RECOMMENDATIONS

on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications

Acquired through Cross-border Education
Pursuant to Article 45, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 7, of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of BiH, Nos. 59/07, 59/09), Director of the Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (hereinafter CIP), hereby issues the following

RECOMMENDATIONS

on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Cross-border Education

I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Cross-border Education (hereinafter the Recommendations), have been made in order to promote good practice in ensuring transnational education, ensure quality in cross-border higher education, improve the overall academic and professional mobility and facilitate and improve the process of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This document recommends the ways on the basis of which procedures of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Bosnia-Herzegovina acquired through cross-border education can be assisted so that the persons who acquired higher education qualifications through cross-border education can exercise the right to recognition of acquired qualifications.

II. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

These Recommendations contain principles and guidelines that should be followed by all recognition authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina while carrying out their policies and procedures for the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications acquired through cross-border education. Those authorities are: the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Srpska, cantonal ministries of education in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Department of Education of the Government of the Brčko District of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the professional bodies of the higher education institutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina defined by their statutes.

These Recommendations were made based on the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region – Lisbon Recognition Convention (Official Gazette of BiH – International Treaties, No. 16/03), and its subsidiary texts, and they primarily apply to the recognition of qualifications issued by countries that signed the Lisbon Convention.

Principles and guidelines from these Recommendations can also apply to the recognition of qualifications issued in other countries, those that are not signatories of the Lisbon Convention.

III. TERMS

Terms used in these Recommendations have meanings given to them by the provisions of the Lisbon Convention.

In order to clearly and comprehensively define the terms related to joint degrees, these Recommendations particularly define the following terms.
Cross-border (transnational education) refers to all types and manners of implementing syllabus in higher education, periods of study, or education services (including distance learning), where students are not in the same state as the education institution awarding a higher education qualification.

In case of difficulties with determining the “country of origin” of the education institution awarding qualification and the recognition authorities and/or accreditation of an institution and/or programme, cross-border education programmes should be set up through two types of cross-border agreements:

- Collaborative agreements – in which study programmes of one education institution awarding a qualification are provided or carried out by another, partner institution,
- Non-collaborative agreements – in which study programmes are directly provided or carried out by the education institution awarding the qualification on the basis of cross-border education.

Credential evaluator is the person conducting the procedure of evaluation of a foreign higher education qualification.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Competent recognition authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina are recommended to:

1. Enable recognition of foreign higher education qualifications acquired through cross-border education;

2. Carry out recognition of higher education qualifications acquired through cross-border education programmes, unless significant differences are found to exist between the qualifications whose recognition is sought and the comparable qualifications within the higher education systems of Bosnia-Herzegovina;

3. When assessing foreign higher education qualifications acquired through cross-border education, take into account the definitions of terms listed in these Recommendations;

4. When developing procedures for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications acquired through cross-border education, to use notices, opinions, advice, and information provided by CIP;

5. If cross-border education is organised by way of distance learning, credential evaluators should check the status of the institution providing distance learning and/or the distance learning programme on the basis of which the qualification was awarded;

6. In case of qualifications awarded by higher education institutions established through cross-border agreements, credential evaluators analyse those agreements on the basis of principles provided in the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (Lisbon Convention Committee) from 2001 and Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (OECD/UNESCO) from 2005;

7. Recognise qualification and points by cross-border education service providers once the following conditions have been met:
   - institution offering programme and awarding a qualification is accredited in the country of origin;
   - education service provider is allowed to work in the host country (by the competent authorities in the country of origin and the local authorities). If this is not the case,
competent recognition authorities are recommended to consider the option of recognising such qualifications if they establish that the quality of carrying out the study programme have been ensured;

- education service provider adheres to the principles listed in the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education and Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education;

8. When evaluating the qualifications awarded to cross-border education programmes, to check the following:

- status of the institution included in the cross-border education programme and/or status of the programme that led to the qualification;
- level of harmony of the cross-border agreement on the basis of which the cross-border education programme was established, with the regulations in the receiving country (host) and the sending country (country of origin);
- whether the institution providing cross-border programme is allowed to do it pursuant to the legislation of the country of origin;
- whether the provider of the cross-border education is allowed to carry out that programme in the host country, taking into account the possibility of having collaborative and non-collaborative agreements. In case of non-collaborative agreements, various licenses are understood to be mandatory: foreign education service provider, private education service provider, special type of recognised or accredited education service provider. In case there is no licence, competent recognition authorities are recommended to check whether the system of quality assurance in carrying out the study programme was satisfied, and decided on this part of evaluation on the basis of that;
- authorisation of the partner institutions in the host country to carry out programmes for certain level of education and authorisation to enter into cross-border agreements in case of collaborative agreements;
- supervision of quality of cross-border education and the quality of programme (academic quality and standards, teaching staff, qualifications, academic workload) carried out through cross-border agreements comparable with the quality of traditional programmes of the institution awarding a qualification;
- the fact that the programme quality has been ensured by a transnational agreement of the institutions involved in the programme;
- the fact that the programme of transnational education has been accredited in the country of origin of the provider or that it has been recognised/accredited in the host country, where in most cases one of the two option will suffice.

V. FINAL PROVISIONS

These Recommendations will enter into force on the eighth day from the day of publishing in the Official Gazette of BiH.

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DIRECTOR

Professor Borko Sorajić, Ph.D.
in his own hand