

# The Triangle of Automatic Recognition



**Guidelines for the application of  
de facto automatic recognition**

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# Executive Summary

**This paper offers practical guidelines on how to implement de facto automatic recognition when dealing with academic recognition of foreign qualifications in the European Higher Education Area.**

The triangle in the title refers to the three criteria that allow implementation of de facto automatic recognition:

1. Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
2. Referencing of the national qualifications framework to the European Qualifications Framework or the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education area;
3. A quality assurance system based on the European Standards & Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG).

This publication shows how to select relevant criteria and implement them for the different cycles of education. Some of the main recommendations stress the importance of:

- Sound and transparent procedures for automatic recognition;
- Information provision on automatic recognition to competent authorities (notably higher education institutions);
- Co-creation and sharing of practices within the office and the wider national context.

The guidelines are geared to ENIC-NARIC offices, but can also be used by any other professional from a competent recognition authority,

This paper is the result of the Erasmus+ Key Action 3 AR-Net project, undertaken by recognition experts from 9 ENIC-NARIC centres, as well as the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and the European University Association (EUA).

# 1. Introduction

**This paper presents guidelines for ENIC-NARIC centres on how to apply de facto automatic recognition in practice. The paper has been developed as part of the “Automatic Recognition in the Networks in 2020” (AR-Net) project (see chapter 5).**

## 1.1 Rationale

The implementation of automatic recognition by 2020 is a priority set by the ministers of education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué.

Since 2015 various initiatives have been undertaken to make automatic recognition a reality: The Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition was first to explore the concept. Between 2015-2017 the Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition (FAIR) Erasmus+ KA3 project supported the implementation of elements of Automatic recognition at higher education institutions in Europe. In addition, intergovernmental agreements on Automatic recognition were established amongst others in the Baltic, Nordic and Benelux regions.

Moreover, the new European 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) reinforced the importance of automatic recognition and aims to make automatic recognition within the European Union a reality by 2025.

The NARIC 2016-2018 PARADIGMS project identified four different models for implementation of automatic recognition in the EHEA (see chapter 2), and developed a set of recommendations for ENIC-NARIC centres on possible ways to apply and support these.

The focus of AR-Net in general and this paper in particular, is to take the findings of the PARADIGMS project further to develop actual guidelines on how to apply the fourth option –de facto automatic recognition- in practice. The ‘de facto’ model was chosen because it is the only one that can be achieved on the level of the ENIC-NARIC networks.

## 1.2 About this paper

Chapter 2 introduces the essentials of automatic recognition, focusing on the definition, the difference between access and admissions and the 4 models of implementation.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used for developing the guidelines for implementation of de facto recognition in chapter 4, which is the heart of this publication. Lastly chapter 5 provides background to the AR-Net project. The outcomes of the test round are included in annex 2 to this publication.

# 2. What is Automatic Recognition?

**This chapter discusses automatic recognition as a concept by providing a definition and explaining how it relates to current recognition practice. It also provides a brief explanation of the 4 models of automatic recognition, with a focus on de facto automatic recognition.**

## 2.1 Definition

The original definition of the EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, is still the basis for the current use of automatic recognition both in the EHEA and EU:

*“Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to the labour market or a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access)”*

This definition is also used in the recent recommendation made by European ministers of Education (2018) for the creation of the European Education Area.

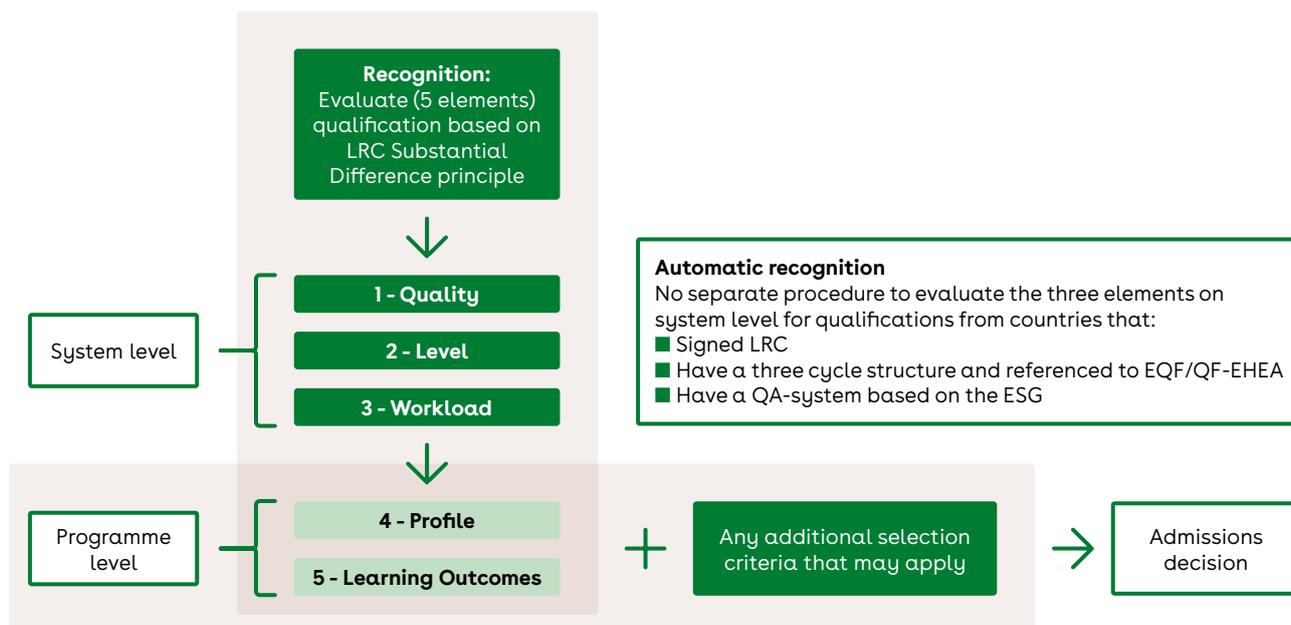
One key aspect of automatic recognition is therefore the automatic right to be considered for access, from one educational level to the next. What does automatic access mean and how does it relate to admissions?

## 2.2 Access and admissions

One may say that the term Automatic Access would better indicate the essence of this aspect of automatic recognition.

In applying automatic recognition, 3 of the 5 main elements of a qualification are automatically accepted: the level, quality and workload. In this way, automatic recognition is provided at system level, by providing access to the next level. The remaining two elements of a qualification, profile and learning outcomes, should still be evaluated to determine whether the qualification fulfils the specific access requirements for admission to a particular study programme.

Figure 1



Access is thus of a more general nature than admission. Access at degree level usually requires meeting a set general educational level. A specific qualification may give formal/general access to all programmes at the next level of study if it meets the general level requirement for access. It may also just give partial access if the home country formally stipulates that it only gives access to a certain type of programmes at the next level or only to programmes at a certain type of institutions (e.g. institutions of applied sciences).

When talking about automatic recognition, the automatic access that may be granted in the receiving country should be comparable to the access to the next level of study that the qualification gives in the home country. A level 6 qualification only giving partial access to the next level in the home country should – when given automatic recognition – give the same access in the receiving country. This may require some adjustment or interpretation into the education system of the receiving country as every system has its own differences.

And finally, as indicated in Figure 1, after recognition at system level and programme level, additional selection criteria (such as grades, motivation, etc.) may be applied in order to make the final admissions decision. However, these criteria should be applied in a fair way to both national and international students.

## 2.2 De facto Automatic recognition

De facto automatic recognition is one of the 4 models of automatic recognition that can be found in the EHEA:

1. Automatic recognition arranged in bilateral and multilateral agreements;
2. Automatic recognition based on a list of countries to be decided by a competent recognition authority (unilateral);
3. Non-legal recommendations (Baltic-Nordic manual);
4. De facto application of automatic recognition, accepting for many countries that in practice MA=MA, BA=BA, and quickly evaluating qualifications in an automated process

De facto automatic recognition is a model where competent authorities in the EHEA automatically accept bachelor and master qualifications from quality assured comparable degrees in other EHEA countries, without referring to formal procedures or agreements on automatic recognition. The criteria developed for de facto automatic recognition, will be discussed in the next chapter.

For further reading on automatic recognition, consult: A Short Path to Automatic Recognition, 4 models, 2018: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/publications/short-path-automatic-recognition-4-models/>

# 3. Methodology

The project aimed to develop the guidelines for de facto automatic recognition, by testing the criteria developed in the PARADIGMS project. This hands-on methodology was chosen to ensure that the developed guidelines would be applicable in practice.

Initially two test rounds were planned. The first one would test the criteria developed in PARADIGMS to see if participating countries apply automatic recognition in their daily practice and if not, why not. After an evaluation of the outcomes, guidelines could be developed that would be tested in the second round.

However, the first test round showed that everyone accepted the criteria for automatic recognition from bachelor to master. The challenges were with the short cycle, mainly because of the variety of short cycle degrees.

Therefore, the project team decided to cancel the second test round altogether because it was widely expected this would not reveal anything new, and base the guidelines for implementation on the first round.

This chapter provides more information on testing the criteria for de facto recognition in practice and the test outcomes.

## 3.1 Testing

To conduct the testing, 9 ENIC NARIC centres (Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the UK) filled out a Scorecard.

On the Scorecard, project partners were asked to indicate two things:

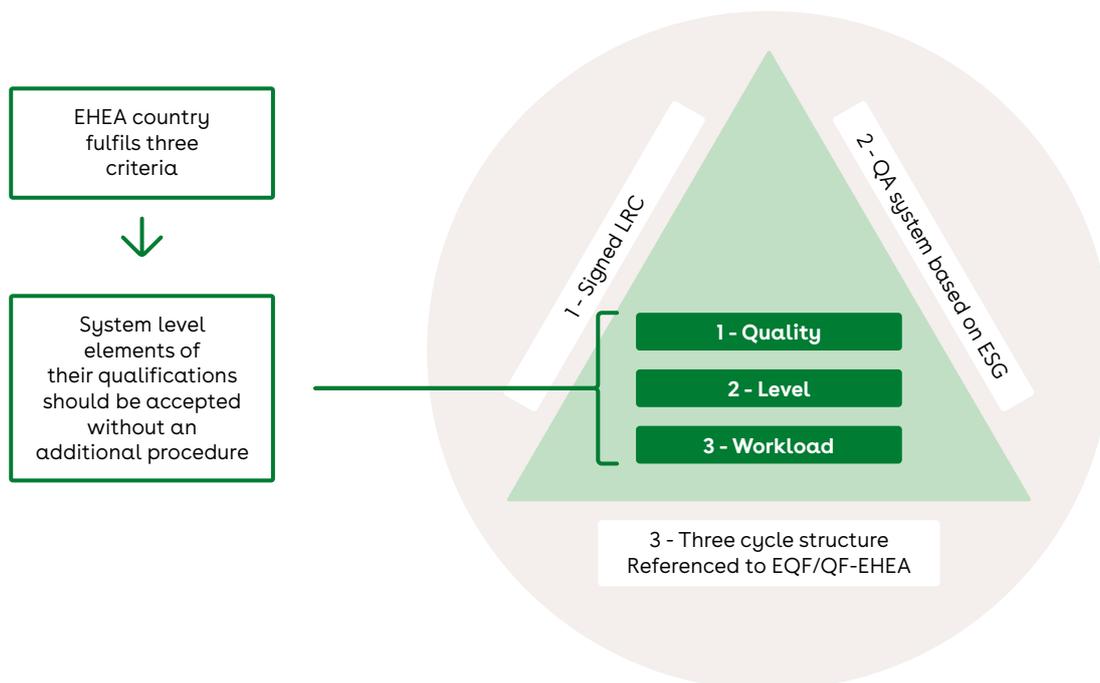
1. if they would automatically recognize a short cycle qualification from each of the 26 listed countries for access to a bachelor's programme, and
2. if they would automatically recognize a bachelor's degree from each of the countries listed for access to a master's programme. It was explicitly stated that "recognition" referred to access at the system level and not to admission to individual programmes of study with specific admissions requirements.

The 26 countries on the scorecard were chosen because each of these countries complied with the three criteria that qualifies their qualifications in the application of facto automatic recognition.

These three criteria were outlined in the final report of the PARADIGMS project "A short path to automatic recognition. 4 models", and are the following:

1. Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. For this criteria, all countries that ratified and signed the LRC were included;
2. Referencing of the national qualifications framework to the European Qualifications Framework or the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education area (QF-EHEA);
3. A quality assurance system based on the European Standards & Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education (ESG).

**Figure 2 - The Triangle of Automatic Recognition**



How to select countries based on these criteria is further explained in chapter 4.

The 23 countries that complied with the three criteria during the test phase in Spring 2018 are: Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

### 3.2 Outcomes

Analysis of the scorecard indicates that with one notable exception, the partners did not hesitate to automatically recognize bachelor's degrees for access to master's programmes. The exception was with regard to bachelor's degrees awarded in the applied arts and sciences. One partner indicated that higher education legislation required academic bachelor's degrees for access to the master's level and that bachelors with an applied focus would not qualify.

The scorecard revealed a number of challenges with regard to automatic acceptance of short-cycle qualifications for access to bachelor's programmes. The most important issue had to do with the lack of standardization of short-cycle qualifications in terms of level, purpose, length and possibilities for further study. In some countries, short-cycle qualifications are offered at the level of secondary vocational education, in others at the higher education level and in one country they are offered at level 6 of the EQF instead of level 5. Possibilities for further study also vary—in some countries short cycle qualifications give access to bachelor's programmes, whereas in others they qualify for 2 years of advanced standing. In two countries short cycle qualifications don't qualify for access but 1) possible exemptions at the bachelor's level and 2) access to special 'top-up' programmes lasting 1,5 years. The fact that short cycle qualifications in the first example don't qualify for access but may be grounds for exemptions may sound illogical, but is based in national legislation that requires an upper secondary qualification for access to a bachelor's programme.

Another factor that was mentioned was that in 10 of the 26 countries, a short cycle qualification is not offered.

It was clear when analysing the scorecard that even though the majority of partners indicated they would automatically accept short cycle qualifications for access to bachelor's programmes, when asked to explain their answers this was either not possible in practice or only if certain conditions were met. This is actually not surprising, given the variety of qualifications that fall into the category of short cycle qualifications.

The test results are included in annex 2.

# 4. De facto AR: implementation

This chapter contains the actual guidelines that credential evaluators can use to implement de facto automatic recognition in practice.

## 4.1 How to select the three criteria

Automatic recognition automatically accepts the level, quality, and workload of a qualification as comparable to that of the receiving country. This has been made possible by the long-term commitment of the EHEA countries to making their systems more compatible through fostering common goals and developing common tools.

The three criteria for automatic recognition allow credential evaluators to determine eligibility of a qualification for automatic recognition based on the implementation of the relevant EHEA tools. Annex 1 provides an overview.

### 1. Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Ratification of the LRC is seen as an important criterion because the recognition methodology is based on broad comparability, not on the equivalency of qualifications. The implementation of the LRC creates favourable conditions for the actual implementation of automatic recognition.

At the time this report was prepared, almost all country members of the European Higher Education Area (with the sole exception of Greece) have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

### 2. Linking of the National Qualifications Framework to the EQF or QF-EHEA

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) allow countries to classify their qualifications onto levels based on their learning outcomes. The NQFs developed in the EHEA countries should be compatible with at least one of the overarching regional qualifications frameworks: the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and/or the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The two regional frameworks are based on learning outcomes. The frameworks provide mechanisms for quality assurance, and, in the case of QF-EHEA, provide a range of credits associated with a specific level. The descriptors of the levels where the two frameworks overlap (levels 5 to 8 in the EQF) are also comparable.

This compatibility of NQFs and regional frameworks is verified with self-certification (QF-EHEA) and/or referencing (EQF). The validity of these exercises is ensured through commonly agreed criteria and procedures as well as inclusion of external international experts. Self-certification and referencing can also be done jointly in a combined report.

Overarching qualifications frameworks provide a broad structure for development of qualifications within member states of the EHEA. Thus, linking to at least one of them signifies compatibility of qualifications placed on the same level in terms of generic learning outcomes.

At the time of writing the Guidelines there were 36 EHEA countries that have referenced or self-certified their NQFs. The list of countries is provided in Annex 1, but because some countries are still in the referencing/self-certifying process the list should be reviewed and updated regularly.

### **3. A quality assurance system based on the European Standards & Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education**

The European Standards & Guidelines (ESG) represents a common approach to quality assurance agreed by the EHEA Ministers responsible for higher education. Compliance with ESG is confirmed through ENQA membership and/or registration with EQAR. Both ENQA and EQAR require demonstrating that an external quality assurance agency meets the requirements of the ESG through cyclical external reviews.

This means that quality assurance agencies, which do not ensure continuous compliance, may lose their listing with ENQA or EQAR after a negative review. Thus, qualifications awarded in the same country within different time frames may not have the same status in terms of eligibility for automatic recognition. Therefore, ENIC/NARIC offices may verify and keep track of the status of external quality assurance agencies on regular basis.

Verifying the status of external quality assurance agencies, institutions, and programmes has been made easier with the development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR), which aims to provide “a one-stop shop” for decisions of all agencies registered with EQAR.

It should also be noted that some countries may have multiple quality assurance agencies, which may not all be listed in ENQA or EQAR. Quality assurance agencies may also operate at the international level, providing accreditation services for foreign higher education institutions. In such cases, it should be verified if agencies listed with ENQA or EQAR are the only ones who are allowed to carry out evaluations leading to state recognised qualifications in the country in question. Additional information regarding specific quality assurance arrangements at the national level is provided on the website of EQAR.

The list of all countries whose system of quality assurance in higher education is ESG compliant in 2020 is included in Annex 1.

## **4.2 Automatic recognition in Practice (cycle 6 to 7 and 5 to 6)**

### **Level 6 to 7**

In essence, automatic recognition is primarily about automatic formal access to the next level of study. This is fairly straightforward when talking about automatic recognition between level 6 and 7: In most countries access to programmes at master’s level requires a completed qualification at level 6, typically a bachelor’s degree.

One way a centre could practice automatic recognition for foreign level 6 (BA) qualifications would be to accept those foreign qualifications to be comparable in level to national level 6 (BA) qualifications for access to the next level, thus accepting them as completed level 6 qualifications. Thereby the foreign qualifications would give general access to studies at the next level (Level 7/ masters) when the general access requirement for studies at master’s level is a completed level 6 (BA) qualification. Whether the foreign qualification meets the specific access requirements for a sought programme is in most countries evaluated by the HEI.

### **Level 5 to 6**

Automatic recognition between level 5 and 6 may not be quite as clearly defined when keeping strictly to the automatic recognition definition where automatic recognition is about recognition for automatic access to the next level of study.

Level 5 qualifications are not uniform across countries. They either can belong to the higher education system or be post-secondary non-higher education. In some countries both types of qualifications co-exist.

In some countries specific designated top-up bachelor programmes (level 6) are provided as further study for level 5 short-cycle graduates. In those countries, automatic recognition should be considered when a foreign level 5 qualification gives general access to the top-up BA programmes in the receiving country on the same line as graduates of the country's own level 5 short-cycle qualifications. Whether admission to a specific programme can be granted will be for the HEI to decide depending on any specific access requirements.

In most countries, access to full level 6 qualifications (e.g. bachelor's degree programmes) require a completed upper secondary access qualification, which is typically placed at level 4. Thus in these cases "standard" access is directly from level 4 to level 6. An HEI may also consider a completed level 5 qualification when deciding admission to BA. However, the general level access requirement is usually a level 4 access qualification, while a level 5 qualification may be considered an "extra". Access to a full BA programme with a level 5 qualification but no level 4 access qualification is less "standard" and thus more difficult to fit into automatic recognition.

In addition, the option may exist to be granted advanced standing or credit transfer from a level 5 qualification to a level 6 programme, but usually this is a decision resting with the individual HEI being a more content-based evaluation falling outside the narrow definition of automatic recognition regarding access. The national ENIC-NARIC centre may inform the HEI that the level 5 qualification can be automatically recognised as X years of studies at higher level, which may be relevant information for the HEI's decision of granting credit transfer.

When setting out to determine if a level 5 qualification is suitable for automatic recognition the best way is to start by determining the features of the qualification itself, most particularly the access rights it gives in the home country. It may also be helpful to know if the qualification belongs to the higher education system or not in the home country.

Practical steps:

- What level is the qualification placed at?
- Regarding level 5 qualifications: Is the qualification a short cycle qualification belonging to higher education or is it below the level of higher education?
- Does the qualification give access to the next level in the home country or is it a final qualification?
- If it gives access to the next level of study: Does it give partial or general access to the next level?

### 4.3 Recommendations for a smooth implementation.

These are a few recommendations for implementation by ENIC-NARICs:

- Every ENIC-NARIC is organized differently. Therefore it is important for each centre to determine the most appropriate strategy for the application of automatic recognition in their centre and the national context;
- When automatic recognition is implemented, organize a meeting with the credential evaluators from your centre on how to apply automatic recognition. Make sure to include this in your internal manual;
- Keep a list of the EHEA countries that fulfil the three criteria, to accept quality and level without an extra procedure, and share this with your stakeholders and notably the competent authorities (higher education institutions) in your country;
- It is extremely important to have a sound knowledge of how automatic recognition is applied. It is highly recommended that you create a complete guide on how automatic recognition is implemented in your office, which should be clear and accessible, avoiding too much technical language or expressions;
- To make the assessment process easier and to check information about HEIs, documents and automatic recognition awarded, the data should be gathered in one single place (database) that can regularly be updated and checked by everyone;
- In cases where automatic recognition is also applied by HEIs, it is essential to have a dialogue and clearly communicate the concept of automatic recognition, through workshops, meetings and training sessions. These events should include clear explanations of what automatic recognition is and what the implications are for the implementation in practice. Such meetings can also serve to share information and best practices. This is crucial to achieve streamlining of the application of automatic recognition by all competent authorities in your country;
- Being part of a digital world, sharing information with your stakeholders is also essential to successfully tackle problems or doubts that you might face along the way. Digital solutions can offer support by sharing information on common problems and solutions found with your key stakeholders;
- Lastly, smooth implementation could result in a Certificate or Statement for each automatic recognitions conferred. The statement could be signed digitally and include a verification code or link to verify the authenticity of it whenever needed.

#### Example statement

An example of a statement is the “Kwalifikator”, a service offered by NAWA, the Polish ENIC-NARIC. For selected countries and levels, you can download a recognition statement at the system level recognition of qualifications explaining the rights associated with the qualification. Here is an example of a German Bachelor:

<https://kwalifikator.nawa.gov.pl/Home/Details/11>

Another example is the Irish comparability statement service, offered by QQI (the Irish ENIC-NARIC): <https://qsearch.qqi.ie/WebPart/Search?searchtype=recognitions>

# 5. About the AR-Net project

These guidelines are being written as part of the Automatic Recognition in the ENIC NARIC networks 2020 (“AR-Net”) project. The main objective of AR-Net is to support the implementation of automatic recognition of foreign qualifications in the EHEA.

While there are four models for implementation in the EHEA (see Chapter 2), the AR-Net project focused on the de facto model. This is the model that can easiest be implemented at the level of the ENIC-NARICs.

Apart from this paper, “AR-Net” also explored the conditions under which information provided in recognition statements could automatically be accepted by another centre. This resulted in the publication “Portability of recognition statements in the EHEA. Fast lane or detour to Automatic Recognition?”

The AR-Net consortium is composed of the following representatives from the ENIC-NARIC network: NARIC The Netherlands (Nuffic, coordinator) NARIC Lithuania, NARIC Denmark and NARIC Portugal. NARIC Italy, UK-NARIC, NARIC Norway, NARIC Ireland and NARIC Czech Republic, as well as the European University Association (EUA) and European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA)

AR-Net started in March 2018 with a duration of two years. The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 3, NARIC call, of the European Union.

# Annex 1. Overview of EHEA countries meeting the 3 criteria for AR

This table was created based on information available in 2018. Note: If you currently have successful policies in place for the application of automatic recognition for countries that may not fully fulfil the criteria in the list below, there is no obligation to use this table to make your procedures stricter for those countries.

Country	LRC. Signed and ratified	NQF referenced to QF EHEA or EQF		ESG		ESG	"Eligible" for AR
		QF EHEA	EQF	ENQA Member	EQAR Register		
Albania	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Andorra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armenia	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Austria	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Azerbaijan	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belarus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belgium Flemish Community	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Belgium French Community	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Bosnia & Herzegovina	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Croatia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Czech Republic	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Denmark	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Estonia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Finland	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
France	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Georgia	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Greece	-	-	+	+	-	+	-
Holy See	+	-	-	+	-	+	-
Hungary	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Iceland	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Ireland	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Italy	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Kazakhstan	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Latvia	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Lichtenstein	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Luxembourg	+	+	+	-	-	-	-

Country	LRC. Signed and ratified	NQF referenced to QF EHEA or EQF		ESG		ESG	"Eligible" for AR
		QF EHEA	EQF	ENQA Member	EQAR Register		
Malta	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Moldova	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montenegro	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Norway	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Poland	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Portugal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Romania	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
Russian Federation	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Slovak Republic	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Slovenia	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Sweden	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Spain	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Switzerland	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
FYROM	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Serbia	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Turkey	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

# Annex 2. Outcomes test round

## 1. Denmark

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Denmark	Yes to all	Yes to all

### Comments

Short cycle qualifications would be accepted as comparable to Danish short cycle qualifications, but the Danish qualifications apparently don't give access to professional bachelor programmes of 3½ years. Short cycle qualifications in Denmark give access to "Top-up" professional bachelor programmes of 1½ years. Short-cycle qualifications awarded in the 22 countries of the survey would also have access to the Top-up programmes, meaning the foreign qualifications would receive equal treatment to the Danish ones.

## 2. Ireland

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Ireland	Yes to all	Yes to all

### Comments

Both types of qualifications would be accepted in Ireland provided there are no substantial differences and the qualification was awarded in a country meeting the three criteria mentioned earlier in this report. In response to this, we would like to point out the following:

- fulfilling the three criteria for automatic recognition is a pre-condition to applying the principles of AR.
- determining whether or not there are substantial differences (in profile and learning outcomes) is one of the next steps in the evaluation procedure, after the principles of automatic recognition have been applied.

## 3. Italy

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Italy	Yes to all, with the exception of countries that have no level 5 EQF qualification.	Yes to all bachelor's degrees awarded after completion of an academic programme. A score of 'no' was given to bachelor's programmes in the applied arts and sciences.

### Comments

According to Italian legislation, for access to bachelor's programmes, an academic upper secondary qualification is required. Access is not possible with short-cycle qualifications. The 'yes' that was indicated on the scorecard for several countries only refers to being eligible for advanced standing based on a short-cycle qualification.

## 4. Lithuania

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Lithuania	Yes to all, with the exception of 10 countries.	Yes to all

### Comments

The explanation given for 10 'no's' in the short cycle-bachelor column was that these countries don't issue short cycle qualifications.

One condition was mentioned regarding the automatic recognition of the Bulgarian bachelor for access to the master. Automatic recognition applies to the bakalavr, but not to similar qualifications that don't grant access to master's programmes in Bulgaria.

## 5. The Netherlands

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
The Netherlands	Yes to all with the exception of 10 countries.	Yes to all

### Comments

The explanation given for 10 'no's' in the short cycle-bachelor column was that these countries don't issue short cycle qualifications.

## 6. Norway

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Norway	No to all	Yes to all

### Comments

In Norway short cycle qualifications (higher education) is at level 6 in EQF. Level 5 is reserved tertiary vocational education (TVET). Norwegian TVET gives access to higher education, level 6. Hence, foreign qualifications at level 5 will be recognised - and thus giving access to HE - if they are defined as higher education in the awarding country. If they are TVET in the home country, they will be evaluated as such and, if recognised by NOKUT as comparable to a Norwegian level 5 qualification, they will normally give access to higher education.

Norwegian partners provided a detailed description of the legal requirements for access to both bachelor's and master's degree programmes. These requirements as well as the GSU list are very specific and focus on admission requirements, thus catering for transparency, making admission more predictable and the concept of access credible. Although the Norwegian response indicated that comparable bachelor's degrees from all of the countries would be recognized for access to master's programmes, it still is up to the HEIs to determine..

## 7. Portugal

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
Portugal	No to all	Yes to all

### Comments

None

## 8. United Kingdom

Project partner	Short cycle → Bachelor	Bachelor → Master
UK	No to all	Yes to all

### Comments

For every country on the Scorecard, partners from UK NARIC indicated that “short cycle qualifications are recognized in accordance with UK NARIC’s evaluation criteria, meaning they would be assessed on a case-by-case basis”. This seems to contradict the principle of automatic recognition. When asked to explain this, the reason given was the “wide range of qualifications with differing roles and functions” among short-cycle qualifications. Since there is no uniform pathway from one level to the next, each short-cycle qualification has to be assessed individually. This still seems more like a ‘no’ than a ‘yes’.

For every country on the Scorecard, partners from UK NARIC stipulated that automatic recognition of bachelor’s degrees applied only for degrees issued as part of the Bologna system.

# Colofon

## AR-Net consortium:

- Nuffic (Coordinator) - The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education
- Centro Informazioni Mobilità Equivalenze Accademiche (CIMEA)
- Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann - Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior - Directorate-General for Higher Education Portugal
- European University Association (EUA)
- France Education International
- Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy - Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Czech Republic
- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)
- Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras (SKCV) - Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education Lithuania
- Styrelsen for Forskning og Uddannelse - Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education
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