Country Report: Republic of Korea

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Korea has signed and ratified the 1983 Regional Convention

- Korea is one of nine member states signed the 2011 Tokyo Convention

No competent recognition authorities in charge of qualification recognition

- National Research Foundation (NRF) verifies foreign degrees and diplomas for selected English-speaking countries

- KCUE (Korean Council for University Education) provided verification & recognition of foreign degrees since 2007, but ended in January, 2011
Recognition of Secondary School Leaving Certificates

Student Mobility: Inbound

- **Study Korea Project in 2004**
  - => 50,000 foreign students by 2010

- **2nd Round of Study Korea in 2008**
  - => 100,000 foreign students by 2012

[Figure 1 The number of Foreign Students at Korean HEIs]
Recognition of Secondary School Leaving Certificates

The number of international students in the undergraduate degree programs was 44,641 in 2011 and 35,503 in 2013.

[Figure 2] The number of international students in bachelor degree programs
Individual higher education institutions have full authority to recognize the foreign secondary school leaving certificates.

Universities utilize different ways of recognition methods based on their regulation:

- Apostille certification
- Students graduating from countries without the Apostille Agreement like China must obtain ‘Certification of Overseas Institutions’
- Confirmation from the consul
The number of international graduate students increased from 14,066 in 2009 to 21,212 in 2013.

Same as undergraduate student admission process.

[Figure 3] The number of international students in graduate programs.
Current Status

- Universities or Institutes have full responsibility for verification of foreign degrees.
- MOE has published a manual for verification of foreign degrees in 2011: universities follow mostly the guidelines rather than their own procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications.
- Mainly being focused on verification, less on recognition to value the equivalence or comparability of qualifications.
No national recognition institution to recognize foreign qualifications for the purpose of employment

- Skills assessment including foreign qualification and employment experience does not exist for the purpose of practicing a profession

Institutions or employers have full responsibility to recognize foreign qualifications and assess skills for foreigners and employment
Korea has no bilateral and multilateral agreement on the recognition of academic qualifications.

Agreement on the recognition of academic qualifications has been being discussed with Russia.
Establishment of recognition system for foreign qualifications

- The scope of recognition of foreign qualifications are limited to verification of foreign doctoral degrees
- Fully agreed to the necessity of competent recognition authority for academic qualifications

Four studies have been conducted:

- Study on investigating the recognition of foreign degrees in Korea and ratification of Tokyo Convention (2012)
- How to establish NIC for higher education and build the network (2012)
- Study on recognition authorities in EU and Asia (2013-2014)
- Academic qualification and higher education system of major sending countries—being conducted

Korea is ready to join recognition-related regional information sharing mechanisms
National Qualification Framework

- Being developed focusing on vocational qualifications
  - NQF incorporating the qualifications from schools, VET and higher education into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework is under discussion in Korea: cornerstone of the quality assurance system

- Regional qualification framework (RQF) can be used as a benchmark that mediates the alignment of qualification across member countries when necessary
  - RQF development needs to be based upon a voluntary relationship with each member country NQF and qualification system
  - RQF does not require countries to change the core structure of their qualifications and NQFs
Ratification of the 2011 Revised Convention

- Korea has signed the revised 2011 convention
- There are no regulatory impediments to ratification
- Ratification is under consideration at ministerial level
Thank you for your attention!

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