

**JOINT DECLARATION**  
**CONCERNING**  
**THE AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

*Vienna, 8 December 2005*

**PREAMBLE**

The participating members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (hereafter "ECA members") and the participating European National Information Centres / National Academic Recognition Information Centres (hereafter "ENIC/NARICs"),

Having regard to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon, 11 April 1997 (hereafter the "Lisbon Recognition Convention")<sup>1</sup>,

Considering that the European ministers responsible for higher education called upon existing organisations and networks such as NARIC and ENIC to promote, at institutional, national and European level, simple, efficient and fair recognition reflecting the underlying diversity of qualifications in their Prague Communiqué,

Having regard to the overarching Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (hereafter the "overarching Framework") adopted by the European Ministers responsible for higher Education, as stated in their Bergen Communiqué,

Convinced that the improved recognition of qualifications is closely linked to improved and transparent quality assurance and this through cooperation between national systems based on a common understanding of goals, procedures and methods,

Realising that the responsibility for higher education lies with the relevant national authorities,

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<sup>1</sup> The terms defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention are used in the same sense in the present Declaration, and reference is made to the definition of these terms in Section I of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

## AGREE TO

form a partnership dedicated to the recognition of higher education qualifications based on accreditation results or decisions.

The aim of this partnership is a state of affairs where the ENIC/NARICs will recommend automatic recognition or, where appropriate, will automatically recognise qualifications of higher education institutions and/or programmes, accredited by ECA members, at their proper level in the overarching Framework.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve this aim the following preconditions have been identified:

- The ECA members recognise each other's accreditation results or decisions.
- The National Qualifications Frameworks of the countries concerned are compatible with the overarching Framework and thus with each other's National Qualifications Frameworks.
- The Lisbon Recognition Convention is entered into force in the countries concerned.

ECA members and ENIC/NARICs will undertake the following actions to meet the preconditions:

- The ECA members will enter into mutual recognition agreements of accreditation results or decisions before the end of 2007.
- The ECA members and the ENIC/NARICs will encourage and contribute to the elaboration of National Qualifications Frameworks that are compatible with the overarching Framework.
- The ENIC/NARICs will encourage and contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, including appropriate bilateral instruments between the countries concerned.
- Before the end of 2009 the ENIC/NARICs will recognise qualifications or recommend recognition in accordance with the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in Riga on 6 June 2001.

ECA members and the ENIC/NARICs will consequently:

- exchange expertise, information and documentation on the subjects relevant for this partnership
- invite each others representatives to meetings and working groups on subjects related to this partnership
- develop a transparent information tool, which provides information on the accreditation organisations, systems and decisions as well as information on the qualifications of accredited higher education programmes and institutions.
- ask for official support of the competent national authorities, where appropriate.

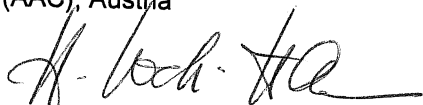
The automatic recognition of qualifications will come into effect for those countries of which an ECA member and the corresponding ENIC/NARIC have signed this declaration.

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of automatic recognition is presented here as recognition without invoking the substantial differences provisions under the Lisbon Recognition Convention regarding the quality and the level of the qualification.

**ECA members**

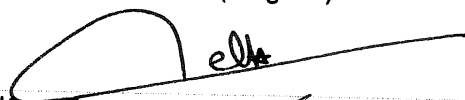
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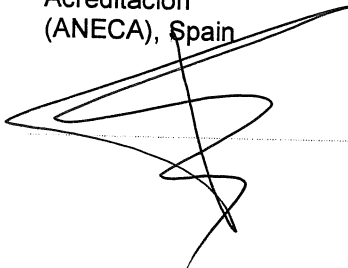
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