

ERASMUS+ PROJECT 2023-1-RS01-KA220-HED-000156660

## **EPIR | E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Documents**

**Written report containing detailed analysis of each partner's existing regulatory institutional frameworks (with a comparative section), and EU standards and policies regarding the process of recognition of foreign HE documents**

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### **I Introduction**

This report is the outcome of collaborative efforts by all partners involved in the second activity within WP2 - In-depth analyses of existing regulatory institutional frameworks, and EU standards and policies. It is based on legal reports prepared by each partner (Qualification Agency-ENIC/NARIC Centre, "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Marche Polytechnic University, University of Split and University of Novi Sad) and insights gained during the study visit held at the University of Split, Croatia.

The purpose of this report is to consolidate all legal regulations that are currently in force at each partner's institution, briefly summarizing their similarities and differences while providing insights for upcoming activities. By analyzing their respective legal regulations within this package and the whole project, each partner has contributed to enabling other partners, as well as all relevant stakeholders involved in the procedure for recognition of foreign higher education documents, to learn about current procedures at partner's institution and to potentially enhance their existing procedures. Each partner has specifically analyzed the type of the recognition procedure for which they are in charge of. Therefore, the analysis has incorporated two types of the recognition procedures, i.e., the academic recognition procedure - recognition of a foreign higher education

EPIR project partners:



UNIVERSITY  
OF NOVI SAD



UNIVERSITÀ  
POLITECNICA  
DELLE MARCHE



ROMANIA  
1 DECEMBRIE 1918  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA



50 years of  
University  
of Split



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
Qualifications Agency

document for the purpose of continuation of education and the professional recognition procedure - recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose of employment.

## II Partners' Legal Reports

This part contains in-depth analyses of existing regulatory institutional frameworks, and EU standards and policies of each partner:

### 1) University of Novi Sad

#### INTRODUCTION

According to the Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazette of the RS" No. 88/2017, 73/2018, 27/2018- other law, 67/2019, 6/2020- other laws, 11/2021- authentic interpretation, 67/2021, 67/2021- other law and 76/2023) there are two types of procedures for recognition of foreign higher education documents in the Republic of Serbia:

- 1) **Academic recognition procedure** - recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose of continuation of education, which is under the jurisdiction of independent higher education institutions (universities, academies of applied studies, colleges, and colleges of applied studies).
- 2) **Professional recognition procedure** - recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose of employment, which is under the jurisdiction of ENIC/NARIC Centre, the organizational unit of the Qualifications Agency.

#### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

##### 1) The Law on Higher Education

The Law on Higher Education is the main law in the Republic of Serbia, which regulates recognition of foreign higher education documents. It defines two types of recognition procedures, jurisdiction for each type of the recognition procedure, criteria for evaluation of foreign study programmes, which higher education documents are not subject to the recognition procedures (higher education documents acquired in SFRY – until 27 April 1992, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, State Community of Serbia and Montenegro – until 16 June 2006 and in the Republic of Srpska), and prescribes obligation for maintaining records of conducted procedures, obligatory data in the registry and obligation for keeping documentation on conducted procedures permanently.

According to the aforementioned law, the procedure for recognition of a foreign higher education document is conducted in accordance with its provisions unless otherwise provided by an international agreement.

Regarding the academic recognition procedure, the Law also prescribes that the procedure shall be conducted by the professional body of the independent higher education institution, upon previously evaluated foreign study programme or part of the study programme. Evaluation of a foreign study programme shall be conducted based on the type and the level of achieved competencies acquired upon completion of a study programme, considering the system of education in the country where the higher education document was acquired, the admission conditions, the rights stemming from the foreign higher education document in the country in which it was acquired and other relevant facts, without the consideration of formal designations and the structure of the study programme. The information on previously mentioned facts shall be provided by the ENIC/NARIC Centre to the independent higher education institution. Besides, it is stipulated that the continuation of education and the enrolment of the higher educational degree can be conditioned by the obligation of acquiring additional learning outcomes or rejected thereof if determined that there is an essential difference between the type and level of the acquired knowledge and skills and the conditions for the enrolment in a specific study programme. The criteria for determining the existence of the essential difference between the type and level of acquired knowledge and skills and the conditions for enrolment in a specific study programme and the procedure of academic recognition should be prescribed by a general legal act of the independent higher education institution. The decision on the outcome of the academic recognition procedure should be made within 90 days from the date of receipt of a proper request. The decision is final in the administrative procedure. Unless otherwise prescribed, the procedure for academic recognition is subject to the law governing the general administrative procedure.

## **2) Bylaws - The Statute of the University of Novi Sad and the Regulation on evaluation of foreign study programmes and recognition of foreign higher education documents for the purpose of continuation of education**

The University of Novi Sad adopted the general internal act – the *Statute of the University of Novi Sad* (adopted on March 8, 2018, changed: on April 5, 2018- correction, on February 13, 2019, on September 29, 2020, on January 28, 2022, on December 5, 2023), which stipulates that the Expert Councils of the Senate of the University of Novi Sad (6 Expert Councils for different educational scientific/artistic fields) are in charge of making final decision in the academic recognition procedure and that the academic recognition procedure shall be conducted in accordance with provisions of a general internal act adopted by the Senate of the University of Novi Sad.

On September 20, 2018 the Senate of the University of Novi Sad adopted internal act *Regulation on evaluation of foreign study programmes and recognition of a foreign higher education for the purpose of continuation of education*. The last changes to this internal act were adopted on April 27, 2023. The aforementioned internal act prescribes the bodies that are involved in the recognition procedure, their jurisdiction in the procedure, the list of obligatory documents that candidates have to submit and the types of decisions that can be made by Expert Councils of the Senate.

The content of the Regulation is divided into six main parts with the following titles:

### **I Subject Matter of the Act**

## II Basic Terms and General Principles

## III Initiation of the procedure of evaluation of foreign study programs and academic recognition of foreign high education documents

## IV Procedure for evaluation of foreign study programs and academic recognition of foreign higher education documents

## V Record

## VI Transitional and Final Provisions

At the end of the Regulation, it is prescribed that two following models are an integral part of the Regulation and are to be used in the recognition procedure:

1. Application for Academic Recognition of a Foreign Higher Education Document
2. Report on the recognition of a Foreign Higher Education Document for the Continuation of Education

### **3) International Agreements and Treaties**

The Republic of Serbia is a contract party in numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements. The main international acts applied in the recognition procedure are found below:

#### *3.1 The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (The Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997)*

On March 3, 2004, the Republic of Serbia signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The Convention was entered into force on May 1, 2004.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from a signatory country can have adequate access to an assessment of the qualification in another country in a fair, flexible, and transparent way.<sup>1</sup> Acceptance of this Convention is very significant considering the principles on which it is based.

The key points of the Lisbon Recognition Convention:

- No discrimination shall be made in this respect on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin.
- The responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment.
- Each country shall recognise qualifications – whether for access to higher education, for periods of study or for higher education degrees – as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can show that there are substantial differences between its own qualifications and the qualifications for which recognition is sought.
- Recognition of a higher education qualification issued in another country shall have one or more of the following consequences: access to further higher education studies, use of an academic title, and access to the labour market.
- All countries shall develop procedures to assess whether refugees and displaced persons fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.enic-naric.net/page-lisbon-recognition-convention>

- All countries shall provide information on the institutions and programmes they consider as belonging to their higher education systems.
- All countries shall appoint a national information centre, one important task of which is to offer advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications to students, graduates, employers, higher education institutions and other interested parties or persons.
- All countries shall encourage their higher education institutions to issue the Diploma Supplement to their students in order to facilitate recognition.<sup>2</sup>

Taking all that into account, the University of Novi Sad through its procedure relies on and applies the basic principles of this Convention.

### *3.2 Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents (HCCH 1961 Apostille Convention)*

The Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents (HCCH 1961 Apostille Convention) facilitates the use of public documents abroad. The purpose of the Convention is to abolish the traditional requirement of legalization, replacing the often long and costly legalization process with the issuance of a single Apostille certificate by a Competent Authority in the place where the document originates.<sup>3</sup>

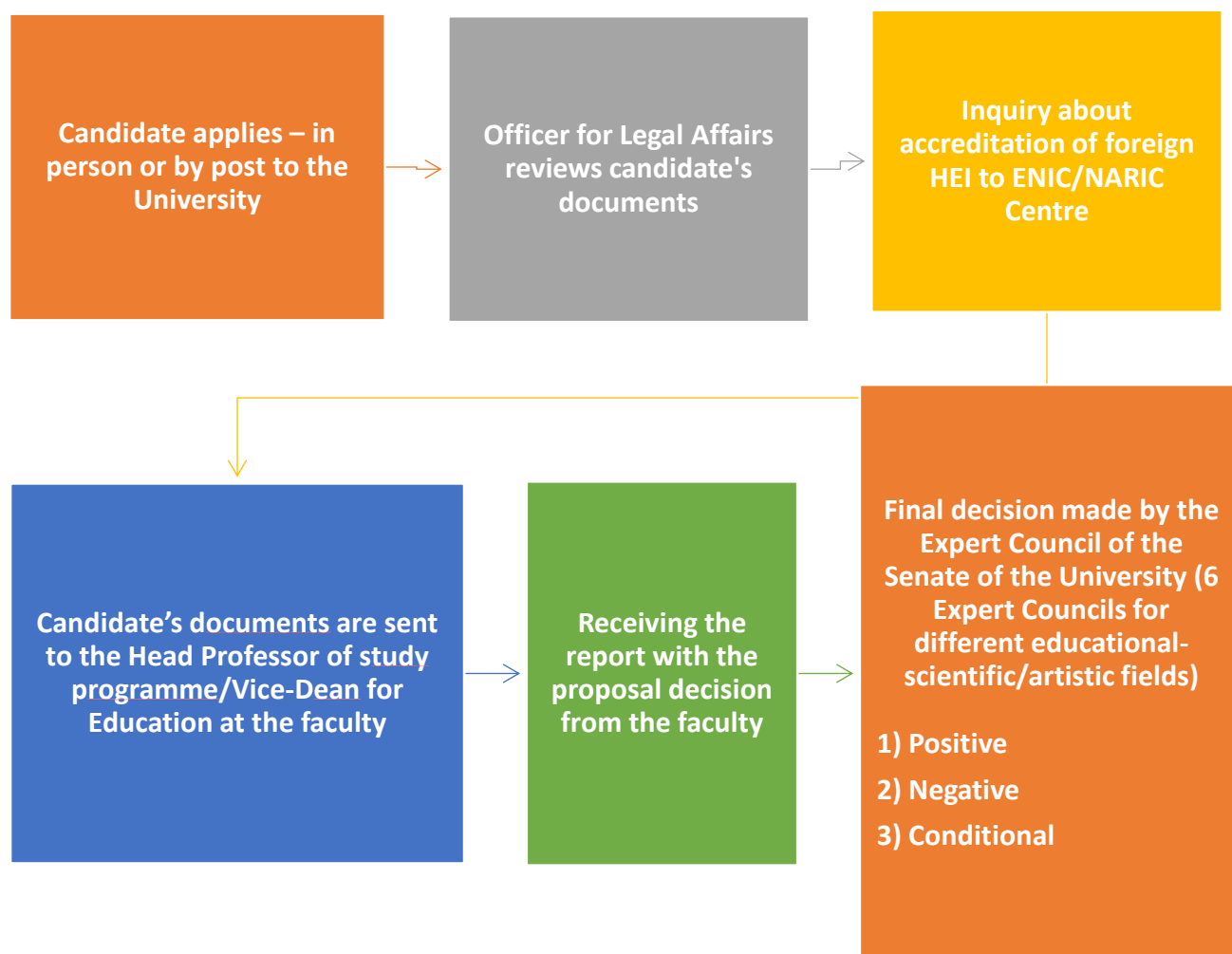
3.3 Mutual bilateral agreements between the Republic of Serbia and other countries that abolish the requirement of legalization for foreign public documents or facilitate the recognition procedure (Montenegro, the Republic of Croatia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Russian Federation...)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.enic-naric.net/page-lisbon-recognition-convention>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/specialised-sections/apostille>

## ACADEMIC RECOGNITION PROCEDURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD



### 1. Submission of the application

- Candidate starts the procedure by applying for academic recognition of a foreign higher education document in person or by post to the University of Novi Sad
- Required documents for the recognition procedure depend on the purpose of application, i.e. the level of studies in which the candidate would like to continue his/her education and they typically include a certified photocopy of the Diploma and the Diploma Supplement or the Transcript of Records, translation of the aforementioned documents into Serbian by a court interpreter\*, official study programme, photocopy of the ID card or passport, proof of payment of the recognition procedure

\*Candidates are not obligated to translate higher education documents acquired in: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Croatia and Montenegro, under the condition that these documents were issued in the official language of the respective countries, unless it is not specifically requested by a competent authority during the evaluation and recognition procedure

- Legalization of foreign higher education public documents (the Diploma, the Diploma Supplement, and the Transcript of Records):
  - diplomatic/consular legalization (“full legalization”) is required if a foreign higher education document is issued in a country with which the Republic of Serbia does not have a bilateral agreement on mutual exemption of public documents from legalization and which is not signatory of the Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (“Apostille Convention”),
  - certification with the Apostille Certificate is required if a foreign higher education document is issued in a country that is a signatory of the “Apostille Convention”, and the Republic of Serbia does not have, with that country, a bilateral agreement on mutual exemption of public documents from legalization,
  - diplomatic/consular legalization is not required nor certification with the Apostille Certificate if a foreign higher education document is issued in a country with which the Republic of Serbia has a bilateral agreement on mutual exemption of public documents from legalization.

2. Review of the submitted application and documentation and the inquiry about the accreditation of the foreign HEI to ENIC/NARIC Centre

- Officer for Legal Affairs in charge of the recognition procedure reviews the submitted application and documentation
- If the application is filled properly and the documentation is complete:
  - the officer sends a request to the ENIC/NARIC Centre asking for information about the accreditation of the foreign higher education institution at which the candidate started/finished his/her previous education (information on system of education in the country where the higher education document was acquired, the admission conditions, the rights stemming from the foreign higher education document in the country in which it was acquired and other relevant facts can also be required) and
  - the confirmation of the initiated recognition procedure is being issued, which enables candidates to apply for admission to the faculty within the University of Novi Sad or the University of Novi Sad itself, depending on where the candidate would like to continue studies
- If the application is not filled properly or the documentation is not complete the candidate receives a decision on the need to submit a properly filled application and documents required for the procedure

3. Sending candidate’s documentation to the Head Professor of Study program/Vice-Dean for Education at the faculty

- When the accreditation of the foreign higher education institution is confirmed by the ENIC/NARIC Centre candidate’s application and documentation altogether with the received information from the ENIC/NARIC Centre are sent to the Head Professor of study programme/Vice-Dean for Education at the faculty where the candidate would like to

continue his/her education for the purpose of making the report with a proposal decision on evaluation of foreign study programme and the possibility for the candidate to continue education in the desired study programme

4. Receiving the report with the proposal decision from the faculty
  - The report with the whole candidate's documentation and the proposal decision based on the received report are sent to the Expert Council of the Senate of the University with the aim of making a decision
5. Making the decision
  - The Expert Council of the Senate of the University (6 councils for different educational-scientific/artistic fields) makes the decision regarding the candidate's application
  - Types of the decision:
    - positive decision
    - negative decision - if determined that there is an essential difference between the type and level of the acquired knowledge and skills and the conditions for the enrolment in a specific study programme and
    - conditional decision - when additional learning outcomes are needed (according to the University's internal act maximum of three additional exams can be required)
  - Once complete, the evaluation of a certain foreign study programme shall be valid for all further cases of recognition of the foreign higher education document when the foreign higher education document was acquired upon completion of the subject study programme
  - The candidate is notified that the decision was made and that the decision have to be taken at the University

## **SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION DOCUMENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD**

### **Strengths**

1. The recognition process is clearly defined through internal regulations
2. Serbian regulation is aligned with the international conventions (the Lisbon Recognition Convention)
3. ENIC/NARIC Centre ensures expertise and support in the recognition process

### **Weakness**

1. Absence of a uniform law at the national level governing the academic recognition procedure at the national level with all its complexity taken into consideration – the existence of differences in the procedures and required documentation at different independent higher education institutions
2. The academic recognition process is not digitalized, candidates do not have the possibility to initiate and conduct the procedure electronically, at a distance. The candidates have to



come in person to submit documentation or to send it via post, which increases the total cost of the procedure.

3. The process often takes several months, which negatively affects the academic plans of the candidates.
4. Many documents are required for the procedure, which increases costs, usage of paper, and is time-consuming

### **Opportunities**

1. Digitalized system for submitting and processing applications can speed up and make the procedure low in cost and more environmentally friendly
2. Increasing the number of recognitions will directly increase the number of foreign students at the university and student mobility
3. Uniform and unambiguous legal framework at a national level governing the academic recognition procedure

### **Threats**

1. National regulations that do not fully recognize the digitalized procedure
2. The digitalized academic recognition procedure functions with difficulty in an environment that is not digitized (office, archive, student services etc.)
3. Differences in educational systems can lead to hardships in the evaluation of foreign study programmes
4. Overloaded system and lack of administrative employees due to an increase in the number of applications

## **2) Qualification Agency- ENIC/NARIC Centre**

The Qualifications Agency was established by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on September 7, 2018, with the adoption of the Decision on the Establishment of the Qualifications Agency ("Official Gazette of the RS" No. 68/2018). The decision was made based on article 14 paragraph 1 of the Law on the National Framework of Qualifications of the Republic of Serbia ("Official Gazette of the RS", no. 27/2018, 6/2020, 129/2021 - other laws and 76/2023), Article 9 of the Law on Public Agencies ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 18/05, 81/05 - correction and 47/18) and Article 43, paragraph 1 of the Law on Government ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 55/05, 71/05 - correction, 101/07, 65/08, 16/11, 68/12 - US, 72/12, 7/14 - US, 44/14 and 30/18 - other laws). The aforementioned decision entered into force on the eighth day from the day of its publication in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", that is, on September 15, 2018.

### **JURISDICTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Providing expertise and professional support in the process of developing qualifications and ensuring quality in the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia and connecting the qualifications system with the European Qualifications

## Framework.

### Main tasks:

- Assessment of initiatives for the introduction of new qualifications
- Provision of expertise and administrative-technical support to sector skills councils (SSC), and development of proposals for qualification standards
- Management of the NQFS Register according to the The National Qualifications Classification System (CLASSNQFS), aligned with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 13-F)
- Recognition of foreign school qualifications and professional recognition (ENIC/NARIC Center)
- Accreditation of providers in non-formal AE (PROAEA)
- External evaluation of PROAEA
- Monitoring the measures and effects of the implementation of (new) qualifications on employment and lifelong learning
- Preparation of developmental projects, analysis and research of importance for the development of qualifications

ENIC/NARIC - center The ENIC/NARIC center is an organizational unit of the The Qualifications Agency that implements the process of recognition of foreign school documents. The procedure for recognizing a foreign school document is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the National Framework of Qualifications of the Republic of Serbia ("Sl glasnik RS", no. 27/18 and 6/20 129/21 – др. закон и 76/23), unless otherwise stipulated by an international agreement.

The ENIC/NARIC Centre, being an organisational unit of the Qualifications Agency implements the following:

- procedure for the recognition of foreign primary school and secondary school documents,
- and the procedure for the recognition of foreign higher education documents for the purpose of employment – professional recognition.

The recognition of a foreign school document is the procedure whereby a qualification acquired abroad is equated to the corresponding, relevant public document of the Republic of Serbia. Following the recognition of a foreign primary school and elementary school document, a person acquires the right to continue education or the right to employment.

### Purpose of recognition:

- Academic recognition - recognition for continuing education - the procedure is carried out at higher education institutions.
- Professional recognition - recognition for employment - the procedure is carried out by the ENIC/NARIC center.

### Education systems:

- Being familiar with educational systems-in order to evaluate foreign higher education documents we need not only to be familiar with education system of the issuing country, but also with educational system of our country in order to determine the level of foreign qualification.

- Evaluation of foreign study program must be quality assured.

Tools for recognition:

- Manuals on the recognition of higher education diplomas (e.g. EAR MANUAL)
- ENIC/NARIC network
- WHED database

#### RECOGNITION OF A FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION DOCUMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

- By recognising the foreign higher education document, through the procedure of professional recognition, a person obtains the right to employment in the labor market of Republic of Serbia.

- Professional recognition is performed by the Qualifications Agency, i.e. the ENIC/NARIC Centre, following the evaluation of the foreign study programme, in accordance with the Law on NQFS and the law regulating higher education.

The Council of Europe has formed a network of information centers and improved cooperation among member states of the Council of Europe (EU and other European countries) in order to facilitate an easier and more secure process of recognizing higher education qualifications obtained from foreign higher education institutions for easier access to the labor market. The basis of cooperation is the trust that exists and is strengthened by better collaboration within the already established European Higher Education Area.

Mutual trust in recognized countries and their education systems, quality control, and accreditation system of higher education institutions and study programs enable faster flow of people, goods, and services, better connection of companies and businesses, adaptation to the labor market, business practices, and the implementation of new technologies. The initial basis is the verification of accreditation status in a recognized foreign country and trust in their quality control system. This facilitates the process and ensures fair treatment of holders of foreign qualifications who bring new quality to the existing labor market.

The European Higher Education Area is based on the principles of the Lisbon Convention and the reform of the higher education system (the so-called Bologna reform), making it easier to recognize qualifications acquired in another work system and employment, or the labor market. The higher education system has three levels: undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies, and two types of study programs: academic and professional, which enables easier recognition and acceptance of qualifications. It is enough to determine the level of qualification and the field of study program attended, which is not always fully comparable to the domestic higher education system and labor market.

The acquired foreign qualification should be recognized in the original title, but the labor market in the Republic of Serbia is still not sufficiently prepared for this, requiring the addition of a title in the Serbian language and an exact designation in relation to the domestic qualification.

The situation in the healthcare sector is particularly rigid, where the system protecting existing staff in the healthcare system, as regulated professions, is sensitive to newcomers with foreign

qualifications entering our labor market. The Law on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications (Law on the National Framework of Qualifications of the Republic of Serbia) determines that the director of The Qualifications Agency makes a decision on professional recognition within 60 days from the date of receiving a complete application. The main novelty introduced by the Law is the possibility of issuing a decision without conducting an evaluation procedure of the foreign study program within 8 days if the higher education document is obtained from one of the top 500 universities ranked on one of the latest international university ranking lists in the world: Shanghai ranking consultancy, US News and World Report Ranking, or The Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

#### **PROCEDURE OF RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION DOCUMENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT – PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

Professional recognition is carried out after the previously performed evaluation of the foreign study program in accordance with the Law on the National Framework of Qualifications of the Republic of Serbia and the law governing higher education.

The interested party submits the request for professional recognition to the Agency electronically on the Agency's portal through the eService:



<http://212.200.100.106:81/enicnaric/prijava/index.cfm>

This method enables a faster and easier submission of requests. You just need to follow the steps that guide you through the application.

If, however, the interested party is not able to submit a request this way, it is necessary to contact the ENIC/NARIC center on the phone: 011/3345-746 on weekdays from 12:00 to 14:00 or send an e-mail to the address: [agencija@azk.gov.rs](mailto:agencija@azk.gov.rs) in order to schedule an appointment with the ENIC/NARIC center and provide the interested party with any needed clarification and to enable the electronic registration.

Before filling out the request, it is necessary to prepare the necessary documentation, which is scanned and then attached in pdf format.

Also, for the sake of easier recognition, it is best to assign the names of the scanned documents according to the name of the attached document, which is specified in the request.

The complete procedure for the professional recognition of foreign higher education documents consists of three steps:

- 1. FILLING OUT THE ELECTRONIC REQUEST;**
- 2. SUBMISSION OF NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION WITH THE COMPLETED ELECTRONIC REQUEST;**

### **3. PERSONAL DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS WHEN RECEIVING THE DECISION ON THE RECOGNITION.**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

- The interested person first fills out the electronic request (mentioned in point 1), then attaches the scanned documentation and scanned proof of fee payment (mentioned in point 2).
- If the attached documentation is incomplete, the applicant will be informed of any necessary additions. The recognition process cannot be started until the documentation is complete.
- Upon completion of the procedure, the applicant will be contacted to receive the Decision on Recognition.
- When receiving the Decision on the recognition, the applicant comes to the Agency and submits:
  - completed, printed and signed electronic request (item 1),
  - the documentation listed in the NOTE section
- The attached documentation is not returned to the applicant and is permanently stored within the archives.

### **1. FILLING OUT THE ELECTRONIC REQUEST**

The request form is an official document necessary to initiate the procedure for the recognition of a foreign higher education document.

The request form must be filled in, printed, signed and attached to the other documentation specified in point 2. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the information in the request with his signature. The recognition procedure cannot be started if the request is not correctly and completely filled out and signed.

### **2. SUBMISSION OF NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION WITH THE COMPLETED ELECTRONIC REQUEST**

The following documents must be submitted with the request (scanned in pdf format) :

#### **1. Original diploma**

The original diploma must be certified with an APOSTIL stamp in the country where the higher education certificate was obtained.

Certification of the original diploma with an APOSTIL seal is not required if the diploma was obtained in countries with which the Republic of Serbia has concluded bilateral agreements on the mutual release of public documents, namely: the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Greece, Republic of Cyprus, Hungary, Republic of North Macedonia, Mongolia, Republic of Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Republic of France, Republic of Croatia, Montenegro, Czech Republic and Republic of Slovenia.

For the signatory countries of the Hague Convention with which the Republic of Serbia has not concluded bilateral agreements on the mutual release of public documents, it is necessary to certify the original diploma with an APOSTIL stamp. You can access the list of countries that have

signed the Hague Convention through the following link:  
<https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/status-table/?cid=41>

For all other countries that are not signatories to the Hague Convention and that are not on the list of countries with which the Republic of Serbia has concluded bilateral agreements on the mutual exemption of public documents from legalization, full legalization of public documents is carried out. You can find out more about the process of legalization at this link:  
<https://www.mfa.gov.rs/gradjani/usluge/overa-dokumenata>

## **2. Original diploma supplement or exam transcript**

The original diploma supplement or exam transcript contains the following information: passed exams with grades, official title and duration of the study program. If it is a doctorate degree that does not have a supplement to the degree or a transcript of the passed exams, it will not be submitted.

## **3. Serbian translations of documents under items 1 and 2 by an authorized court interpreter**

It is not necessary to submit translations of foreign higher education documents from the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and Montenegro. Instead of translating the documents, the certified copies should be scanned and attached to the electronic application. If the original diploma was issued bilingually, it does not matter from which language it is translated.

## **4. Previously obtained higher education certificates (diplomas)**

If there exist - attach the diploma and the diploma supplement or the transcript of the exam in case there is no diploma supplement. If the applicant previously obtained a higher education certificate abroad, it is necessary to attach a certified translation of the said documents. In the event that the previously acquired foreign higher education document has already been recognized at universities in the Republic of Serbia or at the Serbian ENIC/NARIC center, submit the Decision on Recognition instead of the diploma and diploma supplement or transcript of the examination of previous studies.

## **5. ID or passport copy**

## **6. Decision of the competent authority or a copy of the marriage certificate**

If the applicant has changed his/her name and/or surname and has different surnames in the submitted documentation, it is necessary to attach the decision of the competent authority, a copy of the marriage certificate or any other document that proves that the applicant has changed his/her name and/or surname.

## **7. A short biography in either Serbian or English, from which the course of education must be seen. A resume is also possible.**

## **8. For the recognition of doctoral studies it is necessary to attach the doctoral dissertation in the original language in electronic form.**

The doctoral dissertation can be submitted by specifying the link on which it is located, i.e. by submitting it in electronic form.

The extended abstract of the dissertation (in Serbian or English) is submitted in electronic form.

When recognizing doctoral studies, it is necessary to provide a list of published scientific works and where they were published.

#### **9. Submission of proof of payment of the procedure costs**

The fee for one request for the issuance of a decision on the recognition of a foreign higher education document for the purpose of employment is charged based on Article 3, paragraph 3 of the Rulebook on the amount of the fee for public services provided by the Qualifications Agency.

When paying the mentioned fee, if the payer is not the applicant at the same time, i.e. the payment is being made for another person, it is mandatory to state the name and surname of the person who will be the user of the services of the Qualifications Agency, i.e. on whose behalf the payment is being made.

#### **NOTE:**

When receiving the Decision on Recognition, the applicant is obliged to submit: A completed, printed and signed electronic application, the original diploma and diploma supplement or examination transcript for inspection (a certified copy is not the same as the original document) and one of the following:

1) In the case when the diploma, which is in the process of recognition, has been translated in the Serbian language:

Translation of the diploma and the diploma supplement or the exam transcript with a copy of the original certified by a court interpreter.

2) In the case when the diploma, which is in the process of recognition, is from countries from which translation is not required (Bosnia and Montenegro, Republic of Croatia and Montenegro):

A certified copy of the diploma and diploma supplement or transcript of the same exam.

If it is a doctoral diploma, which has neither a supplement to the diploma nor a transcript of the exam, they will not be submitted. Holders of a doctoral degree must also bring a physical copy of the doctoral thesis. Submission of the doctoral thesis can be in printed format, on flash drive or CD.

#### **CERTIFICATION AND TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS:**

- The translation into Serbian is performed and certified by an authorized court interpreter in the Republic of Serbia for the foreign language in which the foreign higher education certificate was issued. Copies of diplomas translated by a court interpreter do not need to be certified by a notary, if the court interpreter has certified the copy with his seal.
- The website of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia contains a list of authorized court interpreters.
- Also, you can take a look at the Rulebook on the List of Professional, Academic and Scientific Titles.
- Copies of public documents in the Republic of Serbia are certified by a notary public (list of notary public offices).

#### **1. PERSONAL DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS WHEN RECEIVING THE DECISION ON THE RECOGNITION**

If the request is incomplete or one of the pdf files is incorrect, the applicant will receive a notification to complete it.

The deadline for drafting the Decision by the Agency is 60 (sixty) days from the date of the reception of the request with complete documentation. If the higher education certificate was obtained at one of the 500 universities ranked in one of the most recently published international rankings of universities in the world by Shanghai ranking consultancy (Shanghai List), US News and World Report Ranking (US News and World Report rating list) or The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the decision on professional recognition is made within 8 (eight) days from the day of the reception of the request with complete documentation. When the decision is made, the applicant will be notified electronically. The decision can be picked up within 30 (thirty) days from the day of receiving this notice, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m..

If the applicant is not able to personally pick up the Decision on the recognition and submit the documentation, he is obliged to inform the ENIC/NARIC center, via email [agencija@azk.gov.rs](mailto:agencija@azk.gov.rs), which person will pick up the Decision and submit the necessary documents.

If the foreign higher education document whose recognition is requested was not issued in the Latin or the Cyrillic script (e.g. in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and other scripts), it is necessary to ask the competent higher education institution to issue a new document in one of those two scripts. If the applicant wishes to submit requests for different levels of study, it is necessary for the applicant to fill out a separate request for each level of study, submit separate documentation and pay a separate fee for the costs of the procedure. In the Agency's decision on diploma recognition, each level of higher education studies that was previously completed is specified, so it is not mandatory to submit a request for previously completed levels of studies. Therefore, this is done only if the applicant insists on the individual recognition of each higher education diploma he has obtained.

**NOTE:** The decision issued by the Qualifications Agency has the status of a public document and is final in the administrative procedure. For this reason, after picking up the Decision, we advise you to make a photocopy of the said Decision, have the copies certified by a public notary and hand them over to your employer, and keep the original with you.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

**STRENGTHS:** Online application for recognition and communication with candidates. Precise instructions on website.

**WEAKNESSES:** Not a completely digitalized procedure. Candidates still have to come physically to get their final recognition document (decision on the recognition) and present original document. (scanned document is not considered an original)

When it comes to inadequate awareness and information of the applicant regarding electronic application, it is important to provide additional resources and support to facilitate understanding of the electronic application process. This may include additional training, step-by-step instructions, or even direct support via phone or email. It is important to ensure that the applicant is sufficiently informed and supported during this process in order to successfully complete it.

**OPPORTUNITIES:** Procedure can be fully digitalized which procedure have to be harmonized with national legislative. We know this from experience with other ENIC/NARIC centres.

**THREATS:** Bad regulations which force us to use outdated methods of work.



### 3) "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia

Recognition is a concept in continuous dynamic.

Recognition in view of access to studies.

The categories of citizens that can benefit from recognition: European citizens (Romania, EU, EEA, The Swiss Confederation), refugees, international protection beneficiaries, third country citizens assimilated to European citizens, third country citizens.

Recognition is made by the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) and the General Directorate of International Relations and European Affairs (DGRIAE) as follows:

- CNRED for:
  - European citizens (Romania, EU, EEA, The Swiss Confederation),
  - Refugees, international protection beneficiaries,
  - Third country citizens assimilated to European citizens.
- DGRIAE for:
  - Third countries citizens.

In Romania, the Ministry of Education, through the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED), evaluates and recognizes study certificates issued for citizens of the European Union, the EEA and the Swiss Confederation, for their family members and beneficiaries of certain forms of international protection, for the purpose of continuing studies in Romania. This also applies to certificates and diplomas held by citizens from **non-EU countries for access to the Romanian labor market only**.

The evaluation and recognition of studies/diplomas obtained abroad are carried out by comparing them to the Romanian educational system to establish the level/ field and/ or specialization.

#### **Recognition and Equivalence of University Studies**

CNRED recognizes university-level study documents (bachelor's, master's and doctorate) by evaluating and determining the level, field, and/or specialization of the study certificate obtained abroad in relation to the Romanian education system.

Following the assessment, CNRED may recognize the studies directly or by applying differential exams or other compensatory measures. To meet the criteria for admission to studies, CNRED recognizes the level of the diploma and the field of study. If the specialization obtained abroad has a correspondent in Romania, CNRED recognizes this specialization upon request.

The recognition period for bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees is 30 working days. This term can be extended accordingly in case of additional checks or in the case when CNRED submits the doctor's diploma file for evaluation to the National Council for Attesting Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (C.N.A.T.D.C.U).

## **Automatic Recognition**

The automatic recognition of diplomas obtained in a member state of the European Union, the EEA and the Swiss Confederation ensures access to continuing studies in Romania.

For admission to university education in Romania, CNRED collaborates with higher education institutions to fulfill the specific admission criteria.

**For access to the labor market**, CNRED recognizes bachelor's, master's and doctorate level study documents obtained at universities in the EU and **prestigious universities in other states**, without requiring the taking of differential exams or other compensatory measures. This provision does not apply to diplomas that give access to the exercise of a regulated profession, in which case compliance with the minimum mandatory provisions established by European and national legislation is verified.

For access to the labor market, CNRED recognizes bachelor's, master's, and doctorate-level study documents obtained from universities in the EU and prestigious universities from other countries, without requiring differential exams or other compensatory measures. This provision does not apply to diplomas granting access to regulated professions, where compliance with minimum mandatory provisions established by European and national legislation is verified.

Following the evaluation, CNRED may automatically recognize study documents obtained from universities in the EU and prestigious universities from other countries or with the application of differential exams or other compensatory measures, the diploma level, field of study and/or specialization. In the recognition procedure for further studies, CNRED collaborates with higher education institutions in Romania. The document issued by CNRED following the evaluation is the Certificate of Equivalence/Recognition of Studies, which allows the continuation of studies or access to the labor market in Romania.

## **Romanian Students**

Upon returning to the country after completing a bachelor's, master's/postgraduate academic studies, or doctoral studies, the university bachelor's diploma must be equated. A file must be submitted in accordance with the legal procedures in force.

## **Citizens of EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation / Family Members / Subsidiary Protection**

Citizens wishing to pursue master's/doctoral/DPPD (teacher training special) studies in Romania can request the recognition of their diploma via the higher education institution they wish to enroll in or directly via the National Center for Diploma Recognition and Equivalence to obtain the certificate/ recognition certificate of studies.

In Romania, the recognition of study documents is regulated by national legislation by the following normative acts:

*National Legislation:*

- OMENCS no. 5923 / 06.12.2016 approving the methodology for the recognition of PhD diploma and doctorate title in science or in a professional field, obtained abroad,
- OMENCS no. 6121 / December 20, 2016, approving the Methodology for the recognition of bachelor's, master's, or postgraduate study documents issued by accredited higher education institution abroad.

At the institutional level, we have a single internal normative act on this subject, namely the Methodology regarding the recognition at "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia of the doctorate diploma and the title of doctor in sciences or in a professional field obtained abroad.

Through OMECS no. 6121 / December 20, 2016, the Methodology for recognizing bachelor's, master's, or postgraduate study documents issued by accredited higher education institutions abroad was approved.

Recognition involves evaluating and establishing the level, field and/or specialization of the study document obtained abroad compared to the Romanian education system, which can result in issuing a certificate. The recognition certificate grants the holder the right to continue their studies and/or access the labor market, under the law.

The present methodology applies to study documents attesting the completion of bachelor's, master's, or a postgraduate program of continuous professional training and development at an accredited higher education institution abroad.

Recognition applies to the following categories of citizens:

- a) Romanian citizens, citizens of EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation,
- b) Family members of Romanian and EU citizens from third countries,
- c) Citizens from third countries with permanent resident status in Romania and long-term resident status granted by one of the EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation,
- d) Citizens from third countries benefiting from a form of international protection in Romania,
- e) Citizens from third countries other than those mentioned in c) and d), **only for access to the labor market in Romania.**

For those mentioned above who want to continue their studies in Romania, except those mentioned in c), CNRED:

- a) Automatically recognizes study documents obtained in EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation, as well as study documents issued by prestigious universities in third countries, listed in the List of prestigious universities from third countries, approved by Order of the Minister of Education,
- b) Recognizes study documents obtained in third countries at universities other than those listed in the List of prestigious universities from third countries, approved by Order of the Minister of Education.

For access to the labor market in Romania for the above-mentioned citizens, CNRED recognizes study documents as follows:

- a) Automatically recognizes study documents obtained in EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation, as well as in third countries at prestigious universities, listed in the List of prestigious universities from other countries, approved by Order of the Minister of Education,
- b) Recognizes study documents obtained in third countries at universities other than those on the List of prestigious universities from third countries, approved by Order of the Minister of Education,

c) For obtaining the free practice right for a regulated profession in Romania, CNRED recognizes both study documents obtained in third countries by European citizens and by the other categories of citizens mentioned in the profession's regulatory acts, as well as diplomas obtained in EU, EEA Member States, and the Swiss Confederation that grant access to regulated professions, unless otherwise stated by the profession's regulatory acts,

d) For a regulated profession in Romania, CNRED recognizes study documents obtained by third-country citizens for employment without free practice right.

In the evaluation procedure of study documents, CNRED takes into consideration:

a) If the study document belongs to the category of national study documents issued by the higher education system in the country of origin,

b) The status of the higher education institution in the country of origin,

c) The right to continue studies in the country of origin granted by the previous study document,

d) The qualification level certified by the study document,

e) The study field/program, the curriculum/workload/learning outcomes, if applicable.

Recognition of study documents under international treaties is carried out according to their provisions.

In the evaluation and recognition procedure, CNRED may consider previous decisions in similar cases.

Based on university autonomy, presenting the recognition certificate issued by CNRED does not limit the right of a Romanian higher education institution to apply specific conditions for access to university studies, including regarding the duration and number of transferable credits accumulated.

Study documents are recognized if the following cumulative conditions are met:

a) The higher education institution issuing the study document is accredited in the country of origin,

b) The qualification level corresponding to the study document is similar to the one in the Romanian higher education system,

c) The field of study and/or study program, curriculum/workload/learning outcomes, where applicable, are similar to those in the Romanian higher education system.

If the evaluation of the elements mentioned above under c) reveals substantial differences compared to the Romanian higher education system, CNRED may recognize study documents by applying compensatory measures, such as continuing studies, taking differential exams, and/or undergoing internships in accredited study programs in Romania.

CNRED may decide to not recognize a study document if the conditions under a) and b) are not met, as well as in other situations, in compliance to the national legislation and international good practices and recommendations.

For joint study programs organized by two or more accredited higher education institutions from Romania and abroad, finalized with a diploma issued by each institution, study documents issued abroad are not subject to recognition, as the diploma issued by the Romanian higher education institution grants the holder all rights.

The recognition file for study documents obtained by the categories of citizens mentioned under a)-d), who request to continue studies in Romania and/or access the labor market in Romania, includes the following documents:

- a) Application form,
- b) Copy of identity documents and proof of name change (if applicable), copy and certified translation,
- c) Study documents- a copy for documents issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian or a copy and authorized translation for other foreign languages,
- d) If specialization recognition is requested, diploma supplement/transcript of records, in copy for documents issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian, and authorized translation for other foreign languages,
- e) For exercising a regulated profession, other relevant documents (e.g. analytical course programs, complete course descriptions/subjects studied, documents related to postgraduate courses, etc.) - copy for documents issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian, and certified translation for other foreign languages,
- f) Proof of payment of the 50 lei evaluation fee, copy,
- g) Other documents, if applicable.

For citizens from third countries mentioned under e) who request access **to the labor market in Romania**, the file includes the following documents:

- a) Application,
- b) Employer's letter requesting the issuance of the recognition certificate for obtaining the work permit,
- c) Identity documents copy and proof of name change (if applicable), copy and authorized translation,
- d) Study documents- copy for documents issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian, or copy and certified translation for other foreign languages,
- e) For specialization recognition, diploma supplement/transcript of records, copy for documents issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian, and authorized translation for other foreign languages,
- f) Proof of payment of the 50 lei evaluation fee, copy,
- g) Other documents, if applicable.

The study documents subject to recognition are authenticated with the Hague Apostille for the states that are parties to the Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents, adopted at The Hague on October 5, 1961, to which Romania is a party. For other states, the study documents are legalized or accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the competent authorities from the country of origin. Exemption from apostille or legalization is permitted under the law, an international treaty to which Romania is a party, or on a reciprocal basis.

If the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) identifies any suspicions regarding the authenticity of the study documents, it informs the Legal General Directorate within the Ministry of Education in writing for the purpose of notifying the competent authorities.

Recognition files are submitted:

- a) for the continuation of studies in Romania, in higher education institutions or the Ministry of Education Registration Office, directly or by post,
- b) for gaining access to the labor market in Romania, to the Ministry of Education Registration Office, directly or by post.

The processing time for the files is a maximum of 30 working days from the date the complete dossier is registered with CNRED. If CNRED finds that the file does not contain all the required documents, it notifies the applicant in writing, either by post or by electronic mail. The file must be completed within a maximum of 1 year from the date of receiving the notification; otherwise, CNRED will close the file, and the procedure will have to be restarted with the submission of a new dossier.

The decision of CNRED can be appealed only once, within 45 working days from the date of notification. CNRED will respond to the request within 60 working days. The processing time can be extended in justified cases, and the applicant will be notified in writing, either by postal services or electronic mail.

The recognition certificate is issued as follows:

- a) to the holder,
- b) to a person authorized via a notarial power of attorney,
- c) to the delegate of the employer or educational institution in Romania,
- d) through postal services.

When the holder uses the recognition certificate, the Higher education institutions and employers may request that the holder submit the documents based upon which the certificate was issued in a format other than the one established in the methodology (original, simple copy or certified copy, authorized and/or certified translation, etc.).

In case of loss, destruction, deterioration of the certificate, and other situations, CNRED issues, upon request, a duplicate. CNRED can issue, upon request, a new recognition certificate without applying the evaluation procedure if a recognition certificate has previously been issued for the same study document.

At an institutional level, there is a Methodology for the recognition of the doctoral degrees and the title of Doctor of Science or in a professional field obtained abroad.

This Methodology includes the principles and procedures for recognition by the "1 December 1918" University of Alba Iulia (UAB) of doctoral degrees and the title of Doctor of Science or in a professional field obtained abroad, in accordance with the provisions contained in the OMENCS no. 5923 / 06.12.2016 approving the methodology for the recognition of PhD diploma and doctorate title in science or in a professional field, obtained abroad published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 1014/16.12.2016.

## I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(1) The institution organizing doctoral studies (IOSUD) – University of Alba Iulia, recognizes the doctoral degree and the title of Doctor of Science or in a professional field obtained at:

- a) Accredited institutions of higher education or research-development institutions from a Member State of the European Union, European Economic Area and Swiss Confederation,
- b) Accredited institutions of higher education or research-development institutions included in the list of prestigious universities from other countries, approved by the Minister of Education, regularly updated,
- c) Accredited institutions of higher education or research-development institutions subject to international mutual recognition agreements signed at intergovernmental level or Interuniversity level.

(2) IOSUD-UAB permanently cooperates with the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) to recognize the diplomas mentioned at 1. and send a **semestrial centralized report of the recognition requests**.

(3) IOSUD-UAB bases its recognition on the present methodology, approved by the UAB Senate for enrollment in post-graduate studies, obtaining habilitation, and occupying a teaching or research position within UAB.

(4) IOSUD-UAB may consult, if necessary, with CNRED and National Council for Attesting Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNRED).

## **II. THE FILE, PROCEDURE AND ISSUING OF THE RECOGNITION DECISION**

### **II.1. Contents of the file for recognition of the doctoral diploma obtained abroad**

(1) The file for recognising the doctoral diploma obtained abroad includes:

- a) recognition request, signed by the applicant,
- b) identity document – copy and proof of name change – copy and certified translation (if applicable),
- c) doctoral degree – copy (for Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian) or copy and certified translation (for any other foreign language),
- d) order regarding the awarding of the doctoral degree issued by the competent authority in the issuing country - copy (for Romanian, English, French, Spanish, Italian) or copy and translation (for any other foreign languages),
- e) proof of payment of the recognition file processing fee. The processing fee will be approved annually by the Senate before the start of the academic year. The fee can be paid into account RO80TREZ00220F330500XXXX,
- f) other documents, if applicable.

(2) The study documents subject to recognition are authenticated with the Hague Apostille for countries that are parties to the Hague Apostille Convention. For other countries, the study documents are legalized or accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the competent authorities from the country of origin. Exemption from apostille or legalization is permitted under the law, an international treaty to which Romania is a party, or on a reciprocal basis.

(3) If IOSUD-UAB identifies any suspicions regarding the authenticity of the study documents, it notifies CNRED.

(4) The file for the recognition of a doctoral degree obtained abroad can be submitted:

- in person, at the General Registry of UAB, Alba Iulia, str. Gabriel Bethlen no. 5,
- online, at the address [doctorat@uab.ro](mailto:doctorat@uab.ro),
- through the Single Electronic Contact Point (PCUe),
- through postal/courier services. The recognition request will receive a registration number.

(5) After the legality check of the documents in the dossier carried out by the legal advisor of UAB, the file is forwarded to the Council for Doctoral University Studies.

### **II.2. The procedure for the Recognition of Doctoral Degrees and the Title of Doctor of Science or in a Professional Field Obtained Abroad**

(1) The recognition file is evaluated by the Council for Doctoral University Studies (CSUD) of IOSUD-UAB. To verify the study documents, the committee may use the Internal Market Information System (IMI) and the translation tool created by the European Commission.

(2) The processing time for the files by CSUD is 30 calendar days from the date the complete file is registered.

(3) If CSUD finds that the file does not contain the documents specified in II, paragraph (1), it notifies the applicant. The file must be completed within a maximum of 45 calendar days from the date of receiving the notification; otherwise, CSUD will close the file, and the procedure will have to be restarted with the submission of a new file.

(4) The decision made by CSUD is communicated to the applicant:

- at the University's office, during the University's working hours,
- by mail, to the declared address,
- electronically to the address indicated in the recognition request submitted in the file,
- through the Single Electronic Contact Point (PCUe), scanned from the original documents.

(5) The CSUD decision can be appealed within 10 working days from the date of its communication to the applicant. The appeal is submitted following the same procedure as in II.1(4) and is resolved by the Appeals Resolution Committee. The report and decision of the Appeals Resolution Committee are issued within 10 days from the committee's appointment. After the expiration of the appeal periods, the report and decision of CSUD or, if applicable, the report and decision of the Appeals Resolution Committee are forwarded to the Rector, who issues the Decision of Recognition/Non-Recognition. The Rector's decision is communicated to the applicant within 5 days from its issuance.

(6) Against the Rector's decision of non-recognition, the applicant may file an appeal with the competent court within 30 days from the date of notification.

### **III. FINAL PROVISIONS FOR DOCTORAL DEGREES**

(1) The recognition of the doctoral degree and the title of Doctor of Science or in a professional field by UAB is valid and produces legal effects only at the level of this higher education institution.

(2) The certificate of recognition of the doctoral degree is issued to the applicant:

- at the University's office, during the University's working hours,
- by mail, to the declared address,
- electronically to the address indicated in the recognition request submitted in the file,
- through the Single Electronic Contact Point (PCUe), with a qualified electronic signature.

The methodology regarding the recognition at the "1 December 1918" University of Alba Iulia of the doctoral degree and the title of Doctor of Science or in a professional field obtained abroad can be found on the UAB website at the address:



#### **IV. Regarding the admission, the general procedural rules in Romania are:**

Access to studies is made by *de facto* recognition of study documents issued by universities. For admission to studies, the recognition is made by CNRED.

Citizens from Romania, EU, EEA and the Swiss confederation, as well as British citizens and their families, as beneficiaries of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community 2019/C 384 I/01 admitted for short term university studies, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs at public, private, or denominational higher education institutions can only enroll based on the baccalaureate, bachelor's, or master's diplomas recognized in accordance with the methodologies developed by the specialized departments within the Ministry of Education.

In the case of recognition documents issued online by the specialized departments within the Ministry of Education, the candidates are to send them electronically to the faculty/department registry, within the timeframe established by their own Admission Regulations. For enrollment, candidates who send the recognition document electronically are required to submit a sworn declaration to confirm their state-funded place.

Failure to present the original baccalaureate/graduation/bachelor's/dissertation diploma/recognition document or certificate, due solely to the admitted candidate's fault, within the timeframe established by their own Admission Regulations, will result in the loss of the state-funded place.

Mentioning the Certificate/Attestation of recognition in the diploma supplement is mandatory.

The submission of files to CNRED can be done as follows:

- Online, through the Single Electronic Contact Point for diplomas issued in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, or Italian – from accounts accessed via ROeID, eIDAS, Qualified Digital Certificate, or ghiseul.ro. Files submitted from accounts accessed through eDirect are not processed.
- Online, through the Single Electronic Contact Point for diplomas issued in other foreign languages – from accounts accessed via ROeID, eIDAS, Qualified Digital Certificate, or ghiseul.ro. Files submitted from accounts accessed through eDirect are not processed.
- At the University.

#### **Diploma recognition by CNRED**

##### **In view of admission for higher education, CNRED recognizes:**

- Baccalaureate diplomas,
- Bachelor's diplomas,
- Master's diplomas.

High school graduates from internationally accredited systems recognized by the Ministry of Education are entitled to participate in the admission process for Romanian higher education, including in the year of their high school graduation, through a conditional acceptance procedure. The admitted candidate must submit the equivalent International Baccalaureate diploma within

maximum 6 months from admission. If the admitted candidate does not submit the equivalent International Baccalaureate diploma within 6 months, they will be expelled.

The mechanism for the admission to Romanian higher education of high school graduates from internationally accredited systems recognized by the Ministry of Education involves the development of a procedure at each higher education institution, in compliance with the legal regulations in force.

#### Recognition of Diplomas by Universities

##### *a. Access to Studies*

A diploma obtained abroad is "accepted" by the higher education institution for the purpose of registering for the admission competition.

##### *b. Recognition of Study Periods*

Universities can consult:

- [www.whed.net](http://www.whed.net) or
- CNRED
- the list of prestigious universities worldwide approved by OMEd

##### *c. Recognition of Credits and Learning Outcomes*

Universities recognize the credits allocated to the bachelor's cycle and do not allow access to a 1-year, 60 ECTS master's cycle if the bachelor's cycle does not attest to obtaining 240 ECTS, even if there is a recognition certificate with the bachelor's diploma issued by CNRED.

#### **Automatic Recognition**

Automatic recognition becomes a reality through the continuous collaboration between Universities and CNRED from the perspective of internationalization.

#### **V. Admission of foreign citizens from non-EU, EEA and the Swiss Confederation at “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia**

The Admission is organized for each university study cycle in accordance to the [Higher Education Law no. 199/2023](#) (updated), as well as in accordance to:

- OMECS 3473/17.03.2017 for the Approval of the Methodology for Admission and Schooling of Foreign Citizens Starting with the 2017-2018 School/Academic Year, with Subsequent Amendments and Additions
- OMECS 3236/10.02.2017 regarding the approval of the Methodology for Admission and Schooling of Foreign Citizens in Tuition-Free Places with Scholarships and Tuition-Free Places without Scholarships in Accredited State Higher Education Institutions.

Foreign citizens are the persons who have citizenship in a EU country, proven by a valid passport, excluding those of Romanian citizenship.

#### **Admission to Bachelor's degree Studies**

Foreign citizens can access Bachelor's degree studies in accredited higher education institutions in Romania if they meet the following conditions cumulatively:

- They have documentation proving they are citizens of a non-EU state,

- They have graduated and hold a baccalaureate diploma or an equivalent, according to the list in the annex. For graduates of the current academic year, only official certificates that serve as diplomas and contain the results that will be included in the future diploma can be accepted.

The application file for the foreign citizens contains the following:

- a) birth certificate – copy and authorized translation,
- b) copy of a document stating the permanent residence abroad,
- c) passport copy,
- d) request for the acceptance letter,
- e) copy and certified translation of the baccalaureate diploma or its equivalent, certified by the empowered authorities in the issuing country,
- f) copy and certified translation of the certificate proving the passing of the baccalaureate exam for the current year's graduates,
- g) transcript of records – copies and certified translations, pertaining to the completed studies,
- h) the graduation certificate for the Romanian language course or the language proficiency certificate, as applicable,
- i) medical certificate (in an internationally recognized language) certifying that the candidate does not suffer from contagious diseases or any other illnesses incompatible with the future profession.

The admission procedure applied to candidates unfolds as follows:

- a) The application files are directly submitted to the accredited higher education institutions chosen by the candidates, following the respective institution's own methodology,
- b) The higher education institutions evaluate the files in accordance with the current legal regulations and communicate to the Ministry of Education - General Directorate for International Relations and European Affairs (MEN-DGRIAE) the list of individuals proposed for the issuance of the acceptance letter for studies,
- c) The list of candidates is transmitted to the Ministry of Education (ME) according to the established template,
- d) The list is accompanied by an electronic copy of each candidate's file. The electronic copy of the file will be made available to the Ministry of Education through platforms or other online means managed by the higher education institutions or through a portable storage medium,
- e) The number of transmitted files must not exceed the maximum number of students who can be enrolled, in accordance with the current regulations,
- f) After reviewing the files, the Ministry of Education issues the acceptance letter,
- g) The Ministry of Education sends the acceptance letters to the higher education institutions and, if applicable, to the diplomatic missions, both in physical and electronic formats,
- h) Incomplete files will not be processed and will be declared rejected. If the files are completed, the higher education institutions will follow the steps described in the admission methodology to process them by the Ministry of Education,
- i) The physical application files of candidates who renounce their obtained place will be returned by the higher education institutions within 48 hours of the submission of the request, without additional fees.

## **Admission to Master's degree Studies**

Foreign citizens can access Master's degree studies in accredited higher education institutions in Romania if they meet the following conditions cumulatively:

- They have documentation proving they are citizens of a non-EU state,
- They have graduated and hold a Bachelor's diploma or an equivalent.

The application file for the foreign citizens contains the following:

- a) birth certificate – copy and authorized translation,
- b) copy of a document stating the permanent residence abroad,
- c) passport copy,
- d) request for the acceptance letter,
- e) copy and certified translation of the baccalaureate diploma or its equivalent, certified by the empowered authorities in the issuing country,
- f) copy and certified translation of the Bachelor's diploma or its equivalent, certified by the empowered authorities in the issuing country,
- g) transcript of records/diploma supplements – copies and certified translations, pertaining to the completed studies,
- h) the graduation certificate for the Romanian language course or the language proficiency certificate, as applicable,
- i) medical certificate (in an internationally recognized language) certifying that the candidate does not suffer from contagious diseases or any other illnesses incompatible with the future profession.

The admission procedure applied to candidates unfolds as follows:

- a) The application files are directly submitted to the accredited higher education institutions chosen by the candidates, following the respective institution's own methodology,
- b) The higher education institutions evaluate the files in accordance with the current legal regulations and communicate to the Ministry of Education - General Directorate for International Relations and European Affairs (MEN-DGRIAE) the list of individuals proposed for the issuance of the acceptance letter for studies,
- c) The list of candidates is transmitted to the Ministry of Education (ME) according to the established template,
- d) The list is accompanied by an electronic copy of each candidate's file. The electronic copy of the file will be made available to the Ministry of Education through platforms or other online means managed by the higher education institutions or through a portable storage medium,
- e) The number of transmitted files must not exceed the maximum number of students who can be enrolled, in accordance with the current regulations,
- f) After reviewing the files, the Ministry of Education issues the acceptance letter,
- g) The Ministry of Education sends the acceptance letters to the higher education institutions and, if applicable, to the diplomatic missions, both in physical and electronic formats,

h) Incomplete files will not be processed and will be declared rejected. If the files are completed, the higher education institutions will follow the steps described in the admission methodology to process them by the Ministry of Education,

i) The physical application files of candidates who renounce their obtained place will be returned by the higher education institutions within 48 hours of the submission of the request, without additional fees.

### **Enrollment for studies**

The enrollment for university studies is conditioned by passing the admission exam and obtaining the acceptance letters to the higher education institutions issued by the Ministry of Education.

The enrollment of foreign citizens will be made by decision of the Rector of the receiving higher education institution, according to the current legislation.

At enrollment, candidates will present the original study and identity documents from their application file, along with the acceptance letter for studies and the passport with a valid visa for "study" purposes. In exceptional cases, established nationally or due to decisions at the level of the higher education institution, enrollment can be done based on authenticated documents transmitted electronically, with the originals to be submitted under the condition of the candidate's physical presence in Romania.

Higher education institutions are responsible for verifying the original documents and taking measures in case of discrepancies between these and the documents transmitted electronically. Original study documents issued in countries that are parties to the Hague Apostille Convention must be endorsed by the competent authorities in the issuing countries with the Hague Apostille. Original study documents issued in countries that are not parties to the Hague Apostille Convention will be legalized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the issuing country and by the embassy/consular office of Romania in that country.

The acceptance letter is valid only for the higher education institution for which it was issued, starting from the academic year for which it was issued and for the respective academic cycle. Any change in the academic path that contradicts the entries in the initial acceptance letter will be regulated, at the request of the involved higher education institution, by issuing a new acceptance letter by the Ministry of Education.

The Admission Regulation for Foreign Citizens and their schooling at the "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia for the academic year 2024-2025 can be consulted on the UAB website at [https://www.uab.ro/media/documente/04\\_Regulament\\_admitere\\_non\\_UE\\_2024-2025.pdf](https://www.uab.ro/media/documente/04_Regulament_admitere_non_UE_2024-2025.pdf)

## **4) Marche Polytechnic University**

### **Current legal regulatory framework in Italy**

The evaluation of foreign qualifications presented for enrolment at Italian higher education courses of study is the exclusive jurisdiction of higher education institutions, as established by Art. 2 of Law 148/2002. Documents referring to qualification and/or produced by the diplomatic consular Missions, including the Declaration of Value, are not mandatory and do not affect the

evaluation decisions of the individual higher education institutions about admission to the chosen course.

Academic qualifications issued by foreign authorities must be accompanied by the documents indicated by Universities, in respect of the Lisbon Convention. The student is obliged to produce the documentation that the institution deems necessary to evaluate the foreign qualification: translations, legalisations, Diploma Supplements, exam certificates, Italian ENIC-NARIC (CIMEA) centre statements and Declaration of Value produced by diplomatic Missions, or other declarations that might serve to check the elements of the foreign qualification.

International students needing a visa must apply for a prior university pre-enrolment procedure, which precedes the subsequent enrolment phase. To start the University pre-enrolment procedures, students need to access the UNIVERSITALY portal (<https://www.universitaly.it>) and fill in a “pre-enrolment request”. Universities carry out a preliminary assessment of the applications by requesting a copy of the academic qualifications and any other document deemed useful for the purpose of this preliminary assessment (certificates from official foreign authorities, certificates issued by the Italian ENIC-NARIC centre, etc.). The Institutions validate the pre-enrolment application by entering the relevant data on the UNIVERSITALY portal. The subsequent phases will be completed at the relevant diplomatic-consular Missions to obtain a visa.

### **How the process is organized at Marche Polytechnic University**

Marche Polytechnic University has made increasing the recruitment of international students one of its priorities.

In December 2021, the International Relations Office implemented and published for the first time a **pre-evaluation platform** aimed at recruiting international students interested in enrolling in a Bachelor's or a Master's Degree programme.

The procedure consists of the following steps: the student enters his/her personal data into the platform and uploads the documents needed for assessing the possession of the curricular requirements and the adequacy of the personal preparation required for enrollment in the course he/she is interested in:

- 1) Id card or passport;
- 2) Transcript of records;
- 3) Diploma certificate/University degree (original or provisional);

#### *Optional documents:*

- 4) Language certificates;
- 5) Reference letter;
- 6) Translation into Italian or English of study title (if owned);
- 7) Declaration of value / CIMEA statements / Declarations from official foreign institutions (if owned);

8) Visa/Resident permit (if owned);

9) Curriculum vitae;

10) Motivation letter.

The referent professor receives a notification about the insertion of a new pre-evaluation application; he/she then evaluates the documents and enters the assessment's result: "admitted", "admitted with reserve" (indicating additional elements are needed to evaluate the application) or "not admitted" (also indicating the reason for the rejection). The student automatically receives an email containing the assessment's outcome and the instructions for the subsequent steps for enrolment.

After receiving a positive pre-acceptance e-mail, international students applying for a visa must complete a **pre-enrolment procedure in the University portal**. To apply, students must upload the following documents scanned or in digital version if digitally issued:

Documentation	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Notes
ID picture	✓	✓	
Passport copy	✓	✓	
Original final secondary education diploma (high school), obtained after at least 12 scholastic study years	✓	✓	To be accompanied by a sworn translation into Italian or English
Final bachelor's degree or equivalent foreign qualification released by an accredited	—	✓	Qualification must correspond to the <b>EQF level 6</b> (European Qualification Framework) and allow studies to continue at the next level (EQF level 7) in the Country where the degree was awarded. To be accompanied by a sworn translation into Italian or English.

higher education institute			
<b>Transcript of records</b> released by the relevant University or <b>Diploma Supplement</b>	—	✓	Transcript must report taken exams, ECTS credits/hour of attendance and marks. To be accompanied by a sworn translation into Italian or English
<b>Certificate of entrance examination to access university</b>	✓	✓	If provided for in the country where the diploma was awarded (ex: Gao-Kao for China, Vestibular or ENEM in Brazil, YKS in Turkey ...)
<b>“Integrative year” or foundation year for students</b> with qualifications awarded <u>with less than 12 scholastic study years</u>	✓	✓	A certificate of completion and the academic transcript certifying the positive outcome of all examinations in the first/second year (translated into Italian or English) from an accredited University must be uploaded (see <a href="#">Annex 1 of the ministerial circular</a> ).
<b>Statement of verification</b> issued by <a href="#">CIMEA</a> or, as alternative, legalization/apostille of your qualification and transcript by the competent authority	✓	✓	At the pre-enrolment stage, the legalization/notarization/apostillation/Statement of Verification is waived if the diploma is accompanied by a QR-code or link to official/governmental database demonstrating the authenticity of the document or in case of specific agreements between Italy and the country in which the diploma has been obtained
<b>Statement of correspondence</b>	✓	✓	To be uploaded if the qualification has been awarded in a country under Lisbon Recognition Convention



issued on " <a href="#">ARDI database</a> "			
Statement of comparability issued by <a href="#">CIMEA</a> , or, <u>alternatively</u> , Declaration of value (DoV) issued by the Italian Diplomatic mission in the Country in charge of the education system where the diploma has been achieved.	✓	✓	To be uploaded if the qualification has been awarded in a country outside Lisbon Recognition Convention
Italian language proficiency certificate, with at least a B2 level according to the CEFR	Courses held in Italian language		Certificate must be issued within institutions belonging to <a href="#">CLIQ system</a> . If the student does not have a language certificate, they must <a href="#">pass the tests</a> organized by our Centre for language support
English language proficiency certificate, with at least a B2 level according to the CEFR	Coursed held in English language		According to language requirements of the course of interest. If the student does not have a language certificate, they must pass the tests organized by our Centre for language support

The International Students Admission Office checks and validates pre-enrolment applications by entering the relevant data into the UNIVERSITALY portal. After their application has been validation, students receive a pre-enrolment summary through the UNIVERSITALY portal that they need to present to the Italian Embassy or Consulate in their Country to obtain a visa. Visa request must be completed by November 29th, 2024 (deadlines may vary for [limited access courses](#)).

## 5) University of Split

### Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications in Croatia

Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Croatia is regulated by legislation that is continuously adapted to meet European and international standards. The qualification recognition process is conducted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO) through the National ENIC/NARIC Office, which serves as the central body for this purpose. Here is a detailed overview of the existing legal framework and procedure:

#### Legal Framework

- 1. Law on Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications:** The main law governing the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications is the "Law on Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications" (National Gazette 69/2022). This law defines the criteria, procedure, and jurisdiction of the bodies responsible for recognizing qualifications. It replaces the previous law (National Gazette 158/03, 198/03, 138/06, 45/11) and is aligned with relevant European directives and conventions, including the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.
- 2. Bylaws:** Regulations and guidelines that further define the recognition process, required documentation, and evaluation criteria. Among them are the "Regulation on Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications" and the "Regulation on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications."
- 3. International Agreements and Treaties:** Croatia is a signatory to numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements that facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications. The Lisbon Convention is a key document at the international level.

### Recognition of Prior Educational Qualifications for the Purpose of Continuation of Education at Croatian Higher Education Institutions (Academic Recognition)

Recognition of prior educational qualifications is a crucial part of the enrollment procedure for both undergraduate and graduate programs at Croatian higher education institutions. The process is regulated by the Law on Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications (National Gazette 69/2022), which outlines the procedures and criteria for recognizing foreign qualifications. Here is how the process works depending on the level of study:

- 1. Undergraduate (Bachelor) Study Programs:** Applicants who hold a foreign secondary school qualification and wish to enroll in undergraduate study programs must submit a request for the recognition of their educational qualification. This request should be submitted along with all necessary application documents to the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO). Detailed instructions, request forms, and a list of required supporting documents are available on the official website: <https://www.studij.hr/recognition>.
- 2. Graduate (Master) Study Programs:** Prospective students aiming to enroll in graduate (master) or postgraduate study programs, who possess a foreign higher education qualification or degree, must undergo the academic recognition process for the continuation of education in Croatia. This process can be conducted by:

- The Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO), following the standard procedure for recognition, as outlined in the new law.
- Croatian higher education institutions, particularly in cases where specific program requirements or institutional policies apply.

It is highly recommended that prospective students directly contact their desired higher education institution to obtain detailed information on the recognition procedure, required documentation, and any institution-specific requirements.

## **Recognition Procedure**

### **1. Undergraduate (Bachelor) Study Programs:**

#### **Step 1: Submission of Application**

- Applicants holding foreign secondary school qualifications must submit a request for recognition along with their application for admission to the chosen study program.
- The application is submitted to the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO).
- Necessary documents include certified copies of the diploma, transcript of records, and a translation of the documents into Croatian or English by an authorized translator.

#### **Step 2: Document Review**

- The Agency reviews the submitted documents to ensure they are complete and meet the requirements for recognition.
- If any documents are missing or incomplete, the applicant will be notified and asked to provide the additional required documentation.

#### **Step 3: Qualification Evaluation**

- AZVO evaluates the foreign qualification to determine its equivalence to the Croatian secondary school qualification.
- This includes verifying the authenticity of the documents, comparing the study program with Croatian educational standards, and assessing the accreditation status of the foreign educational institution.

#### **Step 4: Issuance of Decision**

- Based on the evaluation, AZVO issues a decision:
  - o **Full recognition:** The foreign qualification is recognized as equivalent to a Croatian secondary school qualification.
  - o **Partial recognition:** The qualification is recognized with conditions, such as additional exams.
  - o **Rejection:** The qualification is not recognized due to lack of equivalence or authenticity.
- The decision is communicated to the applicant, and in case of rejection or partial recognition, the decision will include explanations and instructions for further steps.

## **Step 5: Enrollment**

- Once the qualification is recognized, the applicant can proceed with the enrollment process at the chosen higher education institution.

## **2. Graduate (Master) Study Programs:**

### **Step 1: Submission of Application**

- Applicants holding a foreign higher education qualification (Bachelor's degree) must submit a request for recognition along with their application to the graduate study program.
- Depending on the institution, the application may be submitted to either the Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO) or directly to the higher education institution.

### **Description of the Process for the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications and Periods of Study for the Purpose of Continuing Education at One of the University of Split's Constituent Units:**

Regarding the higher education institution, the Competent Office at the University of Split plays a crucial role in the recognition process of foreign higher education qualifications, particularly for the purpose of continuing education (e.g., enrollment in graduate or postgraduate studies). The process of recognizing foreign higher education qualifications and periods of study for the purpose of continuing education at one of the University of Split's constituent units (faculties/departments) (academic recognition) is initiated by submitting a request and application documentation to the competent office of the University of Split.

- After the request is reviewed and the documentation is found to be in order, it is forwarded to the constituent unit of the University of Split (faculty/department) where the applicant wishes to continue their studies for further processing.
- All information related to the study program the interested party wishes to enroll in (enrollment process, requirements, deadlines, etc.) can only be obtained from the constituent unit of the University of Split (faculty/department) where they wish to continue their education.
- Based on the University of Split's Regulations on the Academic Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications and Periods of Study, the University of Split, within 15 days of receiving a complete application, forwards it to the competent constituent unit of the University of Split (faculty/department). The competent body of the constituent unit (faculty/department) then issues a final decision on the request within 60 days from the date of receipt of the request from the University of Split. This decision is sent directly to the applicant and to the University of Split for their records.
- The University of Split and its constituent units (faculties/departments) maintain proper records of the processes for the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and periods of study for the purpose of continuing education and, upon request from competent authorities and agencies, can provide this documentation for informational purposes.

### **Step 2: Document Review**

- The receiving institution or AZVO reviews the submitted documents to ensure they meet the requirements for recognition.
- Necessary documents include certified copies of the degree, transcript of records, study program details, and a translation of the documents into Croatian or English by an authorized translator.

### **Step 3: Qualification Evaluation**

- The institution or AZVO evaluates the foreign qualification to determine its equivalence to the corresponding Croatian qualification.
- This includes verifying the authenticity of the documents, assessing the comparability of the study program with Croatian standards, and evaluating the accreditation of the foreign educational institution.

### **Step 4: Issuance of Decision**

- Based on the evaluation, a decision is made:
  - o **Full recognition:** The foreign qualification is recognized as equivalent to a Croatian Bachelor's degree.
  - o **Partial recognition:** The qualification is recognized with conditions, such as additional coursework or exams.
  - o **Rejection:** The qualification is not recognized due to lack of equivalence or authenticity.
- The decision is communicated to the applicant, and in case of rejection or partial recognition, explanations and further steps are provided.

### **Step 5: Enrollment**

- Upon recognition, the applicant can proceed with the enrollment process at the graduate level.

These steps outline the recognition procedure for both undergraduate and graduate programs, ensuring that foreign qualifications are appropriately evaluated before continuing education in Croatia.

### **Cases of Automatic Recognition**

Automatic recognition of qualifications in Croatia is provided for by law (National Gazette 69/2022) and is applied in specific cases to facilitate and expedite the process for certain categories of qualifications. Cases of automatic recognition include:

#### **1. Undergraduate (Bachelor) Studies:**

- o **Automatic recognition of secondary school qualifications** for enrollment in undergraduate studies is possible without conducting a formal recognition procedure if the qualification was obtained in a country whose national qualifications framework is linked to the European Qualifications Framework or in accordance with an international agreement on the mutual recognition of foreign educational qualifications.

#### **2. Graduate and Postgraduate Studies:**

o **Automatic recognition of higher education qualifications** for enrollment in graduate and postgraduate studies is possible if the following cumulative conditions are met:

- The qualification was obtained in a country whose national qualifications framework is linked to the European Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.
- The external quality assurance of the higher education institution was carried out by an agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

### **3. Case of an International Agreement:**

o Automatic recognition can also be applied in cases where there is an international agreement on the mutual recognition of foreign educational qualifications.

In all these cases, automatic recognition facilitates and speeds up the process for candidates, as it removes the need for a detailed evaluation procedure, except in cases where there is doubt about the authenticity of the documentation.

## **SWOT Analysis of the Legal Framework for Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Croatia**

### **Strengths**

#### **1. Compliance with International Standards:**

o Croatian regulation is aligned with European directives and international conventions, such as the Lisbon Convention, facilitating the mobility of students and professionals.

#### **2. Transparency and Clear Procedures:**

o The recognition process is clearly defined through laws and regulations, ensuring transparency and predictability for applicants.

#### **3. Existence of a Specialized Body:**

o The Agency for Science and Higher Education (AZVO) and the National ENIC/NARIC Office ensure expertise and specialized support in the recognition process.

#### **4. Advisory Board:**

o The Advisory Board, which includes experts from various fields, provides an additional level of expertise and reliability in the evaluation process.

### **Weaknesses**

#### **1. Lengthy Process:**

o Although the recognition procedure has been updated in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications (National Gazette 69/2022), the recognition process may still be lengthy, which can be frustrating for candidates and affect their professional or academic plans.

#### **2. Complexity of Documentation:**

- o Documentation requirements can be extensive and require certified translations, which can be costly and time-consuming.

### **3. Dependence on External Evaluations:**

- o The process can be complicated if it is difficult to obtain information on the accreditation of foreign educational institutions.

### **4. Limited Digitalization:**

- o The lack of fully digitalized procedures can slow down the process and make it difficult to submit applications.

## **Opportunities**

### **1. Digitalization of the Process:**

- o Introducing fully digitalized systems for submitting and processing applications can speed up the process and reduce administrative burden.

### **2. Strengthening International Cooperation:**

- o Increasing cooperation with foreign ENIC/NARIC offices can facilitate the verification of accreditation and comparability of qualifications.

### **3. Education and Information for Candidates:**

- o Improving the availability of information and educating potential candidates about the recognition process can reduce the number of incomplete or incorrect applications.

### **4. Flexibility in Assessment:**

- o Developing more flexible criteria for recognizing non-formal and non-specific qualifications can increase the system's adaptability.

## **Threats**

### **1. Changes in Foreign Educational Systems:**

- o Variable quality of foreign educational systems can make it difficult to assess the actual value of qualifications.

### **2. Increased Mobility and Number of Applications:**

- o An increase in the number of students and professionals seeking recognition can overload the system and extend processing times.

### **3. Economic Uncertainty and Resources:**

- o Financial constraints and lack of resources for administration and evaluation can negatively impact the quality and speed of the process.

### **4. Lack of Adaptation to Technological Changes:**

- o If regulation does not keep pace with technological changes, the system may become outdated and less efficient.

The legal framework for the recognition of higher education qualifications in Croatia has solid foundations and many advantages, including compliance with international standards and transparency of the process. However, there are challenges in the form of lengthy procedures and complexity of documentation. Opportunities for improvement include digitalization and strengthening international cooperation, while threats come from changes in the global education system and economic constraints. Proactive management of these elements can further enhance the qualification recognition system.

### **III Conclusion**

Based on the previous partners' legal reports and discussions regarding the legal provisions governing the recognition of foreign higher education documents during the study visit at the University of Split, it can be concluded that the partners share many similarities related to the recognition procedure. One positive similarity among partners regarding the recognition procedure is the existence of adequate legal procedures at each partner's institution, aligned with international conventions, primarily the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (The Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997). All partners emphasized that the aforementioned Convention is highly significant bearing in mind that the European Higher Education Area is based on its principles aimed at facilitating recognition procedure in each signatory country. Furthermore, internal acts are adopted by a competent body at each institution, resulting in a transparent and precise procedure. Although this is encouraging, it is worth mentioning that in some countries, such as the Republic of Serbia, legal regulations at the national level related to the academic recognition procedure are not uniform, which leads to different practices among universities regarding the required documentation and steps in the procedure.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the importance of both, academic and professional recognition procedures, for society as a whole, as well as the complexity of this work (evaluation and verification or legalization of documents), it was deduced that each partner has, in their respective country, a specialized body that provides support and ensures expertise in conducting this procedure. The specialized bodies (such as the Agency for Science and Higher Education and the National ENIC/NARIC Office in Croatia, Italian ENIC-NARIC (CIMEA), ENIC/NARIC Centre in Serbia, National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) or the General Directorate of International Relations and European Affairs (DGRIAE) in Romania) are responsible for facilitating the procedure, providing the required information, or conducting the recognition procedure.

It was also concluded that digitalized systems for submitting and processing applications have many advantages, such as speeding up the process, increasing student mobility and reducing the cost of the procedure. All partners strive to implement adequate digital solutions. However, national legislation in most partner's countries requires that candidates still have to come physically to receive their final recognition document (decision on the recognition) and submit or



present certified or original documents. Regarding the digitalized systems, the partners emphasized that such systems are challenging in an administrative way. A lack of administrative personnel to manage the system is another potential problem, as well as functioning in an environment that is not fully digitalized (office, archive, student services, etc.). Furthermore, it was pointed out, especially by the partners with numerous applications, that the system can be overloaded, which is why constant system upgrading is necessary.

All partners agreed that the aforementioned impediments could be reduced by revising national legislation to underpin a fully digital recognition procedure. Additionally, tailor-made training in digital skills would benefit all stakeholders.

#### **Summary of similarities and differences between partners**

	<b>Qualification Agency ENIC/NARIC Centre</b>	<b>"1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia</b>	<b>Marche Polytechnic University</b>	<b>University of Split</b>	<b>University of Novi Sad</b>
<i>Legislation aligned with the relevant international conventions</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Specific national legal act governing the recognition procedure</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
<i>Internal regulations which lead to a transparent and precise procedure</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Existence of a specialized body on national level which provides expertise in recognition procedure</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Digitalized  
recognition  
procedure*

✓	✓	✓		
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\*The Law on Higher Education has basic provisions regarding recognition procedure without closely defining the academic recognition procedure

In conclusion, all partners will strive to incorporate all insights gained from the in depth analysis of existing regulations and exchange of experiences during the study visit into the next activities within the WP2. The aim is to upgrade the existing regulations in order to underpin new or improved digital solutions and to provide recommendations to the relevant national institutions.