



Study on the Diploma Supplement as seen by its users

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A project organised in joint co-operation between

ENIC-NARIC
(European Network of Information Centres –
National Academic Recognition Information Centres)

and

ENQA
(European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)

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Foreword

This project is the outcome of the initial contact that started in 2004 between the ENIC-NARIC (European Network Information Centre – National Academic Recognition Information Centre) network and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). The interests the two organisations have with regard to the recognition of evaluation or accreditation decisions for ENQA and the recognition of qualification for the ENIC-NARIC were the starting point for reflection on possible complementary activities with regards to the mobility of students and holders of a diploma.

The initial belief at the beginning of the project was that by optimising the implementation of tools already employed across Europe, such as the Diploma Supplement, this could improve the quality of higher education institutions' activities as well as the recognition of qualifications. This was confirmed with the conclusions resulting from the project. Clearly, the problems associated with the academic recognition of qualifications are closely linked to the quality of the Diploma Supplement. By taking an interest in the mechanisms put in place to guarantee the quality of the Diploma Supplement, the daily work of ENIC-NARIC centres could be improved. Beyond the issues surrounding the academic recognition of qualifications in guaranteeing the quality of the Diploma Supplement, this would open up its potential as an informative and communicative tool as well as helping to facilitate the mobility of personnel and of European development.

However, it is important to outline certain limitations here. The technical feasibility of the academic recognition of qualifications as well as the evaluation of the quality of programmes do not cover all the issues related to the topic of recognition. It does not, for example, include political concerns that arise for those merely seeking the recognition of their qualifications. Furthermore, recognition has economic implications in terms of, for example, granting scholarships or designating places at higher education institutions and in terms of both employment and migration policy. Fundamentally, recognition is the responsibility of the political order and remains regulated by legal measures laid down in the country.

The project greatly benefitted from the participation of several partners particularly interested in the Diploma Supplement implementation. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the steering group and the partners however much involved in this project: the European higher education institutions that provided the ENIC-NARIC centres with example Diploma Supplements and, more specifically, the three institutions in Finland, France and Turkey who generously accepted to receive us and answer our questions. Our thanks go out particularly to the other organisations who have participated in the entirety of the project without whom this study would have been less pertinent: BusinessEurope, ESU, EUA and EURASHE. The steering group would like to especially thank Henning Dettleff, the representative of BusinessEurope, for his time and investment as well as his particularly active participation in the project.

Bruno CURVALE, president of ENQA.
Françoise PROFIT, president of ENIC network.

List of Abbreviations

A list of common abbreviations used throughout the report can be found hereafter:

- AERES:** Agence d'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur
- APL:** Assessment of Prior Learning
- BFUG:** Bologna Follow Up Group
- BusinessEurope:** former UNICE (see below)
- CEPES:** Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
- CIEP:** Centre international d'études pédagogiques
- CTI:** Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur
- DS:** Diploma Supplement
- EC:** European Commission
- ECTS:** European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- EHEA:** European Higher Education Area
- EHEA Framework:** European Higher Education Area Qualifications' Framework
- EISTI:** Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l'Information
- ENIC-NARIC:** European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centres
- ENQA:** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- EQF LLL:** European Qualification Framework Life-Long Learning Program
- ESU:** European Students' Union
- EUA:** European University Association
- EURASHE:** European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
- FINHEEC:** Finnish Higher Education and Evaluation Council
- HEI:** Higher Education Institution
- ISO:** International Organization for Standardisation
- LLL:** Life-Long Learning
- NQF:** National Qualifications Framework
- NVAO:** Nederlands-vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie
- OPH:** Opetushallitus (Finnish National Board of Education)
- UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- UNICE:** Union des industries de la Communauté européenne (today: BusinessEurope)
- VAE:** Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience
- Yök:** Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı -(The Council for Higher Education)

Introduction

The Diploma Supplement Project took place over the year 2008. It was a project initiated by ENIC-NARIC (European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centres) and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), and funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme grant. The European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and BusinessEurope (Employers Federation) joined the project as partners.

The scope of the planned ENQA – ENIC-NARIC project was to develop institutional relations between ENIC-NARIC and ENQA and to continue the dialogue between ENQA and BusinessEurope started in 2005. In addition, the aim was to get all E4 members (ENQA, EUA, ESU, and EURASHE) interested in the project proposal in order to develop cooperation between these members.

The purpose of the project was to conduct a study that would enable various potential users of the Diploma Supplement to compare their respective expectations via the reading of real examples. It also provided a real opportunity to look at the implementation of Bologna process initiatives and reforms across those countries concerned.

The Diploma Supplement presents a certain number of characteristics that make it a potentially interesting object of evaluation for many higher education actors and partners.

The Diploma Supplement is fundamentally a communication tool. It aims to describe in an explicit and understandable manner the students' qualifications and skills when they wish to continue their studies or seek employment at home or abroad.

The project had the following two objectives:

- To ascertain the current situation regarding the issuing of the Diploma Supplement notably by looking at the procedures put in place in generating this document.
- To make recommendations that will help in the writing of the document that will consequently facilitate its implementation.

This approach was approved by ENQA and ENIC-NARIC and was officially introduced at the 13th Joint Meeting of the ENIC-NARIC Networks in Tallinn in June 2006.

Project Partners and main objectives

The objective of this study is to contribute towards the implementation of the Diploma Supplement within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by providing feedback on good practices, points to consider and suggestions to all organisations involved in the Diploma Supplement procedure.

It was clear from the start that a study on the Diploma Supplement would concern various stakeholders which explains why a certain number of partners were involved in the project. Taking into account the aim and nature of the Diploma Supplement, it was normal to call upon all interested parties.

This report lays out the results of a study carried out during 2008. It describes first of all the methodology and goes on to present the different partners and their views on the Diploma Supplement. Subsequently, at the heart of the report we look at the observations resulting from our cross-reading which has allowed us to identify good practices. A final section is dedicated to summarising our initial conclusions as well as underlining good practices and recommendations aimed at policy makers as well as the issuing institutions. Furthermore, it outlines any further questions that may have arisen from the project. The report concludes with an overall look at the project bearing in mind its initial objectives.

I Project Workload Organisation and Methodology

I.I Participants

The project had a Steering Group, consisting of ENIC-NARIC and ENQA representatives, and a Project Group which included, in addition to the Steering Group, representatives from ESU, EUA and BusinessEurope and Eurashe.

The Steering Group included the following members:

ENQA

Guy Aelterman, ENQA Board member, vice-chair of NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie).

Bruno Curvale, President of ENQA, Head of International Affairs at AERES (agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur).

Emmi Helle, Secretary General, ENQA.

ENIC-NARIC

Armağan Erdoğan, Head of the Turkish ENIC-NARIC, YÖK (The Council for Higher Education).

Susanna Kärki, Project Planner – Europass, Finnish ENIC-NARIC, OPH (National Board of Education).

Charlotte Miles, Programme Coordinator, French ENIC-NARIC, CIEP (Centre international d'études pédagogiques).

Françoise Profit, President of the ENIC-NARIC Network, Head of the French ENIC-NARIC in CIEP (Centre international d'études pédagogiques).

In addition to the Steering Group members, the Project Group consisted of the following:

BusinessEurope

Henning Dettleff, BDA Confederation of German Employers' Associations.

ESU

Alessia Cacciagrano, student representative.

Caroline Carlot, Bologna Process Committee.

EUA

Mickaël Hörig, Project Officer.

Christine Masure, Project Officer.

EURASHE

Stefan Delplace, Secretary General of EURASHE.

I.II Organisation of the different stages of the project

The groups met in total four times during the length of the project.

Preparative stage

The Steering Group decided that approximately thirty recently issued Diploma Supplements from Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences from around twenty countries of the European Higher Education Area would constitute a sufficient number of examples for the project. It was clearly recognised at this stage that the chosen Diploma Supplements would constitute a basis for reflection. This limitation prevents the project group from generalising conclusions but not from proposing general recommendations and identifying therefore good practices and areas of improvement. The project group familiarised themselves with the instructions laid out by the European Commission as well as the template Diploma Supplement. The ENIC-NARIC offices of Finland, France and Turkey contacted by e-mail, using a commonly agreed format, institutions in the countries that had been agreed upon by the Steering Group. All in all, 26 Diploma Supplements from 22 countries were received and studied.

Cross Reading

The idea of carrying out a cross reading of the Diploma Supplements that allows to compare the views of the different actors involved in the project was at the heart of the study. For this reason, the first step involved designing a reading grid in order to clarify the points that were crucial in the cross reading of the Diploma Supplements. The preparation of this grid was also an important step used by the group in its' understanding of the different expectations of the participating organisations.

Then, the project group read these 26 Diploma Supplements and went through them, providing comments, in a joint meeting. In addition, the different actors involved were asked to provide comments on this cross-reading from the perspective of their organisations.

Case Studies

Three site visits were organised in order to discuss and clarify the procedures and mechanisms in place at higher education institutions when issuing the Diploma Supplement. The visited higher education institutions included a University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland; a University in Ankara, Turkey; and an engineering school in Paris, France. A common set of questions, agreed by the Steering Group, was presented during these site visits. The site visits constituted an occasion to hear higher education institutions expectations on the Diploma Supplement.

Final stage

The final stage included studying the outcomes of the site visits, analysing the cross-readings of the Diploma Supplements by the different organisations and identifying good practices from the examples studied.

I.III Views and expectations of the project partners on the Diploma Supplement

For this section each representative of the organisation involved in the project was asked to explain their basic reading of the Diploma Supplement.

Credential Evaluators (ENIC-NARIC)

The ENIC-NARIC network appreciates the Diploma Supplement as a useful tool for assessing higher education qualifications from different countries for academic and professional recognition purposes. The ENIC-NARIC centres have the expertise and experience in dealing with the academic recognition of qualifications but recognition statements are increasingly being requested to prove professional status. When assessing foreign qualifications the NARIC centres examine the diploma and transcript of the applicant. The Diploma Supplement provides important additional information on the diploma in question, in particular in assessing its academic level and rights, as well as the professional status conferred by the qualification. Chapter 3 of the Diploma Supplement is of particular use to Credential Evaluators when evaluating a certification in establishing the level, duration and entrance requirements of a programme. Furthermore, Chapter 5 is also crucial in determining both academic and professional rights that are conferred with a qualification and which may improve mobility of both graduates and professionals. Moreover, Chapter 8 which outlines the national higher education system of the country concerned is of high importance to credential evaluators when further information is needed about the context of the qualification in question for example for those countries with binary systems or important reforms.

Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA)

For quality assurance agencies such as the members of ENQA, the Diploma Supplement is an international and intercultural communication tool that can contribute, as a source of information, to mutual accreditation and evaluation decisions. It is viewed as an outcome of a production process within a higher education institution and is a public tool of information. ENQA sought to determine whether the chapters outlined in the Diploma Supplement are understood and respected, thus shedding light on the internal quality assurance mechanisms put in place within the institution in view of the production process of this document. Section 2.3 of the Diploma Supplement regarding the status of the awarding institution is particularly important to quality assurance agencies in establishing by whom its activities have been accredited and/or evaluated. Chapter 3 of the Diploma Supplement which describes the level, length and entrance requirements of a programme is of the utmost importance to quality assurance agencies for example in determining whether the Bologna three cycle reforms have been introduced at the institution and whether binary systems exist. Furthermore, the outlining and expansion of information concerning Qualifications Frameworks (QFs) proves very useful for these agencies as such frameworks are very often linked to the accreditation and evaluation of a study programme. Quality assurance agencies generally look to gain further information on the aims and objectives of a course such as the content, length, learning outcomes and requirements of a study programme.

In brief, in the perspective of quality assurance agencies there are three ways to look at the Diploma Supplement: 1) as a possible tool with regards to the accreditation of programmes (mutual recognition of evaluation/ accreditation decisions), 2) as a component of the external communication of the institution, 3) as an insight into the internal and external quality

assurance procedures are used and/or needed in the production process of the Diploma Supplement.

Employers (BusinessEurope)

Employers appreciate the Diploma Supplement as a useful instrument for the assessment and comparison of academic degrees from different countries and of study profiles of different graduates. It facilitates the evaluation process of qualifications, and especially of foreign qualifications, and thus increases the mobility of professionals. Employers would welcome a uniform structure which is concise and clear. In particular, Chapter 4.2 of the Diploma Supplement, containing information on the programme requirements, is of great importance to employers and proves very valuable in the evaluation of the scientific content and weighting of a programme as well as the learning outcomes and professional targets. Employers also use Diploma Supplements to apprehend which possible fields or progression routes students of the programme enter into upon their graduation. Furthermore, Chapter 6 is vital for employers in determining a graduate's profile thus distinguishing them from other applicants. Employers typically search for information concerning graduates' internships, study abroad, extracurricular activities and their activities within the higher education institution concerned.

Students (ESU)

Student organisations such as the European Student Union (ESU) value the Diploma Supplement as a means of improving the transparency of education thus enhancing the employability and mobility of graduates. This may be achieved by providing comprehensive information concerning a qualification's content, academic and professional objectives and the rights and competencies conferred as well as quality assurance mechanisms. Together with programme content, the quality of qualifications also needs to be established. In order to reply to these demands the Diploma Supplement should be implemented in all countries and its use expanded; only in this way can it be a good tool of mobility for all graduates. An important point according to ESU for example is the language(s) in which a Diploma Supplement is issued which at the bare minimum should be the original language and an international widely spoken language such as English. In order to improve student / graduate mobility this document should be issued in as many languages as possible with the aim of facilitating the understanding of the qualification and in turn this supporting document. Moreover, ESU believes that the Diploma Supplement should be issued automatically to all students together with their qualification. Chapter 6 of the Diploma Supplement providing additional information on both academic and professional rights is very useful to graduates. Chapter 8 is also extremely valuable in understanding the national education system to which the qualification belongs.

Universities (EUA)

Improving student mobility and employability are important goals for establishing the European Higher Education Area. The transparency tools that were developed in the past years such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS or Qualification Frameworks play a crucial role in achieving these goals. When assessing the usefulness of a single instrument, like the Diploma Supplement, the interplay with the other tools should always be kept in mind, in order to avoid overburdening any of the tools. Thus the Diploma Supplement can play an important role by explaining the type of education a student has received, highlighting the learning outcomes obtained and providing information on the type of institution that was

attended. At the same the document needs to remain short, simple and coherent. This is not an easy task, but can be achieved by determining clearly the target group(s) the DS is intended for. From the universities' perspective the Diploma Supplement should be a tool that empowers students to successfully enter a different institution for further studies or a first employment, both at home or abroad. Universities have the responsibility to ensure that the Diploma Supplement fulfils this task and that it is issued automatically and free of charge for the students who are graduating.

Professional Higher Education (EURASHE)

EURASHE and its members acknowledge the positive reception of the Diploma Supplement by students, teachers and prospective employers, as a tool that increases transparency and comparability. It is welcomed by students for the clarity it may impart on qualifications, and its relevance for the labour market is recognised by other main stakeholders in European higher education, higher education institutions, and prospective employers, precisely those that have to ensure its correct use.

On the institutional level it has to guarantee, which is still a weak component, namely the recognition of a study period spent abroad, and linked to this a correct evaluation and assessment of such experience. From the point of view of the prospective employers, next to assessing academic levels, it also has to confirm the professional status conferred by the qualification. After all, the document can only stand the various tests if it is truthful, based on reliable and valid documentation, consistently used and successfully implemented. Only if used universally can it attain its main purpose which is to be an instrument for enhancing the mobility of students and future graduates, and the employability of the latter.

II. Observations and Findings

This second stage of the project involved two important phases: the cross reading of the Diploma Supplements collected and the realisation of three site visits. Our objective was to identify good practices, points to consider in the future and to provide feedback and recommendations to all involved.

II.I Cross readings

The project group looked at and analysed 26 Diploma Supplement examples from 22 European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries. The aim was to identify good practices, as well as to find out whether particular challenges arose in the drafting of the Diploma Supplements for example, were there chapters which were more problematic to fill in than others, and which solutions were being proposed by higher education institutions around Europe to tackle such issues. The examples collected although not statistically representative were found to constitute an interesting diversity. It made it possible to look at the different ways that the Diploma Supplement is implemented. To explain our findings on the different chapters of the Diploma Supplement we took and followed the EC template to highlight important issues as well as good practices.

General Findings and Remarks

The Diploma Supplements studied showed that it is being taken seriously by the higher education institutions. The majority followed, or attempted to follow, the international model and provided accurate information in an easily accessible way. However, despite the use of this commonly followed model, the Diploma Supplements looked at by the project group differed considerably from each other in terms of content, structure and lay-out and consequently also in terms of readability, relevance and quality. Furthermore, some disparity in the quality and detail of information given in different parts of the very same Diploma Supplement was identified.

The project group remarked that the different sections of the Diploma Supplement were not written in the same manner. It is not clear if this is due to local and cultural contexts, freedom to interpretation, or to misunderstandings of the guidelines on behalf of the awarding institution. Therefore there is an obvious call for efforts to provide more support for the higher education institutions concerned in order to standardise the content of the Diploma Supplement. The usability and credibility of the Diploma Supplement would also certainly benefit from binding the document closely with quality assurance processes. Those reading Diploma Supplements need to be sure of the quality of the document they receive for example in knowing that the procedures of implementation, production and content are quality assured. For instance, Diploma Supplements, being also a tool for public information on the higher education institutions, fall within the scope of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG; ENQA, 2005).

Several Diploma Supplements seem to be written for domestic use only and are not really comprehensive for an international audience due to a lack of explicit explanations on national specificities. Information was sometimes provided only by using national terms, or even national abbreviations, that did not assist the international reader.

The Diploma Supplements studied differed considerably in their graphic design. Even though harmonisation is not necessary, it should be a general rule that the layout supports the

structure. Information should be presented in a brief and clear manner, in the form of a short text, a list or a table. In many cases, the examples contained references to other documents, while this information, which would have been necessary in the understanding of the qualification, should have therefore been included in the Diploma Supplement itself. It was felt that the overall length of the Diploma Supplement, however, should not run too long. A critical analysis on the relevance and necessity of information presented is needed by the author in order to produce a more informative, compact and readable document.

It is important to include the textual introduction (preamble) in the format of the Diploma Supplement, stating that it follows the model developed by European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The preamble is part of the official structure. In some Diploma Supplements another text, or a summary of the preamble, had been used instead. One explanation may be that the higher education institutions were not aware that it was part of the official Diploma Supplement structure. The Diploma Supplement needs to be a self sufficient document because it may be widely circulated and can be read by a broad audience. In several cases it was difficult to identify the institution and country in question from the Diploma Supplement. The name and country of the higher education institution should be clearly stated and easily found.

Diploma Supplements should always be issued in an international widely spoken language. Diploma Supplements can also be issued in a national language or even be “bilingual”, and examples of both practises were seen in the project. However, if more than one language is used, it should be ensured that the Diploma Supplement remains clear and informative.

In general, all abbreviations included in the Diploma Supplement should be explained.

In conclusion the name and country of the higher education institution should be clearly stated and easily found in the Diploma Supplement and all chapters should be filled in. Furthermore the Diploma Supplement should follow exactly the structure and numbering of the international model, as well as use the common preamble. The layout should support the structure in order to make the Diploma Supplement informative and clear.

Findings and good practises chapter by chapter

This section will discuss the findings of the cross reading for example good practices, as well as problems and challenges identified. The findings are arranged in the structure of the common international model, chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1: Information identifying the holder of the qualification

The first chapter links the Diploma Supplement to the qualification in question, both to the diploma awarded, and to the transcript delivered. It is therefore highly important that this section be filled out accurately.

Analysis and findings

This chapter was, with very few exceptions, filled in accurately.

Chapter 2: Information identifying the qualification

This second chapter gives information on the qualification that has been granted. This chapter, too, links the Diploma Supplement to the qualification in question and so once again filling it out accurately is of great importance. For quality assurance purposes the information identifying the qualification is important in the context of national and international domain or discipline comparisons but also for the mutual recognition of accreditation/evaluation decisions. There were a number of disparities in filling in the subchapters resulting in parts of the information being unusable or not understandable for international purposes or in the broader context. The examples of this follow in the text.

2.1. Name of qualification and title conferred

Analysis and findings

This subchapter should contain information on the name of the qualification and, if applicable, the title conferred. A translation into English for example may also be used, but should always be accompanied by the titles in the original language. This is imperative as it must always be possible to identify the qualification from the national education system i.e. from national legislation with its original title. Moreover, an abbreviation alone does not provide sufficient information. In many cases, the distinction between the name of the qualification and the title conferred to the graduate was not clear: both should be stated separately for clarity.

If the qualification in question is a joint or a double degree, information on this should be stipulated in this chapter. It is important to ensure that all participating institutions are listed in 2.3 and/or 2.4, and in the case where the graduate is awarded two or more degrees based on the same study programme, all these qualifications should be listed here. Amongst the studied Diploma Supplements there was an example of a diploma awarded jointly by two different Higher Education Institutions in two different countries.

Good practices identified:

- The official title of the qualification is given in full and in the national language as well as an official translation when available, for example into English.
- Official abbreviations, if applicable, should be added in brackets, whilst using abbreviations only should be avoided.

2.2. Main field(s) of study for the qualification

Analysis and findings

The field(s) of studies, as well as the major subjects chosen by the student must be stated. Some Higher Education Institutions do not fill in this chapter at all, whereas others give vast information about the range of all the subjects offered at their institution. The list of *possible*

major subjects, however, should not appear here and actual details about the study programme if relevant should be included in chapter 4.3.

Good practices identified:

- Sufficient information should be provided on the graduate's major subject or specialisation, field of study, degree programme or minor subjects/options/electives.
- Concise and clear information is provided, however leaving programme details to chapter 4.3 and/or to the transcript of records.

2.3. Name and status of the awarding institution

Analysis and findings

The Higher Education Institution granting the degree must be stated clearly for identification. In any case, whatever the language employed in the Diploma Supplement, the full, official name of the Higher Education Institution in the original language and alphabet must be supplied here. A translation into an international widely spoken language may also be provided, if available. In the studied examples there was quite a bit of variation here; sometimes the original name of the institution was not at all stated; sometimes it was unclear as to what the difference was between 2.3 and 2.4, and thus information given in either one, or both, was unclear.

Chapter 2.3 should also include information on the status of the institution. Whether the institution is officially recognised or not, can constitute vital information for the recognition decision. Furthermore, when the accreditation or quality assurance has an impact on, or is a prerequisite for recognition of the institution or programme, or their status, sufficient information should be given here. Otherwise, such information can be included in 6.1.

If the degree programme leads to a joint/double degree, and the participating institutions are awarding the degree conjointly, information on all the participating institutions must be supplied. When joint or double degrees are granted, additional information about the distribution of tasks between the institutions involved is useful to the reader, when available.

Good practices identified:

- The full official name of the Higher Education Institution in the original language should be shown here. A translation into English for example may also be provided.
- The official status of the institution should be supplied i.e. "A state recognised university, Decree X on the Higher Education System of X."
- When the degree is taken as a part of a joint or double degree programme the names of all the institutions granting the degree should be indicated here.

2.4. Name and status of institution (if different from 2.3) administering studies

Analysis and Findings

Chapter 2.4 is important when the institution granting the degree is not the same as the institution(s) administering the studies. This may be the case for example when the study programme is a joint degree where one institution grants the degree on the basis of studies administered by several institutions. The same requirements concerning the name and status of the institution as above, apply here too.

In the Diploma Supplements studied, there was sometimes confusion as to what difference there is between chapters 2.3 and 2.4, and what information should be provided in each. A campus or a faculty of a Higher Education Institution is not a separate Higher Education Institution and therefore should not be listed here.

Good practices identified:

- The subchapter should be filled in only if the Higher Education Institution organising the studies is different from the institution awarding the degree.
- The full official name of the Higher Education Institution in the original language should be shown here. A translation may also be provided.
- The official status of the institution is supplied i.e. “A state recognised university, Decree X on the Higher Education System of X.”
- When one institution awards the degree on the base of studies administered by several institutions, the names of all the participating institutions should be indicated here.

Chapter 3: Information on the level of qualification

In the third chapter, the reader should obtain all the necessary information on the level of the degree awarded. For quality assurance professionals this section is one of the most important. From the examples studied it also became apparent that Higher Education Institutions that have introduced the Bachelor-Master structure and the ECTS had considerably less difficulty in clearly expressing the level of the qualification, than those working in old, or different, degree structures.

3.1. Level of qualification

Analysis and Findings

It should be easy to place the qualification in the framework of the national higher education system (chapter 8). However, Higher Education Institutions should avoid only using national terminology and national abbreviations, as they can be confusing or even misleading. It would be helpful to use the common “international terminology” when describing the level of the qualification such as that employed under Bologna reforms i.e. first-, second- and third-cycle. When the EHEA Framework, European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are available, the information on how the degree is placed within these frameworks should be clearly stated as well.

Good practices identified:

- Use of common terminology such as “first-, second- and third cycle”, familiar to the Bologna process.
- Abbreviations, in particular national abbreviations, when not accompanied by the full title, should be avoided.
- When qualification frameworks are implemented, information on how the degree is placed in the framework should be found here. More detailed information on the higher education system, as well as frameworks can be introduced in chapter 8.

3.2. Official length of programme

Analysis and findings

Chapter 3.2 provides further assistance for recognition experts when they are comparing the qualification with their respective national qualifications. Many Higher Education Institutions do not make use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) when stating the workload or duration of studies. However, information about the workload would make study programmes more easily comparable, especially full-time and part-time programmes. Thus, the duration of studies should be stated both in years, when the normative length of studies is determined in years, and in ECTS.

Good practices identified:

- The ECTS is being used, when applicable.
- Duration is stated both in years and in workload (ECTS).

3.3. Access requirement(s)**Analysis and findings**

Chapter 3.3 helps in comparing the level of the qualification and should therefore refer foremost to the level of qualification that is required for admission. The chapter should again avoid using national terminology only, and when possible, state the level of the education required for access in terms of the NQF, EQF, or EHEA Framework. In addition, admission procedures, should be mentioned when suitable, as they give further information on the level of the qualification and/or help compare and contrast it with national qualifications.

Good practices identified:

- The use of national terminology alone should be avoided and NQF/EQF/EHEA Framework used when available.
- Admission procedures should be mentioned when relevant.

Chapter 4: Information on the contents and results gained

This chapter, in particular 4.2 on programme requirements, provides the most valuable information for employers. For the purposes of professional recognition concerning such regulated professions where the information on the programme content is essential in determining the eligibility for a given profession, chapter 4.2 is also important.

4.1. Mode of study**Analysis and findings**

There were, in some examples studied, some difficulties in determining what the mode of study meant, or how the information should be given. This subchapter should inform the reader as to whether the studies were taken on a full-time or a part-time basis in compliance with the study programme. Typically the mode of study is full-time, but students may study, for example, on a part-time basis or by distance learning, etc. However, if and when studying part-time is not the “official” state of affairs and does not alter the content and programme requirements, it does not need to be mentioned.

Good practices identified:

- When there is an official mode of study determined in the study programme, it is stated here.

4.2. Programme requirements**Analysis and findings**

In this section, content and formal requirements of the study programme, including final thesis, as well as objectives and aims of the education and learning outcomes should be stated. When describing learning outcomes the Higher Education Institution should take into account general, field-specific and programme-specific requirements. In some fields, or countries, these are more formalised than in others. This description was provided only on a few occasions in the examples studied. The section fits well with the programme requirements and descriptions mentioned in most of the Quality Assurance Frameworks, which should contribute to the Diploma Supplements. There were also various interpretations

as to what information should be included in subchapter 4.2 (programme requirements) and what information should be provided in subchapter 4.3 (programme details).

Good practices identified:

- Description of the programme requirements and learning outcomes.
- Information on the work load/scope (ECTS) of each module/programme unit.
- If the degree includes a thesis, it should be mentioned together with their work load/scope (ECTS), as well as other larger mandatory elements, such as practical training.

4.3. Programme details and the individual grades/ marks/ credits obtained

Analysis and findings

Programme details should contain information about the individual modules of the study programme with a description of the subject, workload, and grades (transcript of records). When relevant, it should also be stated as to whether the courses are compulsory or optional. If too lengthy, the full transcript of records should be included into the appendix. Academic projects, assignments, internships and such should be mentioned and described here as well. Moreover, when available or plausible, information about methods of teaching and examinations, for example the importance of oral and written work and of teamwork, can be provided. In some Diploma Supplements chapter 4.3 was too long and detailed, and sometimes the reader was just referred to the transcript of records, even when for the readability of the Diploma Supplement, it would have been helpful to have more information here. It is a delicate balance of how much information should be included here and how much should solely be provided in the transcript. In addition, the layout of the Diploma Supplement can make a difference. Different layouts provide for different solutions as to how much information, where and how this should be presented.

Good practices identified:

- This chapter is clear and concise. When relevant or necessary the reader should be referred to the transcript of records for further information.
- A transcript of records with full details should accompany the Diploma Supplement.

4.4. Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance

Analysis and findings

The grading scheme should embrace both the national grading/classification system and the ECTS. The relative grades are extremely helpful, when they are available, for the assessment of the student's performance, as grading in different countries follows different traditions. Information on national grading systems was not always sufficient in the examples and in particular if the ECTS was not available or used. If the transcript of records has detailed information on the grading scheme, it is not necessary to repeat the information here, as the Diploma Supplement does not normally include the grades given to the graduate.

Good practice identified:

- Concise information on the grading scheme, if possible also using the ECTS, is used. If a separate grading scheme is used for the thesis, this should also be explained.

4.5. Overall classification of the qualification

A system of overall classification is not used in many countries. When it is in use, it is expected to be included in the Diploma Supplement. However, in the examples that were looked at by the project group, it was sometimes difficult to place the overall classification in an international context.

Good practice identified:

- Brief explanation of the classification system in terms of percentages or overall achievement should be provided here so that it can be understood internationally.

Chapter 5: Information on the function of the qualification

This chapter gives information on the function of the qualification i.e. what further studies the graduate may pursue and what professional rights, if any, are conferred to the graduate. Furthermore, as in most of the Quality Assurance Frameworks the results of the studies form an important issue; this section can contribute to the appreciation of the programme. However, in the examples the project group looked at, many higher education institutions gave a rather general description on this point.

5.1. Access to further study

Analysis and findings

In chapter 5.1, it should be stated precisely which further studies the qualification gives access to. For professional recognition this information provides first and foremost information on the level of the qualification, in addition to Chapters 3 and 8.

To be useful, this subchapter must be filled in precisely; if this qualification gives access to a specific level or title of a diploma it should be mentioned here. If applicable, it should also be stated which further conditions have to be fulfilled in order to obtain access to further studies, this however, often being the discretion of the admitting Higher Education Institution. It is also important to remember that information in 5.1 is given on the national level, and is not binding to Higher Education Institutions in other countries.

Good practices identified:

- Indicating access to further study clearly and precisely.
- Using such common terminology as “first-, second- and third-cycle”, familiar to the Bologna process.

5.2. Professional status

Findings and analysis

This chapter is reserved for professional status, and gives valuable information for the purposes of professional recognition. If the degree holder is eligible for a regulated profession, it is important to state it here accurately, when relevant, referring to the legislation. In the Diploma Supplement examples, very often this part was either left empty, or its purpose in particular for professional recognition was not fully understood. Writing “not applicable” here is not a good practice, as there is always something that can be stated on the graduate’s professional status. The description of the professional opportunities in terms of professional status is very helpful in the context of transnational communication because it facilitates making comparisons with the local context of the reader. This could be in terms of possible career domains suited to the graduate, or an indication of their rights in practising a regulated or non-regulated profession, or an outline of the steps needed to be taken for professional registration and exercise.

Here the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications should be referred to.

- If the qualification falls under the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications, the level of the degree in terms of article 11 of the Directive should be indicated.
- If the qualification is furthermore listed in the Directive 2005/36/EC as giving eligibility for automatic recognition (doctors, nurses responsible for general care, dental practitioners, specialised dental practitioners, veterinary surgeons, midwives, pharmacists and architects), this should be stated.

National contact points for the implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC established in all the EU countries may be involved in assisting the higher education institutions with questions concerning the Directive and national qualifications in order to ensure the information is accurate and correctly presented. When there are national decrees concerning general eligibility to for example government positions or professions that are nationally regulated, this should be mentioned.

From the employers' perspective, typical fields of employment for graduates of the respective subject constitute valuable information, and should be stated here. Some higher education institutions already use this chapter for that purpose.

Good practices identified:

- Information on the typical fields of employment should be provided.
- If the degree confers the right to practise a regulated profession, this should be clearly stated, preferably referring to relevant legislation.
- There are clear references to Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Chapter 6: Additional information

This chapter should be completed on a case by case basis. It can be used to add any further information that is relevant for the purposes of assessing and recognising the degree. However, the uses of this chapter have definitely been the most difficult to grasp in the examples studied and it was rather heterogeneously filled in, or simply left blank. The chapter, however, gives a possibility to add interesting and useful information about the qualification.

6.1. Additional information

Analysis and findings

Giving additional information about the graduate seems to be a particular challenge. However, such information is very important for employers in assessing the individual graduate profile as it distinguishes the individual from other candidates. The section can be used to state and describe the individual course of study as well as the extracurricular activities, including study periods abroad, additional classes in different subjects, internships, work as a student assistant, or a role in university boards.

When a significant part of studies has been completed elsewhere and is recognised as contributing towards the qualification it is important to include this in the Diploma Supplement, for example prior learning or experience.

The chapter can also give further information on the qualification and/or higher education institution, when such information has not been provided elsewhere in the Diploma Supplement or in the transcript of records. This could include information about quality

assurance; of the institution and/or the programme. If applicable, it is important to explain the procedures implemented as well as identifying which quality assurance agency is in charge of the evaluation or accreditation.

6.2. General information

Again this chapter could be made more use of. However, such additional references should be specific, so that information sources can be easily accessed. Seemingly random website addresses or addresses without reference can be misleading. If the websites indicated are only available in the national language, it should be noted here. The contact details of the issuing university should always be stated here where they can be easily found, in the case where they have not been previously cited.

Good practices identified:

- Information on study abroad, recognition of prior learning and extracurricular activities, should be clearly outlined, when applicable, for the purpose of giving important and relevant additional information on the graduate.
- Additional relevant information on the qualification or higher education institution, when not provided elsewhere.
- Website addresses, or other sources of further information, if included here, should be clearly cited and referenced.
- All the relevant contact information of the higher education institution.
- Information on the internal and external quality assurance mechanisms and agencies should be noted here at the level of the institution and of the programme.

Chapter 7: Certification of the supplement

The Higher Education Institution should take the same measures of certification of the Diploma Supplement as of the diploma. This chapter carries the certification required in all documents, and no major problems could be identified here. It may be useful to include the official seals and stamps of the relevant faculty or institution(s) to confirm authenticity of the document.

Chapter 8: Information on the national higher education system

Information on the national higher education system is important in determining the level and rights of the qualification in the higher education system of the country.

Analysis and Findings

It is important to state which body is responsible for the information contained in this chapter or where the information has come from, for example the Ministry of Education. Often the source of this information was not evident from the examples the project group looked at. In some examples, section 8 existed but did not clearly explain the structure of national higher education system and the various degrees within. Again, there was also a need for common terminology to help the reader, for example the Bologna-terminology. Information on the NQF and EQF should have been provided, when available.

For the employers the readability and accessibility of the information provided is most important and should therefore be described in a concise manner and if possible in the form of a chart. It is recommendable that all the Diploma Supplements from one country use the same description. It would be reassuring for readers looking at various Diploma Supplements from one country to have a unique and officially approved description of the higher education system.

Good practices identified:

- Information should be given in a clear and concise manner, using a chart when applicable. It should be easy to locate the qualification in the higher education system described.
- NQF/EQF/EHEA Framework when implemented is explained and used.
- The description supports the content of the Diploma Supplement and adds to its readability.
- The sources and/or author of this information are clearly identified.

II.II Site Visits

The project group conducted three study visits: 29th September 2008, HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences in Finland; 7th October 2008, Hacettepe University in Turkey; and 30th October, EISTI, an engineering school in France.

The aim of the study visits was to:

- collect information directly from the source
- identify good practices on the process of compiling the Diploma Supplement
- understand internal quality assurance mechanisms
- discuss possible plans for development that the institutions may have for their Diploma Supplements.

In each site visit there were representatives of ENIC-NARIC, ENQA and Business Europe present. EURASHE and ESU were also able to participate in the Finnish site visit. From the higher education institutions all members of staff involved in the process of compiling a Diploma Supplement at that institution were present. At HAAGA-HELIA and Hacettepe student representatives also took part.

All three institutions issue the Diploma Supplement free of charge and in English. EISTI also issues it in French and moreover both HAAGA-HELIA and EISTI issue the Diploma Supplement automatically. HAAGA-HELIA and Hacettepe issue the Diploma Supplement to all their graduates whereas EISTI provides this document only to those graduating with the “Grade de Master” (other qualifications awarded are not national qualifications).

The actual process of how a Diploma Supplement is compiled in all the institutions is based on a ready working template (following the international template/structure). The template can be in a simple Word –format, or built as a part of the student register IT-systems. How these templates are filled in and used, and to what extent they contain personalised information for each graduate, however, differs from institution to institution. It appears that usually those responsible for the content of the programme are also responsible for the information given in the respective part of the Diploma Supplement. The importance of learning outcomes in the Diploma Supplement was recognised by all the institutions, but the level on which this is already implemented varied.

The quality of the Diploma Supplement posed a problem to these institutions. All had either taken measures of quality assurance and/or expressed their concern and interest about quality issues. The quality of the Diploma Supplement was seen as vital in its usability for facilitating mobility. The Finnish and the French institution had both applied to, and been granted, a European Commission Diploma Supplement Label that is valid until 2009. The Commission’s DS-label is certainly a sign of good quality but in addition, internal quality assurance methods need to be in place too which were discussed. The French institution also benefitted from the ISO 9001 label.

Students in HAAGA-HELIA are informed about the Diploma Supplement upon their graduation, but not before that. Otherwise informing students through any formal procedures/information material appears not to take place. However, during the Finnish study visit student representatives pointed out the importance of ensuring that students know what the Diploma Supplement is, and how it can be used.

In Finland and Turkey there is strong national support to higher education institutions in compiling the Diploma Supplement, whereas in France the level of national support is much

less apparent. However, from the Finnish and Turkish experience it can be seen that good national support is an important factor; furthermore the French institution mentioned the lack of national support for their work.

The interest and motivation of the institution to continuously work in developing their Diploma Supplements is also of great importance. All institutions had invested time and effort into their Diploma Supplements, and had also given consideration to future challenges and development needs. The usability of the Diploma Supplement on the labour market was a concern to all the institutions.

The findings from the site visits have been fed into the conclusions.

II.III Workshop presentation at the EQAR

The Diploma Supplement project and the provisional findings were presented at the European Quality Assurance Forum "EQAR" (Budapest, 20th-22th November 2008) in a selected workshop named "Using Diploma Supplement". The workshop included a presentation (see annex 8: Joint NARIC and ENQA Diploma Supplement Project) and a discussion session.

The discussion group composed of Higher Education teachers, students and academic officers coming from universities in the United Kingdom, Italy, Cyprus, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and Greece.

The discussion group came to findings and remarks in line with the observations and recommendations made by the project group. An important part of the discussion concerned the place of extracurricular competences acquired by students and of experience gained in an international context. Most of the participants agreed that the Diploma Supplement focuses on purely curricular issues and that in addition Europass gives the possibility for mentioning supplementary information concerning the student in question. The participants stressed the need for (re)enforcement of (inter)national guidance and support of the higher education institutions in the understanding and explanation of each of the Diploma Supplement chapters and subchapters by means of giving examples of good practices, giving room for flexibility and contextual approach yet focus on the main objectives of the Diploma Supplement namely providing clear and widely understandable information concerning the degree or diploma in question. The participants appreciated the project objectives and outcomes and would welcome a follow up and even continuation of the project in a broader context.

II.IV Brief presentation at the NARIC meeting

The main conclusions of the Diploma Supplement project was presented at the annual NARIC meeting in Brussels (9th December 2008) in a plenary session. The NARIC centres expressed their interest and requested that the project report be published on the restricted area of the ENIC-NARIC website.

III Main outcomes and recommendations

III.I Good practices

The procedure of issuing the Diploma Supplement should be formalised to ensure transparency and efficiency. This would be also useful for the implementation of relevant and systematic quality assurance mechanisms. The content of the Diploma Supplement must come first and foremost from the bodies responsible, for example, for the programme details and learning outcomes. The procedure of compiling and issuing the Diploma Supplements can be centralised, or it can be done by faculties or departments. The process of making a Diploma Supplement, as well as the content of the document, should be quality assured.

Diploma Supplements must be issued automatically, and free of charge, to all graduates. They should be available to graduates of all cycles: first, second and third. Students should be given information on the purpose and uses of the Diploma Supplement and this information should be easily accessible in study guides or on the website of the student services for example.

It is recommendable that the higher education institution also determines a policy on how they will deal with graduates from previous years that were not issued a Diploma Supplement; whether a Diploma Supplement can be written retrospectively and at what cost. If this is possible, the higher education institution must also work out a transparent procedure for issuing Diploma Supplements retrospectively. The quality of these Diploma Supplements is of equal importance to those issued today. If there are limitations for example in how previous qualifications may be accompanied with a Diploma Supplement, these limitations must be made clear.

Hereafter the good practices identified as a result of the cross reading of the Diploma Supplements are presented clearly in the form of a table.

Chapter	Sub-chapter	Good practices
General comments and recommendations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Diploma Supplement follows exactly the structure and numbering of the international model, as well as uses the common preamble. ▪ When the layout supports the structure and the Diploma Supplement is informative and clear. ▪ All chapters are filled in and the quality of the document does not vary from chapter to chapter. ▪ The name and country of the Higher Education Institution should be clearly stated and easily located in the Diploma Supplement.
Chapter 1: Information identifying the holder of the qualification		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is highly important that this section be filled out accurately
Chapter 2: Information identifying the qualification		
	2.1 Name of qualification and title conferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The official title of the qualification is given in full and in the national language as well as an official translation when available, for example into English. ▪ Official abbreviations, if applicable, should be added in brackets, whilst using abbreviations only should be avoided.

	2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient information should be provided on the graduate's major subject or specialisation, degree programme, field of study, or minor subjects/options/electives. ▪ Concise and clear information is provided, however leaving programme details to chapter 4.3 and/or to the transcript of records.
	2.3 Name and status of the awarding institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The full official name of the Higher Education Institution in the original language should be shown here. A translation into English for example may also be provided. ▪ The official status of the institution should be supplied i.e. "A state recognised university, Decree X on the Higher Education System of X." ▪ When the degree is taken as a part of a joint of double degree programme the names of all the institutions granting the degree should be indicated here.
	2.4 Name and status of institution (if different from 2.3) administering studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The subchapter should be filled in only if the Higher Education Institution organising the studies is different from the institution awarding the degree. ▪ The full official name of the Higher Education Institution in the original language should be shown here. A translation may also be provided. ▪ The official status of the institution is supplied i.e. "A state recognised university, Decree X on the Higher Education System of X." ▪ When one institution awards the degree on the base of studies administered by several institutions, the names of all the participating institutions should be indicated here.

Chapter 3: Information on the level of qualification		
	3.1 Level of qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of common terminology such as “first-, second- and third cycle”, familiar to the Bologna process. ▪ Abbreviations, in particular national abbreviations, when not accompanied by the full title, should be avoided. ▪ When qualification frameworks are implemented, information on how the degree is placed in the framework should be found here. More detailed information on the higher education system, as well as frameworks can be introduced in chapter 8.
	3.2 Official length of programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ECTS is being used, when applicable. ▪ Duration is stated both in years and in workload (ECTS).
	3.3 Access requirement(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of national terminology alone should be avoided and NQF/EQF/EHEA Framework used when available. ▪ Admission procedures should be mentioned when relevant.
Chapter 4: Information on the contents and results gained		
	4.1 Mode of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When there is an official mode of study determined in the study programme, it is stated here.
	4.2 Programme requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of the programme requirements and learning outcomes. ▪ Information on the work load/scope (ECTS) of each module/programme unit. ▪ If the degree includes a thesis, it should be mentioned together with their work load/scope (ECTS), as well as other larger mandatory elements, such as practical training.

	4.3 Programme details and the individual grades/ marks/ credits obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This chapter is clear and concise. When relevant or necessary the reader should be referred to the transcript of records for further information. ▪ A transcript of records with full details should accompany the Diploma Supplement.
	4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concise information on the grading scheme, if possible also using the ECTS, is used. If a separate grading scheme is used for the thesis, this should also be explained.
	4.5 Overall classification of the qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief explanation of the classification system in terms of percentages or overall achievement should be provided here so that it can be understood internationally.
Chapter 5: Information on the function of the qualification		
	5.1 Access to further study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicating access to further study clearly and precisely. ▪ Using such common terminology as “first-, second- and third-cycle”, familiar to the Bologna process.
	5.2 Professional status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on the typical fields of employment should be provided. ▪ If the degree confers the right to practise a regulated profession, this should be clearly stated, preferably referring to relevant legislation. ▪ There are clear references to Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

Chapter 6: Additional information		
	6.1 Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The section can be used to state and describe the individual course of study as well as the extracurricular activities, including study periods abroad, additional classes in different subjects, internships, work as a student assistant, or a role in university boards
	6.2 General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on study abroad, recognition of prior learning and extracurricular activities, should be clearly outlined, when applicable, for the purpose of giving important and relevant additional information on the graduate. ▪ Additional relevant information on the qualification or higher education institution, when not provided elsewhere. ▪ Website addresses, or other sources of further information, if included here, should be clearly cited and referenced. ▪ All the relevant contact information of the higher education institution. ▪ Information on the internal and external quality assurance mechanisms and agencies should be noted here at the level of the institution and of the programme.

Chapter 7: Certification of the supplement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It may be useful to include the official seals and stamps of the relevant faculty or institution(s) to confirm authenticity of the document.
Chapter 8: Information on the national higher education system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information should be given in a clear and concise manner, using a chart when applicable. It should be easy to locate the qualification in the higher education system described. ▪ NQF/EQF/EHEA Framework when implemented is explained and used. ▪ The description supports the content of the Diploma Supplement and adds to its readability. ▪ The sources and/or author of this information are clearly identified.

III.II Conclusions and recommendations

This study confirms the importance of the document “Diploma Supplement” for each of its stakeholders from the higher education institutions and its’ students to credential evaluators and employers. The Diploma Supplement is an important tool of communication. Its’ implementation and use remains however problematic and it is not being used to its full potential.

Our cross reading of the example Diploma Supplements showed that the different chapters were being interpreted heterogeneously. However, it is felt that there is a need to provide more explicit information as well the use of common terminology. Support and guidance should be implemented or enhanced, notably in the aim of ensuring that this document is coherent with national and international frameworks. The project group remarked from the examples that the Diploma Supplement seemed too often than not to be for national use only. The organisations involved in the project realised the difficulties present in understanding a higher education system other than their own or that they deal with on a day-to-day basis. It is important to note that the Diploma Supplement has a significant role to play in transnational communication and the mobility of personnel. It is therefore crucial that the Diploma Supplement is thought of as a document to be read by an international reader with little or no background knowledge of neither the qualification nor the foreign education system. This should be taken into consideration primarily by the higher education institutions so that this document is effective in crossing national borders. Moreover, it should be a useful tool for all those who are interested in knowing more about the study programme, without them necessarily having specialist knowledge on higher education in Europe.

The following recommendations propose possible ways of achieving such aims in the future.

Recommendations to international and national bodies

- There is a need for better guidance in terms of supplying more detailed and clear instructions, providing examples, and making good practices readily available to Higher Education Institutions.
- The role of national guidance should also be strengthened: higher education institutions should be able to receive national support in the development and improvement of their Diploma Supplement. This is particularly true with regards to the description of the higher education system itself (chapter 8) and all aspects that are common to the institutions or programmes of a country.
- Promoting the Diploma Supplement to higher education institutions, as well as and in particular to the labour market, contributes towards making this tool useful and relevant by ensuring sufficient information about its uses and possibilities.
- Diploma Supplement should be part of the employability tools/ Europass

Recommendations to Higher Education Institutions

- The Diploma Supplement should be included in the Quality Assurance work and processes of the higher education institution. It is important to be well informed on the quality of the procedures behind the issuing of this document: How many people are involved? What are their responsibilities? What are the internal quality checks which have been established to assure that both the interests of the student and of the higher education institution are being satisfied?
- The quality, readability and clarity of the Diploma Supplement should be worked upon so it is more easily understood by the international user coming often from outside the Higher Education arena. Those involved in the writing of the Diploma Supplement should be aware of the needs of the various readers of this document, which should be reflected in the language and content provided; information on the national education system should be as concise and clear as possible.
- The Diploma Supplement is a communication document for not only the graduate of a study programme but also for the higher education institution in question. As such it falls within the scope of the European standards and guidelines. The role of the Diploma Supplement is to provide information in the context of mobility during both the time of study and the integration into the labour market. It should also facilitate international and intercultural mobility.
- There should be greater emphasis on learning outcomes and the provision of personalised information which should distinguish the graduate from others. The use of clearly described learning outcomes facilitates the understanding of the document.

Further questions

There is a need for further studies on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement. The acknowledgment of what is being done by higher education institutions across Europe is a unique source of improvement based on practical achievements and the dissemination of good practices. It is also the only way to discover the difficulties encountered by the higher education institutions and the users of the Diploma Supplement. Besides that a few questions deserve to be mentioned at the end of this report in order to help clarify possible stakes in the short term.

- Is the issuing of the Diploma Supplement part of what the Quality Assurance agencies should look at when carrying out their evaluations? To the project group, the usability of the Diploma Supplement would be increased if the readers were sure that the external evaluators of a programme or of an institution had looked at the conditions under which the people in charge of the programme or institution and as to whether care was being taken to ensure the quality of the document. Such an approach would be coherent with the idea that issuing the Diploma Supplement should be internally quality assured. It should be developed in respect of the primary responsibility of higher education institution with regard to the quality of their activities.
- How is the Diploma Supplement being used and taken into account in the context of mutual accreditation and evaluation decisions? This question did not fall directly under the scope of the project but arose when summarising the results. With regards to the possible questions linked to this issue, the project group feels that the Diploma Supplement can raise awareness on the Qualification Frameworks and therefore enhance the relationship between such frameworks and this issue of accreditation or evaluation.

- How do we ensure that the Diploma Supplement is being produced as a tool of international communication? The drafting of the Diploma Supplement is a difficult exercise. Terminology, difficulties in explaining national specificities in another language and a lack of implicit knowledge by readers are all problems faced by the authors of this document. There is no simple answer to an issue that is the essence of intercultural and international communication. One can only warn the writers of Diploma Supplements that their documents will be read in various situations by all possible readers.

Strengthening the link between quality assurance and academic recognition

Finally, this study calls for the development of regular relationships between the members of ENQA and the ENIC-NARIC.

Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms should be included in the criteria of the ENIC-NARIC in their assessment of foreign qualifications in the same way that quality assurance agencies should take into account the problems encountered in describing study programmes. Quality assurance agencies should look into internationalising study routes and providing a clear statement on the quality of the course so that credential evaluators will have all the necessary information available to them.

If at first glance this report seems to deliver information on a purely technical level, the proof remains that stronger ties need to be built between quality assurance activities and academic recognition. This study should motivate each national quality assurance agency and national ENIC-NARIC centre to work closer together in their daily activities in order to harmonise national practices and finally those of the European Higher Education Area.

Annex

- 1) Calendar
- 2) E-mail sent to higher education institutions
- 3) Reading Grid
- 4) Diploma Supplement Model proposed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES
- 5) List of Diploma Supplement Examples
- 6) Questions for Study Visits
- 7) Minutes from the Site Visits
 - a) Finland
 - b) Turkey
 - c) France
- 8) Workshop presentation at the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Forum)

Calendar

Stages	Tasks / Activities	Months 1-3	Months 4-6	Months 6 -7	Months 7-10	Months 10-12
A. Methodology Framework	Preparatory Work Launch Meeting over two days : Day 1. Constituting common points of reference between the ENIC-NARIC/ENQA networks (<i>Steering Group</i>) Day 2. steering group/associated partners: - Devising how best to collect the examples - Drawing up the calendar for future meetings and supplementary documentation (<i>all participants</i>)					
	Collection of Diploma Supplements					
	First Stage Review at the ENIC-NARIC meeting in June 2008 and meeting of the Steering group.					
B. Interactive Analysis	Meeting to work on the Diploma Supplements collected (<i>all participants</i>)					
	Second Stage Review (<i>Steering Group</i>)					
C. Case Studies	Site visits (<i>Site visit group</i>)					
D. Evaluation and Report	Meeting : evaluation of site visits (<i>Steering Group</i>)					
	Drafting of the final report (<i>Steering Group</i>)					
	Conclusion Meeting (<i>Steering Group</i>)					
	Presentation to the ENIC-NARIC and ENQA networks.					

E-mail for higher education institutions

The steering group sent the following email to the higher education institutions in view of collecting the Diploma Supplement examples as well as clearly informing the institutions as to the nature of the project.

To whom it may concern,

The Centre ENIC-NARIC is the national department for the recognition of foreign credentials and qualifications. We belong to a European network established by the European Commission and working under the Lisbon convention. Together with ENQA, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, we are carrying out a project on the Diploma Supplement in Bologna Process countries.

We would like to ask for your cooperation in the framework of this project. We would be delighted if your institution could send us an example of an up-to-date Diploma Supplement it is issuing to your students. This should be a copy of an actual Diploma Supplement issued, if possible – and when relevant to the readability of the Diploma Supplement (and if possible) a copy of the transcript. The personal information of the student may be omitted at will.

We are planning to collect and look at recent ca. 25 Diploma Supplement examples from all over the EHEA in order to reflect on the use and purposes of the Diploma Supplement and use the results to work out an educational tool for the benefit of institutions working with the Diploma Supplement. The purpose of the project is not to evaluate or rank the example documents collected, but to compare and contrast good practices, and collect good examples. The example documents will also not be published, nor will they be seen by anyone outside the project group.

Should you have any further questions regarding the project please do not hesitate to contact us at:

CONTACT DETAILS

Many thanks in advance.

Best regards,

XXXX
ENIC-NARIC (country)

Reading Grid

The reading grid below was designed following a project group meeting reflecting our expectation of possible key areas for discussion and reflection which may arise during our reading of the Diploma Supplement examples.

Study on the Diploma Supplement

This is simply a tool to aid you in your cross-reading of the Diploma Supplements.

Readability/Communication	Usefulness/Efficiency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the Diploma Supplement you're reading strictly following the Europass model or not? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are possible deviations useful or misleading? ▪ To what extent is the Diploma Supplement clear in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content? - structure? - language? ▪ Is the information detailed enough? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the Diploma Supplement give you the sources to find more information if necessary (i.e. required information which is not detailed in the Diploma Supplement)? ▪ Do you feel that you would have needed some background information in order to really understand this document? ▪ Can you easily find in the document who issued it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did you find all the necessary information in the Diploma Supplement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there information missing in the Diploma Supplement that would prove useful to you in your capacity as a ... - Which sections do you find relevant / informative? - Which sections do you not find relevant? ▪ Is the Diploma Supplement understandable for a national and/or an international audience?

Keep in mind we require detailed feedback for the debriefing meeting.

Diploma Supplement Model proposed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES

I. OUTLINE STRUCTURE FOR THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT.

This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). 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. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

1 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION

- 1.1 Family name(s):
- 1.2 Given name(s):
- 1.3 Date of birth (*day/month/year*):
- 1.4 Student identification number or code (*if available*):

2 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION

- 2.1 Name of qualification and (*if applicable*) title conferred (*in original language*):
- 2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification:
- 2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (*in original language*):
- 2.4 Name and status of institution (*if different from 2.3*) administering studies (*in original language*):
- 2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination:

3 INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION

- 3.1 Level of qualification:
- 3.2 Official length of programme:
- 3.3 Access requirements(s)

4 INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED

- 4.1 Mode of study:
- 4.2 Programme requirements:
- 4.3 Programme details: (e.g. modules or units studied), and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained:
(*if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here*)
- 4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance:
- 4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (*in original language*):

5 INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION

- 5.1 Access to further study:
- 5.2 Professional status (*if applicable*):

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 6.1 Additional information:
- 6.2 Further information sources:

7 CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT

- 7.1 Date:
- 7.2 Signature:
- 7.3 Capacity:
- 7.4 Official stamp or seal:

8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

(N.B. Institutions who intend to issue Diploma Supplements should refer to the explanatory notes that explain how to complete them.

Diploma Supplement Examples

We received and studied 26 Diploma Supplement examples awarded from a different Higher Education Institution and representing 22 countries. According to the agreement between the project group and the higher education institutions, the examples of the Diploma Supplement are not to be published, nor have they been seen by anyone outside the project group.

COUNTRY	HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION*
Belgium	Haute Ecole de la Communauté française en Hainaut
Bulgaria	Technical University of Sofia
Croatia	University of Zagreb
Czech Republic, the	Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Czech Republic, the	University of Economics, Prague Vysoká škola ekonomická v Praze
Denmark	University of Aarhus (Aarhus Universitet)
Estonia	Tartu Ülikool University of Tartu
Finland	University of Turku
France	EISTI Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l'Information
France	ENSAM Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers
Great Britain	The University of Nottingham
Greece	Αριστοτελειο Πανεπιστημιο Θεσσαλονικis (Aristotelio Panepistimio Thessalonikis)
Iceland	University of Iceland
Ireland & Wales (Joint Degree)	<i>Ireland:</i> The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) <i>Wales:</i> The University of Wales
Italy	Universita' Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano
Malta	University of Malta
Netherlands, the	University of Groningen
Poland	Warsaw School of Social Psychology
Portugal	Universidade do Minho
Portugal	Instituto Superior Manuel Teixeira Gomes
Portugal	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias
Romania	Universitatea din Bucharesti University of Bucharest
Slovenia	Univerza v Ljubljani Universitas Labacensis
Sweden	Luleå University of Technology
Switzerland	Haute Ecole d'art et de design - Genève
Turkey	Amasya Üniversitesi

* Name of Higher Education Institution as it appears on the Diploma Supplement

Questions for the site visits:

To help the higher education institution visited and to harmonise the questions among the project group, it was decided to have common questions.

- Who is involved in the Diploma Supplement procedure?
- What is the procedure?
- How do you decide upon and provide the information?
- How do you inform the students?
- Do you have a Quality Assurance process for the Diploma Supplement?
- Is the Diploma Supplement included in the education policy of the institution and who is involved in the elaboration of this policy?
- Did/do you receive guidance from the relevant authorities e.g. Ministry of Education?
- When drafting the Diploma Supplement, what factors do you keep in mind e.g. audience?
- Who receives the Diploma Supplement e.g. do you deliver for third cycle degrees also?
- In what language is the Diploma Supplement given? Is it free of charge? Is it given automatically, or by request?
- Does your university use learning outcomes? Are they presented in the Diploma Supplement?
- Do you collect any relevant statistics i.e. number of Diploma Supplements delivered?
- What is your point of view on the usefulness of the Diploma Supplement?
- Are you planning any developments to your Diploma Supplement work?
- What challenges for your Diploma Supplement work do you see in the future?
- What are your needs regarding feedback, guidance, etc? Are these met with? Would you require more, what?

Minutes from the site visits

Hereafter you will find the minutes taken during the three study visits in Finland, France and Turkey. Each study visit was coordinated by the ENIC-NARIC representative of the country concerned, and the minutes were written by the steering group member deemed “secretary” for the site visit. They report on the day’s activities and the responses to the set questions regarding their drafting and issuing of the Diploma Supplement. They are listed in the chronological order that the site visits took place:

a) Finland

29th September 2008

HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

b) Turkey

7th October 2008

Hacettepe University

c) France

30th October 2008

EISTI (Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l’Information)

7a) Minutes from the Site Visit: Finland

**Site visit to HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences
29 September 2008
Ratapihantie 13, Helsinki**

as part of the ENIC-NARIC - ENQA Diploma Supplement Project

Participants

HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences:
Ms Mirja Vatanen, Director of Student Services
Ms Marjo Hiisijärvi, Student Affairs Secretary
Ms Pirtta Holopainen, Management Assistant
Mr Juha Lindstedt, Quality Manager
Mr Jyri Nevalampi, Student Union Helga

Diploma Supplement Project partners' representatives:
NARIC Finland: Ms Susanna Kärki, Project Planner (Chair)
ENQA: Ms Emmi Helle, Secretary General (Secretary)
EURASHE: Mr Hannu Ikonen, Manager of Educational Development, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences.
Business Europe, Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK): Ms Tarja Tuominen, Expert
ESU: Ms Alma Joensen

Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction

The participants introduced themselves, after which the Chair presented briefly the Diploma Supplement (DS) project and the aims and objectives of the site visit. The Chair introduced also the following, detailed questions for the site visit:

- Who is involved in the DS procedure?
- How is the procedure like?
- How do you decide upon the information included in the DS and how is it provided?
- How do you inform the students about the DS?
- Do you have a quality assurance process for the DS?
- Is the DS included in the education policy of the institution and who is involved in the elaboration of this policy?
- Did/do you receive guidance from the relevant authorities, e.g. the Ministry of Education, as to the elaboration of the DS?
- When drafting the DS, what factors do you bear in mind, e.g. audience?
- Who receives the DS, e.g. do you deliver it also for third cycle degrees?
- In what language is the DS given? Is it free of charge? Is it given automatically, or upon request?
- Does your university use learning outcomes? Are they presented in the DS?
- Do you collect any relevant statistics, i.e. the number of DSs delivered?
- What is your view on the usefulness of the DS?
- Are you planning any developments to your DS work?
- What challenges in your DS work can you see in the future?
- What are your needs regarding the feedback, guidance, etc? Are these met? Would you require more, and what would that be?

2. Diploma Supplement procedure at HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

2.1 Background

Mirja Vatanen, the Director of Student Services, told that the Haaga University of Applied Sciences (Haaga) and Helia University of Business and Applied Sciences (Helia) had merged as from 1 January 2007.

What comes to the background of the use of DS at Haaga, it had been agreed in 2004 that all graduates should in the future be given a DS together with a transcript of records in English. Consequently, a model for the DS had been created by Haaga, with instructions from the National Board of Education. In 2005 Haaga started to issue the DS in some programmes, and in 2006 in all programmes. During 2005 the Management Team decided that Haaga should apply for the DS label, and the label application was submitted in February 2006. Consequently, in August 2006, Haaga was awarded the DS label by the European Commission, but could not use it for very long, as the merger with Helia, and the subsequent organisational change was scheduled for 1 January 2007.

In 2005 Haaga applied the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and from August 2005 all diplomas in all degree programmes were issued using the ECTS credits only.

In preparation for the HAAGA-HELIA merger, a joint DS model was developed by these merging institutions during 2006. The DS model adopted for HAAGA-HELIA was based on the best practises identified in the former DS models of both Haaga and Helia. It was found, however, that there were no fundamental changes between these former DS models, and therefore this process of designing a new DS for the new institution was not felt to be too challenging.

2.2 Current situation

2.2.1 Responsibilities

As for the responsibilities of issuing a DS, the overall responsibility of the HAAGA-HELIA DS process lies with the Director of the Student Services, who updates the documents, liaises with the Programme Directors and supervises the Diploma certificate process in the Student Affairs Offices. The Student Affairs Secretary, for his/her part, is responsible for updating the HAAGA-HELIA's DS model for each Degree Programme, producing the DS as part of each Diploma Certificate (DC) and copying the original DC (inclusive of the DS) in the permanent archives of HAAGA-HELIA. The DC is signed by the President of HAAGA-HELIA, while the study transcript and DS are signed by the respective Programme Directors.

2.2.2 Producing a DS at HAAGA-HELIA

Students get information on graduation (incl. DS) from the HAAGA-HELIA website's students' extranet at:

<http://extra.haaga-helia.fi/english/studies/graduation/Pages/default.aspx>.

The process for getting a Diploma Certificate and Diploma Supplement is the following:

1. Student fills in, after having checked from the electronic study register that everything is ready for his/her graduation, the electronic application form for Diploma on the HAAGA-HELIA website at <http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/studies/forms/application-for-diploma>, two weeks before the graduation at the latest;
2. Student Officer will get this application by email as soon as it is completed by the applicant;
3. Student Office will issue the DC and study transcript both in Finnish and English, and the Diploma Supplement in English, automatically (following the diploma application) and free of cost for all graduates (Bachelor's and Master's);

4. Student will get the diploma with the annexes at the graduation ceremony or it will be mailed to him/her after the event.
5. An original copy of the documents remains also in the permanent archives of HAAGA-HELIA, in the case the student would happen to lose his/her documents.

In HAAGA-HELIA, DSs can be issued, upon request, also to older diplomas, i.e. to the ones dated before 2005. A separate DS can be written to a student graduated during 1995-1997 at a cost of 20 EUR, and to a student graduated during 1998-2004 free of cost.

2.2.3 Consultation and feedback systems

Currently, no feedback system from graduates on the DS is in place, except through the HAAGA-HELIA alumni association. The programme directors are responsible for consulting the labour market representatives, but it was not specified whether this consultation is done regularly and formally.

3. Future challenges and further discussion

HAAGA-HELIA will continue to develop and update the DS following the instructions of the National Board of Education at <http://www.oph.fi/europassi/>. It is also planning to submit a DS label application to the European Commission during the next round of applications. As for the application of the ECTS label, HAAGA-HELIA has decided to wait for a while as the institution needs some more time for the development of joint curricula.

HAAGA-HELIA will be audited by the Finnish Higher Education and Evaluation Council (FINHEEC), which is an ENQA member, in 2010. Before that, the institution intends to apply a new, overall quality management system.

In the further discussion between the HAAGA-HELIA personnel and the visitors, the following general points and reflections were made:

- students should be better informed on the uses of the DS, and in general be given information on the document already during their studies;
- more attention should be paid to the part on learning outcomes as it is the most appropriate tool for creating competition between the graduates;
- the quality assurance system should be described better in the DS;
- also the employers should be better informed about the uses and purposes of the DS, because usually when a DS is required, it is done so in an "inappropriate manner", not fully getting the full advantage of the document.
- how can we assure the quality of the DSs if each Higher Education Institution is responsible for its model only?
 - o in Ireland and the Netherlands there is a national template, or visual guidelines, on how should all the DS look like.

7b) Minutes from the Site Visit: Turkey

DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT PROJECT Turkish Site Visit

Hacettepe University, 7th October 2008

Participants:

From the Partners

ENQA:	Dr ir Guy AELTERMAN
ENIC-NARIC Turkey:	Dr. Armagan ERDOGAN Ayca TURAN
Business Europe:	Mr. Fatih TOKATLI (Turkish Business Association)
ESU:	not partipated
EUA:	not partipated

From Hacettepe University

Vice-Rector:	Prof. Dr. Hasan KAZDAGLI
ECTS/DS Coordinator Team:	Prof. Dr. Buket AKKOYUNLU (Dean, Faculty of Education) Prof. Dr. Selda ONDEROGLU (Erasmus Institutional Coordinator) Assoc. Prof. Dr. Arzu Akkoyunlu-WIGLEY Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sibel Aksu YILDIRIM Dr. Mavis E. Kulak KAYIKCI
Registrar's Office and DS Staff:	A. Rifki GÖKMEN (Head of Reg. Office) A.Esra OZHAN CELIK
The student representative:	Zafer YAMAN

1- Introduction:

A single-day site visit to the Hacettepe University, a state-funded University in Ankara, was held on October 7, 2008.

After the participants introduced themselves, Armagan ERDOGAN made a presentation on the aims, the objectives and the content of the DS Project, covering also a brief summary of background to, and progress made in the framework of the project. Ayca TURAN informed the participants on the DS activities carried out under the supervision of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (CoHE). The DS has been introduced in the Turkish Higher Education System within the concept of participation in the EU education, training and youth programmes in 2001. The national DS template has been formed in line with the UNESCO-CEPES and UNESCO standards with the coordination of the CoHE and a standard Turkish DS model has been disseminated to the all Higher Education Institutions in 2005. DS was made mandatory by CoHE at all HEIs in Turkey and starting with the end of 2005-2006 academic year, the Turkish HIEs issue DS to all graduates upon their request, the first copy being free of charge and, in one of the three main languages of EU, English or French or German.

Guy ALTERMAN from ENQA provided an informative introduction on the description of ENQA activities and clearly highlighted the role of DS as a tool aiming to facilitate the recognition of qualifications. He also underlined the importance of site visits in better understanding;

- the DS practices being carried out at different types of higher education institutions from different countries
- the relationship between higher education institutions, students and the labour market needs
- students' demands and expectations changing over time that make universities face new challenges.

Here, he particularly focused on the necessity of rethinking all the DS/ECTS activities achieved so far in the light of a broad question "what is *behind* all the activities?" He also argued that site visits organized at different HEIs should be considered as the process of mutual learning for each participant.

2. Diploma Supplement Activities Procedure at Hacettepe University:

2.1 Background

Erasmus Institutional Coordinator and a member of ECTS/DS Coordinator Team of Hacettepe University, gave general information about the Hacettepe University, i.e. its campuses, faculties, schools, institutes, number of students and the academic staff. Moreover, she presented in detail the DS/ECST studies related to the procedure of drafting and delivering the DS at Hacettepe University. In this presentation, she particularly focused on;

- the technical part of DS work
- the creation of ECTS/DS Coordinator Teams at departmental / faculty and university levels
- ECTS activities since the beginning of 2003-2004 academic year.

During her presentation, she also talked about the following two questions;

- Are students involved in drafting DS/ECTS?
- To what extent does Hacettepe University respond to students' expectations in calculating student workload?

Hacettepe University issues DS in English to its graduates upon their request –not automatically- since the 2005-2006 academic year. However, it is important to note here that DS is delivered to graduating students at first, second and short cycles.

At this point, the student representative of Hacettepe University, also expressed his opinions and expectations concerning the involvement of students in drafting DS/ECTS activities. He stated that the students at Hacettepe University are aware of DS/ECTS activities and that especially the use of ECTS credits in Socrates/Erasmus programmes promotes the awareness of ECTS activities among students. They are free to share their remarks on DS/ECTS works. However it is not possible to say that they are involved in DS/ECTS drafting as they can not participate in decision-making process. According to him, DS should be viewed as an important tool that facilitates international mobility for further study and employment reasons and, high quality DS in which the students' profile is given will create a certain competition among students and develop the content of the courses.

Another topic that arose during the meeting was the calculation of the student workload. Selda ONDEROGLU from Hacettepe University talked of her role, as a Bologna Expert, in informing the Turkish universities about "What the learning outcome is?" She said that within

the project of Bologna, the CoHE has been organizing site visits, national information conferences and regional meetings in different cities to inform HE staff coming from different universities on how to calculate the student workload. Additionally, she argued that every academicians should be aware of their own responsibilities in measuring student workload and that they can not cover whatever they want to cover in that framework. She also added that under the supervision of CoHE, a new commission was formed to define “what should be the qualifications in each Bologna level?”

The other members of the DS Team at Hacettepe University mentioned two essential questions needed to be answered while describing the “programme requirements” during the studies in each Bologna level:

- What are the demands of labour market?”
- To what extent do HEIs respond to labour market needs?

HEIs should present a precise answer to these questions at first since it is totally inaccurate to define the qualifications in “purely academic” way. On one hand, “purely academic” qualifications facilitate access to the further education, on the other hand this reminds us this essential question, “who will employ these students?” Students also expect the HEIs to guarantee them a qualification that facilitate also their access to labour market. That’s why; such a framework including learning outcomes, skills, competences reached during the studies should take into account both academic and professional learning which may be more relevant to the labour market and provide a balance between the interests of various stakeholders.

Another topic discussed during the meeting was the situation of graduates, having followed also the minor courses, along with his major courses. Here, the problem is the fact that there is no information stated in DS, concerning the learning outcomes, skills, competences defining the qualification.

After the first session, all the participants made a short visit to Registrar’s Office to see where DSs are published.

2.2 Current Situation

The second session of the meeting was attended by all participants of the first session, including also the vice rector, Hasan KAZDAGLI.

ECTS and the calculation of student workload were the first topic of the second session.

The vice president of Hacettepe University discussed two questions;

- The number of ECTS Credits

In Turkey, the bachelor degree is awarded after four years of education. At this point, Guy AELTERMAN underscored the fact that in the calculation of ECTS credits, they don’t count the years of education, but the student workload.

- The way how to calculate ECTS

The participants from Hacettepe University argued that ECTS credits at Hacettepe University does not fully reflect the students’ workload and they should involve students in drafting DS/ECTS activities to make them be more at outcome based, not at input based. They also told that HE staff responsible for ECTS/DS studies have started to review curriculum and establish quality development mechanisms to ensure more student-centered approach.

Additionally, Fatih TOKATLI, participant from Turkish Business Association as representative of Business Europe expressed his opinions on DS usage. He argued that even though DS is considered as an important tool that help employers assess the qualifications of the applicant, the employers do not take into account so much DS while employing graduates at national level. That is why; labour market representatives should be more involved in the DS/ECTS Works in order for HE staff to better understand labour market needs.

3. Future Challenges and further discussion:

The following questions decided in DS project meeting to be used in each site visit was given to the University before the site visit. Therefore the members participating from the University answered all questions in their presentations. For the future challenges, the University is planning to apply for the DS label when it finishes the dissemination process. For the time being, they tend to give DS to the graduates upon request, and no feedback system is available. The University is well aware of the importance of DS/ECTS, organizes seminars and workshops, prints leaflets to the academic staff and to the students, shares the current changes in the web page of the University (<http://www.hacettepe.edu.tr>) both in Turkish and in English.

Questions for the Study Visit

- Who is involved in the DS Procedure?
- What is the procedure?
- How do you decide upon and provide the information?
- How do you inform the students?
- Do you have a Quality Assurance process for the DS?
- Did/do you receive guidance from the relevant authority? (YOK)
- Who receives the DS? e.g. do you deliver for the third cycle degrees also?
- In what language is the DS given?
- Is it free of charge? Is it given automatically, or by request?
- When drafting the DS, what factors do you keep in mind e.g. audience?
- Does your university use learning outcomes? Are they presented in the DS?
- Is the DS included in the education policy of your institution?
- Do you collect any relevant statistics i.e. number of DS's delivered?
- What is your point of view on usefulness of the DS?
- Are you planning any developments to your DS work?
- What challenges for your DS work do you see in the future?

7c) Minutes from the Site Visit: France

Site visit to EISTI (Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l'Information),
Cergy, France
30th October 2008

Participants:

Diploma Supplement Project representatives

ENQA:	Mr Bruno CURVALE (chair)
ENIC-NARIC France:	Mrs Françoise PROFIT, Head (chair) Mrs Charlotte MILES, Programme Coordinator (secretary)
Business Europe:	Mr Henning DETTLEFF representative of BDA Confederation of German Employers' Associations
ESU:	not participated
EUA:	not participated

EISTI representatives:

General Director:	Mr Nesim FINTZ
Head of the Pau campus:	Mrs Laurence LAMOULIE
Head of the Cergy campus	Mr Houcine SENOUSSI
Study Coordinator	Mr Hervé de MILLEVILLE
Academic Registrar:	Mrs Nathalie LAMBERT

Meeting minutes:

Introduction:

The meeting began with a small introduction of all participants. The ENQA and ENIC-NARIC representatives then gave a summary on the background, methodology and the various stages of the Diploma Supplement project up to the present day.

The General Director of EISTI in turn gave a brief introduction of the schools role in the issuing of the Diploma Supplement. He highlighted the fact that EISTI was the first engineering school in France to receive the Diploma Supplement Label by the European Commission. Furthermore, he added that they were in the process of updating their Diploma Supplement with improvements to be made particularly to Section 4.2. Furthermore they are awaiting the ISO 9001 Quality Assurance label.

20% of graduates have moved abroad following their studies. As of yet the school has not received a Diploma Supplement from another school as part of an admission dossier.

Question Answer Section:

The questions decided upon in the Project Group meeting had already been circulated to all EISTI representatives present at the site visit.

Who is involved in the Diploma Supplement procedure?

All those present at the meeting. In particular the General Director and the Study Coordinator are in charge of the content whereas the Academic Registrar is responsible for the issuing of the Diploma Supplement.

What is the procedure?

Currently, there is one Diploma Supplement issued by EISTI for the "Diplôme EISTI". The Diploma Supplement is exactly the same for each student except for Section 1 which is changed to identify the student in question. In the future, and awaiting approval, they are going to issue a second Diploma Supplement to describe a different specialisation and thus this section of the Diploma Supplement will also be updated. It is a fast and computerised system which tracks and registers each step of the students' progress and comes under the responsibility of Ms Lambert.

In the past, students had to request a Diploma Supplement and so these were issued on an individual basis.

How do you decide upon and provide the information?

One reason for the lack of specification as to a student's specialisation and minor subjects is that the *Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur* (CTI) which accredits the school and its qualifications does not allow the schools to specify "options" or minor elective modules.

Entrance requirements are not tailored to each student either as it becomes very difficult in explaining the level of the internal preparatory classes as no formal qualification is awarded at the end of these two years.

Precise information on the grading system is not provided as it has, in the past, led to problems of recognition and mobility for graduates pursuing their education abroad where a particular grade is required to access the next stage of study.

At the moment it is indicated as to whether a student has completed an internship but there is no information on where. The point of view of the school is that further information on internships should be provided to employers by the student via their CV and reports.

How do you inform the students?

Students are not necessarily informed as the document is issued automatically upon graduation. Students who have questions about the Diploma Supplement and its content are advised by the academic registry. The school does not promote the fact that they have acquired this European Commission label; it is rather an internal piece of information. However, it was stated in 2004 on their website that they were the first Engineering School in France to receive this accreditation.

Do you have a Quality Assurance process for the Diploma Supplement?

Yes. The Diploma Supplement has received the European Commission Label. Furthermore their diploma is accredited by the *Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur* (CTI), including its deliverance by means of Accreditation of Prior Learning/Experience. According to EISTI the Diploma Supplement was the most accurate image of their graduates' portrait having the procedures in place to track a student's progression, and that the quality of their Diploma Supplement derives from their capacity to express clear views in Section 4.2. Furthermore they are awaiting the ISO 9001 quality assurance label.

Is the Diploma Supplement included in the education policy of the institution and who is involved in the elaboration of this policy?

To the school the Diploma Supplement is a complementary document much like the academic transcript or a candidate's Curriculum Vitae which facilitates the readability of the diploma.

The Diploma Supplement participates to the fine tuning of their education policy as according to them it provides reflection on the organisation and functions of the school.

Did/do you receive guidance from the relevant authorities e.g. Ministry of Education?

The school did not receive any national guidelines or assistance in the drafting of the Diploma Supplement. Since obtaining the EC label they have however been approached by many other schools in France to benchmark best practises.

When drafting the Diploma Supplement, what factors do you keep in mind e.g. audience?

According to the General Director the Diploma Supplement was drafted and is aimed at a purely international audience. As far as they are concerned French professionals and employers should already be aware of the French engineering schools system. They consider the Diploma Supplement to be an external communication document destined for the international reader. Moreover, in the drafting of Section 4.2 they kept in mind the development of learning outcomes.

Who receives the Diploma Supplement e.g. do you deliver for third cycle degrees also?

Students graduating with the “Diplôme d’ingénieur EISTI – grade de Master” receive a Diploma Supplement. Graduates from other courses do not. Their reasoning was that honestly they had not thought about issuing a Diploma Supplement to other graduates seeing as these qualifications fall under the sole responsibility of the school and do not constitute French national diplomas.

In what language is the Diploma Supplement given? Is it free of charge? Is it given automatically, or by request?

The Diploma Supplement is awarded free of charge automatically to all graduates together with their final diploma and official academic transcript. Two copies of the Diploma Supplement are issued; one in French and one in English.

Does your university use learning outcomes? Are they presented in the Diploma Supplement?

According to EISTI the learning outcomes are determined by teachers, companies and committees and are structured in a very clear way. The learning outcomes themselves do not have accreditation but rather make a comment on the academic and professional competencies and capabilities of each graduate at the end of the study programme. These learning outcomes highlighted in Section 4.2 reflect the general philosophy of the school. They are not specific to courses but outline the general competencies acquired at the end of the diploma. The work carried out on Accreditation of Prior Learning/Experience (VAE) has obliged the school to think carefully about the expected learning outcomes from the study programme.

Do you collect any relevant statistics i.e. number of Diploma Supplements delivered?

Before the issuing of the Diploma Supplement was automatic there was less demand for those graduates going overseas. Since 2004, it is issued automatically to all graduates.

What is your point of view on the usefulness of the Diploma Supplement?

The Diploma Supplement is an aid to each graduate in establishing their academic and international profile. It allows them to reflect upon how to develop their study programmes. It is also useful in stating the admission to the diploma by VAE.

Are you planning any developments to your Diploma Supplement work?

The priority of EISTI is to improve the Section 4.2. which is going to be a long and complicated procedure as it involves a great deal of people i.e. head of department, head of faculty, head of elective courses, internship and project supervisors etc. The principal idea is to individualise the Diploma Supplement by making this section less generic and more sculpted to the student’s academic and professional progression.

They are also planning to update Section 6 to include more information on study abroad programmes or internships.

What challenges for your Diploma Supplement work do you see in the future?

Future challenges relate to the individualisation of the Diploma Supplement which will be a result of the developments outlined in the previous question.

What are your needs regarding feedback, guidance, etc? Are these met with? Would you require more, what?

EISTI in turn asked us questions about whether particular information that they had already considered adding to their Diploma Supplement would be useful from our points of view for example: teaching methods.

The following points arose in our discussion about possible ways of making better use of certain sections of the Diploma Supplement according to its various readers.

- 1) Identifying a particular students access to the qualification (progression route)
- 2) Expanding on the information on the higher education system to make it more readable for an international audience, explaining the key terms and differentiating the different types of institutions etc.
- 3) Providing further information on work experience placements.
- 4) A need for a kind of normalisation was expressed, in particular with regard to the vocabulary and the fact that some issues are vague, for example in the programme requirements. A better guidance would be appreciated. This guidance could validly be done by a consultancy service. In the same way they also admit that it would be useful to have one single graphic description of the French Higher Education System in French as well as in English.
- 5) A section on pedagogy or teaching methods is lacking in the Diploma Supplement framework



Joint NARIC and ENQA Diploma Supplement Project

Budapest 20-22 November 2008

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Joint NARIC and ENQA Diploma Supplement Project

Aim of the Project

To study the Diploma Supplement and produce information, best-practises and tools in order to

1. support HEIs in drawing up and developing their Diploma Supplements;
 2. increase the usability and relevance of the DS for study and labour market purposes.
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Joint NARIC and ENQA Diploma Supplement Project

Participants

1. The project steering group is compiled of representatives of NARICs (from Finland, France and Turkey) and ENQA.
 2. The entire project group also has representatives from ESU, EUA , EURASHE and Business Europe.
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Project Content

1. Collecting examples of real Diploma Supplements issued to graduates (April-May)
 2. Reading through and analysing the DS examples: identifying how they communicate information to the reader, and how useful the information is to the different users: HEIs, students, credential evaluators, and the labour market (June-July)
 3. Study visits to HEIs that have particularly well established processes and procedures for issuing Diploma Supplements (September-October)
 4. Compiling the findings into a document to serve the HEIs around Europe (November-December)
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Initial Findings: Cross-reading

- **Reading/analysis of 26 DS-examples from 22 countries**
 - **Quality generally good, but space for improvement:**
 1. Nature of the DS too “national”; main audience international & outside HE
 2. Information relevant to labour market missing / insufficient
 3. Readability & clarity could be improved
 4. Parts of the DS missing or inaccurately filled in
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Initial Findings: Cross-reading

The analysis also showed that there is an obvious need for international cooperation and QA work:

Current international guidelines not sufficient
= misunderstandings and / or different interpretations of how the DS model should be used

→ Some parts more “demanding” than others

→ Significant variations in quality

Initial Findings: Study Visits

- **Study visits to three universities (Finland, France, Turkey)**
- **Aim was to collect information and good practises**
- **Attention should be paid to:**
 1. Process / compiling of the DS; Information included in the DS, such as learning outcomes; Division of responsibilities; QA etc.
 2. Expectations and needs of stakeholders
 3. The HEIs own interest and motivation to develop the DS vital
 4. National support & guidance importance

Initial Findings: Recommendations

1. Need for better international guidance; examples and good practises made available to all HEIs
2. Role of national guidance should be strengthened
3. Promoting the DS
4. DS should be included into the QA work & processes of HEIs
5. Quality, readability and clarity of the DS should be worked on
→ aimed at the users, national and international and often outside HE
6. Emphasis on learning outcomes
7. Personalised information distinguishing the graduate from others

Thank you!

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