

The Lisbon Convention

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- The universality of scholarship
- The “global village”
- The European Higher Education area



Potential for mobility

- Employees (labour)
- Academics
- Students



One problem is how we understand each other's qualifications.

I.e. how do we recognise them for what they are?



Who needs to be able to “read” foreign qualifications?

- Universities

- Professional bodies responsible for regulated professions

- Employers



The problem is variation in the programmes of study which lead to the qualifications/degrees/Diplomas:

- in duration
- in structure
- in content



The solutions which are being urged by the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO are

- Greater transparency (e.g. through the use of the Diploma Supplement)
- A move towards a common pattern of degrees (Bologna process)
- Better understanding of the variations (the Lisbon Convention)



The underlying principles of the Lisbon Convention are

- Mutual trust in the universities which the signatories of the Convention each recognise as their own
- Non-discrimination
- Transparency in the process – complete explanation of any non-recognition decision and the right of appeal



Elements of the Lisbon recognition process

- An information network (ENIC/NARIC)
- An informed judgement (exercised by appropriate experts) as to whether the qualification is appropriate for the purpose(s) for which it is to be used



EU



MZOS



HCG

The judgement should be exercised on the basis of a consideration of learning outcomes

– not on the extent to which the programme of studies matches the programme of studies which leads to a comparable local qualification.



The Lisbon Convention explicitly recognises **the autonomy of universities** - but equally

Universities are **accountable** for

- a decision not to admit a student who has a foreign qualification which is otherwise recognised

-the integrity of their own academic awards, Diploma Supplements and ECTS records



Preconditions for the Lisbon Convention to apply

The qualification must belong to the national system of a signatory to the Convention

i.e. it has to be *recognised in that system*



The signatories to the Lisbon Convention (i.e individual States) are accountable for the integrity of the academic awards of those Higher Education Institutions which the State acknowledges to be part of that country's System of Higher Education

- whether or not they are State funded



Academic recognition:

Is the holder of a degree eligible for to be **considered** for admission to **continue studies** at the stage applied for?

(E.g. admission to a Master's programme on the basis of a Bachelor's degree obtained in another country)



Professional recognition:

Is the holder of a degree or other qualification able to **pursue professional activities** in a given country

when the degree or other qualification has been obtained in another country?



De facto professional recognition (i.e for non-regulated professions)

Is a potential employer prepared to consider the foreign qualification held by an applicant for a post to be a relevant qualification?

The decision rests with the potential employer.



De jure professional recognition:

The decision rests with the professional authority in the host country.

“.....where the... education and training received ... **differ substantially** from those covered by the diploma required in the host Member State” a person who has qualified elsewhere may have to complete aptitude test or adaptation period.

(EC Directive 89/48/EEC Article 4 b)



- Universities
- Potential employers
- Professional bodies

may each for its own purpose need to be informed about an unfamiliar foreign qualification.

- that is the primary role of an ENIC office, which can itself call upon a network of such national offices.

