The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region

JOINT ENIC/NARIC CHARTER OF ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Adopted by written procedure by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region on 30 May 2025

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Conscious of the responsibilities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks for different aspects of academic recognition - through automatic recognition wherever applicable - and considering other purposes of recognition procedures such as access to regulated professions and access to the non-regulated part of the labour market;

Desiring to increase the relevance and the added value of the Networks in terms of promoting and disseminating the principles and practices of the relevant domestic legislation on recognition;

Aware of the differences in organisations of each national information centre in accordance with legislation and mandate;

Mindful of the significance of recognition of qualifications from higher education, upper secondary education and vocational education and training (VET), including transnational education (TNE), non-traditional education and learning modes and micro-credentials, in order to facilitate the mobility of students and scholars to their academic and professional pathways in a transnational context;

Attaching great importance to the right of every qualification holder to fair and transparent of their applications for recognition as well as aiming at ensuring the same level of quality throughout the European Region;

Conscious of the responsibilities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks for the development of the automatic recognition policies and practice in the European Higher Education Area and the European Education Area;

Aware of the responsibilities and duties of the ENIC and NARIC Networks in providing support to holders of foreign qualifications and encouraging mobility;

Conscious of the fact that the organisation, provision of resources for and allocation of the various tasks described in this Charter are a domestic responsibility;

Endeavouring to further increase the relevance of the work of the Networks on the recognition of qualifications in an ever more globalised world of higher education;

Taking into account the entry into force of UNESCO Regional Conventions and Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education;

Conscious of the fact that the ENIC Network encompasses signatories and all state parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, while the NARIC network encompasses Erasmus+ programme countries, and that the specific provisions and legislation of the EU apply only to national information centres of countries of the European Union, the European Economic Area and EU candidate countries;

Welcome the endorsement of this Charter by the Council of Europe and UNESCO, the co-Secretariat to the ENIC Network, and the European Commission, the Secretariat of the NARIC;

Conscious of the fact that both networks work very closely together and have a joint Charter, website, communication channel, workplan, board and annual meetings;

Conscious of the direct and indirect social impact and public responsibility of the mandate given to ENIC

and NARIC centres;

Interested in favouring international dialogue and cooperation within the field of recognition between various constituencies of the European Region;

Has adopted the present Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter of Activities and Services (hereafter called “The Charter”):

SECTION I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this Joint Charter, the terms used shall be understood as defined in the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention). This includes meanings established in recommendations, declarations, protocols, manuals and models of good practice that have been endorsed subsequent to the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, in accordance with Article X.2, paragraph 5.

Due to the dynamic development of global educational standards and the necessity to align with the evolving frameworks established by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and UNESCO, it is important that any references to recognition, including automatic recognition wherever applicable, issues pertaining to qualifications in higher education within this Joint Charter adhere to the documents and guidelines as detailed in the Section IV - Reference Documents. This measure ensures that the terms remain current and in full compliance with the latest international educational policies and standards, thereby maintaining the integrity and applicability of accreditation and recognition processes, including automatic recognition wherever applicable.

SECTION II. TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

II.1 Tasks and activities of a national ENIC/NARIC centre

The tasks to be fulfilled by an ENIC/NARIC centre are the following:

- Provide adequate, reliable, easily accessible and authenticated information on domestic and European legislation, qualifications in different sectors of education and including non- traditional learning modes and micro-credentials, qualifications frameworks, education systems, quality assurance, recognition procedures and automatic recognition, to individual holders of qualifications, education institutions, VET providers, employers, professional organisations, public authorities and other interested parties;

- Provide information, advice, statements of comparability, verification or formal decisions within reasonable time as prescribed by the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and - wherever applicable - in a digital format, on the recognition of qualifications on the basis of their assessment by applying existing criteria, methodology and procedures developed by the Networks, as well as new criteria for assessment of qualifications described in terms of workload, level, quality, learning outcomes, competences and profile;

- Provide expert support to domestic, regional, local authorities, education and training institutions and employers to implement Article 7 of LRC regarding recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, taking due note of the provisions of the 2017 LRC Recommendation on Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-Like Situation;

- Cooperate in related matters with other national information centres, education and training institutions, their networks, quality assurance agencies and other relevant actors in the domestic and European context;

- As far as NARIC centres are concerned, in the EU-context, apply automatic recognition of qualifications in line with the 2018 Council Recommendation on automatic recognition; and as far as NARICs have competence in professional recognition matters, cooperate with the National Coordinator and the competent authorities for the professional recognition of the regulated professions (EU Directives);

- Support credential evaluators at higher education institutions and other organisations to provide recognition services at the highest professional level;

- Contribute to higher education policy development and legislation at regional, domestic and European levels;
- Foster mutual trust and facilitate mobility within and across national borders;
- Cooperate with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and stakeholders with a view to ensuring coherent recognition, including automatic recognition wherever applicable, across the country;
- Encourage and assist higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies to assess institutional recognition procedures in internal and external quality assurance;
- Participate in the elaboration of publications, information and other materials on the education and training system where the national information centre operates and participate in publications, surveys, comparative studies and other research activities undertaken by the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international organisations;
- Collect and regularly update information on education systems, qualifications awarded in different countries and their comparability to the qualifications in the home country, national qualifications frameworks, automatic recognition, legislation on recognition, recognition decisions, information on legitimate providers, officially recognised and accredited institutions, and admission requirements;
- Adopt measures and develop tools to combat all forms of fraudulent practices in the field of recognition;
- Develop and implement strategies that foster inclusivity of digital tools and interoperability of digital technologies and AI to allow integration of, and synergies between, different systems;
- Create, maintain and regularly up-date the information on the national education and training system on the ENIC-NARIC website in the format given in the Annex to the present document. Refer to the membership of the ENIC and NARIC Networks in all relevant publications and correspondence and on websites, and make appropriate use of its logo;
- Where entrusted by the domestic authority, elaborate and maintain the description of the domestic education and training system to be included in the Diploma Supplement;
- Develop cooperation with relevant organisations in countries in other Regions of the world working in the field of recognition, and promote the activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks;
- Perform tasks and activities following principles of professional integrity, deontology and ethics as foreseen by domestic legislation, bearing in mind the role of the national information centre and its mandate. These include but are not limited to the principle of respect of human dignity, integrity, utility and impartiality;
- Other tasks as decided through domestic regulations.

II.2 Tasks and activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks

The tasks fulfilled by the ENIC and NARIC Networks are the following:

- Promote cooperation among national information centres and organise joint activities, as well as with domestic authorities, quality assurance agencies, education and training institutions, VET providers and stakeholder organisations at European level and in a global context. Foster coherence and interactivity with other partners and networks in related fields: academic recognition procedures and automatic recognition, quality assurance, accreditation, education and training, employment and transnational cooperation;
- Collect, evaluate and promote best practices, and develop methodologies and guidelines on academic recognition procedures and automatic recognition in line with the criteria and procedures defined in the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) and in the 2018 Council Recommendation on Automatic Recognition;

- Promote peer-to-peer learning activities and exchange information on the assessment of the qualifications and on the national qualifications framework and/or system, recognition criteria and working methods and procedures;
- Set a common framework for quality assurance systems for recognition, and automatic recognition wherever applicable, within the ENIC-NARIC networks;
- Provide and disseminate updated information on education and training systems, recognition procedures, and automatic recognition wherever applicable, taking into account latest developments such as evaluation of TNE qualifications, non-traditional education and learning modes and micro-credentials;
- Improve the range of information tools and strengthen recognition and automatic recognition practice for the national information centres, such as through the development of suitable and interoperable databases, information materials and digital tools, including tools focused on common issues, and improving procedures to recognise qualifications held by refugees and combating fraud;
- Support national information centres to apply for European and other funds to develop tools and practice;
- Provide the ENICs and NARICs with guidelines on the structure and the organisation of the information they offer to relevant target groups, in particular: higher education institutions and bodies, VET providers, public authorities, quality assurance agencies, employers, professional organisations and individual holders of qualifications;
- Organise annual joint meetings and elect the ENIC Bureau and the NARIC Advisory Board. In cooperation with the co-secretariats (European Commission, Council of Europe, UNESCO), develop a joint Work Programme and set adequate measures for its execution. Consider the creation of working structures (Working and/or Expert groups, Task Force, Advisory Groups, etc.) focused on improving recognition practices for the network and enhancing cooperation and representation with key European and global agencies and initiatives;
- Develop and implement common information strategies for production, selection, quality assurance, presentation and provision of information on recognition-related issues;
- Maintain, update and promote the ENIC-NARIC Networks website, ensure its interoperability with other relevant portals and platforms (e.g. Europass, World Higher Education Database), and increase the visibility of the networks worldwide;
- Strengthen the cooperation with the LRC Committee and their Bureau considering their role and activities in order to provide pertinent and up-to-date information to national information centres, domestic authorities and stakeholders;
- Promote standards and profile of credential evaluators at domestic, European and global level.

SECTION III. RESOURCES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF A NATIONAL ENIC/NARIC CENTRE

III.1. Resources

The ENIC/NARIC centre must have adequate resources ensured by the domestic authorities of the county considering the roles and responsibilities of the national information centre in the relevant country:

- The structure and size of the national information centre shall consider the size of the country, the numbers of institutions, the number of domestic and foreign students, the average number of applications for recognition, including information related to automatic recognition wherever applicable, the intensity of the information flows and the specific position of the ENIC/NARIC centre within the legal and administrative framework and higher education system of the given country;
- National information centres must have sufficient financial capacity and human resources, in particular with regard to information dissemination, information management and other digital tools to improve efficiency, transparency and consistency, and the goal of reducing administrative and financial burden (e.g. tax stamp, VAT costs) for users of their services; see points III.2 - Staff, III.4 – Technical equipment and Annex 1 - Recommended format of the information on the national education system;
- Promote and support the participation of national information centres at domestic, European and global level within funded initiatives, research activities and projects;
- National information centres shall have the capacity to respond to unforeseen events and upcoming challenges;
- National information centres should ensure adequate and ongoing training of their staff.

III.2. Staff

The ENIC/NARIC staff shall be versed in evaluating foreign qualifications, in line with international best practices in methodology and procedures of recognition. This could include, but is not restricted to, the following tasks:

- Be familiar with reference works on domestic education and training system of the country in which the national information centre is working: domestic education legislation (in national and foreign language), and legislation on national qualifications framework, legislation in the field of recognition, including automatic recognition wherever applicable, lists of officially recognised and accredited institutions/programs, description of the domestic education and training system, description of the criteria and procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications, etc;
- Be familiar with reference works on foreign education systems, national and regional qualifications frameworks, bilateral, regional and automatic recognition conventions and/or agreements, and relevant international legislation on the field of recognition;
- Conduct studies into home and foreign education and training systems, and legislation relevant for recognition purposes worldwide;
- Identify the status of the institution awarding a qualification, partial qualification, or micro-credential;
- Verify the authenticity of the documents, also by using digital tools;
- Identify the value of a given qualification by taking into account the academic and professional rights that qualification gives to the holder in the country in which it was conferred;
- Identify the most appropriate comparison to the foreign qualification in the home education system;
- Provide automatic recognition decisions and ensure the consistent implementation of automatic recognition within the EU as far as NARICs have competence, providing a well-founded statement of

existence/absence of substantial differences between the foreign qualification and the home one;

- Participate in trainings and development activities, as well as ensuring adequate knowledge of regional and global process and policy frameworks connected to education and training systems, recognition, and quality assurance;
- Cooperate effectively with staff of other ENIC/NARIC centres, domestic bodies, stakeholders, education institutions and VET providers at domestic, European and global level.

III.3. Quality Assurance

To ensure a constant and high quality of the activities of ENIC/NARIC centres, they should:

- Ensure the dissemination of information in a clear, accessible and transparent way, by developing internal and external quality mechanisms;
- Define standards and profile of experts working in ENIC/NARIC centres and/or credential evaluators, bearing in mind differences of domestic organisations of each national information centre in accordance with legislation and mandate;
- Within the context of the EHEA, be compliant with, and ensure the development of, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) which pertain to "Student admission, progression, recognition and certification";
- Regularly perform self-assessment and participate in peer-review activities among national information centres using the Standards and Guidelines for the ENIC-NARIC networks (adopted in 2019);
- Encourage the use of self-assessment and peer review tools for improvement of recognition practices within education and training providers, including implementation of the outcomes;
- Put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on recognition practices, including for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and whenever relevant, the Council Recommendation on automatic recognition.

III.4. Technical equipment

Each ENIC/NARIC centre is expected to have appropriate hardware and software equipment:

- Have access to publishing on the web;
- Maintain a database on previous evaluations carried out by the ENIC/NARIC centre. The database should be interoperable with other platforms, as for example the European Digital Credentials Infrastructure taking into account and compliant with the GDPR Regulation (EU) 2016/679;
- Encourage the adoption of open, accessible, interoperable and interconnected digital solutions adopted at domestic and institutional level, taking into account common assessment criteria and reports;
- Develop links with existing reliable and relevant tools, in particular database, useful for the transparency and recognition of qualifications;
- Promote the use of documentations, tools, databases, technical and digital solutions and results of projects developed by ENIC-NARIC centres and explore new approaches, including the ethically responsible development and use of AI tools;
- Promote the use of agreed and secure systems of most recent digital certification, exchange of data and communication;
- Ensure that digital solutions are fully compliant with applicable standards for privacy and data protection and that the learner has control over what they wish to share and for how long;

- Use of digital ecosystem able to respect the right to appeal and to grant the possibility to review recognition decisions according to the outcome of the appeal procedure;
- Maintain archives to store applicants' documents for comparison purposes and as a means of preventing recognition of fraudulent documents.

SECTION IV. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

IV.1. (Council of Europe/UNESCO) Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee - Reference Documents

Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165) (1997, Entry into force 1999)

Recommendation on International Access Qualifications, 1999

Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and Explanatory Memorandum, 2001, revised 2010

Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, adopted by the LRC Committee in June 2013

Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees and Explanatory Memorandum, adopted by the LRC Committee in June 2004, revised February 2016

Recommendation on Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-Like Situations, adopted by the LRC Committee in November 2017

Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education, June 2007

Guidelines for National Online Information Systems, June 2019

Monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention: monitoring report, Paris/Strasbourg, 2016

Monitoring of the Implementation of Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, Final Report, June 2019

Monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon recognition Convention: monitoring report, Paris/Strasbourg 2022

IV.2. Council of Europe - Reference Documents adopted by the Committee of Ministers

Recommendation No. R (97) 1 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Recognition and Quality Assessment of Private Institutions of Higher Education

Recommendation No. R (98) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Access to Higher Education

Recommendation Rec(2002)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on higher education policies in lifelong learning

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the public responsibility for higher education and research

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on ensuring quality education

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering education fraud

IV.3. European Commission - Reference Documents

Commission Communication on a blueprint towards a European degree (COM(2024) 144 final)

Proposal for a Council Recommendation a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System (COM(2024) 147 final)

Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad (2018/C 444/01)

Report from the Commission to the Council on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad (COM(2023) 91 final)

Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02)

Commission Communication on Skills and Talent Mobility (COM(2023) 715 final)

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU Talent Pool (COM(2023) 716 final)

Commission Recommendation of 15.11.23 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals (C(2023) 7700 final)

Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone (9804/24)

Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (L 255/22)

Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03)

IV.4. UNESCO - Reference Documents

Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2023)

Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993)

ANNEX

RECOMMENDED FORMAT OF THE INFORMATION ON THE DOMESTIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Each ENIC/NARIC Centre, in line with the structure and information available on the ENIC NARIC network's website, shall refer, provide and update information on its domestic website as well as in the ENIC/NARIC national webpage, including information on:

- Legal basis and description of the education and training system (a short version of which could be used for the Diploma Supplement);

- Lists of recognised and accredited higher education institutions and programmes;

- General description of the domestic system for evaluation and accreditation with websites of the relevant bodies;

- Description of the domestic procedure for academic recognition of foreign qualifications in terms of:

  Legal framework for recognition
  Description of the assessment methodology
  Processing time and possible delays
  Rights and possibilities for appeal
  Requirements regarding information applicant must provide
  Requirements on the certification of foreign qualifications
  Fees for evaluation and/or translation of educational documents (where applicable)
  Possible requirements regarding the translation

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