



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
EDUCATION AND YOUTH BOARD



Erasmus+ NARIC project “Road to Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Access Qualifications” (ARAQUA)

1 December 2022 – 30 November 2024

Conclusions of the ARAQUA comparative study

and

recommendations on automatic recognition

GUNTA KINTA, EDMUNDS LABUNSKIS

ACADEMIC INFORMATION CENTRE



Co-funded by
the European Union

2 October 2024, Tallinn



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Welcome to ARAQUA!

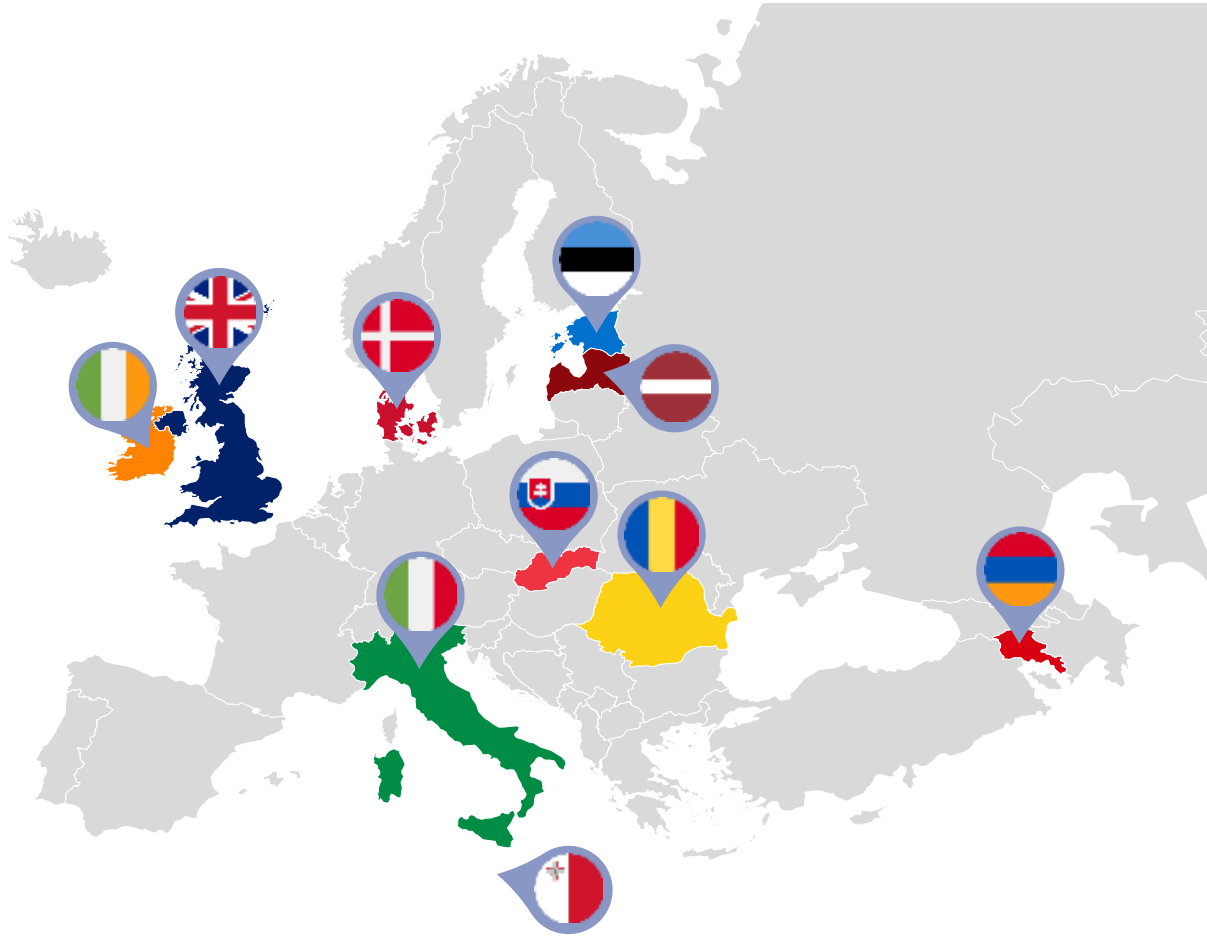
ERASMUS+ NARIC PROJECT “ROAD TO AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS QUALIFICATIONS” (ARAQUA)

1 DECEMBER 2022 – 30 NOVEMBER 2024



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ARAQUA project partners



Academic Information Centre –
coordinator (Latvia)

Danish Agency for Higher Education and
Science (Denmark)

Education and Youth Board (Estonia)

Information Centre on Academic Mobility
and Equivalence (Italy)

Malta Qualifications Recognition
Information Centre (Malta)

National Centre for Recognition and
Equivalence of Diplomas (Romania)

Centre for Recognition of Diplomas
(Slovakia)

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (Ireland)

UK ENIC (United Kingdom)

National Information Center for Academic
Recognition and Mobility (Armenia)

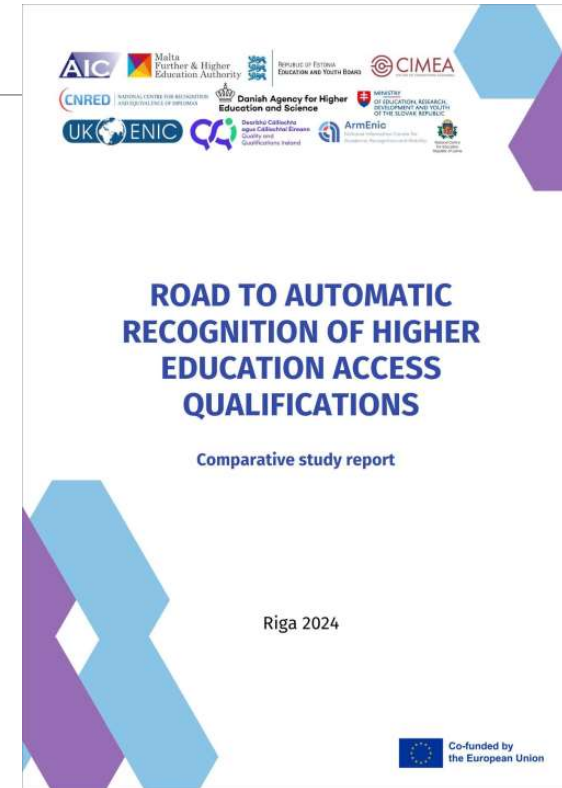
National Centre for Education of the
Republic of Latvia (associated partner)



ARAQUA project outcomes

The project team:

- Composed a set of **criteria for mapping** HE access qualifications (fiche)
- Conducted comparative study and prepared the **study report**
- Provided **recommendations** for NARICs and HEIs about the automatic recognition of HE access qualifications
- Facilitated **discussion among NARICs and HEIs**:
 - Peer learning activity in Bucharest, Romania (29.02.2024)
 - Seven national workshops in partner countries (04-09.2024)
 - ENIC/NARIC meetings (e.g., 23.06.2024) and
 - International conference (2.10.2024)



Project website

<https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/araqua>



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Methodology

Feb – Mar
2023

- Project team drafted and approved **template** for country reports (incl. fiche)

Apr – Aug
2023

- **8** project partner countries conducted desk study and prepared **country reports** about HE access qualifications

Oct 2023 –
Jan 2024

- Project coordinator compared and analysed the country reports and drafted the **comparative report**

The structure of the report

1. Development of **national education system** in the context of HE access qualifications
2. Current **legal framework** regulating HE access qualifications
3. HE access qualifications in **national education system** (present situation)
4. **Flexible pathways** leading to HE access qualifications
5. HE access qualifications in **national qualifications framework**
6. **Quality assurance** for institutions implementing/awarding HE access qualifications
7. **Learning outcomes** of HE access qualifications
8. **Recognition criteria** and procedures of HE access qualifications in the country

Features of education system

- **Diverse education systems:** but all have undergone reforms and become oriented on learning outcomes
- **Nominal duration:** 12-13 years, 33-40 weeks per school year
- **Grading systems:** 21 – 57% passing score for school exams, lower passing scores for state exams which ranges from 1-15-20% to 28% and higher on the other end
- **EQF:** level 4 recommended, HE access qualifications should be placed in NQF to be considered for AR
- **Quality assurance:** all the partner countries have systems of internal and external QA, national license, accreditation and/or approval required for AR
- **Learning outcomes:** varying systems of formulation of LOs, further study necessary
- **Differences:** mostly formal and concerning organization of education, not a deep division among partner countries

Recognition of qualifications

- **Recognition:** ENIC/NARICs, HEIs and other bodies; governed by LRC principles, some variety in credential evaluation between PCs, one year difference in nominal duration should not present a substantial difference
- ENIC/NARICs should promote the **benefits of automatic recognition** supported by the national authorities
- In most of the partner countries **the level of programme, formal eligibility rights and workload/nominal duration** are primarily considered when evaluating a qualification
- Other aspects may differ more prominently, but are taken into consideration more rarely and should **not form an obstacle to automatic recognition**
- **Almost all mapped qualifications** from partner countries fulfil the defined criteria for AR

17 HE access qualifications could be **automatically** recognised among partner countries

4 HE access qualifications would require an **addition evaluation**

The comparative report online

[https://aic.lv/content/files/ARAQUA
Comparative_report_2024.pdf](https://aic.lv/content/files/ARAQUA_Comparative_report_2024.pdf)



ROAD TO AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS QUALIFICATIONS

Comparative study report

Riga 2024



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Recommendations on automatic recognition



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Structure of the recommendations

1. Introduction – explanation

2. The role of different features of HE access qualifications in recognition

3. Contextual aspects of HE access qualifications which affect their recognition

4. List of minimum requirements for automatic recognition of HE access qualifications

1. Introduction – general remarks

Concepts covered in the recommendations:

HE access qualifications –
general and VET
qualifications which allow
applying for HE studies

General access to HE
programmes

Automatic recognition

Access to HE



Admission to HE programmes

- ! AR does not limit or cancel the procedures related to the **verification of the authenticity of credentials** and the **status of the issuing organisation**
- ! Questions or concerns should be addressed to the **ENIC/NARIC office** or other responsible authority

HE access qualifications in ARAQUA partner countries which could be automatically recognised (1/2)

Without additional procedures

Country	HE access qualifications
DK	The Higher General Examination Programme (stx) (Almen studentereksamen (stx)) The Higher Commercial Examination Programme (hcx) (Merkantil studentereksamen (hcx)) The Higher Technical Examination Programme (htx) (Teknisk studentereksamen (htx))
DK	The Higher General Examination Programme (stx) – 2-years (Almen studentereksamen (2-årig stx))
DK	Danish Higher Preparatory Examination (hf-eksamen (2-årig hf))
DK	General Upper Secondary Education for Refugees and Immigrants (Gymnasiale indslusningsforløb for flygtninge og indvandrere (GIF))
DK	Vocational Education Examination Qualifying for Access to Higher Education (EUX) (Erhvervsfaglig studentereksamen i forbindelse med erhvervsuddannelse (EUX))
DK	The Higher Preparatory Examination (hf-single subject) (Højere forberedelseseksamen (enkeltfag))
EE	Certificate of General Secondary Education (Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus)
EE	Certificate of Vocational Secondary Education (Kutsekeskhariduse lõputunnistus)

HE access qualifications in ARAQUA partner countries which could be automatically recognised (2/2)

Without additional procedures

Country	HE access qualifications
IT	State Exam Diploma upon the Conclusion of the Upper Secondary School Course (Diploma di Esame di Stato conclusivo dei corsi di istruzione secondaria superiore)
LV	Certificate of general secondary education (Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību)
LV	Diploma of vocational secondary education (Diploms par profesionālo vidējo izglītību)
MT	Matriculation Certificate
MT	AM – Advanced Matriculation
RO	Baccalaureate degree (Diploma de bacalaureat)
SK	Maturita Examination Certificate (School-leaving Examination Certificate) (Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške)
GB – England and Wales	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A Level)
GB – Scotland	Scottish Higher

HE access qualifications in ARAQUA partner countries which require additional evaluation

With evaluation/recognition procedures

Country	HE access qualifications
DK	Evidence of Training Certificate (VET) (<i>Skolebevis</i>)
DK	The Higher Preparatory Examination (hf) advanced set of subjects included (<i>hf-eksamen (2-årig hf) med overbygning</i>)
DK	The Higher Preparatory Examination (hf-single subject) advanced set of subjects included (<i>Højere forberedelseksamen (enkeltfag) med overbygning</i>)
DK	General Upper Secondary Education Leaving Certificate EUX Part 1 certificate (for mercantile programmes) (Before 2018: <i>Bevis for generel studiekompetence (eux 1. del)</i> , after 2018: <i>Bevis for eux 1. del</i>)

2. Before AR of HE access qualifications...

- An **obstacle** for recognising HE access qualifications should **not be**: differences in assessment systems, different passing marks, different range of learned subjects, different fields for final exams (subjects of study)
- HE access qualification should be included in the **NQF**, level of qualification should correspond to **EQF level 4**
- Institution and programme awarding HE access qualification should be **accredited/approved** by the respective institution and recognised by the state
- **1-year difference** should not be considered as a substantial difference in recognising HE access qualification
- Qualifications obtained through **alternative pathways** should ensure AR and equal access to HE, yet in difficult cases qualifications should be recognised by credential evaluators

3. Contextual aspects (1/2)

Legal framework (where applicable) of the countries should facilitate and support the AR of HE access qualifications with the respect to autonomy of HEIs

The national authorities (e.g. ENIC/NARIC offices) should provide **accessible and transparent information** about access qualifications (NQF/EQF level, content, pathways, grading system, examinations, etc.)

Where possible the national authorities should provide **digital (online) tools** for publishing quality assured information about HE access qualifications

The AR of HE access qualifications is usually based on **rigorous research and the mutual trust** in education systems of the involved countries

ENIC/NARIC offices and HEIs should **work together** to foster the opportunities for capacity building

3. Contextual aspects (2/2)

Bilateral or multilateral agreements on mutual recognition of qualifications increase the trust and comparability between countries with higher volume of student exchange

The signatory countries of the bilateral or multilateral agreements should ratify the **Lisbon Convention and/or Global Convention**, implement a QA system according to the **European Standards and Guidelines** and reference/compare their **NQF to the EQF**

Online national databases should be developed for checking the **authenticity** of HE access qualifications

Countries should consider the shift towards **digital credentials** that are easily identifiable and verifiable; thus, fostering the automatic recognition of HE access qualifications

4. List of minimum requirements for HE access qualifications to be subject to AR

The qualification should provide **general eligibility rights** of the holder to apply for admission at HE programmes

The qualification should be included in **NQF with the reference to EQF level 4** and the corresponding learning outcomes

The qualification should be awarded by institution or awarding body that is quality assured, and the education programme leading to the qualification should be quality assured or approved by the ministry/respective agency (**QA procedures**)

The qualification should be identifiable/confirmed by a **legible document** and supported by transparency tools and publicly accessible information

The HE access qualifications **should enjoy public confidence** for the purpose of progression and successful participation in higher education within the national context



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Project results and materials:

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