

Approaches to automatic recognition of qualifications: concept and principles

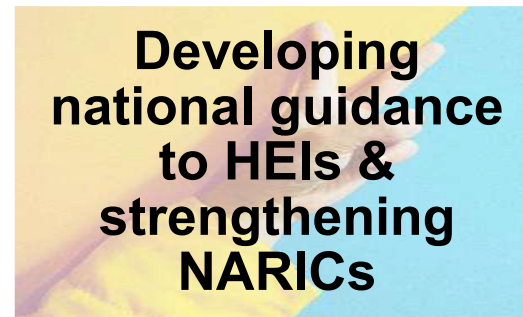
European Commission perspective

*PLA: Facilitating
Implementation of Automatic
Recognition of Qualifications at
Higher Education Institutions*

13 October 2026

Council Recommendation 2018

- **By 2025, Member States should put in place the steps to ensure that**
 - a HE qualification acquired in one MS is automatically recognised at the same level in any other MS, for the purpose of granting access to further studies.
 - the outcomes from a learning period abroad at HE level in one MS are automatically and fully recognised in the others
- **Member States are recommended to create framework conditions and trust and transparency by:**





Council Recommendation - definition

Automatic mutual recognition of a qualification: the right for holders of a qualification of a certain level that has been issued by one Member State to be considered for entry to a higher education programme in the next level in any other Member State, without having to go through any separate recognition procedure.

- ✓ *Right*
- ✓ *Recognition vs. Admission*
- ✓ *Authenticity check*

Council Recommendation - requirements



National qualifications frameworks or systems are referenced to the European Qualifications Framework.



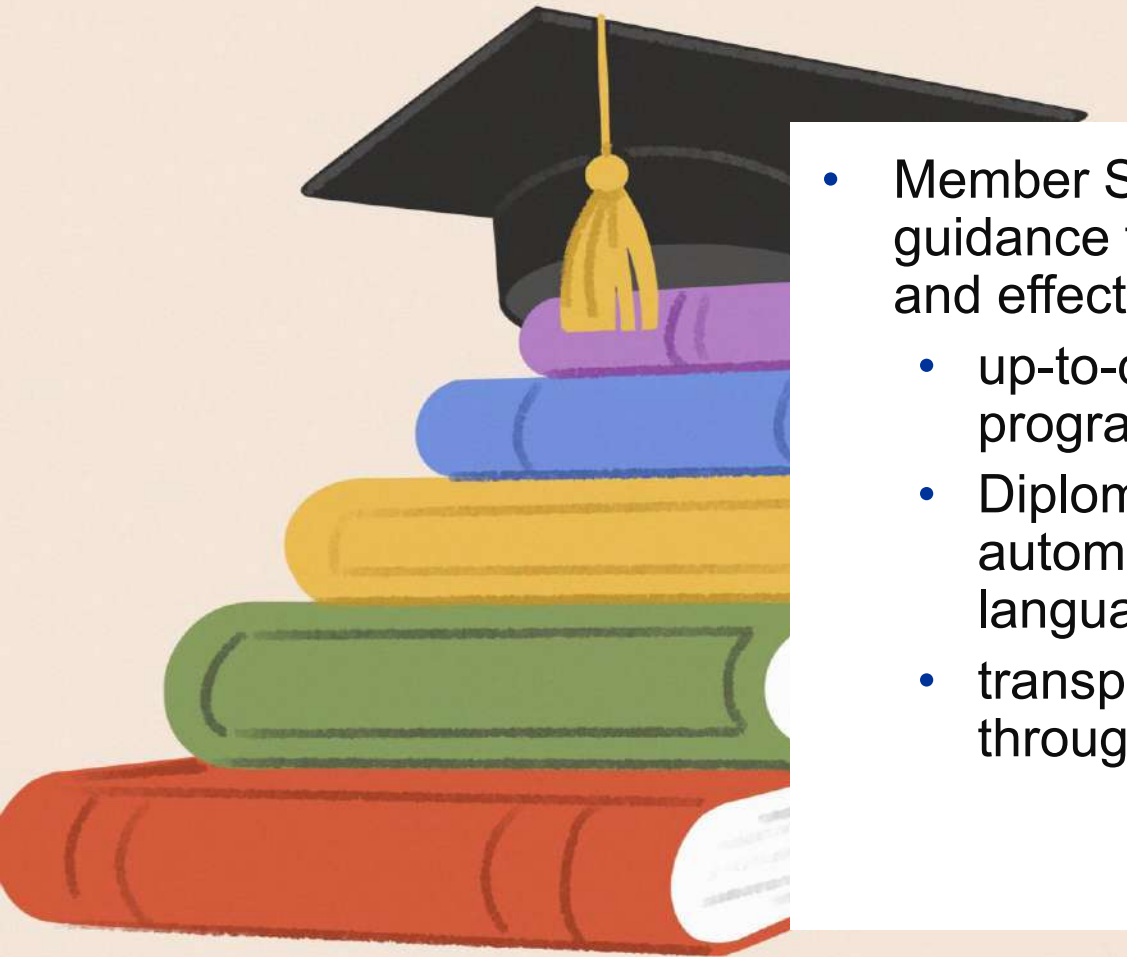
Higher education systems are organised in line with Bologna Process structures and principles.



External quality assurance is carried out by independent quality assurance agencies registered with the European Quality Assurance Register.



Council Recommendation – recommendations

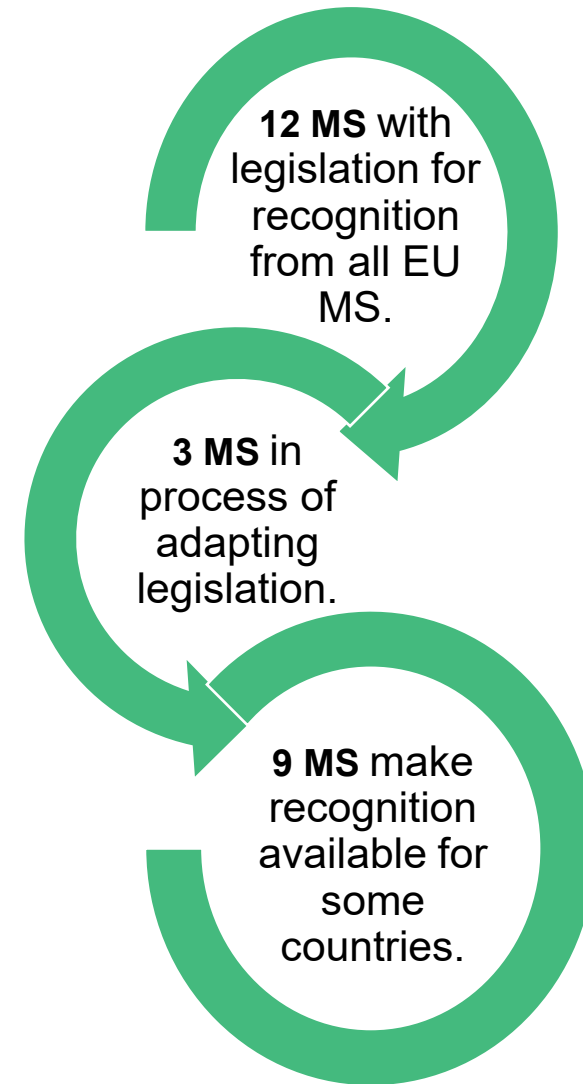


- Member States are recommended to develop national guidance to support higher education institutions in producing and effectively implementing the following transparency tools:
 - up-to-date Course Catalogue, with descriptions of degree programmes;
 - Diploma Supplements for all graduates, issued automatically and free of charge in a widely used language and, where possible, in digital format; and
 - transparent criteria for recognition that are applied throughout each higher education institution.

Commission report - Progress in adapting national legislation (2023)

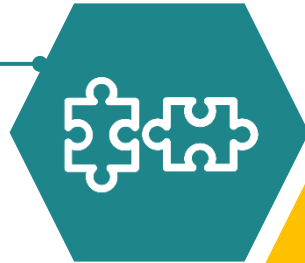
Adapting legislation is a necessary prerequisite for automatic recognition in HE

- National legislation for automatic recognition of HE qualifications from all EU Member States is in place in 12 Member States.
- 3 Member States in process
- 9 Member States with a subset of countries
- No legislative alignment so far: 3 countries



Commission report - Progress in implementing EU tools and common standards for transparency and trust (2023)

Bologna and EU transparency tools used in most MS.
In 11 MS not fully implemented.



26 MS have referenced their NQFs to the EQF.
21 indicate EQF levels in NQF databases and registers. 16 share data on qualifications through the Europass platform.



22 MS use QA agencies registered in EQAR, while 5 are undergoing EQAR review or considering application. NARICs in 3 MS are integrating an automatic DEQAR search in their workflows for recognition.



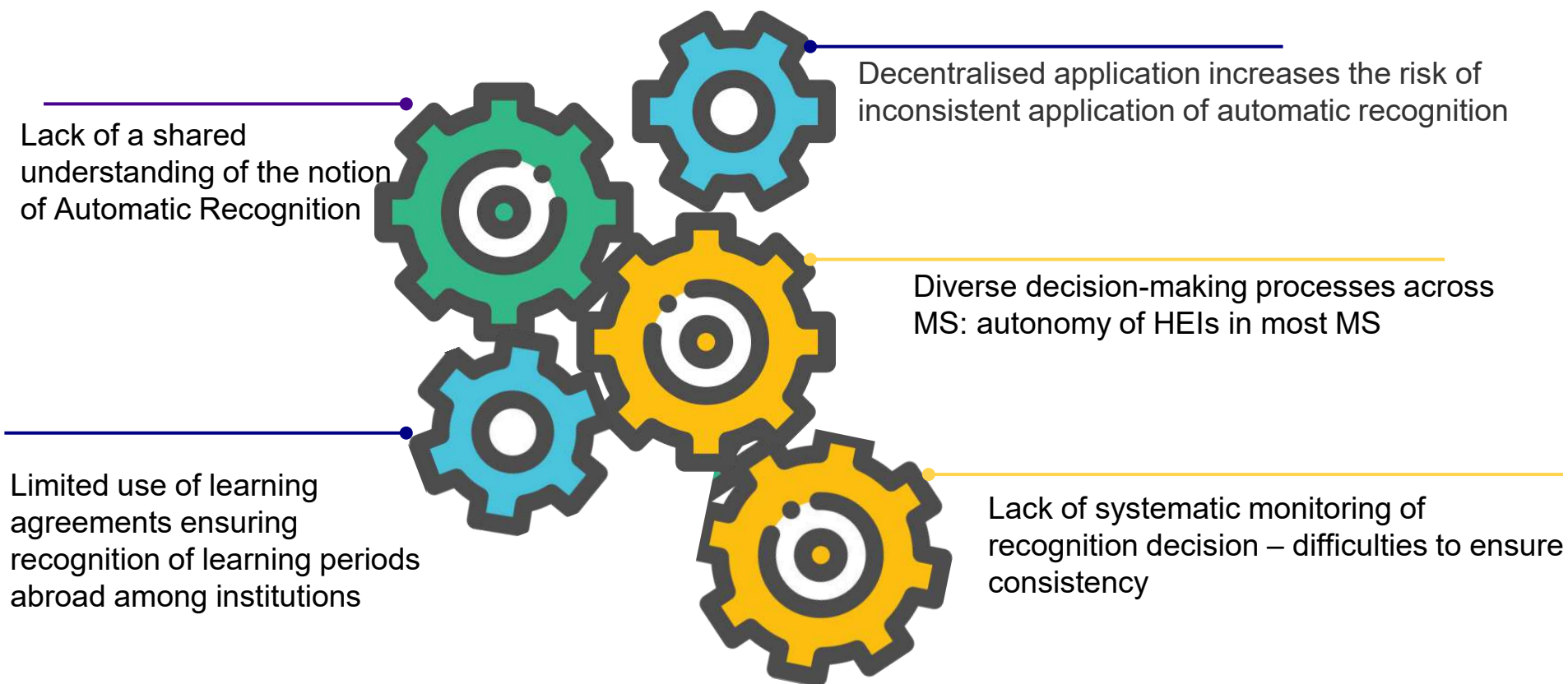
In 23 MS Diploma Supplement is issued automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken language for all graduates.
3 MS do not issue DS automatically and 1 MS requires a fee.



22 MS have a legal requirement for external QA agencies to refer to the key principles of ECTS and the rest use it widely.
In 6 systems the implementation of ECTS is fully monitored.



Commission report - Challenges in implementation



Council conclusions (2023): Recommendation to Member States

- Consolidate and reinforce their efforts in line with the Council Recommendation
- Support higher education institutions in applying automatic mutual recognition as defined in the Council Recommendation, including by providing clear guidance and relevant training.

- Ensure that external quality assurance in higher education is carried out by independent quality assurance agencies registered with EQAR and operating in line with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), to promote transparency and thereby foster mutual trust in automatic mutual recognition.

- Foster synergies within the EHEA and the EEA to ensure that they mutually reinforce each other, to promote transparent and efficient environments for automatic mutual recognition.



Union of Skills

Skills Portability Initiative - adopted on 15 September

Removing barriers to the free movement of workers and
making the EU more attractive to global talent

A package of three interrelated actions

To unlock the full potential of the EU Single Market

Internal dimension

To remove barriers to free movement of workers related to skills and qualifications

External dimension

To attract and value global talent in the EU

Draft regulation

- facilitating **digitalised portability of qualifications**

Action 1



Amendment of the directive:

- facilitating and modernising recognition processes for **regulated professions**
- and extending automatic recognition to additional professions

Action 2

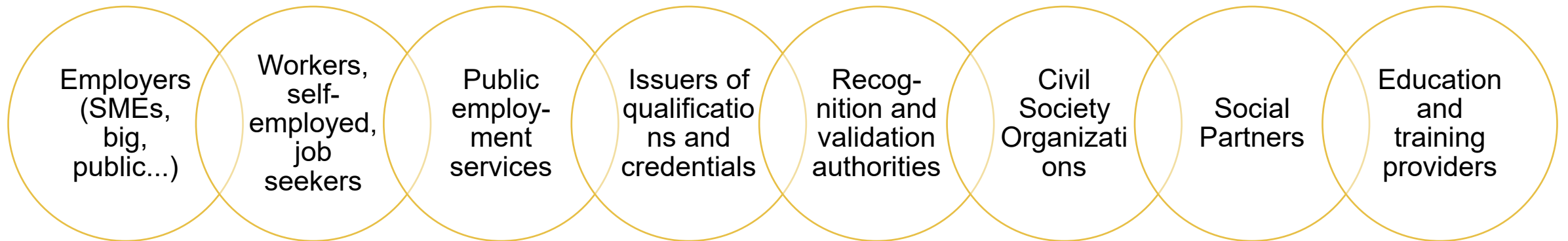
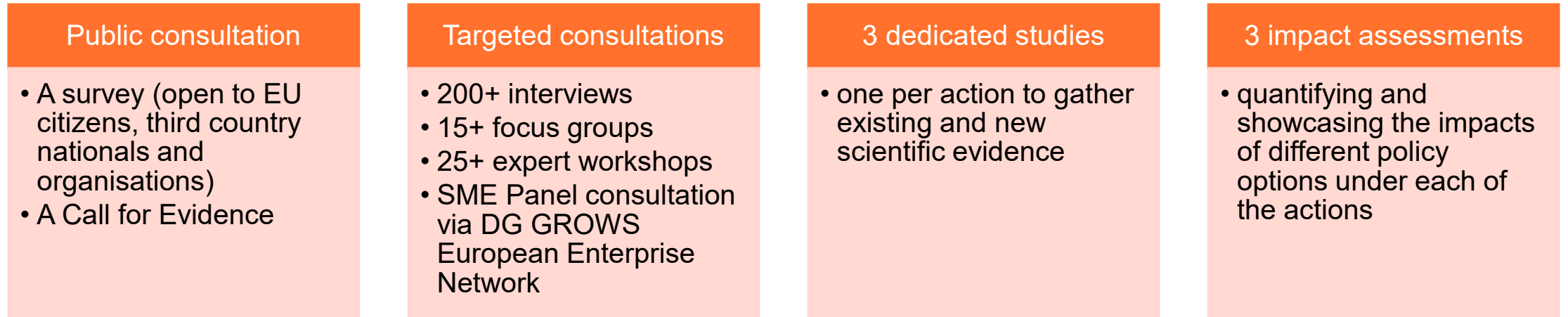


- Draft directive for common rules to simplify procedures for
- the recognition of qualifications and
 - validation of skills of **third-country nationals**

Action 3



A broad consultation strategy and evidence gathering



Joint EHEA/NARIC call

- To be published in December 2026
- Budget: 3 mln EUR
- Implementation of Council Recommendations
- Cooperation projects aimed at improving recognition and automatic recognition
- Capacity building
- Eligible beneficiaries (coordinators): National Academic Recognition Information Centres



Thank you



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