

Nordic Declaration on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education

The “Reykjavik Declaration”

The Nordic Region is an open area in terms of education, training, and the labour market. The broad and deep Nordic co-operation in these fields is unique. It is to be maintained and extended. Through the *Agreement on Cultural Co-operation* (dated 15 March, 1971, Article 3, subparagraphs e and g), the Nordic Ministers of Education and Research have decided to extend the possibilities for students in higher education and other inhabitants of a Nordic country of being eligible for access to education and examinations at the educational and training institutions of the other Nordic Countries as well as bring about mutual recognition of degrees, examinations, partial examinations, and other performance descriptions.

The Nordic Ministers of Education and Research having regard to,

- The Agreement of Nordic Educational Co-operation at Upper Secondary Level, dated 4 March 1992,
- The Agreement on Access to Higher Education, dated 3 September 1996,

have decided that the *Decision of the Nordic Council of Ministers dated 12 June 1975 on Nordic on the validity of examinations* (the Sigtuna Agreement) shall be replaced by the *Nordic Declaration on Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education*. The Declaration is based on the Convention on the *Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region* of the Council of Europe and UNESCO of 1997 (the Lisbon Convention) and shall act as an instrument for deeper co-operation concerning mutual recognition in higher education in the Nordic Region.

Having worked together for many years in the field of education and training, the Nordic countries have established full confidence in the system of higher education in each other's countries and consider them to be equal regarding recognition of studies and examinations. Similarly, in the field of quality assurance of higher education co-operation has been strengthened. Such confidence provides the Nordic countries with a unique opportunity to act as pioneers in the field of common guidelines and good practice regarding recognition of degrees, studies and examinations.

In recent years, co-operation in the field of education and training has also been deepened between the Nordic countries and other countries in Europe through the Lisbon Convention. This convention strengthens the right of students to have their educational qualifications recognised in the other contracting states. All the Nordic countries have ratified the convention.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries take an active part in the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process aims at developing European co-operation in the field of higher education and promoting student mobility between European education systems and labour markets. Thus, the recognition issue is central to the Bologna Process.

With the *Nordic Declaration on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education*, the Nordic Ministers of Education, Training and Research will establish common Nordic objectives and guidelines as well as a basis for joint follow-up and adjustments to changing requirements. This will be achieved through deeper co-operation between the Nordic countries and co-operation between organisations and institutions in the Nordic Region active in the field of higher education.

With the *Nordic Declaration on Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education* the Nordic Ministers of Education and Research will ensure,

- That qualification in the field of higher education of the Nordic countries shall be given full mutual recognition,
- That the Nordic countries shall achieve better Nordic agreement concerning testing of recognition of work-related experience as well as education and training other than higher education,
- That the Nordic countries shall achieve better Nordic agreement in evaluating qualifications obtained in both Nordic and other countries by means of continuing exchange of information and experience, ministries, the authorities appointed as national information centres on academic recognition and mobility (the ENIC offices, see Article X.3 of the Convention) as well as institutions of higher education.
- That the appropriate authorities shall provide information and guidance concerning issues affecting the recognition of Nordic higher education from one Nordic country to another.
- That on a continuous basis, the national ENIC offices shall identify problems in implementing and applying the Nordic Declaration as well as the Lisbon Declaration, and that they shall report to the Nordic Council of Ministers every second year. The first report shall be made at the end of 2005. The Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers shall be responsible for producing such a report.

Together the Nordic Ministers of Education and Research shall monitor the application of this Nordic declaration and adopt any measures required by developments.

Reykjavík, 9 June 2004,

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