



## **The EQUAL Project: Peer counseling approach to improve capacities in recognition of refugees' undocumented qualifications**

Dag HOVDHAUGEN – Executive Director, Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, Norway

# Context and objectives

- Responding to the increased influx of refugees from 2015 onwards, Norwegian-led projects **Toolkit, REACT and ARENA** have been highlighted as **examples of good practice** for improving recognition of refugees' qualifications.
- The 2022 LRC monitoring report shows that **implementation of Article VII** on recognition of insufficiently documented qualifications held by refugees **is still weak**.
- The EQUAL project – European Qualification – Refugees and Recognition, builds on the **experiences from the previous projects** – Toolkit, REACT and ARENA, with the continued aim of **ensuring implementation of Article VII**.
- The objective is to support the ENIC-NARICs of Romania, Lithuania and Poland in establishing **sustainable recognition procedures** that are aligned with national laws and practices for admission.

# Project consortium



**Coordinator:** Norwegian ENIC-NARIC (HK-dir)

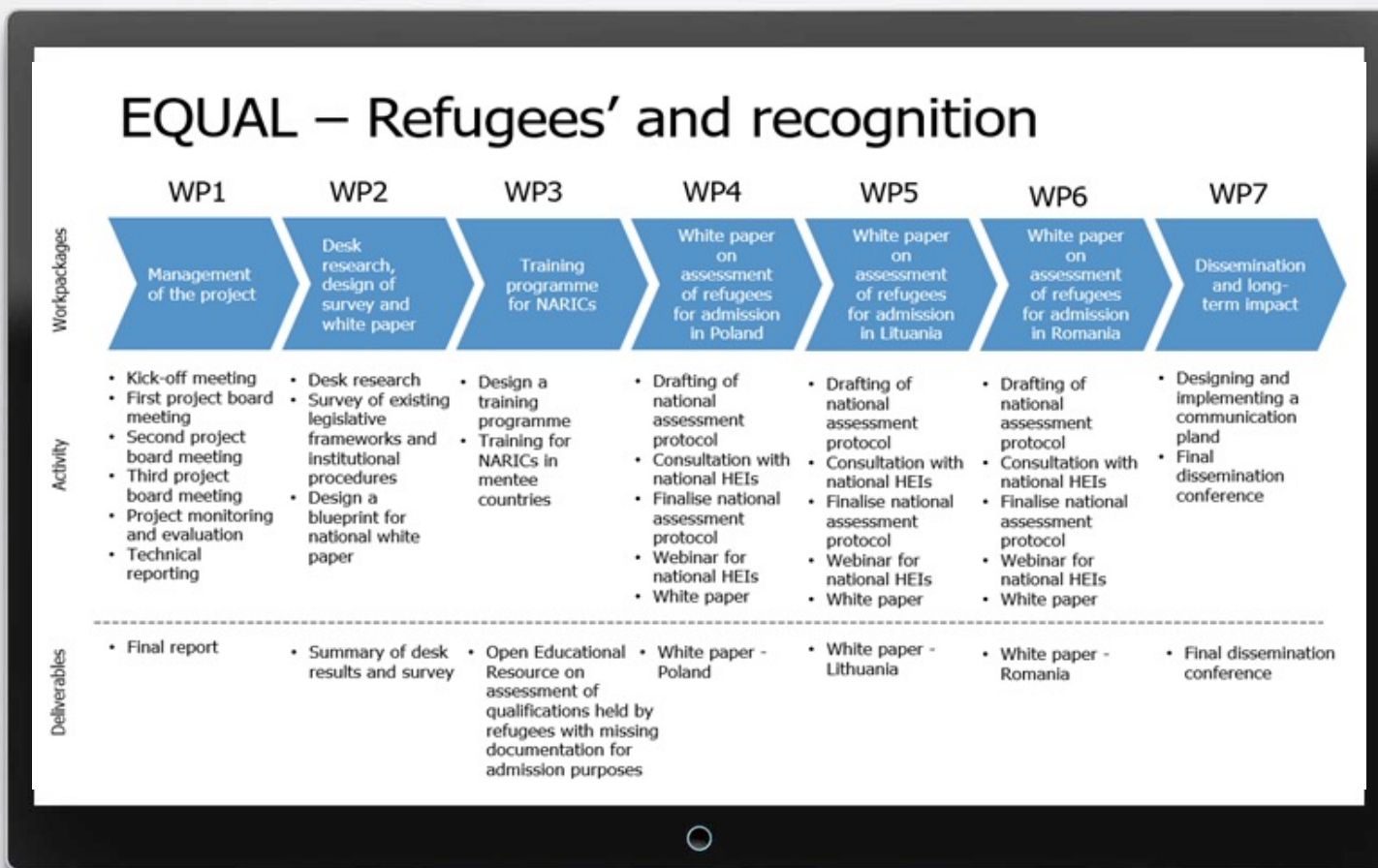
**Target group:** ENIC-NARICs of Romania, Lithuania and Poland (“mentees”)

**Mentors:** ENIC-NARICs of Greece, Italy, Netherlands

Additional expertise from three experienced higher education institutions (third parties/sub-contractors) in the Netherlands, Italy and Greece.

# Activities and deliverables

- **Desk research and surveys** with HEIs on existing legal frameworks and procedures.
- **Training** of ENIC-NARICs and higher education institutions in policies and assessment procedures.
- Development of **e-learning course**.
- Based on these inputs, each mentee ENIC-NARIC will draft a “white paper” with **policy recommendations** in consultation with HEIs (ongoing work).
- **Dissemination conference** in Brussels 4 Dec. 2024 (date tbc).



# Approach and added value

- Peer counselling and mentoring rather than top-down approach to capacity building.
- Focus on knowledge acquisition and training adapted to the needs of each country.
- Foster structural/legal changes to
  - scale up and make better use of tools and methodologies developed through Toolkit, REACT and ARENA projects,
  - increase the use of standardized formats such as the EQPR and ensure that they are accepted for admission by HEIs.



# Thank you!

[equal@hkdir.no](mailto:equal@hkdir.no)



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

