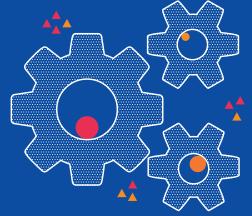


Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture

The Commission's Contribution to the Leaders' Working Lunch *Gothenburg, 17 November 2017*

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MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS

WHAT EXISTS TODAY

- Initiated in 1999, the **intergovernmental Bologna Process** has facilitated, but not ensured, the mutual recognition of diplomas in higher education across 48 countries.
- The common European Credit and Transfer System regulates the accumulation and transfer of higher education study credits, so that studying in one country is recognised in others. It is used in all Erasmus exchanges for university students.



- The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training system provides for a comparable approach in vocational education and training, but remains at a less advanced stage of implementation.
- Set up in 2008, the **European Qualifications Framework** a non-legally binding tool helps to compare qualifications systems in Europe. It facilitates the recognition process and is based on eight common reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- Today, only higher education has a European process of non-binding mutual recognition of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.
- ▶ The European Qualifications Framework has increased transparency of education levels between different Member States and between general and vocationally oriented education.



A young person who wants to have his or her upper secondary level qualification recognised in another Member State frequently faces obstacles. This is because the decisions on admission to a particular programme and the required qualifications to access studies are left to the discretion of a university. The timeframe for taking recognition decisions varies considerably from one university to another.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS?

- Initiate a new process, the **'Sorbonne process'**, to politically and technically prepare the ground for a Commission proposal on mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas and to facilitate cross-border validation of training and lifelong learning certificates with the following milestones:
 - Education Summit (Brussels, January 2018)
 - Bologna Ministerial Conference (Paris, May 2018).
- In May 2018, publish the Commission proposal for a **Recommendation on the mutual recognition of higher** education and school leaving diplomas/study periods abroad with Article 165 TFEU as the legal basis.
- ▶ To support this initiative on mutual recognition, develop and launch a secure electronic system for the storage and retrieval of academic diplomas to facilitate verification of authenticity.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES WITH A 2025 PERSPECTIVE

▶ Establish a **European Education Area** based on trust, mutual recognition, cooperation and exchange of best practices, mobility and growth.



The political ambition would need to be aligned with the means to act and reflected in the future discussions on EU finances.