

CHAPTER 10

PROMOTING CROSS-BORDER RECOGNITION AND MOBILITY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Reliable and transparent information about national systems of education – especially about national quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms – are of great importance for the promotion of cross-border recognition and mobility. The term cross-border education refers to (a) programmes offered by an educational institution in one country that can be followed by students from abroad, or (b) education provided by a cross-national group of co-operating institutions for students from various countries. Providers of e-learning study programmes (i.e. distance learning programmes supported by the new information and communication technologies) should try to gain access to national education systems or, if this is not possible, jointly define quality standards and criteria. For “consumers” of (distance) education – students and employers – but also credential evaluators and administrators at other educational institutions, it is important to know what the quality status of a given study programme is. Transparency instruments, such as the Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer System, can be of additional help in enhancing recognition of e-learning. To further enhance international recognition of all forms of lifelong learning the practice, of international credential evaluation should be combined with instruments for prior learning assessment and recognition.

INTRODUCTION

To promote incoming and outgoing mobility it is of the utmost importance that countries provide reliable and transparent information on their national systems of education. This includes information on quality assurance and accreditation systems, how these systems work and who is responsible for what. The quality and (accreditation) status of an institution or a specific programme are among the basic questions that students, employers and others want answered. The above is also of importance for distance higher education, especially for the study programmes that are offered cross borders using new information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICT-supported distance

education (or e-learning) has tremendous potential for the internationalisation of higher education. ICT does not only expand the possibilities for co-operation between providers of education, it also offers students and staff who are not able to travel the opportunity to become “virtually mobile” (van der Wende, 1998). To promote virtually mobility and the recognition of e-learning courses, it is of utmost importance that there be reliable and transparent information about the courses on offer, the provider and the status of the qualification or certificate awarded after successful completion. Via the Internet there is access to an abundance of information but it is very difficult for “consumers” to determine the reliability and focus of the facts on offer. Different target groups are interested in reliable and transparent information on quality assurance and accreditation of (ICT-supported distance) higher education and the recognition status of the respective qualifications. First of all, there is the group of (potential) incoming students who need it to make a deliberate choice. Foreign students should be aware of all the possible implications of choosing an institutions and/or study programme. They should have a guarantee that their choice of programme meets basic quality criteria, and that the credential awarded upon completion is recognised in the host country, in their own country and elsewhere. Second, international credential evaluators or administrators need this information for credential evaluation purposes. Employers form a third group.

The Netherlands NARIC/ENIC, located at Nuffic (the Netherlands organisation for international co-operation in higher education) aims to facilitate cross-border recognition for both outgoing and incoming mobility. Nuffic is a non-profit professional organisation aimed at making education accessible all over the world. Nuffic’s main areas of activity are: development co-operation, internationalisation of higher education, international credential evaluation and marketing of Dutch higher education. Nuffic strives to be an intermediary between the education community of the Netherlands and the international community. Since the rise of e-learning Nuffic has stressed the importance of attention to quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms for this type of education.

The work of Nuffic and the Dutch NARIC/ENIC has changed over the past few years as a consequence of the Bologna process. This chapter describes two developments that have taken place at Nuffic to further promote cross-border mobility and recognition for both incoming and outgoing students. The first relates to linking the field of expertise of quality assurance and accreditation to international credential evaluation. The second refers to the identification, assessment and recognition of prior learning as a further development of traditional international recognition or credential evaluation.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

In June 1999, 29 European ministers in charge of higher education met in Bologna to lay the basis for establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010 and promoting the European system of higher education worldwide. In the Bologna Declaration, the ministers affirmed their intention to:

- adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- adopt a system with two main cycles (undergraduate/graduate)
- establish a system of credits, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
- promote mobility by overcoming obstacles
- promote European co-operation in quality assurance
- promote European dimensions in higher education

The Bologna Declaration was followed by the Prague Communiqué (2001) and the Berlin Communiqué (2003). Over the years, the importance of lifelong learning, quality assurance and the recognition of qualifications awarded in the European Higher Education Area was more and more emphasised. The Bologna process has an important impact on Nuffic's work in the realm of international credential evaluation. Among others it has strengthened the link between international credential evaluation and quality assurance.

Quality assurance is one of the main issues in the Bologna Declaration. At national level, quality assurance and accreditation is important to ensure accountability, public protection and quality improvement. From an international perspective it also fulfils a major function for cross-border mobility. Quality assurance and accreditation is an important precondition for the recognition of a country's higher education qualifications abroad. The field of international credential evaluation depends on reliable information about a country's quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms. The purpose of international credential evaluation is to determine to what extent a foreign qualification is comparable to the general educational level, the general content and the function/goal of a similar national qualification in the receiving country. Among others, the quality status of a study programme or educational provider is an important evaluation criterion for international credential evaluators. In this respect, it is not important whether a country has implemented a system of quality assurance or quality accreditation, two different concepts. If the quality of a qualification has been assured by means of a valid quality assurance mechanism or accreditation system, this may provide clear and reliable information for credential evaluators to base their recognition decision on.

In most countries, the traditional distance education sector (e.g. the traditional open universities) forms an integrated part of the national education system and as such benefit from the quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms. As a consequence the awarded diplomas and degrees are nationally recognised and international credential evaluators do not treat these qualifications differently than those from "regular" study programmes.

Reliable quality assurance mechanisms and/or accreditation systems have become even more important due to the fact that national laws and regulations and international agreements on international recognition presuppose their existence. In Europe, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the European Directives provide a legal framework for cross-border recognition. These legal instruments base their methodology on the existence of such national systems of quality assurance or accreditation. For example, the Lisbon Recognition Convention is applicable to qualifications awarded by institutions belonging to a national education system. Quality assurance and accreditation, if they exist in the country involved, are considered to be part of that national education system. If ICT-supported distance courses are part of tuition leading to nationally recognised qualifications, then legal recognition instruments like the convention apply. It is then assumed that these courses fall within the boundaries of the quality assurance mechanisms of the institution involved. However, this approach disregards – indeed, it must disregard – the question of whether this methodology uses specific quality assurance standards and criteria for ICT-supported distance courses.

Alternative systems and mechanisms of quality assurance might be useful, especially in fields where national systems are not available. One example in many countries is the field of non-degree programmes or ICT-supported transnational higher education. Transnational or cross-border education and programmes that are offered via distance learning or virtual education may or may not belong to one single national education system. It is recommended that the providers of these programmes either try to join national quality assurance and accreditation systems or take the initiative in setting

up their own accreditation or certification agency. However, any quality assurance or accreditation system that is not backed by national or other competent authorities is very difficult for outsiders to judge.

A similar problem appears with joint degrees, which are offered by higher education institutions in various countries. Such programmes are often not covered by a national quality assurance or accreditation system. Even though one would expect such cross-border forms of education to be internationally recognised, they are a complicated matter for credential evaluators as their status and quality are often hard to identify. The Bologna process reinforces the rise of international co-operative forms of education and, especially given the emphasis on *international employability*, an urgent solution is required to enhance recognition in these fields, too.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE QUALITY ASSURANCE

To achieve transparency in quality assurance and accreditation at the international level, close collaboration between national and international parties is required. Due to the impact of quality assurance on international recognition, this process is also of great importance for the NARIC/ENIC networks, which are major players in the process of international recognition. This section gives an overview of the most important international developments regarding quality assurance in higher education (see also Divis, forthcoming).

An important actor promoting quality assurance at the European level is the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). ENQA and the NARIC/ENIC networks have set a joint agenda to develop an information system on national quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms for foreign target groups and a common language on how to deal with cross-border education. In addition, the European University Association (EUA) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) fulfil key roles in enhancing quality in higher education institutions, making national systems as transparent as possible and achieving international recognition of other countries' quality judgments and accreditation statements.

A number of accreditation organisations, including members of the ENQA, originally from eight countries that introduced national accreditation systems, have established the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The ultimate objective of ECA, in short, is to accept each other's national accreditation statements. This might be crucial for international recognition, because these countries could use ECA to automatically recognise each other's national degrees instead of on a case-by-case basis. The NARICs/ENICs from Flanders and the Netherlands are the first two to do this (see the section below).

The Joint Quality Initiative is an informal network of representatives primarily from quality assurance organisations and ministries in Europe. The network aims to increase international collaboration on quality assurance and to enhance the transparency of European Bachelors and Masters programmes. From the perspective of recognition, the JQI's most important output is the document *Shared descriptors for Bachelors and Masters degrees* (the "Dublin descriptors"), in which generic learning objectives or competencies are formulated.

UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) also provides important backstopping in the field of accreditation. As part of a project on *Strategic Indicators for Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, CEPES has analysed the quality

indicators currently being used for the accreditation of educational institutions and programmes. In this way it can play a useful role in elaborating performance indicators that are used internationally for quality assurance and accreditation. In October 2002, UNESCO launched the *Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Diplomas*, which aims to focus attention for issues relating to quality assurance, accreditation and international recognition on the agendas of the higher education sector and national and international policy-makers. UNESCO pays specific attention to the issue of cross-border education.

In 2004, in co-operation with OECD, UNESCO initiated a project on *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*, which aims to develop guidelines for national stakeholders on how to provide quality cross-border education. Part of this project is the establishment of an international information tool on recognised higher education institutions. This initiative has great potential in relation to international recognition, in offering a solution to one of the main problems of recognition: cross-border provision.

A final important international initiative is the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). This network aims to gather and disseminate information on existing and forthcoming quality assurance methodologies in higher education and promote best practices. It fulfils an important network function, as it provides a forum where quality assurance and accreditation organisations can meet. The network also fosters the use of credit transfer systems and encourages educational institutions to provide materials to facilitate the international recognition of diplomas. In addition, it intends to provide a warning system for dubious accreditation processes and organisations.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

In 2002, in the early years of the Bologna process, the Netherlands made the switch from a quality assurance system to an accreditation system. The accreditation system was introduced together with the Bachelors and Masters degree structure. It was not built from scratch; the Netherlands already had an elaborate system of quality assurance, which was even imitated by other countries. The Dutch quality assurance system was managed by the two umbrella organisations of universities and universities of professional education. The final statement was not an official recognition or accreditation decision but a quality judgment by visiting peers, formulated by the quality assurance agency in a final report.

At the heart of the new system introduced in 2002 is the NVAO (Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization), which is responsible for accrediting existing programmes and assessing new programmes. If a programme receives accreditation, the institution is entitled to award recognised diplomas and degrees for that programme for the coming six years, and students may obtain a student grant/loan while enrolled in the programme. Furthermore, government-funded institutions receive funding in respect of their accredited study programmes. Providers of e-learning degree programmes can also pose a request for accreditation provided that institution is situated in the Netherlands. The NVAO applies the same standards for e-learning as for regular courses as these are broad enough to relate to the specific requirements of this type of education. Till now, no e-learning courses have been accredited. Non-degree programmes do not qualify for accreditation at present.

The accredited programmes of government-approved or government-funded institutions qualify for inclusion in the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO). In addition, the NVAO administers its own register.

Nuffic (the Netherlands NARIC/ENIC) plays a crucial role in recognition. Because of its focus on foreign target groups in many of its activities, Nuffic provides information on the Dutch educational system in general and specific programmes targeted at the foreign student body in particular to foster incoming mobility. Nuffic hosts a Web site to inform potential students on “Study in the Netherlands” (www.studyin.nl). The number of e-learning courses is still very limited in the Netherlands. As a consequence, these programmes are not included in this database. In addition, in the context of a pilot project of the ENQA and the ENIC/NARIC networks, Nuffic has developed a Web site in co-operation with the NVAO which explains the quality assurance and accreditation facilities in the Netherlands from the perspective of the foreign student. The Web site covers both the regular national education system and the private sector. It also tries to help students to ask the relevant institutions the right questions before starting a study programme in the Netherlands. This Web site will be launched in 2005 (www.nuffic.nl/qa-in). This Web site does not specifically address e-learning; nevertheless, providers of e-learning programmes can use the Web site to find out which issues need to be addressed in their study programme information.

To foster outgoing mobility, Nuffic promotes all the relevant tools and activities developed or identified by the NARIC/ENIC networks in the Netherlands. In the 1990s it promoted the Diploma Supplement and ECTS, as well as application of the methodology of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (although the Dutch government had not yet ratified the Convention). The Diploma Supplement aims to promote transparency and recognition of higher education qualifications for academic and professional purposes. UNESCO-CEPES has developed a template that can be used by institutions to provide all the required information about a study programme to enhance recognition. Other examples of relevant tools to be promoted are the *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* and the *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees*, both official documents of the Lisbon Recognition Convention regime. Furthermore, Nuffic offers two credential evaluation products for students who have earned a Dutch diploma. First of all there is the *equivalence letter*, which contains information that answers the questions most frequently asked by credential evaluators in other countries. Second, there is the *diploma description*, which is issued on request to individual graduates. This documents provides information about the Dutch study programme that was followed.

Lastly, accreditation and international recognition are being integrated in another, unique way. Because both Flanders and the Netherlands integrated their accreditation systems for higher education programmes into one organisation based on a bilateral agreement, the two NARICs/ENICs (the Flanders Ministry of Education and Nuffic) decided to investigate the possibilities of automatic recognition of each other’s national degrees and even the automatic recognition of each other’s recognition statements regarding credentials from third countries. After the necessary consultation rounds with the relevant stakeholders in both countries, the Flemish and Netherlands NARICs/ENICs will commence their co-operation in mid-2005. In this way, common accreditation will result in a common recognition (or evaluation) area.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

As a consequence of the Bologna process, recognition of lifelong learning has also grown in importance. The education ministers have included this concept in the Bologna process in Prague in 2001. This poses a major challenge to credential evaluators especially if

the qualification resulting from the various lifelong learning forms do not belong to the formal school system that is covered by national quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms.

To foster *incoming mobility*, it is important that facilities for international credential evaluation and the assessment of prior learning exist both at the institutional level, e.g. at the admissions offices of educational institutions, and at the national level, e.g. at national information centres (NARICs or ENICs), which in many countries play a crucial role in credential evaluation. Credential evaluation is one of the main instruments for recognising incoming mobility. Recognition of foreign credentials can be required for various reasons. Generally, a distinction is made between academic and professional recognition. Academic recognition is when someone wishes to be admitted to a course of education or use their academic title in the receiving country. Professional recognition refers to situations when someone wishes to enter the labour market or obtain permission to work in a regulated profession in the receiving country. Regulated professions are legally protected, which means that an appointed institution has to recognise the professional competence of an applicant before he or she is allowed to work in the profession. The most important legal instrument to improve academic recognition is the Lisbon Recognition Convention. European Directives have been developed for the promotion of professional recognition.

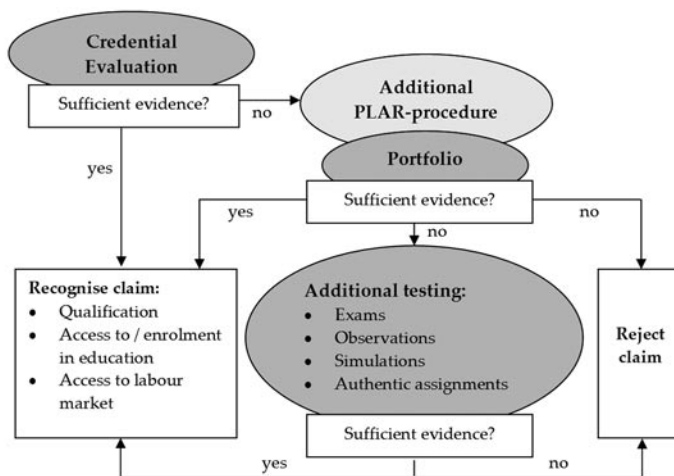
Nuffic has been responsible for the credential evaluation of higher education diplomas and degrees for several decades. It serves Dutch institutions of higher education, ministries and governmental bodies. Based on the credential evaluation, final decisions on admission to educational courses or access to professions are taken by the authorities concerned. To answer individual requests for international credential evaluation, Nuffic is part of the Dutch international credential evaluation structure. Individuals can request credential evaluation at some 125 regional centres.

However, with the advent of lifelong learning, national credential evaluation offices (NARICs/ENICs) are confronted with a new and major challenge. As already mentioned, new forms of education, such as transnational education, virtual courses, various types of post-initial education and work-based learning are emerging. It is acknowledged and encouraged that people continue to learn after completing initial and post-initial formal study programmes that result in nationally recognised diplomas. Lifelong learning takes place in a large range of different learning environments of varying formality. European policies therefore call for all of these forms of learning to be recognised. Due to these developments, Nuffic has identified the need for a methodology to link international credential evaluation and the recognition of competencies, internationally referred to as *Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)* or *Assessment of Prior Learning (APL)*. In situations when foreign qualifications are not recognised, or additional information about a person's competencies is required in the recognition process, assessment instruments that evaluate all forms of learning should be used (Nuffic, 2001).

In the case of distance education qualifications, as long as these are part of a nationally recognised or accredited education system, the qualifications are evaluated in the same way as qualifications awarded by other institutions belonging to the traditional education system. However, if this is not the case and international credential evaluators are unable to find sufficient information on the quality or status of the provider or the study programme that was followed, it will not be possible to evaluate the distance education qualification, and a PLAR procedure would be recommended to find out what the person in question has learned.

A portfolio is an instrument with the potential to identify and present competencies gained during both formal and non-formal experiences. According to Klarus (1998), developing a portfolio enables a person to describe and clarify their competencies, which in turn enables an assessor to evaluate the professional competence of the person for the purpose of recognition. The content of the portfolio and the evidence that is required depends on the purpose for which recognition is sought (the “recognition claim”). In addition to the portfolio instrument, other assessment instruments to collect further information can be used. Examples of such instruments are interviews, theoretical or practical examinations, authentic professional assignments in the workplace or in simulated environments. Based on all the information collected during the assessment process, a recognition decision is taken (see also Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1: Linking international credential evaluation and PLAR



Since 2002, Nuffic has been working on the development of a portfolio instrument that can help foreign trained immigrants to present their competencies. Specific experience was gained with portfolio development by foreign medical doctors from outside the EU/ EER region for the purpose of enrolment in the medical faculty (Nuffic, 2005). A digital portfolio format evolved that can be used by incoming students or workers to present their (formal and informal) learning activities (see Table 9.1).

Nuffic views the portfolio instrument as an important communication tool between the potential student or worker and the recognising party (educational institution or employer). It can enhance assessment of non-formal learning activities if these are effectively described and documented. Preferably, the portfolio also contains evidence such as diplomas, certificates, work contracts and products of work that show what a person is able to do. Again, objective transparent information about the aim, structure and content of study programmes or courses followed can serve as an advantage. Experience so far shows that the portfolio instrument empowered foreign trained immigrants and shed light on other forms of learning that are otherwise kept in the dark. To foster recognition of all forms of learning, the development of additional, more objective, competency-based assessment instruments is welcomed.

Table 9.1: Outline of the portfolio format

1. Curriculum Vitae	Brief overview of factual information, such as personal details, education, medical activities during study, working experience, experience in the Netherlands, computer and language skills and information on fluency in Dutch. The following sections elaborate on these topics.
2. Formal education and other courses	More extensive descriptions are given about the structure and content of the candidate's formal education and additional courses he or she has taken.
3. Work experience	Further elaboration on working experience. For each job, information is given about the type of organisation, the tasks and responsibilities, the field of expertise and the way in which the candidate co-operated and communicated with colleagues.
4. Experience with scientific research	This section is dedicated to describing experience in scientific research. A brief description of the research activities is given, focusing on the context and occasion, goals and research questions, design, results and conclusions, reflection and recommendations and any publications.
5. Experience in the Netherlands	Description of experiences in the Netherlands. For each (voluntary) job or internship, information is given about the type of organisation, the tasks and the feedback that was received from supervisors or colleagues.
6. Expertise development and maintenance	This section contains information about the way the candidate developed and maintained his or her professional expertise in the country of origin, and how he or she tries to do this in the Netherlands.
7. Future perspective	Description of the position the candidate would like to have in the Netherlands, and the steps that need to be taken to achieve this goal. The candidate is encouraged to reflect on his or her situation and the possibilities and challenges that might affect the chance for achievement.

CONCLUSION

To promote incoming and outgoing mobility, it is important that countries provide reliable and transparent information on all forms of learning. Transparency instruments that have been developed at the international level can serve as an example, e.g. the use of ECTS to define study load, Diploma Supplement. Organisations in the fields of both quality assurance and international recognition should play an important role in this information provision. Ideally, they should work together, because the combination of both perspectives and the knowledge of the needs of their specific target groups provide the necessary added value. Furthermore, it is important that quality assurance and accreditation systems, supported by the national authorities, should open themselves to all providers and all forms of educational provisions, including e-learning study programmes and cross-border provision. Only then will fair assessment and recognition

of all possible credentials across borders be possible. Portfolio development can form a valuable addition to international credential evaluation to identify and document all forms of learning. Additionally, more objective test instruments should be developed to assess competencies further. Nuffic will continue to work on the development of instruments for the assessment of prior learning of immigrants. In this process, it will continuously take note of developments at European and international levels and, where possible, link up with instruments developed internationally.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The policy issues that can be drawn from the above are summarised below:

- ***Make sure that reliable and transparent information about the national quality assurance and accreditation system is easily available for potential students, international credential evaluators working at national information centres or at educational institutions and employers.***

Whether a diploma, degree or qualification will be officially recognised in another country depends to a large extent on the quality of the study programme and the institution providing it. Students intending to study abroad should therefore first make enquiries about the quality of their proposed programme and institution and about the recognition that their diploma will have on return to their home country. Similarly, people and organisations involved in the evaluation of diplomas awarded in other countries — admissions officers at educational institutions, employers hiring holders of foreign credentials and credential evaluators at recognising organisations — need to know if and how the basic quality of a specific programme has been assured. This sort of information is not always readily available, but even when it is, it may not be intended for an overseas readership. With this in mind, Nuffic in the role as Netherlands NARIC / ENIC and the Netherlands Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) took the initiative to develop a Web site for overseas readers that contains all the information they need on quality assurance and accreditation in the Netherlands. This initiative is being supported by the ENIC and NARIC networks and the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

- ***Providers of distance e-learning should try to gain access to national (or international) quality assurance and accreditation systems***

It is advised that providers of distance e-learning follow the providers in the traditional distance education sector. However, they may be confronted with criteria and standards that do not apply to their specific type of education. An alternative would be that e-learning providers jointly define standards and criteria. In a later stage these standards can be integrated in national (or international) quality assurance systems.

- ***Make sure that reliable and transparent information about the aim, structure and content of the study programme is available by issuing a Diploma Supplement.***

The Bologna process has contributed to putting recognition issues at the centre stage of the higher education policy debate in Europe. The automatic issue of the Diploma Supplement free of charge in a widely spoken European language by 2005 is one of the key policy measures of this process. Institutions offering virtual study programmes or courses must make sure that they issue reliable and transparent information on the aim, structure and content of the programme or course.

- ***Make sure that incoming students can present all their learning experiences so that recognition decisions are not solely made on the evaluation of formal (traditional) qualifications.***

To enhance recognition of all forms of learning, formal, non-formal, distance, virtual or work-based, a combination of international credential evaluation and prior learning assessment is required. Nuffic has chosen to work with the portfolio instrument to enhance the identification, assessment and recognition of competencies. Through portfolio development immigrants become empowered and the recognising parties become better informed about prior learning experiences. Also in this process, the availability of objective, reliable and transparent information about prior learning is welcomed.

RELEVANT INTERNET SITES

Bologna process

www.bologna-bergen2005.no

ENIC and NARIC network

www.enic-naric.net

UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES)

www.cepes.ro

Dutch International Credential Evaluation Structure

www.idw.nl

International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

www.inqaahe.org

Joint Quality Initiative

www.jointquality.org

Lisbon Recognition Convention

www.enic-naric.net/instruments.asp?display=legal_framework

Study in the Netherlands

www.studyin.nl

This Web site provides information about study in the Netherlands for potential incoming students.

Quality Assurance in the Netherlands

www.nuffic.nl/qa-in

This Web site explains the system of quality assurance currently in place in higher education in the Netherlands.

UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES)

www.cepes.ro

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Notes

1. The European Commission has established the network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs) to identify and solve problems regarding mutual recognition in the EU. The network of European National Information Centres on Recognition and Mobility (ENICs) of the Council of Europe and UNESCO has a similar function with a wider geographical reach. Nuffic has been designated by the Dutch Ministry to serve as the Netherlands NARIC and ENIC.
2. More information about the Lisbon Recognition Convention can be found at:
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=165&CL=ENG>
3. More information about the European Directives can be found at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/qualifications/index_en.htm

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