that may be unnecessary, etc.;
- 4) Where to obtain additional information: if you are not the main provider of the service, who else could or should be contacted for additional advice or instructions; and
- 5) Terms that may need to be clarified: we often take for granted terms that can be difficult to understand, or be interpreted differently, by a person from a different background, culture, or country. Some suggestions are made as examples, but no definitions are given.

Answers need not necessarily contain all those elements, nor be structured this way, but it will be useful to consider all those aspects when preparing your own texts.

## **Suggested List of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. I want to have my credentials evaluated
2. I want to study abroad/in your country
3. I want to study through distance education
4. I want to obtain an European/international credential
5. I want to work in your country/abroad
6. I want to emigrate
7. I want to appeal the evaluation of my credential
8. I want to find financial assistance to study abroad
9. I want to hire a foreign trained person
10. I want to know more about the ENIC-NARICs
11. I want to know more about the Lisbon Convention
12. I want to know more about the Bologna Process
13. I want to know more about the Diploma Supplement
14. I want to know more about the ECTS

## 1. I want to have my credentials evaluated

What you need to do to have your diploma recognized outside the country where it was delivered will depend on what you want to do and on the country where you want to go. Most likely, you want your credentials evaluated for one of the following reasons: you want to study, you want to work, or you want to emigrate (and most likely work also). More detailed answers are provided in other sections.

### *What to expect*

You will be required to provide a number of documents (originals or photocopies), and possibly to have some of them translated. You will be told how much the evaluation will cost (if there is a fee for the service), how long the examination of your credentials will take (several week to several months depending on the complexity of your file), what will happen if you submit forgeries or other false documents, what type of document (for example a full equivalency, or a comparative report) you will obtain at a result of the assessment, and what you can do if you are not satisfied with the evaluation (how to appeal the decision).

### *What to avoid*

- Do not send any documentation (by email, regular mail, or fax) until and unless you have been specifically asked to do so by the appropriate agency. The documents required may not be the ones you think, or the agency you are sending them to may not be the appropriate one. You will be saving time, money and the possible loss of important and confidential documents.
- Do not have any document translated on your own until you are told specifically that such a translation is needed and how to proceed to have it done. In this way, you will avoid possibly unnecessary expenses.
- Do not provide original documents. In most cases, duly certified copies should be sufficient. In case of doubt, you may be required to show the original documents, but don't send them by mail.

### *For more information*

For more detailed information, contact the National Information Centre for the country where you go, or your own national information centre.

### *Examples of terms that may need to be clarified*

Nostrification, equivalency, comparative assessment

## 2. I want to go abroad/come to your country to study

Depending on the country, it will be the educational institution, the ministry responsible for education, or the national academic recognition and information centre that will be responsible for the evaluation of your foreign diploma prior to admission. There are a number of additional questions you may need to clarify:

1. **Is the institution I am interested in recognised by the competent authorities in the country where it is located?**

You need to be sure that other academic institutions, professional bodies or potential employers (depending on what you plan to do with the diploma you will acquire) will accept the credential or qualification you are planning to obtain, or you may waste your time and money.

**If it is not recognised, is it critical for my purpose?**

Some institutions and programs of study, although not officially recognized, may still be of high quality and appropriate for your purpose. Contact your academic institution, professional body or employer, as the case may be, for advice and guidance.

2. **What are the admission/registration procedures and how long do they take?**

Once you have decided to which institution you wish to apply for admission, you should write directly to the institution's admissions office and ask for detailed application information and forms. This office will inform you about the documentation, translation, and visa requirements as applicable. The process can take considerable time, especially if immigration/visa requirements exist; you should start **at least one year in advance** to compile the necessary information and documentation.

3. **Are there quotas for admission to some programs?**

Some countries or institutions do impose quotas for some programs, often in professional disciplines, for example. You should verify in advance with the institution of your choice, or the national academic information centre for the country.

4. **What will the cost be?**

Studying abroad involves expenses of various kinds. First, there will be expenses before you leave: various (administrative) fees for things like visas, admission to and registration with the higher education institution, including the assessment and translation of your credentials, etc. In many countries, there are tuition fees (annual, by term or by semester). Second, there will be your travel expenses. Finally, you will have to budget for your stay in the country (housing, living expenses, books and manuals, medical insurance, etc.)

You may be entitled to or benefit from EU programs designed to promote or facilitate mobility between member States. Individual countries may also have financial assistance programs for national and foreign students. If you already know in which country you would like to study, contact its national academic information centre for additional information and advice. There may also exist several good sources of information and programs: governments, national non-governmental organisations such as student associations or university associations, universities and other higher education institutions, international aid agencies, etc.

5. **What are the language requirements?**

Make sure you conform to the language proficiency requirements of the institution of your choice.

6. **What are the residence/immigration requirements?**

Depending on the country, you may need a student visa or other immigration papers. Make sure you know what the requirements are and how long the process for obtaining the required authorizations may be.

*For more information*

For specific information and for advice, contact the national information centre in your country or in the country where you want to study. In countries where no such centres exist, contact the ministry responsible for education. Once you have confirmed that the institution you are interested in is reliable and corresponds to your expectations, you should also contact the institution directly for specific instructions.

*Examples of terms that may need to be clarified*

Accreditation, recognition, recognised higher education institution

### **3. I want to study through distance education programs**

Distance education is subject to the same restrictions as any other program of study (see question 2 above). This means that, before registering in such a program, you must make sure that the program provider is properly recognized by the competent authorities in the country where it is located and, even more importantly, that the program of studies you plan to follow will be accepted in your country for your purpose, i.e. by your own institution, by an employer (potential or actual), by a professional licensing body, etc., as the case may be.

*For more information*

For information about distance education providers, contact your national information centre; for information about whether specific distance education programs will be accepted for your purpose, contact your own institution, the employer, the professional licensing body, etc., as the case may be.

#### **4. I want to obtain a European (or an international) degree.**

Although clear progress is being made in facilitating international mobility and the recognition of foreign credentials, recognition is given within the framework of each education system and there does not exist degrees or diplomas that are valid as such throughout Europe, or the world. Some qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate, which is an internationally recognized secondary school diploma, may be recognized in many countries, but this is an individual decision in each country.

In the European context, the Bologna Process (see below) is an initiative towards the rapprochement of degree structures among participating countries, but there also the objective is to improve the transparency of the education systems and diplomas, not an attempt to create transnational credentials

Nevertheless, many institutions, within the European region and beyond, have developed partnerships and programs with institutions in other countries where students are granted degrees by each partner institutions, or joint degrees, upon successful completion of the program. In this way, the student becomes the holder of a degree or degrees that are valid in more than one country.

*For more information*

Contact individual higher education institutions, university associations, rectors' conferences, student associations, and national information centres for information on such partnerships.

*Examples of terms that may need to be clarified*

Joint degrees



## 5. I want to work in your country/abroad

**Some occupations are regulated**, while others are not. Whether you are planning emigrate permanently, to go abroad temporarily or to return to your home country to start working after completing studies abroad, it is imperative that you enquire about the status of your chosen occupation, how to proceed to have your qualifications evaluated, and what additional steps you may need to take before you are authorised to practise.

There are essentially two ways to regulate occupations: the use of **specific titles** is controlled (for instance, the title Certified Translator), but one can practise without other restrictions, or **the practice of the profession** is restricted (for instance, medical doctor, or engineer): it is legally forbidden to practise the profession unless specific requirements are met.

Additionally, even if an occupation is not formally regulated, there may still be restrictions to employment, in that employers may impose specific requirements, like membership in a professional association, or having certain academic credentials.

With some professions (especially where the practice is controlled), quotas may exist.

Finally, if emigrating, you should enquire about residence/immigration requirements (visas, temporary permits, vaccinations, etc.), and the length of the various procedures required.

*For more information*

The national information centre should be able to assist you or to direct you to the appropriate source of information.

*Examples of terms that may need to be clarified*

Regulated professions, licensure, certification, registration, regulatory bodies, reserved title, right to practise.

## **6. I want to emigrate/immigrate**

Immigration procedures are always long and complex, and often costly. You must therefore plan a long time in advance and learn everything you can about the process.

### *What to expect*

You will be told what essential documents to provide, what important documents to have at your disposal, how long the process will take, what it will cost.

### *What to avoid*

Normally, it is not necessary to hire a consultant to assist you with your immigration application. If you decide nevertheless to hire somebody, and before you pay any money, make sure that the agency or person from which you are purchasing this service is reliable. In some countries, such consultants must be registered with, and authorised by, the immigration authorities.

### *For more information*

You must contact the immigration authorities (i.e. the national embassy or consulate closest to you) for the country where you want to settle.

## **7. I want to appeal the evaluation of my credential**

If you are not satisfied with the result of the assessment of your diploma, you can appeal the decision. The Explanatory Report to Article III.5 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention states that "...the reasons for a decision to the applicant's disadvantage should be stated. The provision that it is up to the authority evaluating the application to show that the applicant does not fulfil the requirements for recognition is closely linked to the applicant's right to appeal", and that "information should be given on the ways in which an appeal could be made, and on the time limits for such an appeal."

### *What to expect*

The service responsible for the evaluation of your credentials should inform you, as part of the initial information it provides you, of the procedures available to you to appeal their decision.

### *For more information*

Contact your national information centre, or your ministry of education, for details.

## **8. I want to find financial assistance for my studies abroad**

Host countries often do not have financial assistance programs for international students, except sometimes in the context of exchange or research programs. Therefore you should first inquire in your home country about possibilities for financial assistance, both at the government level and from private organisations.

Additionally, individual higher education institutions may have programs, or partnerships with other institutions, to provide some financial assistance to international students.

Also, especially in the context of the European Union, a number of student exchange and mobility programs may apply to your situation.

### *What to avoid*

A number of fraudulent operations exist, which imitate legitimate agencies (in name for instance) to defraud students of their money. In general, be suspicious of any financial assistance program or agency where you have to give money before you can receive money (to go to a seminar, for instance, or to be guaranteed success in your application).

### *For more information*

Contact your national information centre for information on scholarship programs within your country and other exchange and mobility programs. Inquire as well with your own institution, and the institution where you plan to study abroad about the existence of institutional financial aid programs. Student associations may also be able to give you advice in this regard.

## **9. I want to hire a foreign-trained person**

Before you can hire a foreign-trained person, there are a number of things you will need to clarify, in particular how their competencies will be recognized in your country, especially in the case of regulated trades and professions, and what immigration policies and procedures may apply.

If the person belongs to another European Union country, their rights to establish themselves or to provide services anywhere in the EU are fundamental principles of European Community law (see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/qualifications/overview\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/qualifications/overview_en.htm)).

If the person comes from outside the European region, your country's immigration regulations regarding this situation and this country will also need to be ascertained.

*For more information*

Your first source of information will be the national information centre in your country; it will be useful as well to consult your country's immigration authorities.

## **10. I want to know more about the ENICs and NARICs**

The ENICs (European National Information Centres) are bodies set up by the national authorities of the States party to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (also referred to as the Lisbon Recognition Convention, see n° 11), the European Cultural Convention or the 1979 UNESCO Convention for the Europe Region (which are being superseded by the so-called 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention). UNESCO's Europe Region includes a number of countries located outside geographical Europe.

The NARICs (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) were established as an initiative of the European Commission in 1984 with the aim of improving the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States of the European Union, the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. NARICs, which are part of the SOCRATES/ERASMUS Programme, are designated by the Ministries of Education in the respective countries.

While the size and specific competence of individual centres may vary, they will generally provide information on the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications; the education systems in both foreign countries and the centre's own country; opportunities for studying abroad, including information on loans and scholarships, as well as advice on practical questions related to mobility and equivalence.

Both networks of national information centres cooperate closely to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and, in general, to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications.

*For more information*

The ENIC-NARIC Networks have their own Web site, at <http://www.enic-naric.net>. This gateway to the recognition of academic and professional qualifications in the European Region provides general information about recognition and mobility issues and links to detailed information in each of the member countries.

## **11. I want to know more about the Lisbon Recognition Convention**

The proposal was made in 1993 to draw up a single, joint convention, which would eventually replace the European Higher Education Conventions of the Council of Europe as well as the 1979 UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region.

The purpose of those conventions was to facilitate the recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas and to improve access to information of an official nature about the various national systems of higher education of the member States.

The new Joint Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (known as the Lisbon Convention) was adopted in April 1997 by the countries of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe Region. The new convention does not differ significantly in substance and objectives. However, it specifies more concretely and in greater detail the responsibilities of ratifying states with respect to the principles and mechanisms for recognition of qualifications and the collection and dissemination of information on higher education.

*For more information*

The full text of the Lisbon Convention, as well as explanations and the list of signatories, can be found at

<http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=165&CL=ENG>.

## **12. I want to know more about the Bologna Process**

The Bologna Process is an initiative of European education ministers to establish by 2010 an area in which citizens can move with ease and have fair recognition of their qualifications through the implementation of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees (based notably on the Diploma Supplement).

An important goal of the process is thus to move higher education in Europe towards a more transparent and mutually recognized system which would place the diversified national systems into a common frame based on three outcome levels - Bachelor, Master and Doctoral - and recognize the different paths according to which they were achieved.

The Bologna Process is driven by the participating countries, but involves also the European Commission, the European University Association (EUA), the Council of Europe, ESIB - National Unions of Students in Europe, EURASHE and UNESCO/CEPES as key partners in the follow up process.

*For more information*

More information can be found at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Co-operation/education/Higher\\_education/Activities/Bologna\\_Process/http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Higher_education/Activities/Bologna_Process/http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/).



### **13. I want to know more about the Diploma Supplement (DS)**

The Diploma Supplement is a document produced by national institutions that is attached to a higher education diploma; its aim is to improve international ‘transparency’ and to facilitate the academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It was developed jointly as an initiative of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

It **does not replace** the higher education diploma itself. 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 qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible non-prescriptive tool designed to save time, money and work. It can be adapted to local needs.

*For more information*

More information can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec\\_qual/recognition/diploma\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html).

## **14. I want to know more about the ECTS**

A credit system is a systematic way of describing an educational programme by attaching credits to each of its components.

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a student-centred system based on the convention that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to 36/40 weeks per year and in those cases one credit stands for 24 to 30 working hours. Workload refers to the notional time an average learner might expect to complete the required learning outcomes.

ECTS makes study programmes easy to read and compare for all students, local and foreign; as such, it facilitates mobility and academic recognition.

*For more information*

More information on the ECTS can be found at

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects_en.html).

**APPENDIX 3****QUESTIONS PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES (E.G. EMPLOYERS) SHOULD ASK OF EDUCATION PROVIDERS****Questions You Should Ask – A Model****Background**

This document is a companion to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document. Like it, it is intended as a model that centres are invited to adjust to their national and jurisdictional contexts, for use on their Web site and in their day-to-day activities.

**Purpose**

This list of questions is a sort of checklist that prospective students and other individual should ask themselves and ask service providers in order to avoid unpleasant surprises later, and before undertaking procedures take time and cost them money, or prove altogether unnecessary.

This list, like the list of FAQs, is clearly not exhaustive, and is meant to be customized by individual centres.

**Content**

For each question, reasons are given to explain why the question should be asked, and to whom it should be asked.

### Questions you should ask – A Check List for the Mobile Student

| Question to ask   | Why you should ask  | Who you should ask   |
|---|---|--|
| Is the credential evaluation service I plan to use competent and reliable?  | You need to be sure that the credential assessment service you are planning to use is going to give you a document that will be recognised. Countries often have quality assurance, recognition or accreditation mechanisms to regulate the provision of credential assessment services.  | ENIC/NARIC; government authorities, national ministry responsible for education  |
| Is the credential evaluation document I am preparing to obtain the document I need?   | Before you proceed to have your credential assessed for comparability, you need to make sure that this assessment is the one you need: higher education institutions, for example, often do their own assessment and will not use assessment done elsewhere.  | ENIC/NARIC; higher education institution; professional regulatory agency; professional or trade association; employer        |
| Is the institution where I want to study accredited/recognised?   | You need to be sure that your credential will be accepted by other institutions, by professional bodies, or by potential employers. Also, credential evaluation services will automatically check this when you submit your qualifications for assessment.  | ENIC/NARIC; National Ministry responsible for education  |
| The institution I plan to attend claims to be accredited/recognized. What does it mean, and how can I confirm its legal status.             | Accreditation and recognition mean different things in different countries and contexts. Some accrediting bodies are themselves not approved or legitimate, or may be accepted in one country, but not in another. This institution's claim may mean nothing or may even, in the case of non-serious institutions, be fraudulent. | ENIC/NARIC; National Ministry responsible for education  |
| Will the study program I intend to enrol in, abroad or through distance education, be recognised when I return home to continue my studies? | If you do not confirm this before you enrol, you may waste time and money   | Your home institution  |
| Will the training I intend to obtain abroad or through distance education be recognised when I return home to work?                         | If you do not confirm this before you go, you may waste time and money.   | The appropriate vocational or professional association; career information services; national employment centres; ENIC/NARIC |

| Question to ask  | Why you should ask   | Who you should ask  |
|--|--|---|
| How long in advance should I begin the admission procedures to the foreign institution I plan to attend? | The process may be more complex and take longer than you expect. If you start too late, you may not be able to complete the procedures in time.  | The admitting institution; the foreign visa office; your own ministry of foreign affairs; ENIC/NARIC  |
| Is the occupation I want to practice abroad regulated or not in that country?                            | Procedures and requirements will differ depending on whether and how your chosen occupation is regulated   | Employer; regulatory bodies; ENIC/NARIC   |
| How much will it cost me to study abroad?  | Tuition fees vary from country to country. In some countries, foreign students pay higher tuition fees than national students. You must also take into consideration the average cost of living in the country.  | Receiving institution; ENIC/NARIC   |
| Are there EU programs that will facilitate my study and career projects abroad?                          | You may be entitled to or benefit from EU programs designed to promote or facilitate mobility within member States   | ENIC/NARIC; European Commission   |
| Are there programs that could offer financial support for my study abroad                                | Many national organizations, as well as some international programs, offer financial support. Rules, regulations and eligibility vary considerably   | ENIC/NARIC, national grants commissions, national mobility agencies (e.g. DAAD), European Commission (for EU programs), Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordic and Nordic-Baltic-Northwest Russia programs), CEEPUS Office (Austria and Central and South East Europe) |
| Can I take my student loan and scholarship abroad?   | Some countries allow students to take their national scholarship and loans for study abroad; special conditions may apply  | National loan and grants body, ENIC/NARIC, student advisor at your institution  |
| If I feel that the assessment made of my credentials is unfair, can I appeal the decision?               | Conventions and national regulations protect the rights of individuals against wrongful treatment. You may have grounds to appeal a decision. Appeals procedures and deadlines may vary from country to country; in general terms, you should act as soon as possible. | ENIC/NARIC; national government authorities; consumer protection agencies   |

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **DRAFT INFORMATION FACT SHEETS FOR ENIC/NARIC CENTRES**

#### **Introduction**

Information provision on education systems and on recognition is one of the core activities of the national centres in ENIC and NARIC Networks. Acknowledging the need for relevant, accurate and up-to-date information, the national ENIC/NARIC office shall facilitate: a) access to accurate information on the national education system; b) access to information on foreign higher education systems, and c) giving information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications.

The questions are what kind of information the target groups need and how to provide the relevant information.

In general the types of information provision by the national ENIC and NARIC office are divided into two main parts:

#### *1. General information on the education system and recognition matters*

General information on the education system and recognition matters provided by the national ENIC/NARIC office is recommended to offer through general provision. One of the channels for general provision is information fact sheets.

#### *2. Specific information*

Specific information depends on the individual request including the information or assessment of the individual qualification.

#### **Purpose of the document**

The purpose of the present document is to propose what kind of information could be available in the national ENIC/NARIC office for general provision on information, and what part of general information is proposed to provide by fact sheets.

The relevant information fact sheets should cover the needs of all target groups of the national ENIC/NARIC office – public authorities, higher education institutions, employers, national ENIC/NARIC offices of other countries, and individuals.

#### **Information fact sheets for ENIC/NARIC offices**

The proposal is that each ENIC/NARIC office will have fact sheets on the national education system and recognition matters on a hard copy and in electronic format with general information for general provision.

## **I. INFORMATION FACT SHEETS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC OFFICE**

### **A. Information on national education system**

#### **A.1. General**

- educational structure
- adult education and lifelong learning
- definitions and terminology

#### **A.2. Information on general (school) education system**

- short description on basic/elementary school system
- description on secondary education system
  - legal framework
  - type of institutions
  - number of years
  - curriculum (list of general subjects)
  - grading system
  - examination(s)
  - certifications

#### **A.3. Information on vocational education and training**

- legal framework
- type and status of institutions
- study programmes
- grading and examination system
- quality assurance
- certification
- state recognition and access to labour market

#### **A.4. Information on higher education system**

- administration and legal framework
- main legal acts on higher education
- access qualifications
- access requirements (general and specific)
- admission procedure /admission of foreign students
- types of higher education institutions
- list of recognized higher education institutions/ study programmes
- administration and academic staff
- description on higher education levels/stages. Degree structure

- qualifications framework, list of qualifications (degrees, diplomas, certificates, titles etc)
- evaluation and marking system
- credit system
- quality assurance
- recognition policy of national qualifications
- samples of credentials
- description on developments and higher education reforms (e.g. Bologna Process)

### **B. Information on evaluation and recognition**

- national regulation of recognition of foreign qualifications
- description of national ENIC/NARIC activities
- procedure and criteria of credential evaluation at national ENIC/NARIC office
- appeal procedure
- implementation of recognition conventions at national level
- implementation of international recommendations and codes of good practice at national level
- mutual recognition agreements
- implementation of international declarations at national level
- general information on international tools (Diploma Supplement; ECTS)
- general description of professional recognition (incl. implementation of EU directives)
- list of competent authorities (contact data)
- list of FAQ

### **C. Other information**

- list of (higher) education related institutions (related ministries; school boards, examination councils, quality assessment agencies, professional associations, student union, etc)
- reference to international and national legal instruments
- list of international and national references and publications – websites, databases, handbooks

## **II. INFORMATION FACT SHEETS PROVIDED BY THE NETWORKS FOR NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC OFFICES**

- European recognition networks ENIC and NARIC
- academic recognition – legal instruments and their application
- Lisbon Recognition Convention – general explanation
- professional recognition – EU system for professional recognition
- recognition issues in Bologna Process
- transnational education – general overview
- list of documents – resources



The individual ENIC/NARIC office and the Networks may issue the fact sheets of other information depending on specific features in national education system or developments in the recognition networks.

### **Conclusions**

The fact sheets are the publications for provision of clear, adequate, reliable and authenticated general information on education systems and recognition procedure, and are accessible at national offices.

One of the purposes of the fact sheets is to provide – beside of books, manuals, legal instruments, national legal acts and other publications and instruments – short, target-oriented, user-friendly, swift-founded and competently explained information.

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **MEMBERS OF THE WORKING PARTY**

#### ***Chair***

Darius Tamošiunas. Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC

#### ***Members***

Stephen Adam, University of Westminster

Cloud Bai-yun, United Kingdom ENIC/NARIC

Stefan Bienefeld, ESIB

Katarina Witek Glebowicz, Norwegian ENIC/NARIC

Julia Juhasz, Hungarian ENIC/NARIC (first meeting only)

Kimmo Hämäläinen, ENQA

Eric Schvartz, Canadian ENIC

Gunar Vaht, Estonian ENIC/NARIC, President of the ENIC Network

Dimitra Valaka, European Commission

Peter Wells, UNESCO/CEPES

#### ***Secretariat - Council of Europe***

Sjur Bergan

Can Kaftancı

Cristina Negru

Martina Vukasović