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FINAL REPORT BY THE EXPERT

Advice Case: Bulgarian-Romanian Institutional Cooperation Constraint – BRICC

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I. Description of the Obstacle

The cooperation in higher education at the Bulgarian-Romanian border between (1) University of Ruse, (2) University of Economic Studies Bucharest and (3) German Rectors' Conference (GRC) has been started in 2000 via trilateral agreement, and later further institutionalized through Agreement for cooperation and mutual assistance on the functioning of Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre (BRIE) between the governments of the two neighbouring states, which has entered into force in 2005/6. Since 2002 in line with the adoption of standards of Bologna process in Bulgaria and Romania BRIE has been providing joint 2-year master programmes for international students, who have been admitted on the grounds of jointly agreed prerequisites. One of the programmes is European Studies, the other one Business Informatics. According to the then valid laws on higher education in the two neighbouring countries, one of the prerequisites for admission to the master programmes regards prior learning. Eligible applicants for master level degrees are considered graduates from four-year 1st cycle (bachelor) programmes and accumulation of 240 ECTS. At that time the law on higher education in Bulgaria allows the provision of a three-year 1st cycle (bachelor) programmes and accumulation of 180 ECTS, but only for the so called professional degrees, provided by specialized colleges. The problem of institutional cooperation has emerged firstly in Romania in the context of reforms in higher education. In 2005 a three-year 1st cycle with 180 ECTS credits and a two-year 2nd cycle with 120 ECTS credits had been introduced to adapt to the typical for EU member states approach. At the same time in Bulgaria the four year 1st cycle with 240 ECTS credits and the one-year 2nd cycle with 60 ECTS credits had been preserved. This legal mismatch has affected negatively the joint enrolment for the joint master level degree studies. Disputes on the recognition of prior learning have led to rejection of very good candidates. A further constraint has appeared within the decentralization of the recognition of prior learning in Bulgaria. In 2011 it was transferred to the universities. Each university had introduced regulations, which had been changed with the time. These regulations made the admission of international students at BRIE very difficult, and almost impossible. Article 13 of University of Ruse's Rules and procedures on recognition stipulates, that recognition of higher education is carried out in accordance with the acquired educational and qualification degree certified by the documents submitted by the applicant. But, in practice if the degree of the applicant is a three-year bachelor, it is not recognized as a bachelor because of insufficient number of credits, even if in the diploma the degree is defined as bachelor. A recent case regards the refusal of the University of Ruse Academic Council to recognize the



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degree in law as bachelor of two Romanians, because in Bulgaria law studies are provided at master level only. Another example is a three-year bachelor, who had graduated from University of Regensburg, Germany with 243 credits. Her very good application had to be rejected because of deficit of 17 credits. The whole procedure on recognition of University of Ruse is a constraining factor because it is time consuming and overbureaucratic even if candidates from Romania and other EU member states are concerned. The procedure does not take into account BRIE as a cross-border institutional cooperation of University of Ruse, Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest and German Rectors' Conference and imposes unilaterally rules, which constrain the joint academic activities, especially the recruitment of good applicants and their admission.

II. Indication of the Legal /Administrative Dispositions causing the Obstacle

Programmes of higher education in the European Higher Education Area are generally offered at three levels – undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies. Before the Bologna process had started a huge variety of national higher education degrees existed across Europe. With increasing mobility of students more and more problems for recognition of acquired professional qualifications did arise. In June 1999, 29 European countries agreed with the Bologna Declaration on the main goals of the Bologna process. One of the central aims was to establish a common structure of easily readable and comparable degrees in European higher education. For this purpose, all countries conveyed their national systems to a two cycle structure consisting of a first (undergraduate) and a second (graduate) cycle. The exact duration of the two cycles however remained variable, the only thing being observed that the two cycles in their entirety should form a 5-year education (300 ECTS¹ credits).

The first cycle leads to a qualification (in many countries labelled "Bachelor") which is obtained after successful completion of a study programme with 180 (3-year bachelor) or 240 (4-year bachelor) ECTS credits. The second cycle leads to a qualification (in many countries labelled "Master") which is obtained after successful completion of a study programme with 60 (1-year master) or 120 (2-year) ECTS credits. These ranges for undergraduate and graduate programmes have been defined with the development of the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Like the degree structure it should cater for comparable and transferable qualifications and facilitate mobility and recognition irrespective where and how learning

¹ European Credit Transfer System



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outcomes have been achieved. European and national qualifications frameworks are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulations System (ECTS) in terms of quality (learning outcomes) and quantity (workload).

According to the Bulgarian Higher Education Act (Art. 42) *“[h]igher education comprises the following levels:*

1. Bachelor’s educational and qualification degree for the acquisition of which the following shall be required in accordance with the curriculum;

a) at least 180 credits with a minimum length of studies of three years – “professional bachelor in...”;

b) at least 240 credits with a minimum length of studies of four years – “bachelor”;

2. Master’s educational and qualification degree for the acquisition of which the following shall be required:

a) at least 300 credits in accordance with the curriculum with a minimum length of studies of five years;

b) at least 120 credits after the acquisition of a bachelor’s educational and qualification degree under item 1, letter (a);

c) at least 60 credits after the acquisition of a bachelor’s educational and qualification degree under item 1, letter (b);”.

So the normal length of a Bachelor programme in Bulgaria is four years in accordance with the curriculum and requires acquisition of at least 240 ECTS. Bachelor programmes in Bulgaria are offered by universities and specialized higher schools in all fields of study. The instruction for the bachelor's degree in accordance with the curriculum provided comprehensive training or specialised professional training in professional areas and specialties.

Article 31 of the Romanian Law of National Education stipulates that *“[t]he duration of the high school education – daytime education – is 3 years, for the theoretical programme, and 3 or 4 years for the vocational programme and 4 years for the technological programme, in accordance with the frame programmes approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.”.*



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So the normal length of a Bachelor programme in Romania is three years in accordance with the curriculum and requires acquisition of at least 180 ECTS. Bachelor programmes in Romania are offered by universities, study academies, institutes, higher studies schools.

From the foregoing it may be indicated that in view of the bachelor-master model, Bulgaria has accepted the 4+1 years model while Romania has accepted the 3+2 years model.

As to the institute of recognition of foreign diplomas the legal framework is a natural reflection of the public relations associated with the recognition of higher education qualifications. International law is a major source of law in the field of recognition of higher education qualifications. The domestic legal system is a source of procedural rules and special requirements, admissible in accordance with the international commitments of the state. Recognition of higher education qualifications is the first step towards studying or working abroad.

Two types of recognition can be distinguished – academic recognition and recognition of professional qualifications in order to access the labour market.

Academic recognition is for the purpose of accessing further education in the higher education system, using a scientific title or facilitating access to the labour market. Each country defines its national requirements and procedures for academic recognition, a non-harmonized field in the European Union.

Recognition of professional qualifications is recognition of the right to pursue a particular profession. At European level the recognition of professional qualifications is strictly regulated in the regulated professions (Directive 2005/36/EC). For non-regulated professions recognition is based on the principle of reciprocity.

If students wish to continue their education in Bulgaria, to apply for PhD studies or to complete a further education or training, the competent authority for the recognition of their foreign qualification is the Academic council of the accredited Bulgarian higher education institution they have chosen to study in (Art. 7, Para. 1 of the Bulgarian Ordinance on the state requirements for recognition of higher education and completed periods of study in foreign higher education institutions). So it is up to the university where the master study will be delivered to decide whether the education from the foreign university where the bachelor diploma has been issued will be recognised or not.



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In any case, if Bulgarian law requires a 4-year bachelor's degree (240 ECTS credits) as a prerequisite to start a master's degree and students submit a 3-year bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) from Romania, no matter that it is a valid bachelor's degree, they cannot be admitted to the master's degree in Bulgaria.

To make it clearer it should be indicated that the legal definition of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 1997) states that recognition is a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.

The Convention has been jointly drafted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It is designed to streamline the legal framework at European level and to replace in the long run six conventions adopted in this matter by the Council of Europe or UNESCO.

The Convention aims to facilitate the recognition of qualifications granted in one party in another party. It provides that requests should be assessed in a fair manner and within a reasonable time. The recognition can only be refused if the qualification is substantially different from that of the host country - and the onus is on its educational institution to prove that it is.

One of the most significant changes in the recognition of higher education qualifications is that the assessment of acquired qualifications abroad on the basis of a comparison of the curriculum and a list of subjects studied ("seeking equivalence") gives way to a wider comparing qualifications ("recognition") - the "what can I do" principle.

III. Description of a Possible Solution

There are several possible solutions to overcome the obstacles to cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania in the present advice case.

On the first place, a possible solution could be a substantial change in the model of the educational system in one of the two neighbouring countries. This means that either Romania has to undergo the 4+1 training model or Bulgaria – the 3+2 training model for the bachelor's degree. I.e. the bachelor's education model in the two countries should be harmonized at a legislative level. This is the most difficult and least possible hypothesis because it requires a change in the national education policy of either country. Changing the higher education system in a country is a very



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difficult step, as it requires the restructuring of an entire public social system. At the moment, neither country indicates a willingness to take such a step, all the more Romania has chosen the 3+2 model relatively soon and would hardly be willing to change it again. On the contrary, Bulgaria has historically relied on the 4+1 model and public attitudes have not changed at the moment. However, if one of the two countries accepts a change in its national policy, and in particular in the higher education model, this would be a lasting solution to the present case.

A second possible solution to the advice case is the recognition of the bachelor's degree completed in Romania as a part of the bachelor education in Bulgaria. Since, unlike the three-year study in Romania, the education in Bulgaria for the bachelor's degree is 4 years, a person with a bachelor's degree from Romania can be recognized these three years being part of the 4-year education in Bulgaria. This is the so-called recognition of periods of study from a foreign country. However, this means that upon coming to Bulgaria, students will be recognized for three years of education and they will be enrolled in a Bulgarian university for the last fourth year of the bachelor's degree. Thus, after another year, they will already have 4 years of education in Bulgaria and will be eligible for master's degree. This model is the most feasible and does not require any legal changes. However, it has the most downsides. In the first place, students will not really receive recognition of their undergraduate education from Romania but will only receive recognition of a part of their education, i.e. students are not recognized for tertiary education, although they have completed one. Secondly, this additional one year at a Bulgarian university will also mean additional financial expenses for the training, i.e. students' expenses. Next, the education is extended by one year as students can actually enrol in a master's degree after 4 years, whereas if their bachelor's degree in Romania was unconditionally recognized, they could enrol in the master's degree after the third year of their training. Last but not least, those first three years, which are supposed to be recognized, are not always unconditionally recognized due to differences in curricula in Bulgaria and Romania.

The only advantage of this model is that students will also receive a Bulgarian bachelor's degree after 4 years of study. Thus, students will have two bachelor's degrees - one for three years of study from Romania and one for four years of study from Bulgaria.

The third possible solution to the advice case is to find an opportunity within the master's degree training to compensate for this difference of one year in the bachelor's studies between Romania and Bulgaria. By this solution, there will be a real recognition of the Romanian bachelor's degree and students will be able to begin immediately their master's degree. What is special about this



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situation however is that in this case the master's degree will be longer than if the students had completed a 4-year bachelor's education. The longer master's degree will compensate the shorter bachelor's degree in Romania, forming together the 5-year (300 ECTS credits) tertiary education. This is the most student-friendly option because, although the master's degree program is longer, students will not have to repeat their undergraduate studies. In addition, the master's program can be tailored so that students acquire exactly the knowledge and competencies they have not acquired in the 3-year bachelor's program, instead of studying all the disciplines of a 4-year curriculum. This approach will not only serve Romanian students and Romanian-Bulgarian trans-boundary cooperation. This will be an effective solution for students from all over Europe and around the world who have completed a 3-year bachelor course and would like to continue their master's degree in Bulgaria or other country with similar to the Bulgarian educational model.

In order to implement this latter solution a small legislative change is also likely to be required, as Bulgarian law currently allows for students who have graduated from a 3-year bachelor education, to pursue a master's degree only in the same professional field. (Art. 42, Para. 1 of the Bulgarian Higher Education Act). For example, if students have completed a 3-year bachelor's degree in the Social Sciences field, they may continue their master's degree only in the same professional field – Social Sciences. This restriction does not apply to a 4-year bachelor who can study for a master's degree in any other professional field. The legislative change should be in the direction so that the 3-year bachelor can continue their education in any other professional field, but the master's degree to be with a longer duration (e.g. a minimum of 2 years and 120 ECTS credits).

In addition, this third possible solution could be experimentally tested even in the current academic year at the University of Ruse. Experimental admission could be made for the current year recognizing and compensating the prior undergraduate education from Romania within the master's programme in Bulgaria.

IV. Pre-assessment of whether the Case could be solved with the European Cross-Border Mechanism

It is possible to find a solution to this case through the tools of the European Cross-Border Mechanism, especially with regard to the third proposed solution to the advice case. As already stated, a possible solution could be to compensate the missing one year from the undergraduate degree of the 3-year bachelor's degree program during the master's degree. Within the



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framework of the European Cross-Border Mechanism a program document (or a draft legislative act) may be drawn up to regulate the opportunities for such longer (2-year) compensatory master's trainings.

As already mentioned, the problem is cross-border, but not only between Bulgaria and Romania. So the European Cross-Border Mechanism could propose to the European Commission the adoption at European Union level of a single mechanism for action in such situations since it is a common European problem – a part of the Member States has the 3-year bachelor's degree, others – the 4-year. The European Cross-Border Mechanism could offer a single and comprehensive solution at European Union level, which would serve all countries.

Within the European Cross-Border Mechanism a working group could be set up to discuss options for overcoming the problem and, in particular, for compensating a 3-year bachelor's degree program within a 2-year master's program. The European Cross-Border Mechanism could also spark discussion within the competent directorates general of the European Commission, so that institutional support from the European Commission could be addressed.

The Association of European Border Regions may propose an experimental implementation of the third abovementioned solution to the advice case this current academic year and monitor the process of its implementation in the University of Ruse together with authorized persons from the Bulgarian and Romanian Ministries of Education.

V. Other Relevant Aspects to this Case

One of the sustainable projects of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre –BRIE. The rationale behind the project parallels the rationale of the Stability Pact. The crises within the dismantling of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the ethnically motivated spirit of confrontation, the nationalistic antagonism, the perception of the neighbour as an enemy, the bloodsheds and massacres on the eve of the 21 century have been disastrous for the Balkan region.

Therefore, this region needed a new generation of educated decision makers, who would be able to support the peace process, having learned the lessons of reconciliation after the fifties of the last century in Western Europe and having developed competencies to resolve problems in search of the common interest. Secondly, it needed young professionals, who commit themselves to



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overcoming the huge economic and social disparities of the region with the other parts of Europe. And thirdly, the region demanded people, who had experienced in their university lives togetherness and partnership with 'the other' from the Balkans. Such people were more likely to imagine the Balkan identity from a positive perspective and develop a loyalty to the democratization and the prosperity of region and its integration into the European Union. The change of the region could only be driven by a new generation, a generation having acquired the culture of co-operation.

On the grounds of such assumptions, the project was situated in Ruse and Giurgiu. The host cities are perfectly located to breathe the spirit of togetherness in Europe. Mirroring each other on the Bulgarian and the Romanian banks of the Danube and connected by a bridge, they have their direct destination to 10 European countries along the river. The place is also a vivacious check point of east-west waterways and north-south continental routes. Here VII and IX pan-European transport corridors meet to connect Western Europe with the Black Sea region, and Northern Europe with the Aegean Sea and Turkey. It is by this peculiar location, that the identity and the mission of BRIE have been shaped, i.e. to add value to the political, societal and economic stability in Europe.

The main task of the project was to set up BRIE as the first cross-border structure in South Eastern Europe for cooperation in higher education at the bridge on the Danube in the towns of Ruse (Bulgaria) and Giurgiu (Romania) with a political (Stability Pact) mission and academic, research and societal goals:

- to contribute to the European integration and to regional stability through education of students from South Eastern Europe;
- to generate an impulse for development of the Bulgarian-Romanian cross-border area and the establishment of a Euroregion;
- to foster the opening of the border and act as a pressure group for the free movement of people at the Danube Bridge, to be involved in overcoming the numerous political and legal constraints of the border area;
- to be positioned on the European academic map with a quality label of the introduced master degree programs and to provide students with qualifications relevant to the demands of the region via programs set up within inter-university partnerships, implementation of European Credit Transfer System, staff and student mobility, and joint degrees;
- to implement socially responsible and region oriented research projects.



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BRIE has been coordinated by the German Rectors' Conference (project initiator) and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Hertie Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation, Stifterverband fuer die deutsche Wissenschaft, the Siemens Foundation (since 2004), the Haniel Foundation (since 2005), and the Bulgarian and the Romanian ministries of education and research. The two local universities at the Bulgarian-Romanian border – the University of Rousse and the University of Economic Studies Bucharest cooperate with five German partner universities - Chemnitz University of Technology; European University Viadrina - Frankfurt (Oder); Centre for European Integration Studies at the University of Bonn; Bremen University; Johannes Gutenberg University – Mainz.

Further on, BRIE activities comply with regional policy of the European Union, with the Europe of the Regions philosophy, the multi-level governance theory and practice, and the relevant legal framework:

- European Outline Convention on Trans-Frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980);
- European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985);
- Public Charter on Regionalization (1988);
- Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Trans-Frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1995);
- Declaration on Regionalism in Europe (1996);
- Protocol No.2 to the European Outline Convention on Trans-Frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1998).

Within this legal framework BRIE supports the strategic change towards decentralization and development of regional identity, and adds value to the transformation of the Bulgarian and Romanian national peripheries into a European cross-border centre.

The setting up of BRIE as an institution was the next development step. BRIE is governed by Advisory Body, BRIE Board and BRIE Commission under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Rita Suesmuth – President of the German Bundestag (1988 – 1998), and Dr. Zh. Zhelev – President of Republic of Bulgaria (1990 – 1997). They chair the sessions of the Advisory Body of BRIE. The Advisory Body involves BRIE stakeholders and is therefore explicit of the public-private partnership. The BRIE board holds meetings at least twice a year and is chaired on the principle of rotation by the Rectors of University of Rousse “Angel Kantchev”, the University of Economic Studies Bucharest and the



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President of the German Rectors' Conference. It approves BRIE annual report and BRIE activities. The executive body is the BRIE Commission, the executive body, which resolves problems on day-to-day basis.

The academic goals of BRIE have been met by three-lateral cooperation within curricula development and provision of 2 full-time four semester master degree programmes for students from South-Eastern Europe:

- European Studies at BRIE-Rousse and
- International Business Informatics at BRIE-Giurgiu.

The master program of European Studies was accredited in Germany and in Bulgaria.

The two programmes were structured as joint degrees. First, second and the fourth semesters of the two programs are provided at the local BRIE sites, and the third semester takes place at a German partner university or at a German company as an internship.

The academic goal of the European Studies master programme was to provide quality assurance and to develop a qualification profile to meet the regional demands for political, economic and societal change. A joint Bulgarian-Romanian-German academic team has been involved in the development of the structure and content of the studies. The first, second and the final semester are organized by BRIE-Ruse. The third semester takes place either at European University Viadrina at the German-Polish border or at Chemnitz University of Technology at the German-Czech border and later, from 2011 on in the context of the adopted EU Strategy on the Danube region, at the University of Regensburg, a city on the Danube.

Region and practice oriented competences were an important element of European Studies programme. They were developed within a Summer School, including visits and discussions with EU institutions representatives in Brussels/Strasbourg; International Youth Academy Is My Europe the Same as Yours for Bulgarian, Romanian and Greek students, organized by the Economic Policy Institute and the Hanns Seidel Foundation in the Bulgarian-Greek border region, cross-border seminars at the Bulgarian-Romanian border; the Danube Schools, organized by the European Danube Academy in Ulm/Neu Ulm, Germany.

After the entry into force of the EU Reform treaty (Lisbon Treaty) in 2009, and the 2011 EU Strategy for the Danube region, two specializations have been added to the European Studies curriculum. The first one is focused on public administration competences: policy making, policy



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reforms and good practices. The second is related to macroregional cooperation among 14 countries along the Danube: 10 EU member states, 2 Western Balkans states, and 2 EU states from the Eastern EU neighbourhood. It addresses the priorities of the EU Strategy for the Danube region and their multi-level and multi-actor implementation.

Apart from the master degree provision and since 2007 (when Bulgaria and Romania became EU Member States) BRIE has been implementing EU co-financed educational and research projects, related to the cross-border region and its changing profile.

The EU-PHARE educational project BRIDGE (Bulgarian-Romanian Initiative for Democracy as a Guard-Post of Europe) was focused on exploration of educational needs of border police servants and provision of joint training for 18 Bulgarian and 18 Romanian border guards in 2008. The content of the training has been related to European integration, cross-border cooperation, intercultural communication, English and neighbour language skills and to development of competences with regard to the prospective accession of the two countries to the Schengen zone.

EU research project BRAINS (Bulgarian-Romanian Area Identities: Neighbourhood Study) established a cross-border cooperation framework, based on a common interest for the development of an integrated identity of the whole border region, from a bottom-up scientific perspective and within the concept of RO-BUL-NA (Romanian-Bulgarian Neighbourhood Area). The 2011-2013 project united efforts of Bulgarian, Romanian and German researchers. Opinions of 4,000 Bulgarian and Romanian respondents on the potential construction of a cross-border political, economic and cultural regional identity have been investigated. Best practices at the German-Polish border and the German-Czech border have been studied to provide benchmarking reference points for strengthening cross-border cooperation at the Bulgarian-Romanian border. The project takes into account the fact, that in the EU-25 cross-border cooperation is being gradually replaced by integration, a holistic view over the territory and its integrated governance, but in the EU-27 the Romanian-Bulgarian region is rather divided than united and represents a challenge for the achievement of the goals of European territorial cooperation. The cross-border region has been labelled poor and lagging behind. This label affects the identities of the people, and deprives them of expectations for a positive change. It hides strengths and is counter-productive, when it comes to motivation for transformation. Catalysing change in such an identity means to assure drivers of human effort needed to overcome the current negative socio-economic condition. Therefore, the project re-negotiates the identity of the local people. It views the European Union as an environment for construction and positioning of new identities,



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including the identity of the cross-borderer as the identity of the citizen belonging to a space, where barriers have been removed and where the lands beyond the border are not perceived as foreign any more. For this particular space the project research team has proposed the name of RO-BUL-NA (Romanian-Bulgarian Neighbourhood Area) as a core of the identity of the cross-borderer and of the regional identity. BRAINS is an innovative applied study of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region, which identified its salient assets and provided research findings, which can be considered a source of optimism, as evidenced by the surveys: local people view their neighbours rather positively, they are interested in cooperation. This is a relevant starting point in the emerging construction of a cross-border identity. This conclusion opens windows of opportunities for cross-border identity policy as a milestone for raising the regional profile in Europe and worldwide. Through one of those windows BRIE academics and students will continue learning to overcome borders.

Beyond its overall reputation of an established international academic structure, today BRIE is mostly known for its students and graduates. Nowadays more than 200 European Studies students from 15 countries belong to BRIE Ruse and to the BRIE Alumni Club: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Mongolia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Turkey. Their successful careers are the best evidence of the quality label of BRIE.

VI. References and Appendix/Appendices if any

The international legal framework for the recognition of higher education qualifications:

- European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities (1953, ETS 15);
- European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study (1956, ETS 21);
- European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications (1959, ETS 32);
- Protocol to the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities (1964, ETS 49);
- Convention on mutual recognition of the equivalence of documents relating to the completion of secondary, secondary specialized and higher educational establishments and to the awarding of academic degrees and titles (Prague, 1972);



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- International Convention for the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean (1976);
- 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 138);
- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (No 165), Lisbon, 1997;

The domestic legal framework in Bulgaria for the recognition of higher education qualifications:

- Higher Education Act;
- Law on recognition of professional qualifications;
- Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Ordinance on the state requirements for recognition of higher education and completed periods of study in foreign higher education institutions;

The domestic legal framework in Romania for the recognition of higher education qualifications:

- Law no. 200/2004 on recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications for regulated professions in Romania;
- Romanian Law of National Education.