



Department for the recognition of foreign qualifications - ENIC-NARIC France

Conference Summary report

Internationalization of Higher Education: Mobility and Employability

CIEP, Sèvres, May 28th 2015

Context

The international conference “Internationalization of Higher Education: Mobility and Employability”, held in Sèvres (France) on May 28th 2015, was carried out by CIEP in the framework of an Erasmus+ Project “Enhancing the use of mobility tools for recognition” coordinated by the French ENIC-NARIC. This project aims at raising awareness and improving the use of mobility and recognition tools by setting up trainings in each of the partner countries (Croatia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy and the Netherlands). The target groups are higher education institutions, public administration bodies and employers.

The aim of the international conference, held in May in France, was to gather all the stakeholders involved in mobility from the six countries participating in the project. It gave also the opportunity to share, discuss and exchange on topics such as mobility, employability, and quality assurance, as well as on good recognition practices and possible issues these stakeholders might face.

Organization

The conference lasted one day. More than 120 representatives of HEIs, employers and administration bodies of different European countries participated in this event.

Opening

In his opening speech, Mr. Daniel ASSOULINE, Director of CIEP highlighted the fact that recognition of foreign qualifications has recently shifted to the very center of European and global policy discussions related to mobility. Fair recognition is now acknowledged to be the cornerstone of the internationalization of higher education and of student mobility.

Plenary meeting

The main topics discussed during the plenary session of the conference were:

- **Trends and strategies in the processes of the internationalization of Higher Education**

Ms Carla SALVATERRA, Vice Rector for international relations at the University of Bologna, presented the context of the internationalization of higher education in Europe and the strategies implemented to promote European higher education in the world. Through a case study of a Brazilian mobility programme, she provided a comprehensive review of higher education policies and strategies aimed at enhancing student's mobility.

- **Understanding quality assurance in Higher Education**

Mr. Bruno CURVALE, Senior programme coordinator at CIEP and former president of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), described the major steps of quality assurance developments in higher education. He underlined the increasing interest in quality and standards all over the world, which reflects the quick development of higher education in the last decades. He indicated that a key goal of the standards and guidelines of quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area is to contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders. He stressed the fact that undertaking a quality assurance process allows higher education systems to demonstrate quality and increase transparency, and thus helps to build mutual trust and a better recognition of qualifications and programs.

- **Internationalization of Higher Education: RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), mobility and employability**

Patrick Werquin, PhD, economist and Professor at CNAM, shared with all the participants his point of view on internationalization of tertiary education and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Mr. Werquin underlined that, in his point of view, all learning is vocational. For him a higher education system should be diverse in order to reach employability, whilst being coherent in developing bridges between the academic and professional world. He indicated that the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides individuals with an opportunity to validate skills and competencies which have not been formally recognized. The importance of recognizing skills, including prior learning and previous experience, irrespective of the countries where they were acquired and the way they were acquired (formally or informally), is one of the key determinants of employability.

- **Presentation of the Chinese education system**

Mr. Xiaohui WANG, Professor at the Institute of International and Comparative Education, Beijing Normal University, presented the Chinese higher education system, especially the main credentials and types of institutions. His speech shed light on interesting topics, helping to better understand the system: National University Entrance Examination (*Gaokao*), principal educational qualifications and degrees, competitive entrance exams for each level of higher education, quality assurance and accreditation of higher education institutions, etc.

Workshops

Workshop 1: Fraudulent education documents and degrees

Ms Jessica STANNARD and Mr. Samer ALZAIDY from the Dutch ENIC-NARIC- NUFFIC shared their experience in dealing with fraudulent education documents and degrees with all the participants. They underlined the importance of being aware of three types of knowledge to be used in detection and prevention of fake diplomas: common sense, specific knowledge and technical knowledge. The workshop included several case studies. Participants were encouraged to detect fake diplomas among the examples given. The moderators of the workshop stressed the importance of putting in place a case by case procedure by creating an internal database of the detected cases.

Workshop 2: Recognition of degrees from countries in conflict situations

Ms Marina MALGINA, Project Manager in the Department of Foreign Education of Norwegian ENIC-NARIC – NOKUT, presented the recognition procedure, implemented at NOKUT, for applicants with insufficient or non-verifiable documentation. Through this workshop, she presented NOKUT's experience and several keys to succeed: a national centralized scheme, a lot of time, motivation and active participation from the applicant and a robust support service.

Workshop 3: Recognition conventions in other regions of the world

Ms Liliana SIMIONESCU, Programme specialist for UNESCO Higher Education section, presented the most important regional conventions for the recognition of higher education qualifications and the key principles of “modernization” of the existing conventions. She also gave some information about the “global recognition convention” which is still at a draft level.

Workshop 4: Good practices in the implementation of the Diploma Supplement

Ms Encarna GARRIDO, Assistant Director, International Relations Office from the University of Granada, explained, through examples, the implementation of the Diploma Supplement at the university she works for and the process to issue it to students. She shared her experience with all the participants and proposed some alternatives to solve the difficulties that can be faced when implementing the Diploma Supplement.

Workshop 5: The use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition process

Ms Niamh LENEHAN, Manager of Operations at the Irish ENIC-NARIC, presented the evolution of Qualifications Frameworks (QF) and the use of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in her center. The participants were interested in several practical questions concerning the comparisons of several academic and professional qualifications in Ireland. Participants debated on the topic, difficulties faced and tried to find an answer to some questions, such as:

- Relation between NQF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- Classification of the professional qualification in a NQF and the EQF
- Who will make the decision concerning the EQF and NQF, institutions or political decision makers?
- Can the institutions have more influence on the development of the QF?

Conclusion

The relevance of the speakers and the variety of the topics covered during the conference participated in conveying great attention and interest of the participants. The workshops allowed sharing of information and experiences.

To conclude, Kevin GUILLAUME, President of the ENIC-NARIC network, underlined the importance of working together and sharing good practices. He stressed the importance of putting in place actions at “local level” to share with those who could not participate to the conference or to the trainings.

Shortly after the event, the French ENIC-NARIC will conduct a survey aiming at measuring the effectiveness of the national trainings and the conference. This survey will be carried out during the first two weeks of September. The results of the survey will be disseminated among the participating stakeholders.

All the documents are available on the web page of the project: <http://www.ciep.fr/expertise-audit-education/reconnaissance-diplomes/appui-a-lutilisation-outils-mobilite-domaine-reconnaissance>