Towards a Global UNESCO Recognition Convention

ENQA Member’s Forum
Zaragoza 19 April 2018
General opinion in Europe (Toledo 2012):

unconditioned support: 3

general refusal: 2

support under certain conditions: 37
UNESCO
Global Recognition Convention …

a brief History:
The „pre-History“

1945: UNESCO Constitution
1947: General Conference
1993: „Recommendation“ XXVII G.C.
1997: Lisbon Recognition Convention
Launching an idea
– preparing the ground …

2011-11-26: Tokyo Conference (A.-P. Conv.)
2012-10-29: Meeting in Nanjing (China)
2013 - Nov.: UNESCO General Conference 37
2015-04-29: Draft preliminary Report
2015 - Nov.: UNESCO General Conference 38
2016-04-13: Letter of nomination Drafting group
The Drafting committee
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The Drafting Committee …

18 experts from 6 UNESCO electoral Groups

I: Canada, Germany, Finland
II: Estonia, Russia, Slovakia
III: Brasil, Cuba, Mexico
IV: India, Iran, Malaysia
Va: Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal
Vb: Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia

5 Additional Experts
Australia, China, Holy See, Norway, Zambia
Timeline …

11-12 May 2016 – Paris
19-20 September 2016 – Rome
13-15 February 2017 – Paris
28-30 June 2017 – Paris

November 2017 UNESCO Gen. Conference 39

……..

2018 Consultations - UNESCO Member States

? December 2018: Information Conference
Global Recognition Convention means …

* multiculturality?  
  * a compromise?  
    * a bridging tool?  
      * a prestigious political project?  
    * an important step forward?  
  * another document for the archives?  
* ………..?
What’s the added value of a Global Recognition Convention - compared to the regional ones …?

* addressing global issues?
  * an incentive to participate?
    * bringing regions closer together?
      * new standard-setting ideas?
    * a valid response to today’s challenges?
  * …………?
Draft - Outline …

PREAMBLE

SECTION I. DEFINITION OF TERMS (Art. I)

SECTION II. AIMS OF THE CONVENTION (Art. II)

SECTION III. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS (Art. III)

SECTION IV. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION (Art. IV-XI)

SECTION V. IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES AND COOPERATION (Art. XII-XV)

SECTION VI. FINAL CLAUSES (Art. XVI-XXV)
Quality and Quality Assurance as an innovative element in the Draft Global Convention
I. INTRODUCTION

3. The number of students choosing to study abroad in a country outside of their region, together with the internationalization of quality assurance and higher education, have increasingly become a policy objective for governments. …, these trends emphasize the need for creating a global normative instrument which can secure cross-border recognition of qualifications in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. A Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications would facilitate the recognition of qualifications for 2.5 million students studying outside their home region today, and this number is expected to grow in the years to come.
III. AIMS AND ADDED VALUE OF A GLOBAL CONVENTION

9. The future Global Convention aims to strengthen inter-regional academic mobility; promote increased international cooperation in higher education; promote democratization of higher education and lifelong learning opportunities for all; provide a framework of quality assurance for the fast-growing diversity of higher education providers; and develop agreed principles for recognition of on higher education qualifications common to all regions. It will seek to cover practices for the recognition of qualifications in higher education awarded by a diverse range of providers as well as define terms such as higher education and types of recognition enhancing inter-regional mobility.
IV. WAY FORWARD

11. Higher education has been recognized as an integral part of Sustainable Development Goal 4. In the draft 39 C/5, an expected result of Major Programme I is dedicated to the provision of higher quality education (contributing to SDG target 4.3) particularly as regards improved recognition of and access to equitable and quality assured higher education provision. Advancing the formulation of a Global Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications is envisaged to reinforce the priority area of international mobility of learning, learners and qualifications.
Looking back 25 years: Recommendation 1993

... the only reference to «quality» was: ...

Preamble:
«... In order ultimately to promote improvements everywhere in the quality of higher education»

International co-operation:
«Member States should encourage the setting up of mechanisms such as evaluation and accrediting bodies for the purpose of assuring the quality of higher education studies and should encourage international co-operation among such mechanisms and bodies.»
The Parties to this Convention: …

[6] Reaffirming their responsibility to promote inclusive education, equitable quality of higher education and lifelong learning opportunities for all;

[13 – last] Convinced that this Convention will promote inter-regional articulation of procedures for recognition and quality assurance at a global level,

Have agreed as follows:
For the purpose of this Convention, the following terms shall apply:

Qualifications framework: a system for classification, publication and articulation of quality assured qualifications according to a set of criteria;

Quality assurance: a process by which the quality of a higher education system, institution or programme is assessed to assure stakeholders that acceptable standards are being maintained and enhanced;
Building on and enhancing the coordination, revisions and achievements of the Regional Recognition Conventions, the aims of this Convention are to:

4. Foster trust and confidence in the quality and integrity of qualifications, including through encouraging ethical practices in higher education.

5. Promote and build capacities for reliability and complementarity in quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and the recognition of qualifications to support inter-regional mobility.

9. Promote, through the recognition of qualifications, inclusive and equitable access to quality higher education and support learning opportunities for all.
SECTION IV. - OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION - (Article IV - VI)

Recognition of

* Qualifications Giving Access to Higher Education
* Higher Education Qualifications
* Partial Studies

in all three cases, the third point, regarding

«... higher education programmes delivered by non-traditional learning modes …»

requests that they are …

« ... subject to the same or comparable quality assurance mechanisms of a Party, and … are considered to be part of the higher education system of a Party, …”
SECTION IV. - OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION –

Article VIII - Information for Assessment and Recognition

2. Each Party shall put in place a robust and ethical system of approval, recognition and quality assurance of their higher educational institutions in order to promote confidence and trust in their higher education system.

4. In each Party, the national information centre or similar structure shall: …. [ a) … b) … c) … ]

(d) Ensure the provision of adequate information on any institution belonging to its higher education system, and on any programme operated by these institutions, with a view to enabling the competent authorities of other Parties to ascertain whether the quality of the qualifications issued by these institutions justifies recognition in the Party in which recognition is sought.
4. Representatives of relevant international organisations as well as representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of recognition may also be invited to attend meetings of The Committee as observers.
A UNESCO – Global Recognition Convention …

+ a strong political statement
+ corresponds to a globalised University
+ a stronger invitation to participate
A UNESCO – Global Recognition Convention …

+ some questions and discussions:
A UNESCO – Global Recognition Convention …

- different level of development;
- strength of Convention is it’s implementation;
- are there sufficient resources?
A UNESCO – Global Recognition Convention ...

the fear to loose what has been achieved:
the fear to loose what has been achieved:

* National Information Centres;
* feasible annual meetings;
* (personal) relations of mutual trust;
* a consolidated common praxis
* experience and expertise
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the alternative (?):

a closed but successful (Lisbon) club

vs

a global project without impact?
Thank you
for your
Attention!