

CONVENTION ON THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

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Lisbon, 11 April 1997

The Parties to this Convention,

Conscious of the fact that the right to education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society;

Considering that higher education should play a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations;

Considering that the great diversity of education systems in the European region reflects its cultural, social, political, philosophical, religious and economic diversity, an exceptional asset which should be fully respected;

Desiring to enable all people of the region to benefit fully from this rich asset of diversity by facilitating access by the inhabitants of each State and by the students of each Party's educational institutions to the educational resources of the other Parties, more specifically by facilitating their efforts to continue their education or to complete a period of studies in higher education institutions in those other Parties;

Considering that the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained in another country of the European region represents an important measure for promoting academic mobility between the Parties;

Attaching great importance to the principle of institutional autonomy, and conscious of the need to uphold and protect this principle;

Convinced that a fair recognition of qualifications is a key element of the right to education and a responsibility of society;

Having regard to the Council of Europe and UNESCO Conventions covering academic recognition in Europe:

European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities

(1953, ETS No. 15), and its Protocol (1964, ETS No. 49);

European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study (1956, ETS No. 21);

European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications (1959, ETS No. 32);

Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region (1979);

European Convention on the General Equivalence of Periods of University Study (1990, ETS No. 138);

Having regard also to the International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean (1976), adopted within the framework of UNESCO and partially covering academic recognition in Europe;

Mindful that this Convention should also be considered in the context of the UNESCO conventions and the International Recommendation covering other Regions of the world, and of the need for an improved exchange of information between these Regions;

Conscious of the wide ranging changes in higher education in the European region since these Conventions were adopted, resulting in considerably increased diversification within and between national higher education systems, and of the need to adapt the legal instruments and practice to reflect these developments;

Conscious of the need to find common solutions to practical recognition problems in the European region;

Conscious of the need to improve current recognition practice and to make it more transparent and better adapted to the current situation of higher education in the European region;

Confident of the positive significance of a Convention elaborated and adopted under the joint auspices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO providing a framework for the further