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UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, September 17, 2018

BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP

Wien, September 27 - 28, 2018

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA 2018 - 20

INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe is a consultative member of the BFUG and Board. It has been an active contributor to the Bologna Process since the outset, including as Chair or Co-Chair of Working Groups on Structural Reforms (2012 – 15) and Qualifications Frameworks (2007 – 09 and 2009 – 12) and a member of several other working or advisory groups. With UNESCO, the Council of Europe is the co-depository of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the only legally binding text of the EHEA, which had been ratified by all EHEA member States but one as well as by several non-EHEA countries.

FRAMEWORK

The Council of Europe's [Education program](#) is overseen by the [Steering Committee on Educational Policy and Practice](#) (CDPPE), made up of the representatives of all 50 States Party to the European Cultural Convention, including all 48 EHEA members. The current Chair of the CDPPE is Etienne Gilliard (Belgium), the Vice Chair Maria Fassari (Greece). The CDPPE meets twice a year, normally in March and October. Its next meeting will be held in Strasbourg on October 25 – 26, 2018. A sub-group on higher education advises the CDPPE and its Bureau.

The Education Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation, encompassing Education, Culture and Youth. Matjaž Gruden took over as Director on June 15, 2018.

The Head of the Education Department is Sjur Bergan. The Education Policy Division is headed by Michael Remmert, who on September 1, 2018 took over from Villano Qiriazzi, who was appointed Coordinator of DG Democracy. The Division for [Cooperation and Capacity Building](#) is headed by Sarah Keating and the [European Centre for Modern Languages](#), located in Graz, by Sarah Breslin. Stefania Kruger (Education Policy Division) is Secretary to the CDPPE.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Education program¹ aims to strengthen the contribution of Education to the Council of Europe's overarching goals of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In the 2018 – 19 program, adopted by the Committee of Ministers at the end of November 2017 and adjusted in April 2018, all education projects are incorporated into the overall program on Education for Democracy. [Higher education](#) is a policy area within the program as well as a part of several transversal projects, in particular:

- [Competences for Democratic Culture](#)
- [Ethics, Transparency, and Integrity in Education \(ETINED\)](#)
- [Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#)

¹ A power point presentation will be found at <https://rm.coe.int/rma/drl/objectId/090000168077bad8>.

The democratic mission of higher education

Higher education plays a key role in developing and maintaining the democratic culture without which democratic institutions, laws, and election will not function in practice. Since the late 1990s, the Council of Europe has cooperated with the [International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy](#) on furthering the democratic mission of higher education. The [European Wergeland Centre](#) and other partners have now also joined this cooperation, which is focused around Global Fora every two – three years as well as a series of publications.

The next Global Forum will be held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg on June 20 – 21, 2019 and will focus on “Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy, and the Future of Democracy”. In this context, it is worth recalling that the Council of Europe also played a key role in developing the [BFUG discussion document on fundamental values](#) submitted to the BFUG meeting in December 2016.

An invitational conference on the local mission of higher education will be held in Dublin on October 4 – 5, 2018. It will include a public event open to the broader Irish higher education community.

A book on [Higher Education for Diversity, Social Inclusion and Community. A Democratic Imperative](#) has just been published in the [Council of Europe Higher Education Series](#).

Recognition of qualifications

With UNESCO, the Council of Europe is co-depository of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#). It serves as co-secretariat to the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee as well as to the [ENIC Network](#), which cooperates closely with the NARIC Network of the European Commission. Jean-Philippe Restoueix is co-secretary top both bodies.

The Council of Europe has volunteered to participate in the peer group on recognition in the 2018 – 20 work program.

Qualifications frameworks

The Council of Europe coordinates the Network of national correspondents for qualifications frameworks, established to exchange experience in the development and self-certification of national qualifications frameworks within and against the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) as well as to ensure coherence between the QF-EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF).

The 2018 meeting was held in Strasbourg on September 4. Whereas attendance at recent annual meetings has dropped and rarely exceeded 25 countries, representatives of 37 countries as well

as of the European Commission, the European Training Foundation, EURASHE, ESU, the IAU, and the Bologna Secretariat attended the 2018, which focused on the full integration of ECTS-based short cycle qualifications, mainly found in professional higher education, into the QF-EHEA in follow up to the Paris Communiqué adopted by Ministers in May 2018 as well as how competences for democratic culture can best be integrated into national qualifications frameworks.

In the evaluation of the meeting, delegations underlined the need for the network to continue operation; some even expressed a desire for more frequent meetings. The Council of Europe has therefore submitted a proposal to include the Network, with one annual meeting, in the 2018 – 20 EHEA work program.

Capacity building and advice to new members

The Council of Europe has traditionally played an important role in advising and assisting newer and prospective members of the EHEA. In addition to individual requests for advice, which tend to focus on structural reforms, several [capacity building](#) projects may be of interest to higher education, possibly in particular the [regional joint programs with the EU](#).

Education provision for refugees

The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee adopted a [Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons, and persons in a refugee-like situation](#) at an extraordinary meeting in Strasbourg on November 14, 2017. The Recommendation and its Explanatory memorandum are accessible in the four languages of the Convention: English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

The “[European Qualifications Passport for Refugees](#)” (EQPR) aims to facilitate the recognition of qualifications held by refugees even when these cannot be adequately documented. The project has relied on the strong participation of the ENICs of Greece, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom. The methodology used for issuing the EQPR has successfully been tested thanks to on site and online evaluation sessions.

Following the first phase, conducted in 2017, a three year follow-up project was launched at a conference in Athens on 28 March 2018. This project will be implemented in 2018 – 20 with the support of existing and additional partners, to further develop the methodology for assessing and describing refugees' qualifications in a common format and to gain broad acceptance for the EQPR so that neither refugees nor public authorities need to repeat the assessment process if and when refugees move to new countries. The new partners include the Italian Ministry of Education, the ENICs of Armenia, Canada, France, Germany and the Netherlands as well as a stronger role for the UNHCR. Italy, Norway, and Greece have already made contributions to the second phase of this project.

A [documentary](#) describes the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees and its benefit on refugees' lives.

Publications

The [Council of Europe Higher Education Series](#) comprises books on topical higher education issues, in particular the democratic mission of higher education and recognition and qualifications. 22 volumes have been published since late 2004; as mentioned above the latest is on [*Higher Education for Diversity, Social Inclusion and Community. A Democratic Imperative*](#)

The three publications on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture may also be of interest to higher education policy makers and practitioners. Volume 1 covers [context, concepts, and the model](#), Volume 2 [descriptors](#), and Volume 3 [Guidance for implementation](#).

The [publications of the ETINED Platform](#) (Ethics, Transparency and integrity) may likewise be of interest. So far, these cover ethical principles, ethical behavior of all actors in education, codes of conduct for teachers in Europe; a background study, and a study on policies for academic integrity in South East Europe in addition to a publication based on the launching conference of the ETINED Platform.