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Bologna Seminar
**Council of Europe Higher Education Forum
on
Qualifications Frameworks**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council of Europe Headquarters, Strasbourg
Thursday 11 – Friday 12 October 2007
Room 1

The Council of Europe Forum on Qualification Frameworks, organized as an official Bologna seminar – the first to be held in the work period between the 2007 and 2009 Ministerial conferences – gathered participants from most members of the Bologna Process and parties to the European Cultural Convention as well as from Australia, New Zealand.

The conference was an important step in fulfilling the mandate given to the Council of Europe by the Ministers of the Bologna Process at their meeting in London on 17 – 18 May 2007:

We note that some initial progress has been made towards the implementation of national qualifications frameworks, but that much more effort is required. We commit ourselves to fully implementing such national qualifications frameworks, certified against the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA, by 2010. Recognising that this is a challenging task, we ask the Council of Europe to support the sharing of experience in the elaboration of national qualifications frameworks. We emphasise that qualification frameworks should be designed so as to encourage greater mobility of students and teachers and improve employability.

On this background, the participants in the Forum make the following recommendations:

to national public authorities

Participants recommend that competent public authorities of members of the Bologna Process:

- seek to develop national qualifications frameworks compatible with both the overarching framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA framework) and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)
- make explicit the roles and responsibilities of various actors in the development of national qualifications frameworks;
- take due account of related developments in areas like ECTS and quality assurance provision;
- in particular, take account of the interface between national qualifications frameworks and all the Bologna action lines;
- engage actively with higher education institutions, students, staff and other stakeholders in the development of their national qualifications frameworks;
- make information on the development of their national qualifications frameworks easily available through dedicated web sites;

- provide the Council of Europe and the Bologna Secretariat with information on the web sites and on significant updates so that relevant information may be easily shared with other members of the Process;
- make clear the scope of the national qualifications framework and its relationship with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA as well as with the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning;
- appoint a “qualifications frameworks correspondent” (see recommendation to the Council of Europe, below) and ensure that relevant information on the development of qualifications frameworks in other countries as well as on European developments is disseminated and shared within each country.

to higher education institutions, Rectors’ conferences, the European University Association and EURASHE

Participants recommend that higher education institutions:

- be explicit about how they estimate and use workload for curriculum planning;
- involve students in the definition of workloads;
- engage with national authorities and other partners to develop and implement national qualifications frameworks;
- support the proper implementation of ECTS based on learning outcomes and student workload, in particular as regards the accumulation function;
- develop and deepen the use of learning outcomes across all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment.

To student unions and to the European Student Union

Participants recommend that student unions and the European Student Union:

- engage with other key players to encourage and support the proper use of learning outcomes and workload in implementing ECTS and qualifications frameworks;
- raise awareness among students of the roles and functions of qualifications frameworks and the importance of learning outcomes.

To quality agencies and their stakeholders:

Participants recommend that quality agencies and their stakeholders:

- when developing/reviewing national quality systems, ensure that these encompass arrangements for review of use of qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes and allocation of credits.

to the Council of Europe, under its mandate to support the sharing of experience

Participants recommend that the Council of Europe:

- develop a specific section of its higher education web site dedicated to the sharing of experience in the development of national qualifications frameworks and through this web site make pertinent information available to a wide audience;
- establish a mailing list of “framework correspondents” comprising all Bologna members, upon nomination by the competent public authorities, and seek to disseminate information regularly through this mailing list;
- establish a base of experts that may assist the members of the Bologna Process, upon request, in the development of their national frameworks and that, together, represent a diversity of national and institutional experiences;

to the European Commission, as coordinator of the European Qualifications Framework

Participants recommend that the European Commission, in its support for the development of national frameworks compatible with the EQF,

- ensure sufficient emphasis on compatibility with the overarching framework of the EHEA;
- influence the development of ECVET so that it is compatible with ECTS;
- ensure that the Coordination Group for the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area is represented in the coordination structures for the EQF.

to the ENIC and NARIC Networks

Participants recommend that the ENIC and NARIC Networks and their member centres:

- make full use of the potential of qualifications frameworks in facilitating the recognition of qualifications;
- as far as possible base recognition on an assessment of learning outcomes.