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Conclusions

Working group on synergies between qualifications frameworks and recognition for further learning purposes

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All participants welcomed the conclusions of the Bucharest Communique in the Bologna Process that urges fair and rapid recognition of qualifications and emphasises that recognition policies need to be interlinked with the implementation of transparency tools such as the learning outcomes approach, qualifications frameworks and credit systems and quality assurance. The work of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Bureau on a subsidiary text on the use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition of qualifications was also broadly supported. Nevertheless, the working group agreed that building on the achievements of Lisbon Recognition Convention and ENIC/NARIC in higher education, recognition of qualifications should also be facilitated in a lifelong learning perspective – beyond higher education, and in particular in VET. In this context, comprehensive national qualifications frameworks linked to the EQF may prove to be a useful reference for the comparison and recognition of qualifications in Europe. The progress made in indicating EQF levels in certificates, diplomas and Europass documents was welcomed.

The working group agreed that a note should be prepared for the EQF Advisory Group and the Bologna Follow-up Group on the strong links between the recognition of qualifications and qualifications frameworks, which should address the issues below:

- Following the Bucharest Communiiqué, new structures and a work programme have been defined for the Bologna Process for 2013-2015, with special emphasis on qualifications frameworks and recognition. It is necessary to closely coordinate work carried out in the context of the Bologna Process and the EQF.

- The future Lisbon Recognition Convention subsidiary text on qualifications frameworks will provide useful guidance on how qualifications frameworks...
could be used in the recognition of qualifications. In order to make sure that the text should become a widely accepted guidance document, it is useful to inform and discuss the draft text with the EQF National Coordination Points and the national correspondents of the QF EHEA, as well as the EQF AG. Therefore, the draft will be presented in the 3rd joint meeting of the NCPs and correspondents on 6-7 November 2012 in Mechelen, and in the December meeting of the EQF AG.

- Based on the experiences of the ENICs and NARICs in facilitating the recognition of qualifications, in and access to higher education, similar practises should be developed for other qualifications, in particular in vocational education and training. To support this process, information on existing practises and institutional arrangements as regards recognition of non-academic qualifications should be gathered, providing the basis for a policy proposal to be presented to the EQF AG. The EQF NCPs should be involved in this process, fully utilising their overview of qualifications of all types and at all levels of education and training.

- Indicating EQF levels in certificates, diplomas and Europass documents make the practise of the recognition of qualifications easier. The common structures of the Certificate Supplement and the Diploma Supplement make comparison easier. Nevertheless, special attention should be paid to the quality of information in certificates, diplomas and supplements, such as the description of learning outcomes and quality assurance underpinning the qualification.

- In order to promote the use of qualifications frameworks and the learning outcomes approach in recognition, there is a need for better understanding the learning outcomes concepts used in different sub-systems and countries and developing a common understanding of learning outcomes approach in Europe. Therefore, a stronger coordination of the work on the learning outcomes approach – between countries, sub-systems and European tools, was asked for and welcomed.