



System for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Croatia

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PLA seminar The Role of NQF's and QA in Recognition
Trakošćan, Croatia
11th December 2013

Legal framework

- The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon, 1997 (European Treaty Series, No 165) – *The Lisbon Convention*
- Act on Ascertaining of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Official Gazette, International Agreements 9/2002 and 15/2002) → *ratification of the Lisbon Convention in Croatia*
- Act on Recognition of Foreign Education Qualifications (Official Gazette 158/2003, 198/2003, 138/2006, 045/2011) – *came into force in July 2004*
- Act on Amendments to the Act on Recognition of Foreign Education Qualifications (Official Gazette 138/2006)
- Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education (Official Gazette 123/03, 198/03, 105/04 and 174/04) – *regulates types and levels of higher education in Croatia*
- Criteria for evaluation of foreign higher education qualification by Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office



Recognition of foreign qualifications – competent bodies

- Primary education and general, gymnasium and art secondary education qualifications (for the purpose of employment or continuation of education) – *Education and Teacher Training Agency*
- Vocational secondary education qualifications (for the purpose of employment or continuation of education) – *Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education*
- For the purpose of continuation of or access to primary or secondary education – *school at which the applicant wishes to pursue his/her education*
- Recognition of periods of study (continuation of study) – *Higher Education Institutions*
- Higher education qualifications (HEQs)
 - academic recognition (continuation of study) – *Higher Education Institutions*
 - professional recognition (for employment) – *Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatian ENIC/NARIC office*
- Recognition of professional qualifications (regulated professions), specialisations and state exams – *relevant competent bodies (ministries, chambers, etc.)*



Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office

Within Croatian Agency for science and higher education (ASHE) – national independent public institution responsible for external QA in higher education and science

- Full ENQA member
- Listed in EQAR
- Quality Assurance Role
- Collecting and analysing data on the systems of science and higher education
- Croatian ENIC/NARIC office
- Central Applications Office
- Support to work of various strategic bodies in HE and science
- International cooperation



Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE)

- ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) – since 2011
- EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) – since 2011
- CEENQA (Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) – since 2008
- CIQG (CHEA International Quality Group)
- OECD IMHE forum (Organization for economic co-operation and development/Institutional management in Higher Education) – since 2008
- INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) – since 2006
- APQN (Asia-Pacific Quality Network) – observer status
- Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office
- HEISEE - Higher Education Initiative for Southeastern Europe
- EU projects
- Conferences, workshops, observers at the site visits



Main activities of Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office

- Activities related to the recognition of HEQs
- Providing information to national and international legal entities and individuals on daily basis and by all means of communication
- Issuing recommendations for academic recognition and a period of study
- Issuing opinions and recommendations about foreign qualifications and their comparison to Croatian levels of higher education
 - To assist individuals and employers
- Publishing brochures, leaflets, reports



Changes in recognition practice

Prior to 2004:

Equivalence = recognition as equivalence with a certain national qualification

Since 2004 (Act on Recognition of Foreign Education Qualifications):

Formal recognition = formal acknowledgement of the value of foreign education qualification

Evaluation of foreign education qualification is done exclusively on the basis of acquired knowledge, skills and competences, without the comparison of study programmes.

Professional and academic titles as well as academic degrees are not awarded in the process of professional recognition, but the value of a foreign education qualification is acknowledged formally for the purpose of accession to the labour market.

Since 2006 (The Act on Amendments to the Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications):

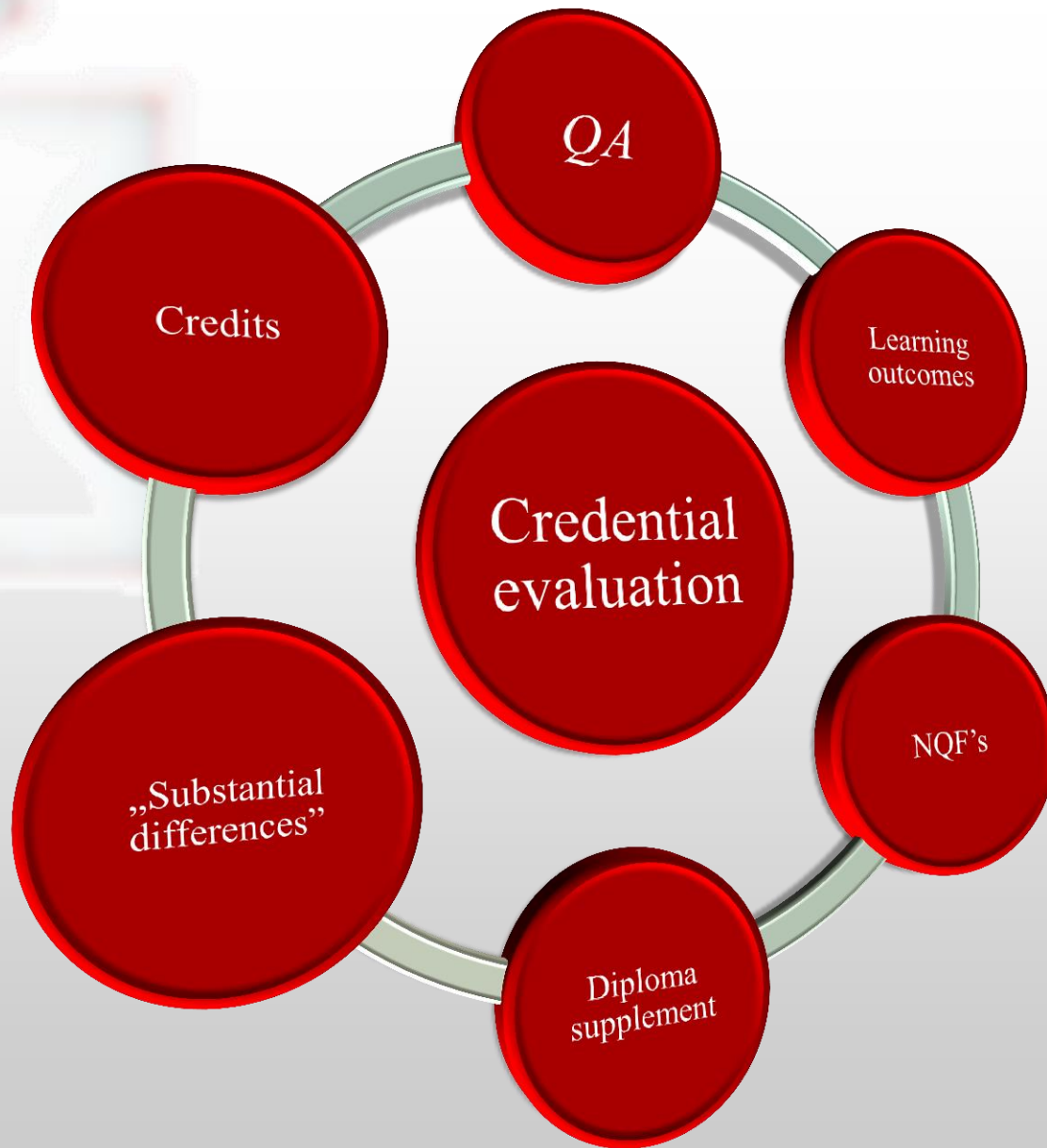
Academic recognition – higher education institutions

Recognition procedure

1. Application is sent to the ENIC/NARIC office (ASHE)
2. ENIC/NARIC Office:
 - a. processes application,
 - b. examines the status of institution and study program,
 - c. writes recommendation and submits it together with the documentation to the expert body (*Council for evaluation of HEQs*),
3. The Agency for Science and Higher Education issues a decision (positive/negative), which is *legally binding document*, and delivers it to the applicant.
4. The individual may appeal to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

NOTE:

Once carried out positive evaluation of a certain foreign higher education qualification shall not be subject to another evaluation, but shall be applicable to all future cases of recognition of the same higher education qualifications.



New changes in recognition practice 2012/2013 (I.)

- Strategic plan/activities for amendments of the Act on recognition of foreign education qualifications
- Croatian ENIC/NARIC office has a strong role in this procedure/dialogue
- Amendments of the Act should be introduced by the beginning of 2014
- Possibility for drafting completely new Act
- Act include recognition framework and procedures for all levels of education

New changes in recognition practice

2012/2013 (II.)

Discussion among different stakeholders (several levels of coordinations) - academic society, universities, agencies responsible for different levels of education, ministry responsible for education - on following topics:

- Stronger use of Bologna/EU tools, e.g. QF's
- Transparent criteria for assessment
- „Framework” of assessment – to which extend do we need to assess – e.g. questions of substantial differences
- Concept of legally binding decision on recognition or non-legally binding document (recommendation)
- QA
- Principles of Directive 2005/36/EC....question of position of qualifications from „third countries”
- Stronger position of Croatian ENIC/NARIC office as National Contact Point according to Directive 2005/36/EC
- Appeals procedure



Improvements made in recognition of foreign qualifications

- Upgraded existing information system
 - Enables easier data input and output as well as statistical analyses concerning the recognition of foreign HEQ
- project MATRA "Strengthening the Role of Croatian ENIC/NARIC Office" (2006 to 2008)
 - Assistance to Croatia with the implementation of the European directive 2005/36/EG dealing with professional recognition
 - Building *National database for recognition of professional qualifications*
- ENIC/NARIC office was appointed as a National contact point
 - pursuant to the Act on regulated professions and recognition of foreign professional qualifications passed on 2 October 2009

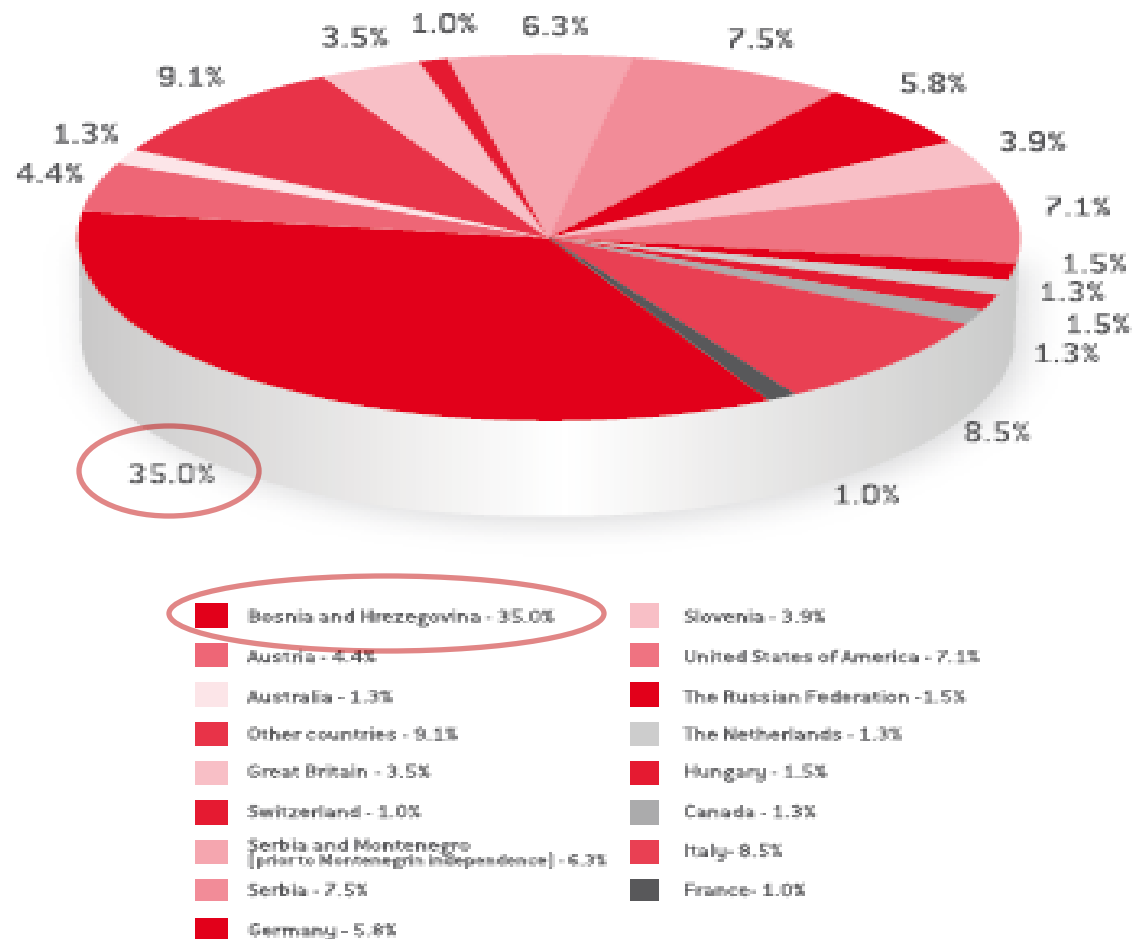


Figures

- professional recognition – over 1700 applications per year
- since 2005 – over 14 000 applications for recognition of foreign HE qualifications
- academic recognition – recommendations to higher education institutions – 200 requests per year
- over 2000 e-mail queries per year

RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS - STATISTICS

Number of applications for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications (in %)





Thank you for your attention!



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