GUIDELINES FOR THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE U.S.A.

Results of the Council of Europe/ UNESCO working group compiled by **Stamenka UVALIC-TRUMBIC**

UNESCO CEPESS,Bucharest,

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European countries, on several occasions, have voiced their concern about the ways European qualifications are assessed in the U.S.A. The United States, on the other hand, has expressed the opinion that the recognition level in Europe of certain U.S. qualifications is not acceptable.

Following a Decision adopted by the Regional Committee for the Application of the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees Concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region, CEPES-UNESCO was offered the possibility to establish a working group, for which it would provide the Secretariat, as part of an effort to contribute to a better assessment of credentials from both sides of the Atlantic.

Composed of experts from Europe and the United States and of representatives of the Council of Europe and of the European Union, the Working Group proceeded to make a thorough analysis of higher education systems, admission procedures, and recognition processes in order to propose a fairer treatment of each other's students and of their qualifications.

Although there were often differences in opinions and a compromise was not always easy to reach, as the compiler of this Report, I feel greatly indebted to all members of the Working Group not only for their high levels of competence and for the time spent and the patience required in order to achieve the results presented in this study, but also for the warm and friendly relations that developed from hours of negotiation, paperwork, faxing, and e-mailing that were part of the process.

In order to make the results of the Working Group accessible to a large audience of credential evaluators, admission officers, national information centres on academic recognition and mobility, and also to students as the ultimate target group, UNESCO-CEPES has decided to include the text of the Report in its Papers on Higher Education Series and to provide for its wide distribution.

Definition of the Problem

1.1. Terms of Reference

According to statistical overviews, the percentage of students from Europe in the United States has increased in the past few years, reaching the figure of 53,720 during the 1991-1992 academic year. According to the same source (Open Doors, 1991-1992), these figures are constantly on the rise, and Europe is becoming the home region of the second largest group of foreign students in the United States. Thus, in 1992-1993, these figures rose by 8% reaching 58,010. It is interesting to note that the figures representing students from eastern Europe, including the republics of the former Soviet Union, rose by 42% compared to those of the previous year.

On the other side, of the 71,154 American students who studied abroad during the 1992-1993 academic year, as many as 71.3 per cent studied in Europe. The country that received the largest percentage of American students remained the United Kingdom (23.3%), followed by France (11.5%), Spain (10.0%), Italy (7.5%), Germany (4.9%), and Austria (2.5%). It is interesting to note that Russia received a larger percentage of American students (1.9%) than did Greece (1.2%), Switzerland (1.1%), the Netherlands (0.8%), and Denmark (0.8%), and that in total figures, the percentage of American students studying in Europe has been decreasing since 1985. Only the number of students going to Germany, Russia, and Greece is displaying a slight increase compared to the figures of the 1991-1992 academic year. In spite of this increase, however, Europe remains

the region hosting the largest number of students from the United States (Open Doors, 1991-1992; 1992-1993).

For this reason, problems concerning the mutual recognition of studies or portions of studies between European and American universities have gained in significance, and the awareness of them has risen within various international and regional organizations.

Thus, the delegation of Austria raised the issue at the Fourteenth Session of the Standing Conference on University Problems - CC-PU - of the Council of Europe - in Berlin in March 1991. The note presented expressed dissatisfaction with the level of access to higher education institutions in the U.S.A. granted to holders of secondary school leaving certificates from Austria. The delegation of Austria informed the CC-PU that similar problems were being faced by holders of Intermediate Qualifications and Final Degrees from Austria wishing to pursue their (post)graduate studies in the U.S.A. Concluding that this was an all-European problem of wider range, the note invited the Council of Europe to help in seeking solutions to it, along with the competent central authorities in the U.S.A. and the assistance of other European states sharing similar problems.

Following the CC-PU session in Berlin, which defined the problem as a pan-European one, the issue was passed on to UNESCO, the U.S.A. being part of the Europe Region according to the United Nations definition. Although the U.S.A. is no longer a member of UNESCO, professional links have been maintained between the latter and institutions in the U.S.A. Furthermore, the U.S.A. has adopted (although not ratified) the UNESCO European Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees Concerning Higher Education, and co-operation activities have been carried out with the European Centre for Higher Education, CEPES, of UNESCO which serves as the Secretariat of the Convention.

After the issue had been passed on to UNESCO, UNESCO-CEPES addressed the different organizations and associations in the U.S.A. with which it had kept professional links, such as the College Board, NAFSA, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), the American Council on Education, and other institutions and individuals. It presented the problems and sought their collaboration in finding solutions.

As a response to these solicitations, the representatives of these organizations and associations considered the issue and nominated the Chairperson of the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials (hereafter referred to by its acronym CEC) as the most logical individual to represent the United States in a discussion of the issues. (CEC is the only inter-associational body in the United States specifically organized to provide guidance on foreign education credentials for American institutions, giving a common framework in the highly decentralized system of education of this country.) She offered her assistance and co-operation in a very pragmatic approach to concrete recognition issues with different European states.

As the rising interest in promoting inter-university links between Europe and the U.S.A. has also had an echo in the activities of the European Commission, namely in the launching of the 1993-1994 Exploratory Phase of the European Commission-United States Co-operation in Higher Education, the European Commission has also been invited to join the efforts in solving the problem, in the framework of the good co-operation links between the National Information Bodies on Academic Recognition and Mobility in the Europe Region (NIB - CEPES-UNESCO network), National Equivalence Information Centres (NEIC - Council of Europe Network), and National Academic Recognition Centres (NARIC - European Union Network) networks.

A subsequent meeting, the First Joint Meeting of the NARIC, NEIC, and NIB networks (Lisbon, May 1992), addressed the issue more thoroughly. Ms. Caroline Aldrich-Langen, the Chairperson of CEC, was invited to the meeting to represent the Council. She presented a paper entitled, *Europe-*

U.S.A.: Recognition of European Qualifications in the U.S.A. and distributed the *Guide to Placement Recommendations* (NAFSA Working Paper No. 23, edited by William H. Smart, Chairman, and Ann Fletcher, Chairperson-Elect, 1991). With a wealth of concrete examples, both documents gave a detailed description of the American system of education as well as of the procedures in which foreign qualifications are evaluated in the United States, and placement recommendations, made. On the basis of the discussion that ensued, the conclusion was reached that a Working Group could analyze the problem further, taking as a starting point the two documents presented and comments to be made to them by the NIB's, the NEIC's, and the NARIC's.

1.2. Members of the Working Group

The Regional Committee, an intergovernmental body under the auspices of UNESCO, in charge of the application of the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the Countries belonging to the Europe Region, at its sixth session held in Paris (4 November 1992), officially proposed the establishment of the Working Group and nominated its members, later confirmed and/or changed by the respective national ministries and other competent authorities in the Member States. The criteria for the selection of the Group members were based on the interest expressed by states faced with specific problems and the competence of the experts concerned in proposing solutions to the problems. Due attention was also paid to having different sub-regions of Europe represented, while at the same time trying to keep the group small enough to permit efficient work. This criterion resulted in the following composition of the Group:

Ms. Solange de Serre (France) - Chairperson
Ms. Dorothea Steiner (Austria)
Ms. Silvia Capucci (Italy)
Ms. Marianne Hildebrand (Sweden)
Mr. Tibor Gyula Nagy (Hungary)
Mr. Nizam Mohammed (United Kingdom)
Ms. Caroline Aldrich-Langen (U.S.A.)

Because the decision was reached that this Group would be a joint group of UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission, the representatives of the latter two organizations participated in the work of the Group:

Mr. Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe)
Ms. Constance Meldrum (Task Force Human Resources, European Commission)

The Secretariat of the Group was assured by CEPES/UNESCO (Ms. Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic, Programme Specialist).

Several experts from the National Information Centres for Academic Recognition and Mobility in the Europe Region (the NIB's) or the respective ministries contributed to different stages of the Group's work (Dr G. Reuhl, German NIB; Ms. Jean Nesland Olsen, Norwegian NIB; Mr Kees Kouwenaar, NUFFIC, the Netherlands NIB; Ms. Alice Nissen, Danish Ministry of Education and Research). Some universities also expressed their interest in the work of the Group and contributed to its contents. Thus, the Universities of Salzburg and Heidelberg hosted the second and third meetings of the Working Group, respectively, through the kind assistance of Professors Dorothea Steiner, member of the Group from the University of Salzburg, and Dr. Diether Raff, Director of the International Studies Centre of Heidelberg University. Dr. Cees Bolle, from the Groningen Centre for Comparative Education of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, participated in

the second meeting of the Group by presenting a project proposal on *The Entry Level in Higher Education: An Outline for a Research Proposal*, as an information input to the work of the Group on a related topic. Dr Charlotte Rosen, Associate Director of the Advanced Placement Programme at the College Board, New York, gave a presentation of the Programme at the Heidelberg meeting.

Credit also goes to the member organizations of the CEC for commenting on all stages and phases of the work of the Group.

This chapter would not be complete without an acknowledgment of the help of some thirty individual NIB's. Without their assistance, the work of this Group would not have been possible. The valuable information that they have provided is reflected in this Report.

1.3. Meetings

The Group held three formal meetings: in Bucharest (4-5 March 1993), in Salzburg (17-19 October 1993), and in Heidelberg (6-8 April 1994) and several informal encounters between European and American experts in the field (Stockholm, May 1993; NAFSA, San Francisco, June 1993, European Association for International Education - EAIE, the Hague, December 1993). The Group's work and its results were also presented and discussed at several meetings in Europe and in the U.S.A. (NARIC, Brussels, December 1992; NARIC, Brussels, December 1993; NEIC, Strasbourg, November 1993; AACRAO, Orlando, April 1993; AACRAO, Boston 1994; NAFSA, Miami, 1994).

1.4. Ways and Methods of the Group's work

In addition to meetings, the Group's work included consultations with the National Information Centres. The latter were asked to make comments on C. Aldrich-Langen's paper, "Europe-U.S.A.: Recognition of European Qualifications in the U.S.A". Thus comments were provided by Austria, Germany, the Netherlands (NUFFIC), Norway, Italy (CIMEA), Spain, France, the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Poland, and Romania and were distributed to the participants of the first meeting of the Group (Bucharest, 4-5 March 1993).

Following the meeting in Bucharest, as an additional tool for information gathering, a *Questionnaire* on problems encountered by European Member States, Australia, and the United States in gaining access to higher education institutions in the U.S.A. and in obtaining recognition (placement recommendations) in the U.S.A. for Intermediate and Final Degrees was elaborated and distributed to the European countries (National Information Centres on Recognition and Mobility) and the U.S.A. (the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials).

Replies to this questionnaire were received from 28 countries (Albania, Australia, Austria, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S.A.) and contributed to the formulation of the problems.

Following the meeting in Salzburg, it was felt that an additional round of consultations with the NIB's was necessary in order to assess how U.S. qualifications were evaluated in different European countries. Thus, the answers provided by the U.S.A. to the UNESCO-CEPES questionnaire, in which the dissatisfaction of United States was voiced relating to the access level given to some of the qualifications of American students wishing to study in Europe, were distributed. The purpose was to discover whether some of these procedures could be changed and/or improved in order to provide more satisfactory solutions. To facilitate a more systematic

analysis, members of the Group were asked to act as coordinators for different sub-groups of countries.

A comparative survey was made of the answers provided to the CEPES questionnaire to assist the work of the Group.

A bibliography of indispensable literature for credential evaluators, published and updated annually by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, was provided by a member of the Group, Ms. Marianne Hildebrand.

Understanding Each Other (The Framework)

2.1. The Importance of Understanding Each Other's Systems of (Higher) Education

Contributing to international understanding is one of the basic principles set out in the Constitution of UNESCO, and the promotion of the mobility of teachers, researchers, and students is one of the ways to attain this objective. It is in this spirit that the six regional conventions on the recognition of studies in higher education were adopted by UNESCO, in the late 1970's, as a means to promote mobility, and in the framework of its ultimate goal: to contribute to the elaboration of a universal convention on the recognition of studies.

It is in the same spirit that the Working Group has been set up: as a means to promote understanding between the European Member States and the U.S.A., by getting an insight into each other's systems of education, in order to acknowledge the differences while at the same time proposing means for overcoming them.

The entire activity is part of the overall tendency towards the internationalization of higher education, one of the determining features of higher education throughout the world today. The promotion of the recognition of higher education degrees is a natural consequence of this process.

Thus, in the area of academic recognition, in this vital process of the internationalization of higher education, even the concepts have evolved: shifting from the notion of *equivalence*, promoted in the 1950's in the Equivalence Conventions of the Council of Europe, to the concept of *recognition*, introduced by the UNESCO Conventions in the late 1970's. The latter is being replaced in the 1990's by the overriding concept of *acceptance*.

It is through a constant dialogue, an exchange of information, and an understanding of different educational systems that an adequate acceptance of degrees can be promoted within Europe, but also between the European countries and the United States, in order to meet the realities of increased exchanges of students, teachers, and researchers.

The problems associated with the recognition of higher education qualifications are mutual. The *access* of European students to higher and advanced education in the United States is reportedly not an issue. The underevaluation of European qualifications by U.S. educators is stressed by Austria (note mentioned), and is cited as a problem in many European countries (*e.g.*, whether or not advanced standing or transfer credit is awarded for secondary qualifications and whether or not a master's degree is required before a European student continues in a doctoral programme).

On the other hand, the access of American students to higher education in European countries is also an issue; however, in some cases, access is permitted based on evaluation procedures including external test results (*e.g.*, the Advanced Placement Tests). American institutions feel that the qualifications obtained from American secondary and higher education institutions are

undervalued in Europe and that there is a lack of accurate information on both sides not only on the (higher) education systems but also on the evaluation of these different qualifications and diplomas.

The major problem, however, seems to reside in differences in the general philosophy of education. Whilst higher education in the U.S.A. emphasizes broad studies which include increased specialization in the later stages, in Europe, specialized studies are undertaken from the very beginning of higher education. Neither approach necessarily implies a difference in quality, even if there is a tendency for such interpretation.

Another major difference is in the admission procedures to higher education systems, *i.e.*, "individualistic" (U.S.A.) versus "collective" placement methods in a large number of European countries. This difference also contributes to a great extent to the problems arising in exchanges.

Furthermore, when speaking of higher education in the U.S.A., one should realize that one is dealing with a highly decentralized system of over 3,000 institutions. They range from community colleges to universities. The differences among these institutions are enormous.

In Europe, national higher education systems are generally relatively homogeneous. There are, however, considerable differences *among* national systems. There is also a tendency in favour of greater differentiation within many national systems, especially as concerns the non-university higher education sector.

What is important, however, is to admit that differences exist among educational systems, and that such differences in no way reflect the quality of a particular system or lack thereof. It is also very important to approach these issues in terms of recognition, acceptance, and fitness of purpose. To establish a dialogue between Europe and the U.S.A. and to try to understand each other are prerequisites for trying to overcome the differences.

The establishment of the Working Group in an intergovernmental framework was intended as a contribution to this process of dialogue and is complemented by other non-governmental initiatives (*i.e.*, the Joint EAIE/NAFSA Working Group on Co-operation in the Study of Foreign Educational Systems, Credential Evaluation, and Credit Transfer; the PIER studies and symposia like the one that was held on the educational systems of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the U.S.A., etc.).

2.2. A Brief Overview of the U.S. System of Education

2.2.1. The Education System

The U.S. education system, unlike those of most European countries, is decentralized and can be characterized as one of tremendous size, great diversity, and a multitude of institutions catering to different student groups. These characteristics make comparison very difficult.

Formal (and usually compulsory) education begins at age six and ends at age eighteen. During this period, children complete twelve years of elementary and secondary education, graduating at the end of year twelve with a high school diploma (see Figure 1).

In secondary school (high school) students may choose to follow one of several programmes: *general academic*, *vocational* or *technical*, *university preparatory*, and *honors*. Commercial studies, home economics, and agriculture are examples of vocational programmes. The International Baccalaureate and the Advanced Placement programmes fall under the category of *honors* programmes. Students who are planning to attend a higher education institution select a general academic, a university preparatory, or an honors programme - depending on the degree of

selectivity of the college or university they plan to attend. Approximately 20% of high school students prepare rigorously for admission to selective and highly selective colleges and universities by taking either a combination of university preparatory and honors courses or a programme consisting entirely of advanced and honors courses. Regardless of the programme followed, all students who successfully complete secondary school are awarded the high school diploma.

Following the conclusion of secondary studies, a qualified student may continue in higher education at junior or community colleges in two-year programmes leading to the Associate Degree or at colleges or universities in four-year programmes leading to the Bachelor's Degree. (Generally, universities are comprehensive institutions, offering graduate and sometimes professional programmes, as well as first degree instruction.) Secondary school graduates who attend a junior or a community college generally do so for any one or a combination of the following reasons:

- *Cost*: Community colleges provide courses and programmes at a low cost to residents of the areas they serve.

Accessibility: Because they are established for local, commuting populations, they are easily reached on foot, by car, or by public transportation.
Programmes offered: These provide academic preparation and courses that are designed to transfer and yield credit at four-year colleges and comprehensive universities. Usually established agreements (*articulation* agreements) exist with nearby or related senior institutions to ensure that transferring students will be guaranteed full recognition of their community or junior college studies. Terminal vocational programmes are also offered for students who do not plan to continue into the advanced stages of higher education. Two-year colleges provide a suitable alternative for the secondary school graduate who is committed to higher education but who is unsure at the time of high school graduation regarding the academic or career path to follow.
Admissions requirements: They are more flexible at the two-year colleges which means that students with varied educational backgrounds may enroll.
Secondary school graduates, who instead elect to attend a four-year college or a comprehensive university, generally do so for one or more of the following reasons:
Funds available to them: They are usually able to afford the higher costs associated with these institutions, especially the privately-established ones, for which fees for tuition, room, and board can exceed $12,000 a year. (As an example, in 1990-1991, at 11% of private four-year institutions, tuition alone was $12,000 or higher.) Or, their academic backgrounds (grades, subjects, test scores) and/or talents (music, art, athletic skills) are good enough to ensure scholarships.
Mobility: They are able to leave home to travel the distance to attend an institution of their preference. In the U.S.A., it is not unusual for a high school graduate in Massachusetts to pursue higher education in Virginia, Illinois, or California.
Programmes offered: The programmes offered lead to the bachelor's degree. Students who enroll at the institution do not have to worry about transferring units/credits. They elect courses within an easily understood framework from the beginning. Some colleges and comprehensive universities are renowned for their specialized programmes (theater, arts, technology, allied health fields). Students so inclined will apply for admission to the special programmes of these universities.
Admission requirements: Most four-year colleges and comprehensive universities have specific admissions requirements that involve consideration of grades and/or rank in high school graduating class, test scores, subjects completed, and - sometimes - letters of recommendation. Secondary school graduates will apply to colleges for which their qualifications match the admissions profile of successful candidates in previous years.
Plans for postgraduate study: High school graduates who are certain of their academic careers - that they plan to continue for master's and/or doctoral study, or for entrance to professional schools such as those of law or medicine - will usually enroll initially in a four-year college or in comprehensive university.
Reputation: Selection may be based on the overall reputation - deserved or not - of the institution, or on the advice of friends. Sometimes a family tradition regarding enrollment in a particular university affects choice.

Referring again to Figure 1, at universities offering graduate study (also called *postgraduate study*, qualified students may pursue one- to four-year programmes leading to the master's degree; or one- to four-year programmes leading to the doctorate. A *qualified* student is one who as a minimum has earned a first academic degree called the bachelor's degree in the U.S.A. In many cases, but not always, completion of a master's programme is required for admission to a doctoral programme. (Note that not all post secondary degrees offered by U.S. higher education institutions are indicated in Figure 1.)

With no centralized authority at the national level, responsibility in the United States for the administration of education at the primary and secondary levels lies with the various states, which traditionally have delegated this authority to local school districts. Post secondary colleges and universities are authorized to operate and to grant degrees by the state in which they are located. They are, with very few exceptions, autonomous, with decisions made by their individual boards of trustees. Academic policies are established independently by each institution's faculty, including those policies relative to undergraduate and postgraduate admissions, the transfer of academic credits, and course requirements for approved academic programmes (C. Aldrich-Langen, 1992).

2.2.2. Admission Practices

There are two types of admission practices in the United States: *open door* and *selective* (moderately selective, selective, or highly selective). *Open door* admissions practices are easily understood: all high school graduates are admitted without consideration of grades, test scores, and subjects studied (in the case of public, state institutions, however, state residency is usually a requirement for admission).

Selective admissions policies are established by the institutions themselves and attempt to be fairly and reasonably consistent with the educational mission of the respective institution. Therefore, admissions policies vary from one institution to the next, and even among faculties within the same institution. However, most selective policies involve, at minimum, consideration of:

- grades: the high school grade point average/GPA, as indicators of academic performance;

the nature of the secondary programme followed - rigorous, general, or vocational;
scores on nationally standardized tests - the Scholastic Aptitude Test/SAT or the American College Test/ACT.

Highly selective, competitive institutions usually have many more qualified applicants than the number of places available. Therefore, their admission requirements will usually be stated in terms of very strong grade point averages (GPA) and test scores, and rigorous academic programmes of study, as well as other factors like letters of recommendation and extracurricular achievement. After all of these factors have been considered for each applicant, a certain percentage out of the entire pool of candidates will be admitted. In this system, some well-qualified applicants will be denied admission.

Moderately selective, less competitive, institutions usually enroll many well-qualified students, as well as some that are not so well-qualified. Academic performance, subjects studied, and test scores are still the factors that are considered (C. Aldrich-Langen, 1992).

2.2.3. American Examinations in the Admission Process

The following examinations are used in the admissions process to provide an objective measure of a student's achievement in secondary school in the United States:

2.2.3.1. Scholastic Achievement Tests

SAT I: Reasoning Test (formerly the SAT Verbal and the SAT math); this test yields scores in verbal and mathematics sections which range each from a low of 200 to a high of 800. Beginning in 1995, the mean will be 500.

SAT II: Subject Tests (formerly the College Board "Achievement Tests"). These tests yield scores in various subject areas (e.g. Calculus, English, Composition, French, and American History). Scores range from 200 to 800.

2.2.3.2. American College Test (ACT)

The ACT has five test scores with subscores as follows. Scores range from a low of 1 to a high of 35. The tests are structured as follows:

English
Usage/Mechanics
Rhetorical Skills
Mathematics
Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra
Algebra/Coordinate Geometry
Plane Geometry/Trigonometry
Reading
Social Studies/Science Reading
Arts/Literature Reading
Science Reasoning
Composite (of all the above)

2.2.3.3. Advanced Placement Tests

The following examination programmes, available through the College Entrance Examination Board, allow advanced standing or credit by examination in recognition of university-level achievement:

- *Advanced Placement (AP) Program*: This programme is a co-operative educational endeavour between American secondary schools and universities which enables willing and able students to complete rigorous university-level studies during secondary school. Upon completion of study (sometimes two years) in one or more of the 29 fields covered by examination in sixteen different disciplinary areas, students may sit for the nationally standardized examinations in the areas studied. Scores range from 1 (low) to 5 (high). AP exams also provide the means for colleges and universities to grant transfer credit, advanced placement, or both to students who have earned qualifying scores on one or more of the examinations.

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP): This programme is a College Board programme of credit by examination that permits a person to obtain recognition and transfer credit for college-level achievement. No formal classroom instruction is required to prepare students for CLEP examinations. Rather, CLEP allows the assessment of college-level knowledge gained independently. Students may choose from among 35 subject examination areas, including 5 General Examinations that cover liberal arts areas. Scores in the CLEP examinations are reported in terms of standard scores.

International students may use the AP and the CLEP examinations to demonstrate their knowledge and to qualify for advanced placement or transfer credit at universities in the United States.

2.2.4. Accreditation

The U.S. system of accreditation provides a basic indicator that a higher education institution meets certain minimum standards. Although accrediting agencies vary in the ways in which they are organized and in their statements of scope and mission, all function to assure that the institutions they accredit have met generally accepted minimum standards for accreditation.

Probably the most visible purpose of accreditation is to enable students to move freely from one accredited institution to another, transferring or *carrying* courses and credits earned with them, even if there is no guarantee that all credits earned at one school will transfer to another.

There are three types of accrediting bodies:

regional accrediting commissions (*e.g.*, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges);

national accrediting bodies that accredit specialized institutions (*e.g.*, the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools);
professional organizations that accredit professional schools or professional programmes within multi-purpose institutions, for example, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (see Christensen, n.d., and Sjogren, 1986).

2.3. A Brief Overview of the European System(s) of Education

2.3.1. New Developments in Europe

It is certainly difficult to speak of a European system of education. In a region that has at present over fifty independent states, with many more languages, cultures, and traditions, the diversity of the educational systems is a logical consequence. In addition, following the ideological and economic changes during and after 1989, most educational systems and particularly the higher education systems in central and eastern Europe are in a process of reform. On the other hand, the great diversification of higher education in western Europe is vastly changing the pattern of higher education in Europe in general. These ongoing processes render difficult the standardization and the evaluation of diplomas among European countries themselves and even more so between them and the U.S.A.

One can, however, underline some distinguishing features of the systems of (higher) education in Europe, which point to the existing differences and possible levels of comparability with the American system of education.

2.3.2. Distinguishing Features of the Secondary School Systems in Europe

In Europe, there are basically three types of secondary schools, if one looks at the overall objectives of their curricula: a) general/academic secondary schools preparing for university studies (the Gymnasium model); b) technical secondary schools, preparing for employment but allowing for access to specific higher education institutions; and c) vocational secondary schools granting terminal qualifications usually not permitting access to higher education.

The *duration of study* of pre-university education in Europe can vary from 10 to 13 years. In the majority of the European systems of education, it is 12 years. In Russia, however, the present length of primary and secondary school studies is 10 years with a tendency towards 11 years.

In Germany, there are two types of secondary schools: the *Gymnasium*, which grants the *Abitur* after 13 years of study as a secondary school leaving certificate, and the technical secondary school, which grants the *Fachhochschulreife* after 12 years of study. The *Abitur* gives access to universities but also to the *Fachhochschulen*, but the *Fachhochschulreife* gives access only to the *Fachhochschulsektor* of higher education.

In England, primary and secondary schooling combined lasts 13 years; in Scotland, however, the duration is twelve years.

In the Netherlands, the combined length of primary and secondary education varies between 11 and 13 years; in Italy, most schooling lasts 13 years (or 12 years in a very limited number of cases: two of nine typologies of upper secondary education institutes, for access to only two faculties). In Austria, in Poland, and in other countries, pre-university education lasts twelve or thirteen years, depending upon the type of upper-secondary school attended.

2.3.3. Admission Policies for Higher Education Institutions

There are, moreover, great differences in admission procedures across Europe, ranging from selective to more open access policies, with variations in between. In most countries, a qualified diploma of secondary education forms the main basic requirement for entry into higher education. However, a large majority of European states have systems for restricting the numbers of students admitted by the imposition of quotas (numerus clausus/numerus fixus). Thus, the United Kingdom lies at one extreme as a highly selective admissions system with a numerus clausus for every subject and different levels of additional selection procedures. Sweden also has a numerus clausus for all higher *education* with highly selective admission to most programmes.

At the other extreme are countries in which the secondary school leaving certificate guarantees admission to higher education institutions based on the concept that maturity implies scholastic aptitude. These countries are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy (limited to a number of *laurea* courses), and the Netherlands. France has highly selective institutions - the *Grandes écoles* - which admit students only on the basis of highly competitive entrance examinations.

In between are countries such as Greece, Spain, and the former socialist republics of eastern and central Europe, where in addition to the secondary school leaving certificate, students, in most cases, must also take either a national entrance examination or examinations conducted by individual universities.

2.3.4. Higher Education Institutions

At the level of higher education institutions, there is a great variety as to the types of higher education offered. Parallel to the university sector, in a great number of European countries, a large non-university sector offers more professionally oriented course programmes.

As for universities in Europe, it is certain that they have common roots in the classical and humanistic legacy which gave birth to the medieval Liberal Arts education model, having as an aim to produce the cultivated, well-rounded individual.

Some researchers, (Altbach, 1991), claim that there is only one common academic model worldwide, the *European University Model*. A more common typology distinguishes three basic university models in Europe: a) the *Humboldtian* or *German academic model*, leading to the research university with the integration of research and study from the very beginning of university studies; b) the *Anglo-Saxon model*, with a strong interest in the personality development of the student; c) the *French* or *Napoleonic model*, with its strict hierarchical state subordination, and its

elitist approach characterized by the *Grandes écoles*. Of course, all these models have been modified through the years.

The medieval model of Liberal Arts education first found its two basic and differing manifestations in the Liberal Arts College of the Anglo-Saxon world and the European Gymnasium. The Humboldtian concept has been the model of the European university and academic training, while in the U.S.A. it brought forth the Graduate School model (first, at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, the first research university, around 1870) where new research paradigms were developed.

The Anglo-Saxon and the Continental European systems developed their own structures with respect to the segmentation of general and specialized education. The major discrepancies with the American system of education have arisen from this segmentation.

In the central and eastern European countries, the higher education systems were largely adapted to the Humboldtian concept (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland) and the Napoleonic model of state-serving élite academic institutions (Romania and Russia), to be later transformed into higher education systems characterized by mono-disciplinary universities, the separation of the teaching and the research functions of the university, and the domination of ideological doctrines (Marxist-Leninist). At present, this group of countries does not represent a monolithic bloc. While some of them are trying to revive the Humboldtian model, there are tendencies in others to introduce the Anglo-Saxon model of higher education. Some countries (Hungary, for instance) are introducing the modular system. In many, there is a tendency to re-unite the teaching and research function in universities (Sadlak, 1991).

2.4. Some Fundamental Differences

2.4.1. The Role of the State/Federal Authorities

One of the distinguishing features of American higher education in comparison with European systems (Rhoades, 1987) is the fact that it is market-driven and open (based on student demand). Neither the Federal nor the state governments attempt to control higher education in detail. Operations are strongly steered by the financial choices of the consumer, rather than by the politician's political priorities. No central legislation or organization is in charge of American higher education.

Although it is true that an analysis of reform trends (Clark, 1986) demonstrates that one of the most important changes in the general structure of American higher education has been the strengthening of the superstructure of control (*federal supervision*), higher education in the United States still remains both the most extended and the most decentralized post secondary system of education in the world.

2.4.2. The Diversity of the Systems

In the United States, in 1990, according to statistical data, higher education consisted of nearly 3,400 degree-granting institutions, enrolling nearly 14 million degree-seeking students, nearly 8 million full-time and just over 6 million part-time students. A total of approximately $120 billion dollars were spent in the same year for higher education. In a decentralized system like that of the U.S.A., where there is neither Federal nor state control over the curriculum, over standards for student admission, or over the awarding of degrees, the diversity of the system is characterized by the figures presented reflecting the strong institutional autonomy of each individual higher education institution.

In Europe, the great diversification of higher education structures, both internal and external, has characterized main developments in the last two decades. This external diversification manifests itself by the development, alongside the traditional academic studies, of more profession-oriented studies at institutions such as the *Fachhochschulen*, the Polytechnics, the *Instituts universitaires de technologie (IUT's)*, the *Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrimata (TEI)*, the *Hogescholen*, the *Scuole Dirette a Fini Speciali*, the *Ensino Politecnico*, the *Escuelas Universitarias* all a testimony of the new balance which is being sought between traditional academic programmes and newer professionally oriented ones.

The emergence of private, often non-recognized, universities, especially in the eastern European countries, contributes further to this diversification, closely linking it to the concept of quality control and institutional accreditation.

2.4.3. Specialized versus General Education

The American University is described by some researchers (T. Husén, 1991) as the "Chicago model", developed by Hutchins, with a programme having a strong liberal arts orientation, falling in the purview of the liberal arts tradition of Europe. Greater emphasis is laid on developing skills to find and to sift new knowledge in an era of information explosion than to specialize in a given discipline.

The four-year American bachelor's curriculum is considerably less specialized than comparable curricula elsewhere, with approximately 40% to 65% of the courses being within the major, and those mostly concentrated in the third and fourth years. In certain professional majors (for instance, engineering, business, communications) a high percentage of degree programmes consists of specialization studies. Much of the first two years and about one-quarter to one-third of the total courses will be in what is termed as general education.

The three major functions of the leading American universities today seem to correspond to a threefold structural segmentation. The function of liberal education, in many ways similar to the British counterpart, is almost exclusively reserved for the undergraduate level. The function of professional training is placed in specialized professional graduate schools, and the research function is exercised mainly within the graduate schools of arts and science (Gellert, 1993).

3. Recognition issues: classification

Both the earlier comments and the replies to the questionnaire circulated by UNESCO-CEPES among the NIB network demonstrate that the country answers could be roughly classified into five groups according to the level of problems encountered. This classification is most evident in the domain of access to higher education institutions, but it also applies with regard to intermediate qualifications and access to doctoral studies.

Although these groups are not always homogeneous, and a certain overlapping in some areas and approaches is evident among some of the groups, they have been classified in the following manner, for the sake of simplifying and facilitating the analysis:

- *Anglophone countries* (the United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta, Australia): low level of problems; common language, common traditions, examples of good practice; pragmatic ways of dealing with problems.

Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden): problems exist: this group is not entirely homogeneous, but in some countries and in specific areas of studies, due to the long tradition of exchanges with the U.S.A., some solutions arising from good practice have been worked out.

Central and eastern European countries (including Russia): although this group is also not homogeneous, the common denominator is the relatively low number of exchanges and the lack of information on placement procedures in the U.S.A.
Western European continental countries: Austria, the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain are faced with similar specific questions of recognition in the U.S.A.

Students from the U.S.A. who wish to study in Europe have specific problems with regard to access to higher education institutions and to the recognition of their intermediate and final degrees.

Analysis of several of the issues stated in the questionnaires and cited in the following pages indicates that problems result from the fact that there is no published information on certain European qualifications in the U.S. (for example, those of Iceland, Spain, and Italy) or from a misunderstanding of the American education system or lack of knowledge of admission practices or CEC placement recommendations.

Furthermore, the placement recommendations approved for the use of U.S. institutions are not always known in the home countries (as in the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, and Australia). This situation lays emphasis on the existing problem of dissemination of information regarding these questions.

4. Recognition issues: access to higher education

4.1. The Recognition of European Secondary School Certificates in the United States

4.1.1. The Issue

According to the replies received from the Anglophone countries (Australia, Ireland, Malta), there are either no significant problems regarding access to undergraduate studies for holders of secondary school leaving diplomas (Malta) or insufficient information about the respective placement recommendations (Australia, Ireland).

The comments/replies received from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) demonstrate that the solutions obtained through good practice have generally proven to be satisfactory. Thus, the secondary school certificate from all five countries is granted recognition in the United States not only as a high school diploma but as a document conveying a right to advanced standing of up to at least one year in institutions of higher education. However, this practice may change in a negative way when the PIER (Projects for International Education Research) reports on Scandinavian countries are published. The latter suggest that advanced standing or transfer credits should be based on the results of tests.

The replies to the Questionnaire received from a number of central and eastern European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, and Russia) clearly demonstrate the existing interest in promoting exchanges with the United States but at the same time give proof of a lack of information on already established placement recommendations. The majority of the replies recommend establishing bilateral agreements with the United States as well as a mutual exchange of information. As part of the Group's work, placement recommendations for the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland have been sent to UNESCO-CEPES and included in the Survey. Some countries are satisfied with the level of access given, while others need more information and experience in the field.

The replies received from the western European continental countries (Austria, the Flemish community of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland) demonstrate mainly a similar type of dissatisfaction with the access level to undergraduate studies. With the exception of Germany, which has confirmed, through a bilateral agreement in 1990, a minimum of 1 year of advanced standing in a bachelor's degree course programme for *Abitur* holders, the other countries are dissatisfied with the recognition given to their certificates: the Austrian *Matura*; the Dutch *VWO*; the Swiss Federal Maturity Certificate, Cantonal Maturity Certificate, and Cantonal Teacher Patents; and the French *Baccalauréat*. These countries believe that recognition of their secondary school leaving certificates as high school diplomas is not satisfactory. The majority of the countries mentioned would like their students to be given at least one year of transfer credit - access to the Sophomore Year (something which Germany, Italy, and France have, in some cases, achieved) while others would prefer two-year advanced credit - access to the Junior Year.

In this respect, Greece, Portugal, and Spain are exceptions. The three countries seem satisfied with the high school diploma recognition granted to their respective secondary school leaving certificates.

All the secondary school leaving certificate holders from Europe are granted access to higher education institutions. The problem arises not with the admission but with the amount of credit given for certain secondary school qualifications. Europeans find a great deal of inconsistency in the placement recommendations of the CEC in this respect, as the same placement is given regardless of the years of study (to the Dutch twelve year and thirteen-year secondary school leaving certificates, or the *Baccalauréat* 12 year certificate, etc.)

One possible solution has been suggested by the University of Oslo in cases in which transfer credit is not granted. According to this suggestion, the Advanced Placement Programme or the College-Level Examination Programme (CLEP) would be used to determine the amount of transfer credit to be given to Norwegian students. Although this practical way of determining the access level of European students to university studies in the U.S.A. may be a pragmatic solution, the majority of countries consider it to be an unnecessary *double testing* for their students who have already given proof of their maturity in college level subjects and scholastic aptitude by taking secondary school finishing examinations such as the French *Baccalauréat* or the German *Abitur*.

4.1.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

Having analyzed the problems, the Group proposed the following recommendation regarding the access of European students to higher education in the U.S.A.:

Holders of European secondary school leaving examinations or certificates, obtained after at least twelve years of schooling, that permit access to higher education in the home country, should be considered not only for access to higher education in the U.S.A. but also for advanced standing and for transfer credit. The decision to award transfer credit should take into account such factors as the subjects taken, the programme followed, the grades obtained, etc.

European students who wish to demonstrate knowledge in college level subjects which have not been credited may seek credit through success on American nationally standardized examinations such as the AP, the CLEP, or institutional examinations.
In cases in which secondary school leaving certificates from Europe are obtained after less than twelve years of study, the student should be considered for enrollment on an individual basis.

4.2. The Recognition of American High School Diplomas in Europe

4.2.1. The Issue

Most western European countries do not recognize the American high school leaving diploma as sufficient basis for access to higher education. In addition to the high school diploma, they usually require up to two years of higher education for admission. This requirement is unsatisfactory from the U.S. perspective. This period could be reduced or eliminated if students were to take placement examinations such as AP's or SAT's earning specified scores/results.

Practices vary, from the Netherlands, in which 5 AP's are required to grant access to higher education, through Germany, requiring 4 AP's, to the UK where 2 AP's are sufficient.

4.2.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

With respect to the recognition of American high school diplomas in Europe, the Group made the following recommendation:

- A U.S. high school diploma representing twelve years of study in a university preparatory programme should be the minimum general requirement for admission to a European university. In addition, U.S. students should demonstrate their mastery of achievement in the subject areas required for admission to a specific European university.

There are several ways to meet these requirements:

- Submission of SAT II Subject Test results (formerly the College Board Achievement Tests) indicating high achievement in the subjects required for admission.

Satisfactory completion of AP examinations in the subject areas required for admission.
In addition, European universities should consider the results of the ACT Composite or the SAT I: Reasoning Test (formerly the SAT) results in the admission process.

Recognition Issues: Intermediate Qualifications

5.1. The Recognition of European Intermediate Qualifications in the U.S.A.

5.1.1. The Issue

The Anglophone countries that have replied do not have intermediate qualifications; therefore, this part of the Questionnaire was not applicable.

The Nordic countries vary among themselves in this respect. Some of them do not have regular intermediate qualifications (Sweden). The countries that do have them are either satisfied with the recognition given (Iceland) or have not experienced major problems (Denmark).

Some of the central and eastern European countries have intermediate qualifications - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic - but have no information about the recognition given to them in the United States.

As for the continental western European countries which have replied to the questionnaire, with the exception of Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain, all of them have intermediate qualifications: Austria (the first *Diplomprüfung-Vordiplom*); Germany (the *Vordiplom* or the *Zwischenprüfung*), the Netherlands (the *Propedeuse*), Switzerland (the *Vordiplom*, the *Cand.iur.*, the *¼ Licence*, the *Demi-Licence*, and the *¾ - Licence*), France (*Diplôme d'études universitaires générales - DEUG*).

With the exception of Switzerland, which stated that it does not have information on the recognition given in the U.S.A. to its qualifications, all the countries mentioned are only partly satisfied (Austria, Germany, France, and the Netherlands).

France is partly satisfied in those cases in which practical evaluations are made by the universities within exchange agreements. In these cases, fairer placements are granted than the ones suggested by placement recommendations.

Germany and Austria are satisfied only when holders of their intermediate qualifications plus one-to-two semesters of regular studies are granted access to graduate studies. The Netherlands is satisfied with the recognition of the *HBO Propedeuse* but dissatisfied with the university *Propedeuse* recognition if it does not grant exemption from two years of an American bachelor's degree programme.

Diplomas such as the *Vordiplom*, the *DEUG*, etc., represent a minimum of two years completed in specialized studies in the education system of the home country. If after completing these two years students are not given graduate admission in the United States, the situation is viewed as unsatisfactory by (some) Europeans who might wish to take advanced courses in a subject area already studied as a specialization.

The United States reports the tradition that European students with two or more years of specialized studies may be allowed to enroll in graduate level courses in the area of specialization subject to demonstrated completion of prerequisites and/or the permission of the instructor. In such cases, the subjects are taken only for the acquisition of credits for a thesis to be defended in the home country. There does not seem to be substantial difficulty in granting this right. The difficulty arises when a student wants to enroll in a Master's degree programme. The problem is that he or she may not have the requisite first university degree for admission.

5.1.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

The Members of the Group made the following recommendation:

Students with an Intermediate Qualification from a European university should be considered for enrollment in individual courses at the graduate level with the aim of receiving or of obtaining transfer credits upon return to their home universities. Any European student seeking admission to graduate studies will be expected to meet the standard admission requirements of the programme chosen.

5.2. The Recognition in European Countries of Partially Completed American First Degree Studies

5.2.1. The Issue

Associate degree studies may constitute the first stage of higher education in the United States. However, some European countries consider the first two years of study in the United States, including completion of the Associate Degree (A.A. or A.S), usually in two-year colleges, not to be fully academic level programmes. This position is not acceptable from the perspective of the United States. The American authorities emphasize that studies at this level are tertiary studies.

5.2.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

An individual U.S. student's record (including the diploma for an intermediate associate's degree) should be analyzed on a course by course basis to determine which courses completed are appropriate for meeting certain requirements of European higher education.

6. Recognition issues: access to doctoral studies

6.1. Access of European Students to Doctoral Studies in the U.S.A.

6.1.1. The Issue

The Anglophone countries either have no problems in having their final degrees (BA, MA, Ph.D.) recognized in the U.S.A. or have no information about respective placement recommendations (Australia).

They also do not have any problems worth mentioning with access to doctoral studies.

The Nordic countries vary in this respect so far as specific diplomas are concerned. Denmark has voiced dissatisfaction with the current placement granted to holders of its bachelor's Degree but is content with the new placement recommendations (to be published shortly) in which the Danish bachelor's degrees are recommended for consideration as a basis for graduate admission. Iceland considers that its B.A., B.S., and B.Ed. degrees should be given recognition in the U.S.A. as the B.A. and B.S. degrees. However, this country is not satisfied with the recognition granted to its M.A. and M.S. degrees as well as to its *Kandidatprof* degree. Likewise it considers that credits earned in Icelandic Ph.D. programmes are inadequately recognized in the U.S., resulting in a loss of time for students. As for Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, they generally express satisfaction, now that the new placement recommendations (to be published shortly) state that master's degrees may be considered for admission to doctoral studies. Finland expresses the opinion that the lack of a Bachelor's degree in its universities should not hinder recognition of the *kandidaatin tutkinto* as equivalent to a master's degree, since the extent and contents are comparable.

The central and eastern European countries, in some cases, have made detailed descriptions of the degrees awarded in their respective countries, with suggestions for placement recommendations in the U.S.A. In general, the observation was made that they are unaware of how these degrees are recognized in the U.S.A. Russia expressed the opinion that some of the Russian degrees were undervalued and that there is a general lack of consistency in evaluating Russian qualifications. CEC has not yet laid down official guidelines for the recognition of Russian qualifications.

As for the continental western European countries, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the Flemish-speaking community of Belgium feel that students who have completed the *Magister* degree, the *Lizentiaat*, the *Licence*, the *Diplom*, the *Staatsexamen*, or the *doctoraal* are not receiving full recognition for their work. These programmes are complete units of specialized studies (usually two subjects) of 4 to 5 years minimum which are structured into undergraduate and graduate study phases (divided by a *Vordiplom*). They require a research thesis of 80 to 100 pages plus the passing of comprehensive final diploma examinations before a board of examiners. The feeling is that these graduates should be admitted directly to doctoral studies without being required to take additional master's courses.

France suggests that the *licence* should give access to graduate studies and that the *maîtrise* should give access to doctoral studies in the U.S. Both qualifications constitute the second cycle of higher education in France, offering a higher degree of specialization. The *licence* consists of a minimum of 350 and a maximum of 500 hours of education per year, depending on the discipline, out of which at least 250 hours are in the major discipline. The *maîtrise* consists of the same number of hours per year as the *licence*, with a minimum of 100 hours devoted to teaching and 250 hours devoted to research, with the defense of a short thesis at the end.

Italy, particularly the Centro di Informazione sulla Mobilità e le Equivalenze Accademiche (CIMEA), has come to realize that most of its higher education qualifications are not known in the United States. Therefore, it will soon provide written information on its whole system to the CEC. Anyhow, Italy is of the opinion that the *Diploma Universitario - DU* (first level university degree awarded after three years of undergraduate full-time professionally-oriented studies) should be considered for admission to graduate studies, while the *Diploma di Laurea* should be accepted for admission to doctoral studies in the U.S.A.

Greece, Portugal, and Spain are generally satisfied with the recognition given to their final degrees and the level of access to doctoral studies in the U.S.A., but Portugal recommends a regular updating of the existing information on courses and diplomas, both in Portugal and in the United States.

In conclusion, for the holders of most terminal degrees from Europe differing in duration of studies from three to five years, admission to Ph.D. programmes in the United States is not normally recommended.

Thus a considerable number of European countries disapprove of the placement recommendations given to the holders of those degrees and maintain that final degrees, awarded by approved European universities, should be considered for doctoral studies in the U.S.

6.1.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

With respect to this recognition issue, the Working Group has made the following recommendation:

Holders of final degrees from European countries obtained after a legally prescribed minimum period of studies of at least four years' duration should be considered for admission to doctoral studies in the United States.

Holders of degrees from European countries requiring a minimum of three years of full-time studies should be considered for admission to graduate studies in the United States.

6.2. Access of U.S. Students to Doctoral Studies in Europe

6.2.1. The Issue

Holders of a bachelor's degree from the United States have completed a distinct programme of study at the second stage of higher education. Particularly during the final two years, studies represent greater specialization as well as an introduction to research and analysis of complex problems.

However, the recognition given to the U.S. bachelor's degree varies among European nations. Generally, tertiary recognition is given only for the final two (out of four or more) years, a practice which is not considered acceptable by American higher education institutions.

This problem is compounded because in certain European countries the specialization expected of first degree holders is higher than that required of holders of U.S. bachelor's degrees. Nevertheless, the United States is of the opinion that the bachelor's degree should be accepted as the minimum requirement for admission to a doctoral programme. At the same time, it has recognized that it is reasonable to expect U.S. students to complete any specialized studies that are essential for beginning a doctoral programme.

6.2.2. Recommendation of the Working Group

With regard to this issue, the Working Group has made the following recommendation:

- A bachelor's degree from a U.S. college/university should be considered for admission to a master's programme where this exists (the master's degree in the United Kingdom and in Ireland; the *maîtrise* in France).

A U.S. bachelor's degree should be considered for admission to the second level of specialized studies at Continental European universities (leading to the German *Diplom*, the Austrian *Magister*, the Italian *Laurea*...) with transfer credit as appropriate, based on careful analysis of previous course work completed.
Holders of a master's degree from a U.S. college/university should be considered for admission to doctoral studies in European universities. Due consideration should be given to the quality of the programme studied, the grades obtained, and the relevance of courses.

7. General Guidelines and Recommendations

7.1. General Guidelines

The Working Group considered that it needed to adopt a series of general guidelines that would reflect conclusions reached concerning certain general issues needing to be followed up, such as a more organized information exchange; inadequacies in proving language proficiency; a greater participation of Europeans in the elaboration of respective placement recommendations in the United States; definition by the Europeans of their evaluation and placement processes along with participation by the U.S.A. in the process; organization of training workshops, etc. While not being specific recommendations relating to recognition issues, these general guidelines are as significant

in promoting the mutual recognition of qualifications between Europe and the U.S.A. and are listed in the following sub-paragraphs.

7.1.1. Greater Participation of Europeans in Placement Recommendations in the U.S.A. and Americans in Recognition Procedures in Europe

The home country should be offered an opportunity to review the placement recommendation once it is elaborated but before it is printed. Despite the fact that PIER projects include a thorough analysis of the education system of the given country, sometimes in collaboration with respective national authorities, the resulting placement recommendation is elaborated only by the CEC with no chance being given by the home country specialists to review it. A first step towards such a review has been taken for the Scandinavian countries.

The European countries should develop transparent recognition procedures, and the U.S.A. should be offered an opportunity to review them and to make comments once they are elaborated.

7.1.2. Language Proficiency

Even though acknowledgment was made of the fact that the Council (CEC) does not deal with issues of English proficiency and that the requirement of the TOEFL test and the level of its results represent individual decisions by American colleges/universities, the Working Group, nonetheless, made a strong case that the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test be waived for applicants from all countries in Europe who have studied or are studying English as a major or minor subject at university level.

European students who have proved their proficiency in English by taking tests other than the TOEFL test (for example, the Cambridge Proficiency Examination) should be exempted from further language testing.

U.S. students having proved their language proficiency for the host country concerned, for example, by taking an AP test in Language (for instance, AP German) should be equally exempted from language testing.

7.1.3. Mutual Recognition: Problem Solving Instances

The U.S.A. should designate a centre that will represent it in the ENIC network, one that could be, *inter alia*, the U.S. partner in mutual recognition problem solving. If and when a problem arises in the recognition of qualifications between a European country and the U.S.A., the respective two national information centres, represented in the ENIC network, should be the first to propose the most adequate solution. When major problems cannot be solved between the two respective centres or when problems faced are shared by more than two countries, they should be referred to the European National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC) network for analysis.

7.1.4. Information Exchange

UNESCO (CEPES), the Council of Europe, and the European Union, through their respective national information networks on academic recognition (ENIC, NARIC), should promote the dissemination of information on existing placement recommendations in the U.S.A. and in Europe, on guidelines and recommendations made by the Working Group, on other results achieved by non-governmental organizations (i.e. EAIE). They should find the best means possible to cause this information to reach the target groups.

7.1.5. Training Workshops

UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Union should include in the activities programme of the ENIC/NARIC networks activities designed to:

Train European Admission Officers in the interpretation of the transcript of records of American higher education institutions and the U.S. nationally standardized testing systems (AP, CLEP, etc.).

Organize information seminars on courses and qualifications in the U.S.A. and in European countries, comparable, for instance, to the PIER Symposium on Scandinavian countries (Autumn 1993) as an efficient way of granting better insight into the respective courses and qualifications.

Periodically publish updated bibliographies on publications indispensable for admission officers in Europe and the U.S.A.

Publish in the UNESCO-CEPES series, *Monographs on Higher Education Systems*, a revised and updated study of higher education in the U.S.A.

7.2. Recommendations

7.2.1. Access to Higher Education

Holders of European secondary school leaving examinations or certificates, obtained after at least twelve years of schooling, that permit access to higher education in the home country, should be considered not only for access to higher education in the U.S.A. but also for advanced standing and for transfer credit. The decision to award transfer credit should take into account such factors as the subjects taken, the programme followed, the grades obtained, etc.

European students who wish to demonstrate knowledge in college level subjects which have not been credited may seek credit through success in American nationally standardized examinations such as the AP, the CLEP, or institutional examinations.
In cases in which secondary school leaving certificates from Europe are obtained after less than twelve years of study, the student should be considered for enrollment on an individual basis.
A U.S. high school diploma representing twelve years of study in a university preparatory programme should be the minimum general requirement for admission to a European university. In addition, U.S. students should demonstrate their mastery of achievement in subject areas required for admission to a specific European university. There are several ways to meet these requirements:

- Submission of SAT II Subject Test results (formerly the College Board Achievement Tests) indicating high achievement in the subjects required for admission.

Satisfactory completion of AP examinations in the subject areas required for admission. In addition, European universities should consider the results of the ACT Composite or the SAT I: Reasoning Test (formerly the SAT) results in the admission process.

7.2.2. Intermediate Qualifications/Partially Completed American First Degree Studies

Students with an Intermediate Qualification from a European university should be considered for enrollment in individual courses at the graduate level with the aim of receiving or of obtaining transfer credits upon return to their home universities. Any European student seeking admission to graduate studies will be expected to meet the standard admission requirements of the programme chosen.

An individual U.S. student's record (including the diploma for an intermediate associate's degree) should be analyzed on a course by course basis to determine which courses completed are appropriate for meeting certain requirements of European higher education.

7.2.3. Access to Doctoral Studies

Holders of final degrees from European countries obtained after a legally prescribed minimum period of studies of at least four years' duration should be *considered for admission to doctoral studies in the United States.*

Holders of degrees from European countries requiring a minimum of three years of full-time studies should be considered for admission to graduate studies in the United States.
A bachelor's degree from a U.S. college/university should be considered for admission to a master's programme where this exists (the master's degree in the United Kingdom and Ireland, the *maîtrise* in France).
A U.S. bachelor's Degree should be considered for admission to the second level of specialized studies at Continental European universities (leading to the German *Diplom*, the Austrian *Magister*, the Italian *Laurea*...) with transfer credit as appropriate, based on careful analysis of previous course work completed.
Holders of a master's degree from a U.S. college/university should be considered for admission to doctoral studies in European universities. Due consideration should be given to the quality of the programme studied, the grades obtained, and the relevance of courses.

Members of the Working Group

Ms Solange DE SERRE, Chairperson
Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Culture - DAGIC 7
173 Bd. Saint Germain
F-75006 Paris Cedex

FRANCE
Tel: 33-1-40656590
Fax: 33-1-45445787

E-Mail: mendaj@calvanet.calvacom.fr

Ms Caroline ALDRICH-LANGEN
Office of Admissions and Records
California State University,
Chico CA 95929-0720
U.S.A.
Tel: 1-916-898-4878
Fax: 1-916-898-6824

E-mail: caldrich@oavax.csuchico.edu

Ms Marianne HILDEBRAND
Department for International Affairs
National Agency for Higher Education
Box 7851, S-103 99 Stockholm
SWEDEN
Tel: 46-8-4535141
Fax: 46-8-4535140

E-Mail: marianne.hildebrand@hsv.se

Mr. Nizam MOHAMMED
University Entrance Requirements Officer
University of London, Senate House (Room 11)
Malet Street
London WC1E 7HU
UNITED KINGDOM
Tel: 44-71-6368000 (ext. 3041)
Fax: 44-71-63 65 841
Mr. Tibor Gyula NAGY
Director
Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre
Szalay ut. no. 10-14
H - 1055 Budapest
HUNGARY
Ms. Dorothea STEINER
Department of English-American Studies
University of Salzburg
Akademiestr. 24
A-5020 Salzburg
AUSTRIA
Tel: 662/8044/4423
Fax: 662/8044/613
Prof. Dott. Silvia CAPUCCI
CIMEA of the RUI Foundation
(Italian NARIC)
Viale Ventuno Aprile 36
00162 Rome
ITALY
Tel: 39-6-86321281
Fax: 39-6-86322845
Mr. Sjur BERGAN
Higher Education Section/DECS

Council of Europe
B.P. 431 R6
67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Council of Europe
FRANCE
Tel: 33-88412643
Fax: 33-88412788

E-Mail: sjur.bergan@decs.coe.fr

Ms. Constance MELDRUM
E.C. Commission
TFHR J37
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
BELGIUM
Fax: 32-2-2955719