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# Recognition challenges in a fast-changing world: the ENIC-NARIC network

2016 ASIIN International CONFERENCE

“Quality Assurance in Higher Education - the unsolved Mystery of its untapped Potential”

How to jointly tackle the five remaining grand challenges?

Berlin 3-4 May 2016

# Summary

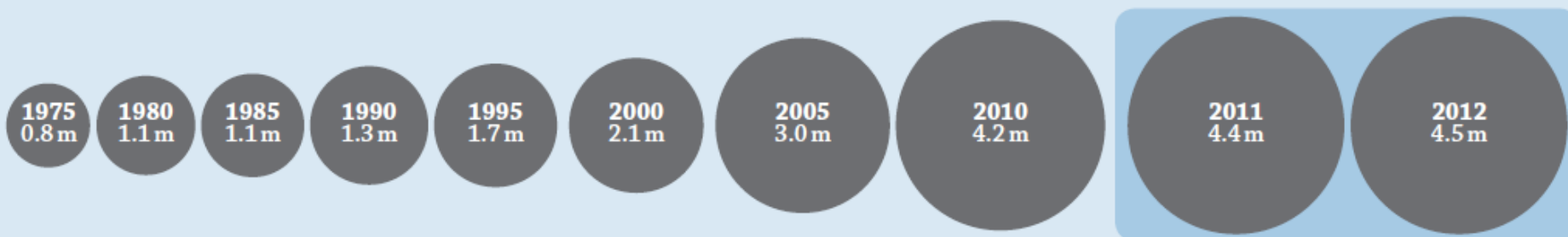
- I. Mobility trends and internationalization of Higher education**
- II. ENIC-NARIC networks, purpose of recognition and good practices**
- III. Lisbon recognition convention (LRC) and its subsidiary texts**
- IV. Information and communication tools**
- V. NARIC and other projects**
- VI. Quality assurance, Qualifications frameworks & recognition**
- VII. Conclusion**

## ••• Higher education, some important trends

And this growing mass of students is **more and more mobile!**

### Box C4.1. Long-term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship

*Growth in internationalisation of tertiary education (1975-2012, in millions)*



Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

## ••• Higher education, some important trends

- Those trends are persistent, **constantly growing** and **global**
  - Average annual growth of **7%**
  - Many **driving factors** → higher demand for HE, “value” of mobility, specific policies, etc.
  - In 2012, 4 million students went abroad to study → 1.8% of all tertiary enrolments
- **But those trends are changing very quickly**
  - In 2000: top 5 destination countries (US, UK, FR, AU, DE) received **55%** of the total mobile students
  - In 2012: top 5 received **47%** of the total mobile students
  - Because of the expansion of “new” HE systems, i.e. China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, UAE
  - Developments of **regional hubs** because of lower costs for mobile students

## ... So what?

### Recognition is essential!

- Need to be considered as a **political issue, not a technical one**
- Need to link with the “**structural**” aspects, QA and QFs
- Need to support **capacity-building** amongst all stakeholders and among foreign partners
- Need to foster the **European (and global) cooperation** in the field
- Need to adopt a **common approach to common challenges**

**So, still lot of work ahead!**

# •••Recognition is essential: ENIC-NARIC networks

➤ Two networks for the same objective → fair recognition!

➤ **NARIC network**

- 1984 : *National Academic Recognition Information Centres* in the European Union created by the European Commission

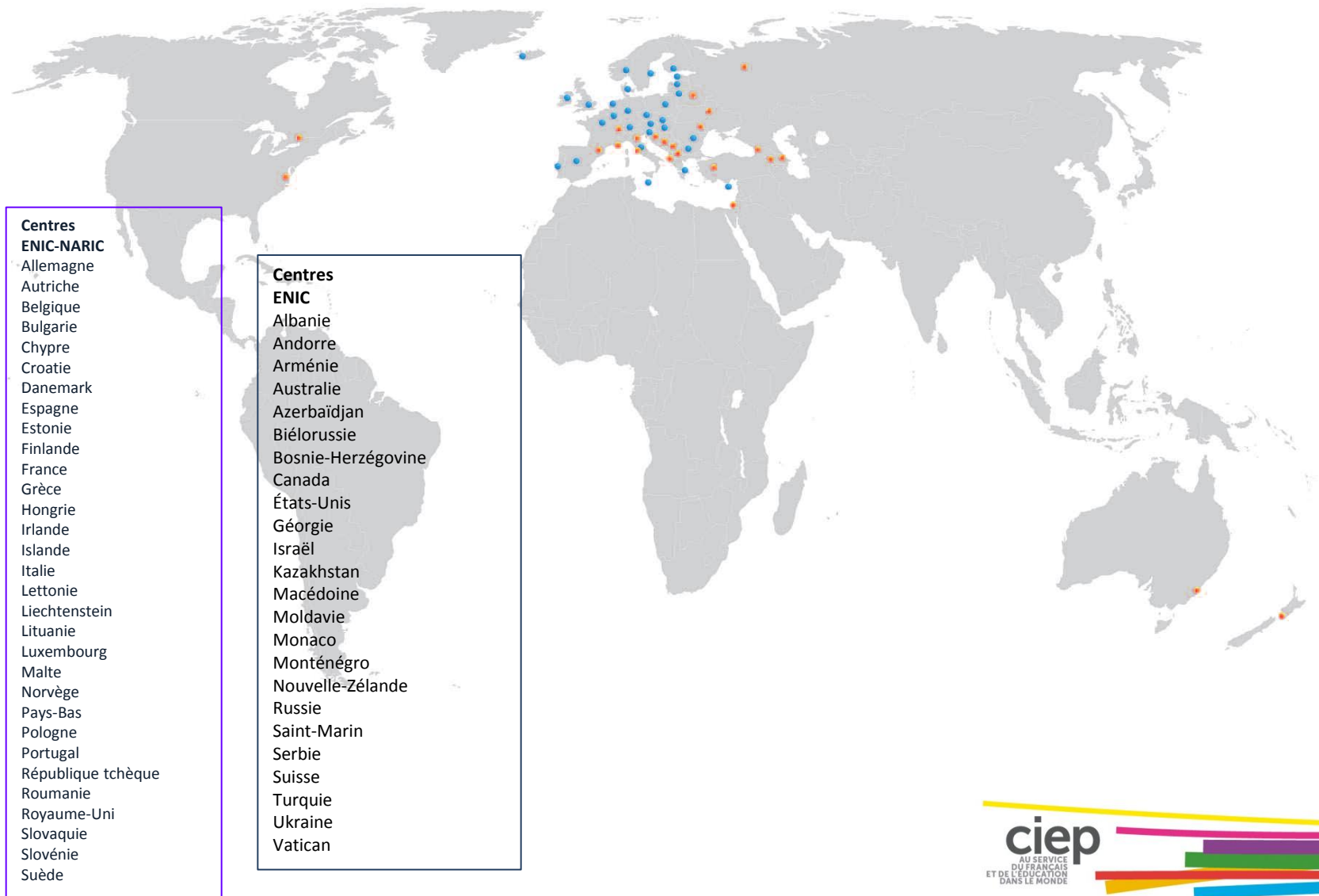


➤ **ENIC network**

- 1997 : *European Network of National Information Centres* on academic recognition and mobility created by the Council of Europe and UNESCO to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications



# ••• ENIC-NARIC networks: where?





# ••• ENIC-NARIC networks: how it works

## ➤ Networks supported by

⇒ Three Secretariats

European Commission

Council of Europe

UNESCO

⇒ Two bodies to reinforce the role of the Networks

ENIC Bureau

NARIC Advisory  
Board

## ... What about the networks

### ➤ Very efficient and performing networks:

✓ Annual networks meetings



✓ Common information and communication tools



✓ Cooperation/participation in common projects



✓ Funding by European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO

✓ **TRUST** as basis for the networks!



# ... Information and communication tools



## ➤ Share information to increase cooperation

→ 1999: development of a common website and ListServers (5 different ListServers), under the coordination of the ELCORE Group

## ➤ 2012-2014: decision to review completely the website to modernize the visual identity and answer the needs of all stakeholders

- ✓ With EU funded-project led by Italian NARIC, CIMEA
- ✓ With the monitoring/decision of the ELCORE Group

→ Official launch in June 2014: [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)

## ➤ Launch of the social media strategy

- Facebook (/ENIC.NARIC)
- Twitter (@ENIC\_NARIC)
- LinkedIn (soon)

# ••• Cooperation in common projects



- Initiatives taken by individual centres to foster innovative approaches at national, European or global level
- Specific support by the European Commission through specific NARIC projects calls → total budget of 800.000€ for 2016-2018
- But also cooperation with other regions of the world via other EC calls (ERASMUS +)

⇒ Examples:

- ✓ Annual joint ENIC-NARIC meetings
- ✓ ENIC-NARIC website
- ✓ [EAR Manual](#) and EAR-HEI Manual
- ✓ CHARONA project
- ✓ SQUARE
- ✓ EU-MTR
- ✓ RecoNow

# ●●● Purpose of the networks

- **The two networks work together to promote and enhance mobility by improving academic recognition of diplomas**
- **ENICs and NARICs = main provider of authoritative information**
  - ✓ User-oriented, including individuals, HEIs, QAAs, public authorities, etc.
  - ✓ Might be the recognition competent authority
  - ✓ Contribute to policy developments
  - ✓ Contribute to sharing and disseminating good recognition practice and policy in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
  - ✓ Have the appropriate resources (staff, ICTs, documentation)
- **But still great diversity in terms of competences (information vs. recognition), outcomes (advice vs. decision), structures (agency-like vs. ministerial dpt.), scope (technical vs. policy) and resources**

# Lisbon recognition convention (LRC) and its subsidiary texts

## ➤ The founding recognition documents



- The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) (1997)
- Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and Explanatory Memorandum (2001, revised in 2010)
- Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter of Activities and Services (2004)
- Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (2013)

# Lisbon recognition convention (LRC)

## ➤ Spirit and main principles of the LRC:

- Reinforcing education as a human right
- Promoting academic mobility
- Respecting institutional autonomy
- Fair assessment of foreign qualifications
- No discrimination
- Recognition of qualifications and periods of study in a flexible way (only substantial differences should lead to partial recognition)
- Existence of a national information centre
- Possibility to appeal

# Lisbon recognition convention (LRC) and its subsidiary texts

## Recognition good practice

### ⇒ Transparency

- Dissemination of good recognition practice in line with the LRC
- Publication of assessment criteria and procedures
- Communication at every recognition step with the applicant

### ⇒ Recognition versus equivalency

- Comparison with the national educational system
- Use of different set of criteria
- Take into account the purpose of recognition

### ⇒ Quality and quantity criteria

- Higher education institution status
- Rights attached to the diploma in the system of origin
- Length of study



# Role of the recognition centers

## ⇒ Implementation of the LRC

- Two main bodies:

- ✓ the LRC Committee (and Bureau)

- ✓ and the ENIC Network (and the Bureau)

➤ Today, 53 countries signed and/or ratified (all EHEA countries, plus Australia, Canada (no ratification), Israel, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Tajikistan, USA → one of the top 3 European conventions!

⇒ [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)

## ●●● Which link between QA and recognition?

- **Quality assurance** in the Bologna Process/EHEA
  - **Very fast development** of both internal and external QA
  - Convergence (despite the diversity) through the **ESG, EQAR and ENQA**
  - Basically, the **quality** of HE programmes, institutions and systems **within and outside national context**
    - widening the '**circle of trust**' (Kelo, 2014)
- **How QA contributes to recognition?**
  - One of the **preconditions** for the evaluation of a foreign qualification
  - **No need to further assess the 'inner' quality** of a programme/institution
    - **Minimum standards** for QA process(es) are respected

# ••• Which link between QFs and recognition?

- **Qualifications frameworks** in the Bologna Process/EHEA
    - **Further development** of the three cycle-structure → emphasis on the learning outcomes and the 'cultural shift'
    - Convergence (despite the diversity) through the **EHEA-QF (and the EQF-LLL)**
    - Basically, the **generic description** of HE qualifications **within and outside national context**
  - How QFs **contribute to recognition?**
    - Provide basic information on **quality, workload, level, profile and learning outcomes**
    - **No need to search further information on the generic qualification**
- The qualification can be **'translated' outside the national context**

## ... Which link between Los and recognition?

- **Learning outcomes** in the Bologna Process/EHEA
  - **Central common concept** for the structural elements
  - No need for convergence as **LOs are a 'diversity tool'**
  - Basically, the motor for the 'cultural shift' → from 'knowledge transmission' to '**knowledge/competences/skills reception**'
- How **LOs contribute to recognition?**
  - Go beyond the '**traditional**' approach of equivalency
  - **Focus on the applicant** and the recognition purposes
  - **Provide more qualitative information** on the qualification

## ... And how should recognition be included?

- Recognition should be **part of the (internal and external) QA systems** → quality of admission procedures, quality of recognition of prior learning, quality of flexible learning paths
- Recognition should be **one of the objectives of the QFs** → permeability within and between system and subsystems
- **Recognition** should be **considered when defining learning outcomes** → programmes 'answering' the societal needs/expectations

## ... Some concluding remarks ... or challenges!

- Need to support a more **holistic/comprehensive vision at all levels**
- Therefore consider recognition not only as a technical issue, but as an important part of HE policies → commitment needed
- And also need to link recognition developments with other policy areas, mainly QFs and QA
- Need to further **implement the structural instruments at all levels** (institutional, national, European)
- Need to integrate these instruments **in a global dimension** → synergies with developments in other regions
- Need to consider the **rapid changes and developments** → new modes of learning, new learners, increase of unreliable institutions/bodies, etc.
- Last but not least: **Trust, trust and trust!**

## ... Websites of interest

- [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)
- [www.conventions.coe.int](http://www.conventions.coe.int)
- [www.ec.europa.eu/education/tools/naric\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/education/tools/naric_en.htm)
- [www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project\\_reports/project\\_reports\\_naric\\_en.php](http://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/project_reports/project_reports_naric_en.php)
- [www.ehea.org](http://www.ehea.org)
- [www.eurorecognition.eu](http://www.eurorecognition.eu)



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Thank you for your attention!



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