Expert Seminar on the establishment of a Network of National Information Centers

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Mediterranean Recognition Information Centers Network (MERIC)

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Recognition: as old as the programme…

UNESCO’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} General Conference, Mexico 1947

A resolution supporting the programme ‘Work with universities’, one of the six specific objectives:

“Address problems of the difference in university degrees across the world”
Today: only legal instruments in HE, over 100 States Parties

1975: Latin America and the Caribbean

1976: Arab and European States bordering the Mediterranean (Inter-regional) - MERIC Network launched in 2006

1978: Arab States

1979: Europe – revised 1997 (co-depository Council of Europe); ENIC Network launched 1994

1981: Africa – up for revision in 2012 (co-depository African Union)

1983: Asia and the Pacific – revised in 2011

1993: Recommendation on Recognition in Higher Education
Mediterranean Convention
Nice, France, December 1976

- Entered into force in March 1978, following a diplomatic conference in Nice, France in December 1976
- Only inter-regional UNESCO Recognition Convention
12 States Parties

Algeria            Bosnia &            Croatia           Egypt           Macedonia
Herzegovina

Italy               Malta              Morocco           Montenegro       Serbia

Slovenia                           Turkey
10 Other Participating States*

Albania  Cyprus  France  Greece  Libya

Lebanon  Spain  Monaco  Syria  Tunisia

*Member States invited to the 1976 Diplomatic Conference with the right to vote
Implementation: Intergovernmental Committee

1\textsuperscript{st} session – UNESCO, Paris 1986
2\textsuperscript{nd} session, - La Valletta, Malta 1989
3\textsuperscript{rd} session – Cairo, Egypt 1991
4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} sessions – UNESCO, Paris 1992 and 1995
6\textsuperscript{th} session – La Valletta, Malta 2002
7\textsuperscript{th} session - Split, Croatia 2005
8\textsuperscript{th} Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010
Towards a network…

6th session, La Valetta, Malta, 2002

Recommendation by the 6th session of Intergovernmental Committee for the application of the Mediterranean Convention to establish a Mediterranean network of National Information Centres as one of its implementation arms.
MERIC background: RecQualif MEDA (2004-2005)

A pilot project
Coordinated by UNESCO and CIEP
Funded by the EU TEMPUS Meda

Participants:
ENICs from the Northern Mediterranean (France, Italy, Slovenia) and
Focal points from the Southern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia)
Council of Europe and NUFFIC
RecQualif MEDA: activities

Foster the establishment of national information centres with a focus on linking Qualifications Recognition and Quality Assurance

Capacity building: training courses, on-line and face to face (NUFFIC)

Preparation of a Mediterranean network (spread to other countries in the Mediterranean region).
MERIC meetings

1st MERIC meeting: Rabat December 2006 (launch)

2nd MERIC meeting, Mostar, February 2010
MERIC CHARTER 2010

Proposed by the 1st MERIC meeting in Rabat, Morocco
Adopted at the 8th session of the Intergovernmental Committee, Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina 2010

- Tasks and activities
- Resources and Expertise
- Documentation
- Technical Equipment

Developed a format of the information on the national education system
Tasks and responsibilities

- Provide adequate information, within a reasonable period of time to different stakeholders;
- Provide information, advice or formal decision on the recognition of qualifications, based on defined criteria and procedures
- Provide information to holders of foreign diplomas
- Serve as main information point at national level
- Cooperate with other information centres
- Contribute to the development of HE policies at national/regional level
- Participate in elaboration of publications and other information material on HE system
- Collect and update information on education systems, qualification frameworks, quality assurance
- Contribute to the establishment and operation of the MERIC
Resources and expertise

Staff requirements
- The staff of a NIC should be versed in evaluating foreign qualifications in line with international best practices.

Staff expertise
- The centre should be adequately staffed by each country taking into account the size of the country, the number of HEIs, the number of students etc.
Documentation

Access to:

- Reference works on foreign education systems
- Reference works on the education system of the country in which the centre is working
- National/international institutional catalogues
- Recognition conventions, multilateral/bilateral agreements etc.
Technical Equipment

Adequate hardware and software equipment to:

- Maintain e-mail connection
- Have access to Internet
- Publish on the web
- Maintain a database of previous evaluations carried out by the centre
1. Organize study visits for NIC staff
2. Training Workshops (topics: Quality Assurance, Qualifications Frameworks etc.)
3. Glossary of key terms for QA and Recognition (in Arabic, English, French)
4. Capacity building for the development of structured information on HE systems
5. Advocacy through the MERIC website and listserv
6. Development of an Information Sheet on MERICs
7. Inviting all MERIC countries to join the UNESCO Portal to Higher Education Institutions
MERIC: next steps

Organization of follow up activities
- Identification of additional financing for follow up

Next Meetings
- 3rd MERIC Meeting – 2012 – Algiers, Algeria
- 9th Session of the Mediterranean Intergovernmental Committee Meeting – 2012 - Algiers, Algeria
MERIC: challenges

- Political support
- Further need for capacity-building
- Human and financial resources
- Continuity
- Sustainability
For more information

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THANK YOU

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