

# Monitoring quality assurance in recognition

The perspective of the AR25 project



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24 April 2024

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meet the world



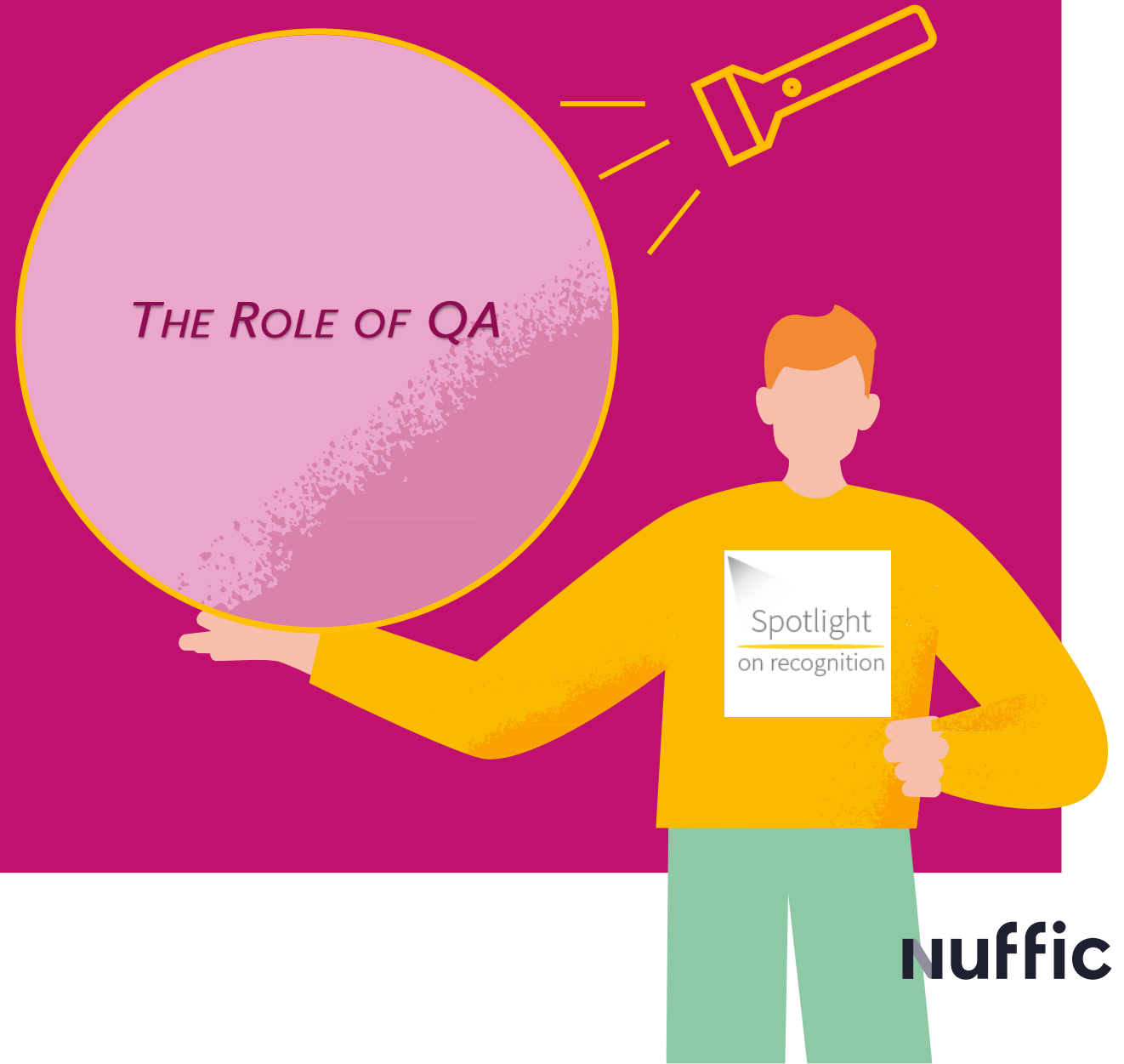
# Welcome!



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# Goal today

- QA of recognition?
- QA & digitization
- AR25
- The Spotlight tool



# 1. Quality Assurance in Recognition

- Relation to digitization
- ESG 1.4
- EAR HEI, institutional procedures & AR25



# Digitization & recognition

Digital solutions offer many opportunities:

- Consistent decisions
- Efficiency (ie information)
- Contribute to automatic recognition

Also:

- Implementation forces us to look closely at our recognition processes

# ESG Standard 1.4

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Standard 1.4:

Requires institutions to: 'consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all aspects of the student 'life cycle'', including recognition and admission.

## ESG Standard 1.4 (2)

Appropriate procedures rely on:

- recognition in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- cooperation with other HEIs, QA agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country

# EAR HEI manual

European Area of Recognition – Higher Education Institutions manual

- Practical translation LRC
- European agreed standard
- Based on EAR manual (adopted in Bucharest Communiqué 2012)
- 5th edition in making



# EAR HEI manual

## Chapter 12. Institutional recognition practices.

### Recommendations:

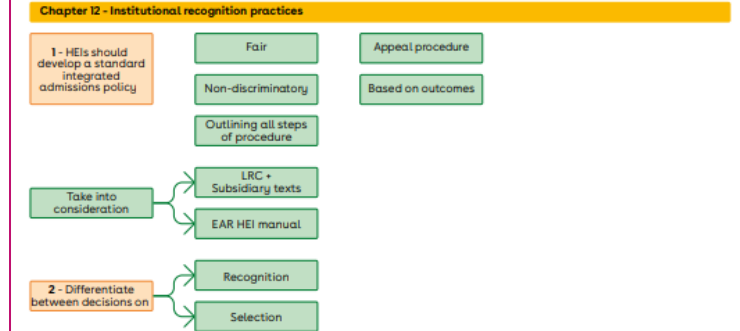
- Procedures
- Information management
- Databases
- Sources
- Quality assurance of the recognition procedure

## 12. Institutional recognition practices

### Summary

This chapter describes good recognition practice in higher education institutions and provides recommendations on how to improve institutional procedures. Quality assurance of the recognition procedure is an important tool to enhance the quality and consistency of recognition decisions. Models of cooperation between ENIC-NARIC centres and admissions offices are discussed.

### Flowchart



# EAR HEI manual: Institutional procedures

## Procedures

To ensure fair recognition practice by your institution it is recommended that procedures and criteria be established for:

- Communication with applicants (as described in chapter II, 'Transparency and Information Provision');
- The assessment of foreign qualifications (based on the evaluation process as described in parts II and V of this manual);
- The appeals procedure (based on chapter 10, 'Alternative recognition and the right to appeal').

# EAR HEI manual: Information management

## Information management

Information management - involving the creation of databases and organisation of information sources - is another prerequisite to enable fair recognition decisions.

## Databases

It is recommended that the following databases (which may be combined into one system) be created and used:

- A database for consistency purposes that includes all previous recognition outcomes of your institution. The ability to consult previous recognition decisions minimises arbitrariness and supports consistency in recognition decisions made by your institution. It also saves a lot of time if previous decisions can easily be applied to new application cases;
- A database for verification purposes which includes examples of incoming qualifications that have been checked and found to be genuine, examples of fraudulent documents, a glossary of common terms in foreign languages (see chapter 5, 'Authenticity' and examples of qualifications from Diploma Mills (see chapter 4, 'Diploma and Accreditation Mills'). Such a database can be used to compare incoming qualifications and help to establish whether these are genuine or possibly fraudulent.

Note that in order to be useful, these databases should not only be created, but should also be kept up to date. One way to guarantee this is to make these databases an essential part of your evaluation process. Remember that the privacy of applicants included in the database should be guaranteed at all times.

## Example 12.1 - An efficient recognition database

An admissions office has developed a tailor-made database with the following features:

- Applicants may enter their application form and upload the required documents into the database via a website;
- From the database, e-mail messages are sent (automatically, or by the admissions officer) to the applicant on the status of the application (such as acknowledgement of receipt, file is complete, additional documents are required, recognition decision);
- A standard evaluation format is available, containing relevant criteria (such as quality, level, workload, profile, learning outcomes) to be filled in by the admissions officer, leading to a recognition decision in terms of substantial differences;
- The database provides a suggestion for the evaluation, based on previous evaluations of comparable qualifications, in order to ensure consistency;
- The admissions officer may also search the database for previous evaluations via a suitable search function (using parameters such as country, level, name of institution, name of qualification, name of programme);
- The database provides a list of applications to be evaluated, sorted by deadline, which can be used to divide the work among admissions officers and to monitor whether the deadlines are met.

Various types of management reports may be extracted from the database (on numbers of evaluations, throughput times, qualifications by country, etc.).

# EAR HEI manual: Sources

## **Sources**

A systematic organization of sources and references is recommended because it will benefit the efficiency of the overall recognition process in your institution. Most sources and references to sources can be found in part 4 'Information instruments'.

# Question

How do you know you comply with the LRC?

# Use Spotlight!

- Self - assessment and quality assurance tool
- Systematically evaluate your procedures against LRC
- Based on the EAR HEI manual

# AR25: Objectives

Support EU Council Recommendation 2018:

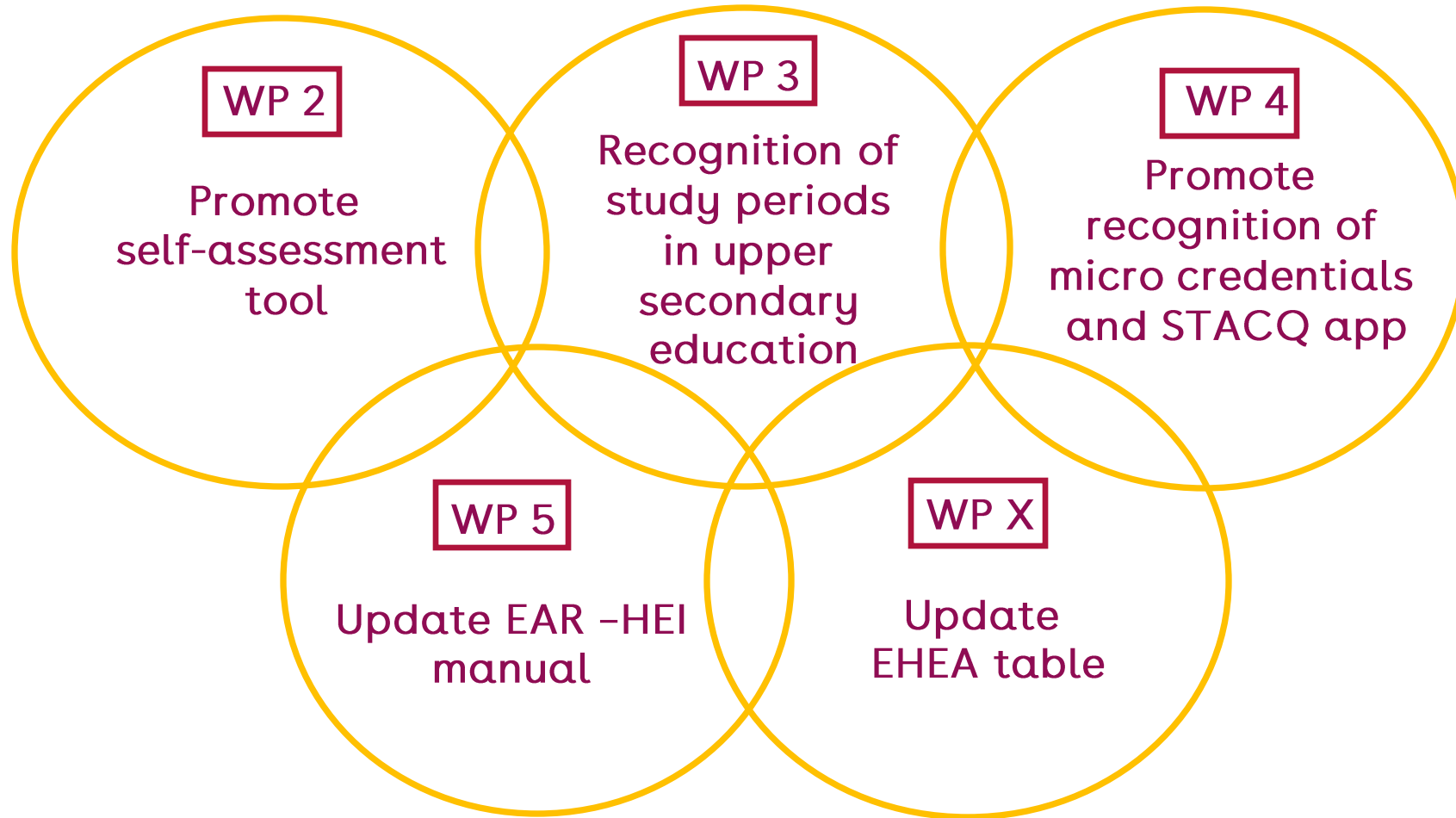
- Automatic recognition of qualifications, via:
  - self assessment tool for HEIs to support implementation LRC;
  - support institutional recognition practices via update EAR HEI manual;
- Automatic recognition of study periods in upper secondary education;
- Automatic recognition of micro-credentials;
- Update EAR-HEI manual.

Erasmus+ Key Action 3 project



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# Workpackages



WP 1

Project management

WP 6

Monitoring and evaluation

WP 7

Dissemination



# Duration

- Start April 2023 – April 2025
- 24 months

# TEAM AR25

## Steering Group

- Allan Bruun Pedersen  
(EN Denmark)
- Gunnar Vaht  
(EN Estonia)
- George Ubachs  
(EADTU)
- Klemen Subic  
(ECA)
- Helene Peterbauer  
(EUA)
- Gabi Witthaus  
(Art of Learning)

## Project team

### ENIC – NARIC:

- Austria
- Croatia
- France
- Ireland
- Italy
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Sweden
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom

## Coordinator

- Nuffic

## 2. The Spotlight tool



# The "Spotlight on recognition" self-assessment tool

Helene Peterbauer, Policy Analyst, EUA



## “Spotlight on recognition” in a nutshell

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- **Aim:** to enhance capacities in terms of recognition procedures in compliance with the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#), where most recognition decisions in the EHEA are taken → HEIs (instead of ENIC-NARICs or governments)
- **Target group:** staff at higher education institutions who are responsible for recognition processes and decisions (e.g., admissions officers)
- Erasmus+
- July 2020-June 2022
- Project partners: Crue, HRK, Nuffic

# Improved recognition

## **A self-assessment tool**

Developed in the context of the “Spotlight on recognition” project

April 2022



Spotlight  
on recognition



eua EUROPEAN  
UNIVERSITY  
ASSOCIATION

crue  
Universidades  
Españolas

HRK Nuffic

Nuffic

## Scope of self-assessment tool

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- Designed in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
- Recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education
- Recognition of periods of study
- Recognition of higher education qualifications
  - Tool applicable to recognition of qualifications granting access to all levels
- Recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation
- Yet can be applied flexibly

## Rationale

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- Institutional responsibility
- Autonomy
- Diversity
- Example: substantial differences



## Approach

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- Self-assessment table in line with Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle
- Plan: Section 1 “Policies and guidelines”
- Do:
  - Section 2 “Implementation of processes”
    - Organisational aspects
    - Information provision
    - Special procedures and decisions
    - Tools and resources
  - Section 3 “Capacity-building”
- Check: Section 4 “Monitoring and improving”
- Act: Follow-up action

| Key question  | Sub-questions   | Relevant section in EAR-HEI manual  | Further reading  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>1. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES</b>   |   |   |  |
| 1.1. What kind of national and/or institutional regulations and guidelines for recognition procedures does your institution follow? | If your staff are following (institutional, regional, national or international) guidelines, statutes or regulations to ensure a consistent approach: to which (other) national or international reference documents do these guidelines refer directly?                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part I, Chapter 1: Introduction to recognition, Section “The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)”</li> </ul> | The <a href="#">LRC</a> (1997) is a legal tool that governs recognition of qualifications and study periods abroad in the European region. |
| 1.2. At your institution, do you have a commonly applied definition of what a “substantial difference” is?                          | If your institution has a commonly established definition of a “substantial difference”, to what extent is this definition based on the purpose for which recognition is sought and the potential of the candidate to succeed in the learning path for which they are applying? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part II, Chapter 6: Purpose of recognition</li> </ul>  | The <a href="#">Global Recognition Convention</a> (2019), Section I, Article I contains a definition of “substantial differences”.         |

## Approach

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- How to proceed:
- Set up self-assessment team
- Agree on approach and timeline, gather data
- Analyse data
- Follow-up action

# Thank you for your attention!

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|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
|  <p><b>Improved recognition</b><br/><b>A self-assessment tool</b></p> <p>Developed in the context of the "Spotlight on recognition" project</p> <p>Abril 2022</p> <p>Spotlight on recognition  Subsidized by the European Programme of the Erasmus+ plan</p> <p>   </p> |  <p><b>Verbesserte Anerkennung</b><br/><b>Ein Selbstbewertungsinstrument</b></p> <p>Entwickelt im Rahmen des Projektes „Spotlight on recognition“</p> <p>Abril 2022</p> <p>Spotlight on recognition  Subsidized by the European Programme of the Erasmus+ plan</p> <p>   </p> |  <p><b>Herramienta de autoevaluación para mejorar el reconocimiento</b></p> <p>Desarrollada en el contexto del proyecto <i>Spotlight on recognition</i></p> <p>Abril de 2022</p> <p>Spotlight on recognition  Subsidized by the European Programme of the Erasmus+ plan</p> <p>   </p> |  <p><b>Amélioration de la reconnaissance</b><br/><b>Un outil d'autoévaluation</b></p> <p>Développé dans le cadre du projet « Spotlight on recognition »</p> <p>Abril 2022</p> <p>Spotlight on recognition  Subsidized by the European Programme of the Erasmus+ plan</p> <p>   </p> |
|--|---|--|---|

#SPOT\_EU

## The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions



Practical guidelines for credential  
evaluators and admissions officers to  
provide fair and flexible recognition of  
foreign degrees and studies abroad

Third edition, February 2020

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Manual available on

[Nuffic website](#)

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# AR25: Spotlight tool

Evaluate your procedures against the LRC

- Opportunity for higher education institutions to complete the tool together
- ENIC-NARIC coordinates peer counselling
- Opportunity to review together:
  - Ask questions
  - Provide feedback
- Gain inspiration
- Different levels of participation (!)

# Peer counselling

## Three meetings:

### 1. Introductory meeting (official start);

- Recap the use of the tool / allow for questions and clarification;
- Recap the process and timeline.

### 2. Mid-term “work in progress” meeting (ie after 6 weeks)

- Allow peer counselling on identified issues (ie by survey);
- Reminder of the process and next steps.

### 3. Final meeting: review main outcomes (ie after 8 weeks)

- HEIs finished the review and prepared a final draft report;
- HEIs present their main outcomes and solutions, for feedback (depends on nr of participants);
- Before the meeting, collect the topics for discussion / make an equal division.

Optional: consider discussing how you as ENIC-NARIC centre can even better support HEIs



# Questions?



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# Thank you!



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