



Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ministry of Civil Affairs

## Thematic Peer Group B on Lisbon Recognition Convention (TPG B on LRC)

Fourth Meeting, Online

24 January 2023

9:30 – 12:30 (CET)

Minutes

### List of Participants

Country/Organization	First Name	Last Name
Albania (Co-Chair)	Linda	Pustina
Armenia	Gayane	Harutyunyan
Austria	Victoria E.	Tschiedl
Belgium Flemish Community	Erwin	Malfroy
Bulgaria	Kostadin	Tonev
Council of Europe	Catherine	Dolgova Dreyer
Croatia	Leonardo	Marušić
Cyprus	Popi	Appios
Denmark	Allan Brunn	Pedersen
ENQA	Anna	Gover
EQAR	Colin	Tück
EQAR	Aleksandra	Zhivkovikj
EUA	Maria	Kelo
EUA	Helene	Peterbauer
European Commission	Lucie	Trojanova
France (Co-Chair)	Hélène	Bekker
Georgia	Ana	Gvritishvili
Georgia	Abramishvili	Salome
Germany	David	Akrami Flores
Greece	Vasiliki	Athanasopoulou
Greece	Vasilis	Charalampopoulos
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Hungary	Gabor	Meszaros
Ireland	Andrina	Wafer



Albanian BFUG Secretariat  
2021-2024

Italy	Alessandro	Arienzo
Italy	Elisa	Petrucci
Italy	Angela	Ziccardi
Latvia	Inara	Dunska
Latvia	Baiba	Ramina
Latvia	Solvita	Silina
Malta	Graziella	Debattista
Moldova	Lilia	Parhomenco
The Netherlands	Jenneke	Lokhoff
The Netherlands	Bas	Wegewijs
The Netherlands	Evelien	Willems
Norway	Dag	Hovdhaugen
Poland	Hanna	Reczulska
Romania	Gianina	Chirazi
Romania	Adrian	Iordache
Sweden	Ulrika	Axell
Ukraine	Kateryna	Suprun
United Kingdom	Fabrizio	Trifiro
UNESCO	Andreas	Snildal
BFUG Secretariat	Oltion	Rrumbullaku
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, EI-ETUCE, EURASHE, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Portugal, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Spain and Switzerland did not attend the meeting.

### **1. Welcome remarks and introduction to the meeting**

Linda Pustina (Co-Chair, Albania) welcomed the participants to the fourth TPG B meeting and expressed her gratitude to the other Co-Chairs for their efforts in preparing for the meeting. She also conveyed apologies from Chiara Finocchietti (Co-Chair, Italy) for being unable to participate due to unforeseen circumstances. Linda then provided some logistical details for the meeting and stressed its main objective, which is to discuss the distribution of work and responsibilities for recognition procedures among competent institutions with the right knowledge and skills. The meeting's purpose was to share updates on the TPG B on LRC and present deliverables from the Erasmus+ Umbrella project TPG-LRC, which focuses on recognition in the EHEA. The meeting would be organized into three parts: the first part was a panel discussion on improving cooperation among stakeholders, the second part was dedicated to delivering work relevant to the TPG-LRC developed in the CoRE project, which included micro-credentials, digital technology, and quality recognition. The third part of the meeting would be devoted to working groups.

For more information, please see: [TPG B SE BA 4 Agenda](#)

### **2. The work done by the TPG B: main results and room for improvements**

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair, France) expressed her gratitude to the other Co-Chairs and Elisa Petrucci from CIMEA Italy for organizing the meeting. She then provided a brief update on the progress of TPG B on LRC, indicating that the focus of the group is derived from specific thematic indicators gathered through a survey conducted during the first work period in 2018 and confirmed for the new work period through a survey conducted from June to September 2021. The objective of the survey was to assess the current state of implementation of Bologna key commitment two (2) and identify interests for the group in the future. The outcomes of the 2021 survey identified six thematic priorities, with a particular emphasis on the first three: digital technology, automatic recognition, alternative pathways, ethics, refugees, and legal frameworks.

Around 30 responses to the survey were received from 26 countries and four consultative members. The results of the survey were discussed at the first TPG B meeting and can be found on the dedicated section for TPG B of the EHEA website. In accordance with BICG guidelines, there will be seven TPG B meetings during the 2021-2024 work period. These meetings aim to share information and experiences on the implementation of Key Commitment 2 at the national level and to plan and monitor group actions. To encourage active participation, preparatory notes and discussion questions will be sent in advance. The TPG B has also planned three public seminars on alternative pathways, automatic recognition, and digitalization, which will be held in-presence. The aim of these seminars is to inform and engage stakeholders, particularly higher education institutions (HEIs), in the countries where the TPG meeting is held. Additionally, staff mobility, which required reorganization during the previous working period due to the pandemic, will also be discussed at the meeting, with three PLAs organized.

The first meeting of the TPG B for the 2021-2024 work period aimed to define the group's work plan for the coming years, taking an evidence-based approach and focusing on the state of play of TPG B. To this end, the meeting was organized into subgroups, which discussed the existing and potential thematic indications to be included in the work plan. Emphasis was placed on the topic of automatic recognition, as well as better embedding of the LRC principles in legislation. The student perspective was also presented, with a focus on transparency, accessibility, and equity of recognition procedures. The second meeting focused on digital technology and the diploma supplement. The meeting aimed to provide an overview of the group work plan and address the first thematic priority of digitalization through three different dimensions. The third meeting, held in France, was an in-person event that focused on supporting the recognition of qualifications from Ukraine. It was followed by a public seminar on recognizing alternative pathways. Three more meetings are planned for the future.

The upcoming TPG B meeting will take place in-presence in Tirana, Albania on April 27-28, 2023. Following the meeting, there will be a public seminar on automatic recognition. The sixth meeting in 2024 will be held online, and the seventh meeting will be determined based on the dates of the Ministerial Conference. The final seminar will focus on digitalization. Peer support activities and staff mobility will be defined through a questionnaire and an activity that will take place during the Tirana meeting. Additional activities will be organized based on feedback and needs expressed by TPG B members.

The TPG-LRC CoRE project, co-funded by Erasmus+, is the umbrella project for TPG B, starting in May 2022 and running until April 2025. The project includes working packages, public seminars, research, and publications for partner countries and institutions.

TPG B members provided feedback through a questionnaire, indicating that discussions have improved on topics such as automatic recognition, digitalization, micro-credentials, qualifications held by

refugees, and optimizing the potential of digital technology, including the diploma supplement. Members have also expressed improved practice sharing, networking, and stakeholder engagement at the national level.

For more information, please see: [The work of the TPG B on LRC](#)

### **3. Panel discussion on distribution of work and responsibilities among the competent institutions that carry out recognition procedures**

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair) introduced the speakers and highlighted the importance of discussing the cooperation mechanism and the allocation of work and responsibilities among competent institutions involved in recognition procedures. This issue aligns with a sub-thematic area of TPG B and is aimed at establishing priorities to improve cooperation among stakeholders supporting the recognition process from the perspective of national authorities.

Jenneke Lokhoff (ENIC-NARIC) stressed that recognition should be viewed as part of a broader ecosystem where collaboration among stakeholders is critical. She emphasized that discussions should be held at various levels, including generic networks, umbrella stakeholders, and centres, each of which has distinct organizational structures and mandates. Additionally, she noted that recognition is organized differently across countries, and identifying priorities requires a comprehensive understanding of national contexts and the bigger picture.

From the quality assurance (QA) perspective, Anna Gover (ENQA) highlighted the importance of having QA systems that align with the Bologna commitments across the EHEA for a seamless recognition process from a QA perspective. To achieve this, she emphasized the need for ESG-compliant QA agencies, which can facilitate cross-border QA, QA of joint programs, and QA of transnational education. Ms. Gover acknowledged that this process involves a complex network of actors at national and European levels, and therefore, transparency, clear division of responsibilities, and easy access to information are essential at all levels. She reiterated that recognition is a global issue, and harmonized QA systems and recognition processes in Europe can inspire similar processes worldwide.

She also emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing the diversity of QA in different systems and countries to ensure effective QA. A continuous dialogue between the QA agency and the national authority can facilitate compliance with QA standards. Additionally, better communication between QA agencies and ENIC Networks can lead to more effective recognition procedures. Ms. Gover emphasized the need for QA agencies to ensure that recognition is effectively covered in their external QA procedures. This includes recognizing prior learning and micro-credentials and providing alternative pathways into higher education.

Ana Gvritshvlli (ESU) expressed the student perspective and emphasized that timely and effective recognition is a fundamental right for students. She pointed out that recent recognition issues faced by Ukrainian students in the EHEA have revealed problems with the recognition system that need to be addressed. She strongly advocated for the involvement of students as key partners in the recognition process, as they can help design less burdensome, student-centered procedures. Furthermore, Ms. Gvritshvlli stressed the importance of facilitating information exchange among all stakeholders, including national authorities, employers, and students, and involving the job market in the recognition process to enable student job mobility. She also highlighted the need to adapt recognition procedures



to current trends in higher education and the job market, including the recognition of micro-credentials and other new developments. She also emphasized the significance of digitalizing the recognition process and stated that automatic recognition is essential for seamless mobility in the EHEA.

Maria Kelo (EUA) emphasized the crucial need for a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities among actors, both at the national level and within HEIs. She stressed the importance of appointing persons with expertise in all available support systems for recognition procedures. Ms. Kelo further highlighted the need for clear policies, processes, and verifications for recognition at the institutional level, and the importance of investment in training and good practices for effective recognition processes at both national and institutional levels.

Regarding the identification of priorities, Ms. Kelo emphasized the importance of investing in these priorities. At the institutional level, she suggested a more structured approach with a network of admission officers or individuals assigned to recognition at the central level of institutions, who can be easily identified and contacted for support. She also stressed the need for a well-established national network, where individuals with similar tasks are involved in training and knowledge-sharing, and the effective exchange of good practices at the international level, where ENIC-NARIC can serve as a catalyst and support in translating international practices into the national context.

Lastly, Jenneke Lokhoff (ENIC) recommended that the conversation about recognition continue at the ENIC-NARIC network level and be incorporated into the annual program. She proposed centralizing the invitation process for stakeholders, and encouraged ENIC-NARIC centers to take on the responsibility of organizing the discussion within their national contexts. However, she acknowledged that some centers may be understaffed and require additional support. Regular assessments of everyone's role and reflection on improvements in light of new developments were also suggested.

In conclusion, it was suggested that the 2012 recommendation for the validation of non-formal and formal learning, which included a skeleton framework for the implementation of RPL, could be used to address the variety of purposes and subsequent contextual complexity of recognition bodies.

#### **4. Research and publications within the TPG-LRC CoRE project**

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair) introduced the next item on the agenda, which was research and publication within the TPG-LRC CoRE project. She mentioned three of the four thematic questions that would be studied in the work package on research and publications of the project, which are micro-credentials, digital technology and recognition tools, and quality as a trust-enhancing tool. The Co-Chair then gave the floor to Elissa Petrucci (CIMEA) to present on a practical guidance to develop, assess, quality assure and issue micro-credentials.

- Micro-credentials: practical guidance to develop, assess, quality assure and issue them

Elisa Petrucci (CIMEA, Italy) presented to participants the Erasmus+ CoRE project, TPG B umbrella project on micro-credentials. One of the project's goals is to produce research and publications that explore the scope and topics of micro-credentials, particularly in relation to their importance for lifelong learning and employability. The project will provide stakeholders with guidance documents to help them implement and recognize micro-credentials in line with European recommendations. To ensure a comprehensive approach to the topic, the project will address micro-credentials from both input and



output perspectives, considering the roles of both awarding and receiving institutions in higher education.

Another key concept of the project is the need to increase clarity and transparency around what constitutes a micro-credential. To achieve this, the project will address micro-credentials from different perspectives, drawing on input from four different groups: the three thematic groups focused on qualification frameworks, ECTS recognition, and quality assurance, as well as the working group on learning and teaching within the TP LRC core. These subgroups, composed of CIMEA, EUA, NUFFIC, and external experts, will contribute to the document's core focus: two separate chapters exploring the different varieties and forms of micro-credentials. The document will also include an introduction and other supporting chapters.

The primary objective of providing HEIs with a practical tool is achieved through the first chapter, which maps out available key reference documents and tools, rather than relying solely on desk research. This chapter encompasses various structures such as the European recommendation on micro-credential and EU-funded projects, such as MicroBol. Additionally, it includes work done within other networks. The second core chapter focuses on key elements from the 3 TPG-s and WG on learning and teaching. Starting from practical examples at a national level, this chapter delineates recommendations and indications on handling micro-credentials. To aid in this effort, a questionnaire targeted at HEIs is drafted with two aims. Firstly, to collect real-life examples of micro-credentials and information about their diversity at a national level, and secondly, to gather information about different approaches and challenges when defining and recognizing micro-credentials. The samples shared from the TPG B and TPG LRC CoRE projects are also included. The questionnaire is divided into two sections, with HEIs free to choose whether to fill in both or just one section. The survey will be circulated between February and June 2023, with the document set to be published by October 2023. TPG B members are invited to circulate the survey at the national level, and also to share any interesting examples or experiences at the national level.

For more information, please see: [Micro-credentials within the TPG-LRC CoRE project](#)

- [Digital technology and recognition: tools and standards at our disposal](#)

Aleksandra Zhivkovikj (EQAR) explained that aim of this workgroup is to map the digital tools for recognition in the TPG B member countries. In addition to EQAR, the group consists of CIMEA, NUFFIC and Anthony Camilleri, as an expert. She explained that the group has met three times and plans to organize three peer-learning seminars for primarily TPB G members, which will focus on the three phases of the recognition process and share best practices and cases of effective digitalization for each of these phases.

Ms. Zhivkovikj explained that the objective is to include a synthesis of this shared knowledge in a final publication, which will serve as a blueprint on guiding principles for digitalization of the recognition workflows. The publication will build on existing work, such as work done through the DigiREG project. The group also plans to organize an activity to discuss standardizing the information in the diploma supplement to make it more machine-readable. Ms. Zhivkovikj invited all members to participate in the discussion and provide recommendations and suggestions for the upcoming session.

For more information, please see: [TPG LRC CoRE Project WG - Digitalization of recognition tools](#)



- Quality as a trust-enhancing tool enabling recognition

Helene Peterbauer (EUA) presented the work of the working subgroup on quality of recognition. She listed the partners of the group as CIMEA (Italy), Hornell (Estonia), NUFFIC (the Netherlands), EQAR and ESU. Ms. Peterbauer stated that the subgroup is working towards identifying recommendations that support quality as a trust-building tool for recognition.

The subgroup is utilizing a variety of methodologies, including a survey that will be distributed to individuals responsible for recognition and quality assurance at HEIs. The survey will take place from February to May 2023. Additionally, the subgroup will gather qualitative data from focus groups and QA-related information from ENQA. EQAR will also contribute through desk research via the DECAR database, which includes 80,000 accreditations and evaluations of HEIs from across the EHEA. Ms. Peterbauer emphasized that the results of this work will be published as recommendations primarily for HEIs and other important stakeholders in May 2024. She invited comments and recommendations from working group members.

For more information, please see: [Quality as a trust-enhancing tool enabling recognition](#)

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair) thanked the presenters and reminded them that the diploma supplement is jointly owned by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Union and that there is a need of for coordination.

## **5. Working groups on the three research areas:**

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair) introduced the breakout sessions according to the topics of micro-credentials, digital technology for recognition agenda, and quality of recognition. Each group appointed a reporter who shared the conclusions of the discussions had in each session.

- Breakout in parallel session: Room 1 (Micro-credentials)

Jenneke Lokhoff (ENIC-NARIC) stated that the Micro-credentials Group shared insights on the development, issuance, and recognition of micro-credentials at a national level. Based on the group's discussion, Ms. Lokhoff explained that different countries have different purposes for using micro-credentials and emphasized the importance of implementing national regulations in some countries. The group also discussed micro-qualifications in short cycle studies and raised questions about how to best stack micro-credentials and standardize their outcomes in a digital format to ensure easy recognition. The group found that while some countries lack a national framework for micro-credentials, others require a legal framework to guide their development and recognition. In some cases, there are active efforts to facilitate the offering of micro-credentials, while in others, laws have been modified to issue digital micro-credentials. The group also recognized that some countries only use micro-credentials for labor markets, while others prioritize them for educational access. The group shared best practices, such as including micro-credentials in course catalogs or maintaining a database of micro-credentials.

- Breakout in parallel session: Room 2 (Digital technology for the recognition agenda)

Colin Tück (EQAR) provided an update on the group discussion concerning digital technology for the recognition agenda. During his presentation, Mr. Tück emphasized the existence of a European learning



model that incorporates a digital format for the diploma supplement. He recommended that the TPG leverage this model as a foundation to further refine with their input. To this end, it was agreed that a select group of experts in recognition would convene online over the next several weeks and months to examine this model in greater detail and utilize it as a basis for developing a standardized and recognizable template. Mr. Tück clarified that while the European learning model was initially designed for use within the European Union (EU), the TPG B must ensure that the digital format can be implemented throughout the entire EHEA. Mr. Tück concluded by inviting interested TPG B colleagues with relevant experience in recognition to join the expert subgroup, which will look at the European model and contribute to its refinement.

- Breakout in parallel session: Room 3 (Quality of recognition)

Adrian Iordache presented the conclusions of the first topic discussed, which was focused on the national framework for compliance with the LRC and ESG for quality of recognition. The majority of participants reported that while there may be a national level framework in place, there is no formal framework structure. The second question raised during the meeting related to the frequency of communication between HEIs and national authority stakeholders to improve quality of recognition. Responses varied based on each center's responsibilities and relationship with HEIs or other stakeholders. It was mentioned that due to the growing mobility of workers in the labor market, there has been an increase in information exchange between national recognition centers and competent authorities for degree recognition. Mr. Iordache clarified that quality assurance is dealt with differently among all stakeholders, with some centers holding annual meetings or training with HEIs and others having daily communication through email or phone. In conclusion, Mr. Iordache emphasized that the quality of recognition is a critical topic that needs to be addressed and debated, and it will be included in the agenda for future meetings and discussions.

## **6. Wrap up and conclusions**

Hélène Bekker (Co-Chair) thanked everyone for a very active and vivid meeting, and reminded everyone of next TPG B meeting in Tirana on 26-27 April 2023, followed by the public seminar on April 28, 2023, which will be open to HEIs. She also invited all TPG B members to fill in the questionnaire sent out to all. The materials of the coming meeting in Tirana will be sent to all participants as well as the evaluation form was made possible for participants, who were encouraged to fill in the evaluation. Linda Pustina (Co-Chair) reminded all participants of a possible social activity following the meeting in Tirana, information which would be following in due time. No other business was brought forward, thus the fourth meeting of the TPG B on LRC was successfully concluded with special thanks to the Co-Chairs, members and guests for their contributions and input to the meeting.

