



EUROPEAN
Higher Education Area



MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI NAȚIONALE

Ministry of Education and Science



Republic of North Macedonia



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Sustainable
Development
Goals

UNESCO's Work on International Mobility and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education 2018–2019

The Brussels Declaration resulting from the Global Education Meeting convened by UNESCO in Brussels 3–5 December 2018 highlighted the importance of regional and national mechanisms for the recognition of higher education, and UNESCO is currently increasing its efforts to put in place normative instruments and other means for the improved recognition of higher education qualifications globally.

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention).

UNESCO and the Council of Europe, as co-secretariats to the LRC Committee, are supporting LRC Parties to implement the Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation, adopted during an extraordinary session of the LRC Committee in November 2017. The Recommendation establishes common procedures for the States Parties to the LRC that take into account the recognition of qualifications where refugees' qualifications cannot be adequately documented. UNESCO in collaboration with the Council of Europe is currently also preparing the ordinary meeting of the LRC Committee to be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 28 June 2019, where the revised Diploma Supplement will be tabled for adoption.

Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

After having received around 1200 comments from more than 70 Member States on the Preliminary Draft prepared by a Drafting Committee between 2016 and 2017, UNESCO presented a revised draft text at the First Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts taking place at UNESCO HQ in Paris on 5–7 December 2018. Around 270 technical and legal experts appointed by UNESCO's Member States and Associate Members, as well as observers from Non-Member States and other stakeholders reviewed the Draft, and will meet again from 18–22 March 2019 to finalize the review and to approve the Final Draft that will be submitted to UNESCO's General Conference for adoption in November 2019

Other Regional Recognition Conventions

- The *Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education*, adopted in 2011, came into force on 1 February 2018, after five Member States had ratified the Convention: China and Australia in 2014, New Zealand in 2016, and Japan and the Republic of Korea in December 2017. In July 2018, the Holy See became the sixth State Party to the Convention. The first meeting of the Tokyo Convention Committee took place in the Republic of Korea from 16 to 19 October 2018.
- The *Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States* was adopted in 2014 in Addis Ababa. The Addis Convention received its first ratifications in 2018, and as of March 2019 the following 7 Member States have ratified the convention: Togo, Gambia, Congo, Djibouti, Mauritius, Senegal and Mauretania. Member States in all parts of the region have initiated the ratification process or are preparing the deposit of their ratification instrument with UNESCO. UNESCO is currently also contributing with capacity building in quality assurance of higher education in the framework of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project.
- Following the October 2015 ministerial meeting in Brasilia, a working group finalized in 2017 a draft for a revised *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which was examined at two intergovernmental consultation meetings in Argentina in 2018, in Buenos Aires on 5-6 April and in Córdoba on 14-15 June, respectively. The revised convention will be adopted at an International Conference of States in Buenos Aires on 11–13 July 2019.
- In November 2017, the 39th Session of the General Conference approved the launch of a revision process of the 1978 *Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States*, and a working group of experts endorsed a draft at a meeting in Rabat in March 2018. The revised convention is foreseen to be adopted at an International Conference of States in 2019.

Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications

Following the Global Education Meeting in Brussels in December 2018, UNESCO has also intensified its work towards the improvement of recognition of refugees' qualifications. All the regional recognition conventions, including the newly revised drafts of the Latin American and Caribbean Convention and the Arab States Convention, already include provisions on the recognition of refugees and forcibly displaced persons and the future Global Convention will also cover this. Therefore, a side-event during the Global Education Meeting specifically addressed the obstacles refugees and forcibly displaced persons are facing with having their qualifications adopted, and the Brussels Declaration calls for increased efforts to facilitate the recognition of qualifications of migrants, displaced persons, returnees, asylumseekers, refugees and stateless persons. Consequently, UNESCO is now exploring an up-scaling of the Qualification Passport for Refugees on a global level. The Qualifications Passport, developed under the auspices of the Council of Europe, has already proved to be an efficient and time-saving option for refugees that lacks documentary evidence for their qualifications, and Member States have expressed interest in expanding the scheme into other regions.