Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention 5th Meeting

7th of October 2026
Online
Minutes of the meeting

List of participants

Country/Institution	First Name	Last Name
Armenia	Gayane	Harutyunyan
Armenia (TPG C)	Varduhi	Gyulazyan
Austria	Hannah	Pesek
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Dženan	Omanović
Denmark	Allan Bruun	Pedersen
ENQA	Elena	Cîrlan
EQAR	Giorgi	Munjishvili
EQAR	Aleksandar	Šušnjar
ESU	Katariina	Järve
EUA	Helene	Peterbauer
EURASHE	Jakub	Grodecki
France (Co-Chair)	Jingchao	Shi
France (TPG A)	Sara	Thornton
Georgia	Salome	Abramishvili
Germany	Tim	Maschuw
Greece	Vasilis	Charalampopoulos
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Hungary	Gábor	Mészáros
Hungary	Julia	Juhasz
Ireland	Andrina	Wafer
Italy (Co-Chair)	Chiara	Finocchietti
Italy	Emanuela	Gitto
Italy	Isabella	Rinaldi
Italy	Marianna	Tardioli
Kazahstan	Alibek	Madibekov
Latvia	Baiba	Ramina
Latvia	Solvita	Silina
Liechtenstein	Belgin	Amann
Lithuania	Aurelija	Valeikiene
Malta	Graziella	Debattista
Netherlands	Jenneke	Lokhoff

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Country/Institution	First Name	Last Name
Norway	Dag	Hovdhaugen
Romania	Adrian	Iordache
Slovakia	Lucia	Hustavova
Slovenia	Sabina	Zajc
Sweden	Ernst	Lindqvist
Switzerland	Rahel	Hollenstein
Türkiye	Canan	Ünvan
Ukraine (Co-Chair)	Maryna	Mruga
Ukraine	Tetiana	Vahina
UNESCO	Leila	Loupis
United Kingdom - Scotland	Shannon	Stowers
EHEA Secretariat	Irina	Duma

Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Council of Europe, Croatia, Czech Republic, European Commission, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and San Marino were absent.

1. Welcome remarks and introduction to the meeting

The Ukrainian Co-Chair welcomed the TPG B on LRC members to the 5th meeting. She pointed out that the meeting was primarily devoted to the discussion on transnational education and the recognition of qualifications gained under transnational education delivery.

2. Conceptual definition and policy framework of TNE in the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_2_CodeOfGoodPractice_LRCBureau

Allan Bruun Pedersen (Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Bureau) presented the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education, which was revised and adopted by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) on 22 October 2025 at its Tenth meeting in Paris, France, following the recommendations from the Monitoring Report of the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2022. The emphasis of the presentation was on the documents' background, its key content provisions and recommendations to national authorities and higher education institutions for its' implementation. There were no comments or questions from TPG B members.

3. Evidence from quantitative data analysis on TNE

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_3_AnalysisTNE_ENQA

Elena Cîrlan (ENQA) presented the findings from the ROQA-TNE survey, conducted under the framework of the Robust Quality Assurance of Transnational Education (ROQA-TNE) project. She pointed out that the project aims at promoting more robust and transparent quality assurance of transnational education delivered worldwide, in line with the ESG, to protect the interests of students. The focus of the project was to respond to the EHEA ministers who committed to have global transnational education, which is transparent and in line with the ESG.

The survey carried out within the project was focused on studying the current situation of the provision of TNE, from allowance of TNE delivery, geographic spread, types of TNE allowed, to definitions used in practice for TNE by quality assurance agencies and ministries, as well as the approaches to regulating outgoing TNE and the use of UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Cross-border Higher Education. ENQA also showed the findings related to implementation of quality assurance of TNE, agreements between QA agencies and ministries with parties based outside the EHEA, and challenges in implementing external quality assurance of TNE. However, most of the respondents declared they use the same standards and criteria for external evaluation of TNE as for domestic higher education, with half of them introducing specific adjustments for outgoing TNE. There were no comments or questions from TPG B members.

4. Sharing practices and data on TNE: experiences at national level

4.1. Austria

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_4.1_TNE_Austria

Hannah Pesek (Austria) shared experiences at national level regarding their practices and data on TNE, namely related to types of arrangements for provision, quality assurance practices built on the LRC Code of Good Practice for the Provision of TNE, as well as recognition of the qualification provided. Given that TNE has increased in popularity in the recent years, they focused on the internal national guidelines for recognition of TNE, built on the Lisbon Recognition Convention and EHEA practices. They mentioned the types of agreements between Austrian higher education institutions and local institutions located in the countries where TNE is delivered, as well as the minimum quality assurance requirements for enabling recognition of qualifications. Following her presentation, Allan Bruun Pedersen (LRC Bureau) positively noted that the Code of Good Practice can be implemented in a very practical and direct manner, enhancing recognition.

4.2. France

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_4.2_TNE_France

Sara Thornton (France) shared the national experiences of "Franco-X" campuses, which consist of cooperation agreements between French higher education institutions and other HEIs located worldwide, for a variety of study fields and cooperation means. The agreements have been supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education in France, thus the campuses being also diplomatically driven. They provided examples of successful campuses still operating world-wide, especially in Asia, Europe and Africa, following the cooperation between French authorities and those from the receiving countries.

4.3. Italy

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_4.3_TNE_Italy

Emanuela Gitto (Italy) shared the Italian experience on practices and data on TNE, with focus on the policy context and national regulations for the provision of trans-national education in Italy, which are built on the Lisbon Recognition Convention ratified by law at national level. According to the national legal framework, the authorisation criteria for the activities of affiliation of foreign higher education institutions operating in Italy are required by the Ministry of Universities and Research, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The national regulations also

require provision of information on TNE, which is accessible to potential students willing to study in Italy within institutions delivering TNE on their territory.

4.4. Q&A session

Austria asked about the evidence used by credential evaluators to assess cooperation between higher education institution and non-higher education providers, as they often appear in the TNE arrangements. Allan Bruun Pedersen (LRC Bureau) recognised that even if there is a fully accredited or recognised higher education provider operating in a specific country from the EHEA, some information normally necessary at national level could still be missing and, therefore, the national regular recognition assessment and decision should be conducted. In the case of providers not normally linked to higher education, but recognised as being legitimate in offering transnational education, there would be an open question for national systems whether TNE would be recognised. According to the Code, these providers should abide to the good practice described in the document, but it is up to the national authorities whether recognise the education provided.

EQAR noticed the differences in definitions of terms used in presentations related to national experiences, acknowledging that alignment between the differences in definitions would be desirable. ENQA recognised that well-defined terms are desirable, given that definitions influence the scope of the regulatory documents. ENQA also agreed that at least EHEA-wide alignment is advisable, which is being addressed through the Note on Terminology of the Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility. Allan Bruun Pedersen (LRC Bureau) emphasised that it would be difficult to have a uniform definition of transnational education, as those in place had been constantly expanded by various national contexts.

In terms of expectations for the quality assurance for TNE, EQAR also asked whether the principle would be to treat TNE in the same way or even in a more restrictive one than foreign qualifications. France noted that, in their case, it is important to have the same quality of education delivered trans-nationally, as on the French territory, which also impacts the quality assurance of TNE. ENQA emphasized that the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) have been used as the baseline for quality assurance agencies in developing their standards and evaluation methodologies for TNE. They have also noticed that, in some cases, there are specific aspects addressed by the external quality assurance of TNE, which is evaluated as a positive aspect from the discussions held at international level with different stakeholders. For example, besides covering the national context where TNE is provided, standards usually cover the cultural and socio-economic context to address the fitness for purpose of programs delivered cross-border. Allan Bruun Pedersen (LRC Bureau) highlighted that the Code of Good Practice refers to quality assurance of TNE as being based on the ESG, which should be sufficient to ensure alignment of quality assurance standards used for the assessment of TNE.

UNESCO mentioned that the Global Convention aims at developing recommendations in relation to quality assurance, including a section on cross-border education, which is currently defined as including transnational education. They also provided the example of universities which do not have a country of origin, but are internationally established, and which have made steps towards obtaining accreditation in different systems in which they operate.

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5. Open questions on TNE in the light of Bologna Key Commitments

The French Co-Chair opened the second part of the meeting, dedicated to presenting open questions and future approaches to TNE under the lenses of the two Bologna key commitments, namely qualifications framework and quality assurance.

5.1. TPG A on Qualifications Framework

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_5.1_TNE_TPG_A

Baiba Ramina (Latvia, TPG A Co-Chair) presented the work of the TPG A on Qualifications Framework related to transnational education, with a focus on the role of QF-EHEA and EQF in the provision of TNE, and their connection with National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF). They also reiterated the legal and policy measures for use of qualifications frameworks for TNE, namely the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (2015), the revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2016) and the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of TNE (2025).

5.2. TPG C on Quality Assurance

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_5.2_TNE_TPG_C

Varduhi Gyulazyam (Armenia, TPG C Co-Chair) presented the work of the TPG C on Quality Assurance, with a focus on the QA priorities relevant to TNE, as well as four open questions related to *1) Who should take responsibility for TNE – the awarding institution, the delivery partner or sending/receiving authorities?; 2) When can one quality assurance review serve both systems and whether acceptance of quality assurance outcomes and any justified additional requirements is possible?; 3) What evidence supports recognition – the specific programme, delivery site, partner or QA decision?; 4) How could collaborative and digital provision be assured – through European alliances, online learning or hybrid delivery?*.

6. Breakout Sessions: Discussion on challenges and opportunities associated with TNE

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_6_BreakoutSessions

The Italian Co-Chair introduced the breakout sessions, focused on two main questions for discussion*: 1) What are the main challenges and opportunities at national level in implementing the recommendations of the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education regarding the recognition of qualifications awarded through transnational agreements? 2) What suggestions would be offered to further promote the implementation of the Code of Good Practice recommendations by competent recognition authorities at national level?*

The Holy See reported back in plenary for the Group 1, whose members identified among the challenges the different interpretation of terminology on TNE, the absence of a clear legal framework even when joint partnerships exist, the necessity for a coherent framework that would allow for a chain of trust, including in terms of quality assurance processes for TNE provided. Participants also noted the necessity to consider whether a revision or a different format of Diploma Supplement for TNE qualifications is needed. In terms of suggestions, the Holy See highlighted the need for more information about TNE to be made available by institutions providing it, as well as to establish national frameworks for the operation and recognition of TNE, by initiating legal procedures in this regard.

Ireland reported from the discussions of Group 2, which raised the issue of the visibility of TNE and how national legislation could enhance this visibility, but also allow for adaptation in different jurisdictions. The challenge of establishing registers of TNE providers was considered an obstacle, particularly at national level in terms of practical implementation. Moreover, participants noted that collaboration between TNE providers and quality assurance agencies should be strengthened, to support the improvement of TNE visibility and transparency, as well as to build trust. There was also a recommendation for automatic recognition of joint degrees provided in two jurisdictions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina reported from the discussions of Group 3, which underlined the difficulties in implementing the Code of Good Practice given the diversity of educational authorities and education recognition bodies, as well as given the complexity to determine some TNE providers' status. In terms of quality assurance, participants noted the lack of official definition of TNE in many countries' legislation, such as a lack of information provision and even the lack of legal documents in some cases, especially when discussing about institutions which are not accredited by EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies. Participants suggested that systematic cooperation between recognition authorities and quality assurance agencies is needed.

7. Updates from the TPG-LRC Plus project and upcoming publication on TNE

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_7_TPG-LRCPlus_Project

CIMEA (Italy), as project coordinator of the TPG-LRC Plus project aimed at supporting the work of the TPG B on LRC, presented the recent developments of the project, and the project timeline for the upcoming period.

The Holy See suggested that, in the case that the project runs beyond the 2024-2027 EHEA working cycle, the work on the TNE publication should be slightly postponed in order to also take into account the developments on the global perspective, which are being developed under the Global Recognition Convention Bureau's work on the subsidiary text on the quality assurance of TNE and recognition. The TPG B Co-Chairs took note of Holy See's suggestion and confirmed that the project would last until 2028. Italy further mentioned the plan of organising dissemination webinars towards the end of the project.

8. Insights about the organisation of the 4th TPG B on LRC meeting

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_8_FeedbackReport_4thMeeting

The EHEA Secretariat thanked once again the French Co-Chair for hosting the 4th TPG B meeting in Sèvres, France, in June 2026, and briefly presented the main outcomes of the feedback form disseminated among the participants.

9. Wrap-up and conclusions

Documents: TPG_B_IE_ME_9_Conclusions

The Italian Co-Chair closed the meeting with a brief summary of the outcomes from the breakout sessions. She also presented the upcoming steps for the group, reminding about the 6th TPG B on LRC meeting, which will be held on 3rd-4th February 2027 in Rome, Italy. She finally expressed her thanks to speakers and participants for their engagement in the meeting.