

Multilateral Treaty on Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications of 14.09.2021

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ORIGIN

- ▶ Established agreements/legal instruments in the context of respectively the Benelux and Baltic cooperation since 2015. Both regions were in dialogue while working at their own regional cooperation.
- ▶ Basis: *acquis* of the Bologna Process and of the EU cooperation but embedded in mutual “trust” between countries of the same region.
- ▶ Treaty of 2021 marks the trust between the two regions while reaching out to the rest of the European Higher Education Area.



PRINCIPLES OF RECOGNITION (1)

- ▶ Automatic, not procedural

No (speed) procedure but established legal right

- ▶ Generic, not (yet) specific

Level of the degree, specific discipline not in the scope

- ▶ Academic, not professional

Focus on learning qualification as basis for further (study) trajectory

No interference with EU Directives on regulated professions

- ▶ Nonetheless: experience in our 2 Regions show important positive spill-over effects of facilitating specific recognition and transition to the world of work.



PRINCIPLES OF RECOGNITION (2)

- ▶ No “revolution” – putting the European (EU, COE) and international (Unesco) acquis on recognition together in a coherent framework
- ▶ Reaffirmation of our political determination to observe earlier decisions, especially in the context of the Bologna Process
- ▶ No “substitution” of earlier legal instruments
- ▶ Key word is **trust**
 - In the other countries’ recognized degrees
 - In the validity of the (instruments of) European and international cooperation



ACCESSION CRITERIA

Overall rationale: Recognition underpinned by transparency and quality assurance (triangular relation between the 3 building blocks) as basis of trust

- ▶ Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention (including implementation of Diploma Supplement) [RECOGNITION]
- ▶ Adherence to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area [QUALITY ASSURANCE]
- ▶ Referenced higher education to the Qualifications Framework of the EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (including credit system based on ECTS) [TRANSPARENCY]



ACCESSION PROCEDURE

- ▶ Interest for accession to address to Secretariat-General of the Benelux Union who provides the secretariat for the Treaty.

Contact persons: Stéphane Verwilghen s.verwilghen@benelux.int (legal aspects) and Lotte Dijkink l.dijkink@benelux.int

- ▶ Text of the Treaty cannot be changed – no “partial” adhesion possible but once acceded all countries are “in the driving seat” on equal footing.
- ▶ Benelux countries and Baltic States at your disposal for further information.

