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TITLE The global dimension of recognition: trends and developments from a European perspective

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Abstract

The policy brief presents the main trends and developments for recognition of foreign qualification on a global scale, from the perspective of ENIC-NARIC, the networks of National Information Centre on recognition in the European Region. The analysis focuses on 3 main dimensions: recognition flows, cooperation and strategic developments, and internationalisation strategies with a view on bilateral and multilateral agreements, including the global convention on recognition. Finally, a focus on the impact of COVID 19 on recognition flows is presented. The key findings of the survey are:

- The top countries from which ENIC-NARICs receive requests and inquiries is more or less the same over the last 7 years. This is also the case when the European region is excluded;
- Most top external requests are originating from the (broader) Asian region (section 1), and only one Latin American and one African country is listed. However, ENIC-NARICs list African countries as of great interest;
- Most cooperation activities are taking place in the Asia and Pacific UNESCO region (42,5%), which is in line with the 2019 report;
- 44% of ENIC-NARIC centres have developed information sources related to regions outside of the Networks. In addition, centres indicate the need for information resources from other regions;
- The top three strategic developments listed outside of the Networks are: the development of information centres in other regions, digitisation and the UNESCO Global Convention on higher education;
- 75% of the ENIC-NARICs centres have bilateral or multilateral treaties on recognition (excluding the UNESCO Conventions), both with countries inside and outside the Networks;
- 32,5% of respondents stated that the national procedures for joining the Global Convention is initiated. Moreover, five countries part of the ENIC-NARIC Networks

already ratified. This signals a major interest from the ENIC-NARIC centres to join the Global Convention;

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, one third saw an increase of recognition applications during the pandemic.

Contents

Introduction

Recognition of foreign qualifications is a foundation for international higher education cooperation. In the last years, the legal framework for recognition has been significantly strengthened with the ratification of UNESCO regional treaties and the establishment of the Asian – Pacific and (soon) African region. Moreover, in 2019, the UNESCO Global Convention

on Higher Education was adopted to facilitate mutual recognition worldwide. With international student mobility only rising, this is an important achievement.

This article reflects the state of play of the global dimension of one of the UNESCO regions, the European and North American region. The Convention for this region is the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Under the Convention, the European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC Network) established in 1994, are tasked with its implementation. The ENIC-Network closely collaborations with the NARIC Networks, established in 1984 by the European Commission.

The global dimension has been a focus of the ENIC-NARIC Networks for a long time, following the ever increase of international student numbers from outside of Europe and the Networks. In 2010 the work on the global dimension started in the framework of the Bologna Process. In 2015 the ENIC-NARIC Networks (stretching beyond Bologna) launched their first survey to systematically map the global dimension of the networks. This survey was repeated in 2019.

This article contains the data for the 2022 survey on the global dimension and intends to provide a systematic view on current trends and future developments in recognition from an ENIC-NARIC perspective.

Methodology

The survey was open from to 7 December 2021 to 7 February 2022. In total 40 centres participated in the survey, which constitutes a response rate of over 70% of the ENIC-NARIC centres. The questions were organized through 7 sections:

1 - Requests for recognition per country

2 - Cooperation activities

3 - Information sources related to non-European regions/countries

4 - Possible strategic developments

5 - Internationalisation strategies

6 - Global Convention

7 - Impact of COVID-19

The first 3 sections showed the numbers of recognition requests according to the countries from which they are received, followed by the different typologies of cooperation activities currently in place with other regions, and the information sources that centres use for their daily work.

The following 3 sections are dedicated to internationalisation strategies that have an impact also on recognition, and on possible spaces for strategic developments, with the interest and effort toward a Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education as a standalone section. Finally, the last section is devoted to gain evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on recognition of qualifications of Higher Education systems outside the UNESCO Europe region.

Where relevant, few diachronical references are made based on the outcomes of the surveys from 2015 and 2019 mentioned above. The 2015 and 2019 surveys contained the same questions for the first five sections and followed the same methodology, which allows for easy comparison.

Key findings

In the following paragraphs the detailed findings are outlined, showing that ENIC-NARIC centres are actively engaged with regions outside of the Networks. First because of the high number of applications received from countries outside of the European region. The activities and interests show the Networks are outward looking and welcome initiatives for collaboration, such as collaboration with other centres for information purposes and the Global Convention. The main findings are included in the last paragraph.

1 - Requests for recognition per country

Top 10 countries (including those part of the European region) from which centres receive recognition requests.

Centres were asked to provide a list of the top ten countries from which they receive recognition requests in decreasing order, from most requests received to least requests (received in the years 2019-2021). Here it should be noted that the mandate from ENIC-NARIC centres differs and not all centres do evaluations themselves. In those cases the inquiries received were listed.

The centres were first asked to list the countries including the UNESCO Europe region[1], and after excluding those countries. This allowed to gain a picture of the recognition flows including intra-regional requests, and of the flows of recognition requests coming at inter-regional level.

For this section 4 tables are presented. The first two tables present the information regarding recognition flows including countries within the Europe region, and the second couple of tables (3 and 4) present the data excluding European region countries.

The data summarised in the first table of each couple contains absolute figures indicate the total number of times a country was reported regardless of its position in the list. The data summarised in the second table of each couple contains the country ranking, make use of a weighted sum model in order to obtain a score assignable to each country. The purpose of this score, is to illustrate not only the number of times a country is reported but also the position in which it is collocated[2].

Table 1 Top 10 countries (including UNESCO Europe Region)

In absolute figures

Country	Absolute figures
UK	32
Russian Federation	23
USA	21

Weighted sum

Country	Score
UK	20,3
Russian Federation	14,2
India	12,7

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[1] The list of countries belonging to the UNESCO Europe region is available on UNESCO website at this link: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48899&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[2] A coefficient is assigned to each position in decreasing order ranging from 1 to 0,1, with 1 being assigned to the most common and 0,1 being assigned to the least common. The number of times the country appears in that position is multiplied by the respective coefficient and inserted into the weighted sum model.

Ukraine	18
Germany	18
France	16
India	17
Turkey	14
Italy	11
Spain	11

Ukraine	11,8
USA	9
Turkey	8,5
Germany	8,4
France	8,1
Romania	6
Iran	5,6

Table 2 Top 10 countries (excluding those part of the European region) from which centres receive recognition requests.

In absolute figures

Country	Absolute figures
India	29
USA	24
Iran	20
China	19
Pakistan	17
Brazil	17
Syrian Arab Republic	13
Australia	13
Egypt	12
Canada	12

Weighted sum

Country	Ranking
India	23
USA	18,6
Iran	12,6
China	9
Syrian Arab Republic	8,7
Pakistan	8,4
Brazil	8,2
Australia	6,8
Philippines	5,7
Nigeria	5,3

Key findings:

- Comparing the first couple of tables that show data for requests of recognition including UNESCO Europe region ones, the recurring "top countries" are: UK, Russian Federation, India, USA, Ukraine, Germany, France and Turkey. The two "lower position" in absolute figures are Italy and Spain, whereas in the weighted sum are Romania and Iran.
- Also in the second couple of tables, the first 8 positions are occupied by the same countries, even if in slightly different ranking: India, USA, Iran, China, Pakistan, Brazil, Syrian Arab republic, Australia. In the lower position (9th and 10th) there are Egypt and Canada in absolute figures, and Philippines and Nigeria in the weighted sum.
- Adding a diachronical perspective, the "top countries" in absolute number are almost the same, or very similar, from 2015 till today. Looking to top countries including European region comparing 2015-2019-2022 survey results, there are UK, Russian Federation, USA,

Ukraine, Germany, Italy and India. Both in 2015 and 2019 surveys there is also Poland, that is not present in 2022, and Romania, that for 2022 is present only in the weighted sum.

- Moving to top countries excluding Europe region, comparing 2015-2019-2022 survey results, the recurrent top countries are 6: India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt and Brazil. There are some oscillations for few countries, that could be related to a specific country' situation (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was in the top countries in 2015 but not in the following surveys, the Syrian Arab Republic appeared in 2019 and it is still in 2022 in the top countries).
- As a general observation for 2022, looking to top countries excluding Europe there are few African countries (only Egypt in absolute number, and Nigeria in the weighted sum). Looking to the countries of interest (section 5), it appears that many African countries are quoted. In other words: there are not still many applications, but the level of interest for countries of the African region is high. In the previous survey South Africa (2019) and Nigeria (2015) were in the top countries too.
- Latin America and Caribbean region is present only with Brazil in the 2022 survey, in the table reporting top countries excluding European region. As already reported, also in previous survey this region was present only in 2015 with Venezuela (always in the section excluding European region).
- Asia-Pacific region is present in 2022 survey in absolute number including Europe region with Russian Federation, India, Turkey. In top countries excluding Europe in absolute number there are India, China, Iran, Pakistan and Australia in absolute number (and Philippines in the weighted sum).

It is worth to note that in the list of top countries outside the UNESCO region there is one country that do belong to such region, but from a methodological point of view the answers have been showed as they have been provided, and some countries that belong to more than one region.

2 - Cooperation activities

Countries that coordinated/participated in a project/network/work with countries outside the UNESCO Europe region

37% of respondents take part in initiatives outside the UNESCO Europe region.

Figure 1 Centres participating in initiatives outside the UNESCO Europe region
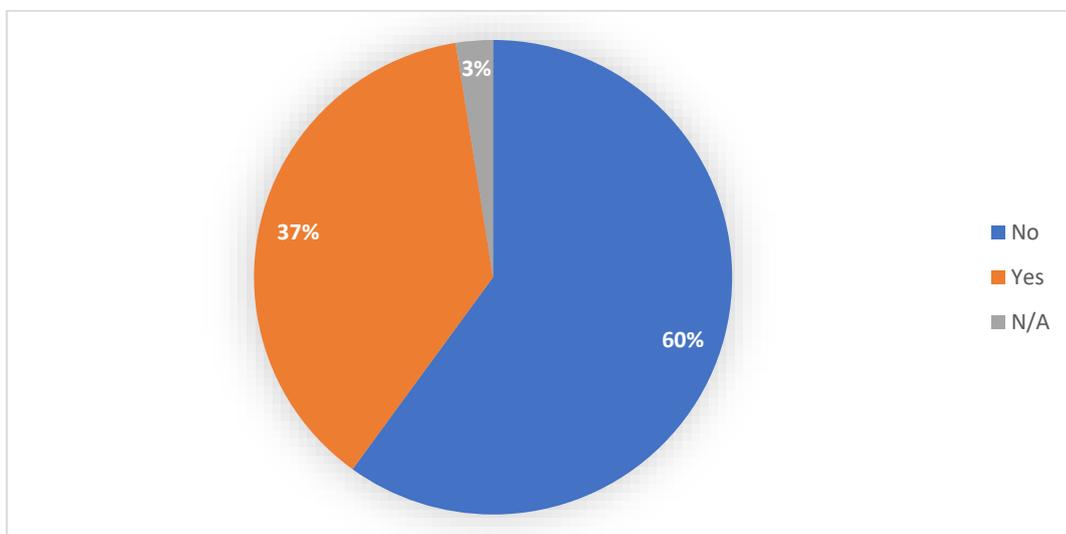
60% of respondents replied they have no cooperation outside their UNESCO region. One country did not reply.

From the 15 countries stating that they are participating in initiatives outside the Europe Region, 14 provided also details concerning the name of the project, network, work, countries involved and the relevant link (where applicable).

In total 39 initiatives were reported. As described in figure number 2 (below), most of these initiatives are projects (37,5%). Countries reported about capacity building and training projects (12,5%)[3] as well as project focused on cooperation among qualifications authorities (7,5) and on regional cooperation ones (5%).

Some countries specified that they participate in projects on the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants (5%), professional development (5%) and national qualifications frameworks-NQFs (2,5%). 15% of respondents participate in Networks, followed by 10% that reported to share information with other countries.

5% stated that they are involved in training and/or staff exchange initiatives, intergovernmental forum, bilateral agreements, and processes toward mutual recognition with other UNESCO region countries, initiatives related to the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, also known as Tokyo Convention (some ENIC-NARICs are also part of the convention) and task forces on recognition.

2,5% of respondents reported that they participate in initiatives related to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) coordination group, Global Convention and that collaborate with qualification authorities. Another initiative mentioned is the Groningen Declaration Networks.

Topics of collaboration that are listed by centres include (but are not limited to) fraud and verification of authenticity, automatic recognition, information provision, digitization, refugees' qualifications, recognition procedures, national qualification frameworks, and general capacity building in recognition. Research on the impact of Covid-19 on recognition is mentioned, together with analysis of final school leaving qualification giving access to higher education.

Figure 2: Types of initiatives implemented

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[3] Projects co-funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme such as RecoAsia, Recolatin, etc.
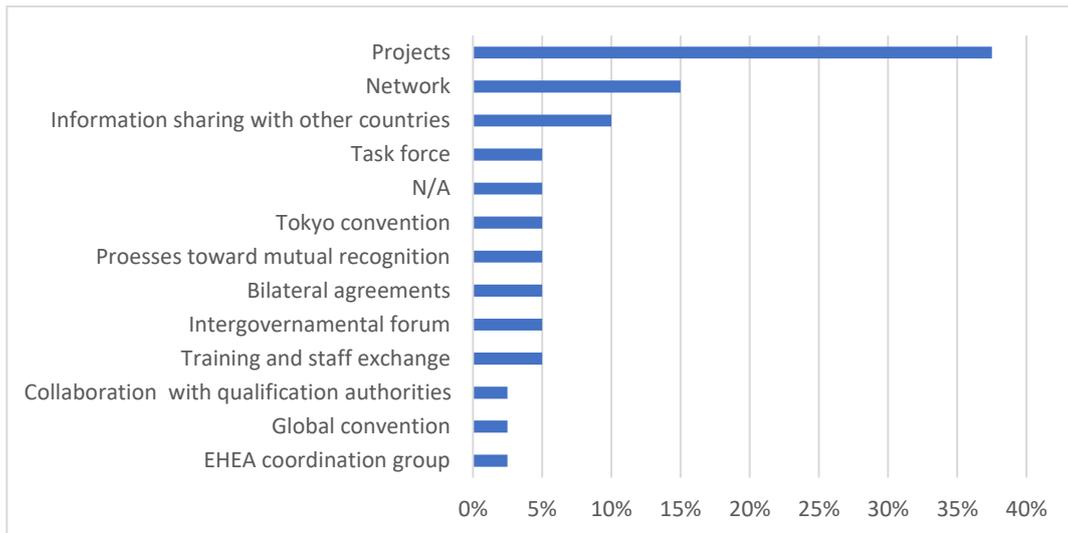
Results show that cooperation activities are mainly taking place in the Asia and Pacific UNESCO region (42,5%), that is in line with the previous report. 15% of respondents reported to cooperate with countries of Africa and Arab States regions. The intergovernmental forum ASEM Education[4] was quoted as an initiative of cooperation. 5% of respondents reported to cooperate with the Europe and North America region (USA).

Figure 3 UNESCO regions in which cooperation activities are taking place
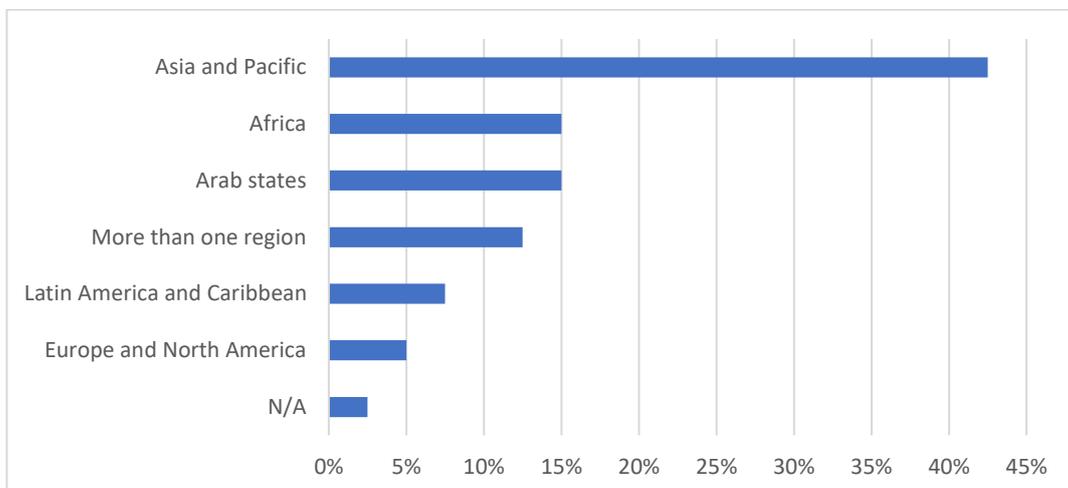
Key findings:

- About 37% of the ENIC-NARIC centres are actively engaged in collaborations with countries outside of the Networks;
- Projects represent the main way to cooperate, but also activities within existing networks plays a role;
- Asia-Pacific is the region with which there is more cooperation. This may partially be explained by overlap of signatory countries between the LRC and Tokyo Convention, the existence of networks within the two regions and a number of projects;

[4] https://asem-education.org/about/asem-education-process/

- Looking to topics of cooperation, there are recurrent ones such as automatic recognition. Other topic are less quoted, such as digitalization, that is mentioned only once.

3 - Information sources related to non-European regions/countries

Centres that have developed information sources related to countries/regions outside the UNESCO Europe region

44% of respondents stated that they have developed information sources related to other regions of the world. 43% replied negatively. 10% chose the option "other", one centre further specified that they are planning to develop such information sources.

Figure 4 Centres that have developed information sources related to other UNESCO regions
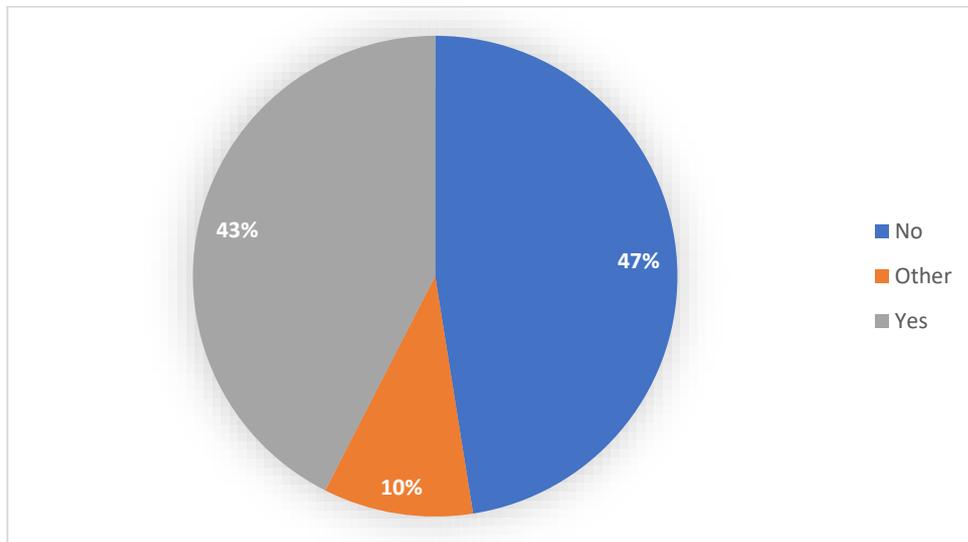
The main tools developed are country profiles (37,5%), that are available for countries located in all the UNESCO regions. The second most common tools are databases (16,7%), followed by internal databases or files stored for internal use (12,5%). 8,3% reported to share guide /information with relevant stakeholders. 4,2% of respondents developed national reports, verification sources training materials, toolkit for recognition of refugees qualifications. The same percentage stated that they update and use listservs to share information.

Figure 5 Information sources related to other UNESCO regions
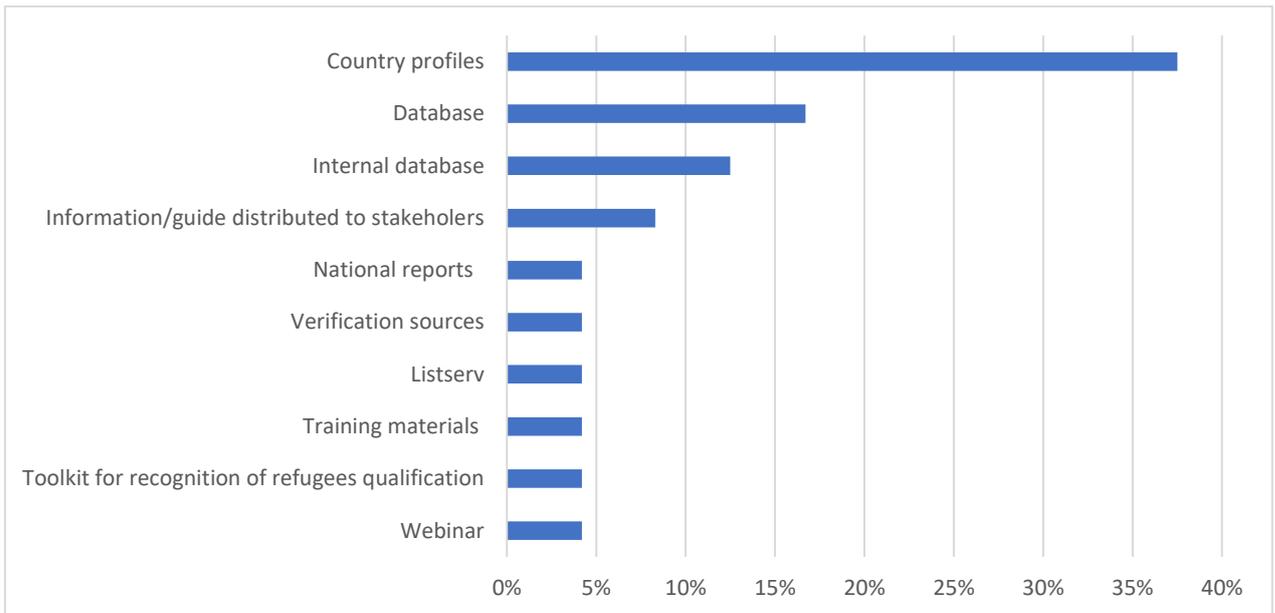
Key findings:

- Even if centres do not directly cooperate with other regions/countries, there is high need of information and information resources.
- The main tools developed are country profiles (37,5%), databases (16,7%), followed by internal databases or files stored for internal use (12,5%).

4 - Possible strategic developments

Centres that see any strategic developments/initiatives in recognition for the ENIC-NARIC networks at global level

60% of respondents do see strategic developments for the ENIC-NARIC networks at global level, while 25% replied negatively. 15% of countries did not reply.

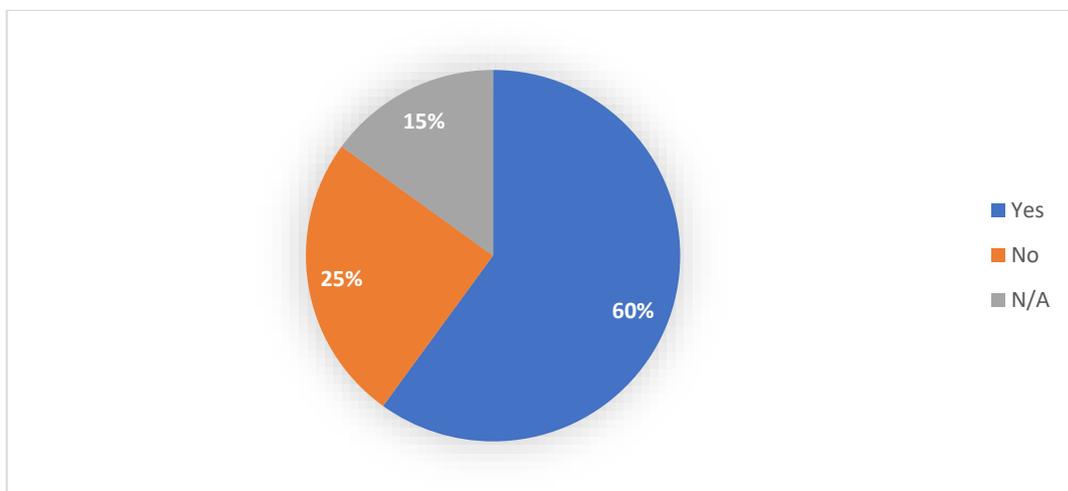### Figure 6 Centres that see any strategic initiatives for the Networks

Table 3 Clustering strategic developments

Clustering of strategic developments	Percentage of centres
Establishing NICs in other regions/Supporting the development of NICs in other regions/Cooperating with regional networks	17%
Digitalisation	14,6%
Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education	12,1%
Non-traditional qualifications/learning, including online learning and micro-credential	6%
Strengthening cooperation among ENIC-NARICs	5%
Recognition of qualifications held by refugees	2,4%
Information exchange	2,4%
ASEM Education	2,4%
Capacity building initiatives to further enhance the connections with regional and global networks	2,4%
Streamlining of recognition policy across regions	2,4%
Development of educational databases	2,4%
Sharing best practices with other regions	2,4%
Recognition of transnational education	2,4%
Development of global network of information centers	2,4%
Visibility of ENIC-NARIC networks	2,4%
Transparency	2,4%
Information provision	2,4%

Key findings:

- The majority of respondents do see strategic developments for the ENIC-NARIC networks at global level (60%).
- Cooperation is high priority, together with digitalisation and legislative frameworks (global convention), followed by non-traditional qualifications and strengthening the cooperation among ENIC-NARICs.
- It is interesting to notice that digitalization, that it is mentioned only once as a topic of cooperation in section 2, is among the top priorities for cooperation

5 - Internationalisation strategies

Centres that have internationalisation strategies at national level that impact also on recognition.

The question is aimed to showcase to what extent recognition is as a part of internationalisation strategy at national level. The percentage of countries that replied that they have no internationalisation strategy that impact also recognition is 45%. It is slightly higher than the one of countries that do have internationalization strategies impacting also on recognition (37%). 17% of countries replied "other". In this 17%, some countries do have a internationalization strategy that includes recognition, but that it is currently under revision.

Figure 7 Countries having internationalization strategies impacting also on recognition
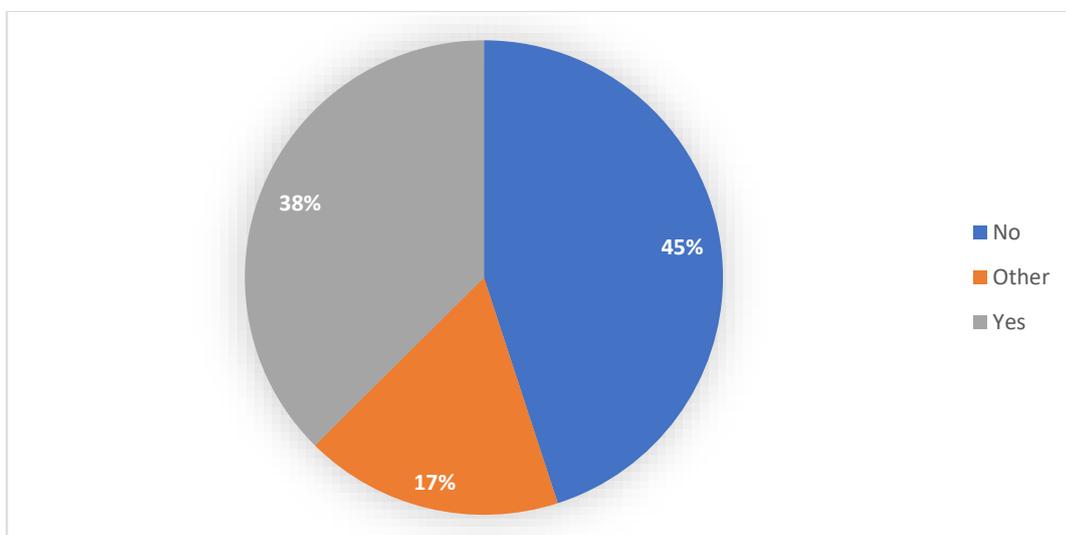
The top 10 key countries of interest are the following:

- Brazil, China, Russian Federation (selected by 3 respondents)
- Canada, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, USA (selected by 2 respondents).

Countries and regions that have been selected once:

Africa, Asia, Baltic States, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Colombia, Congo, France, Georgia, Guinea, Haïti, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Tchad, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

Centres that have bilateral/multilateral agreements to foster automatic and/or mutual recognition of qualifications.

As shown in the graph below, most respondents (75%) do have bilateral/multilateral agreements to foster automatic recognition, while 10% of them stated that they do not have such agreements. 2 countries did not answer the question. 10% of respondents reporting "other", due to different national legislation, government structure, etc.

Figure 8 Countries having bilateral/multilateral agreement to foster automatic recognition
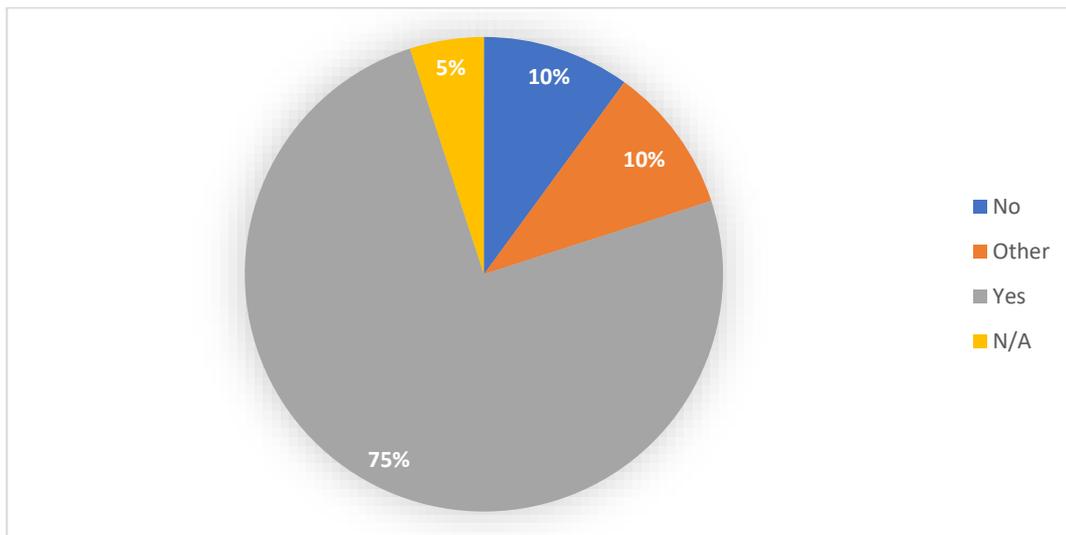

Key findings

- The majority of respondents report that they have no internationalisation strategy that impact also recognition (45%). It is slightly higher than the one of countries that do have internationalization strategies impacting also on recognition (37%).
- The countries of major interest partially overlap with the top countries from which recognition requests are received. But it is worth to mention that many countries if the Africa region are also mentioned, showing a strategic interest toward Africa.
- The majority of the respondents (75%) have bilateral or multilateral agreements to support recognition. These include agreements both within the Networks as with countries outside of the Networks.

6 - Global Convention

Stage at which each government is with regard to joining the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.

32,5% of respondents stated that the national procedures for joining the Global Convention are initiated. In some cases, the decision of joining the Convention has been taken and relevant authorities are currently undergoing processes to allow its ratification. 12,5% are already a State Party of the Global Convention.

Figure 9 Global Convention: state of play
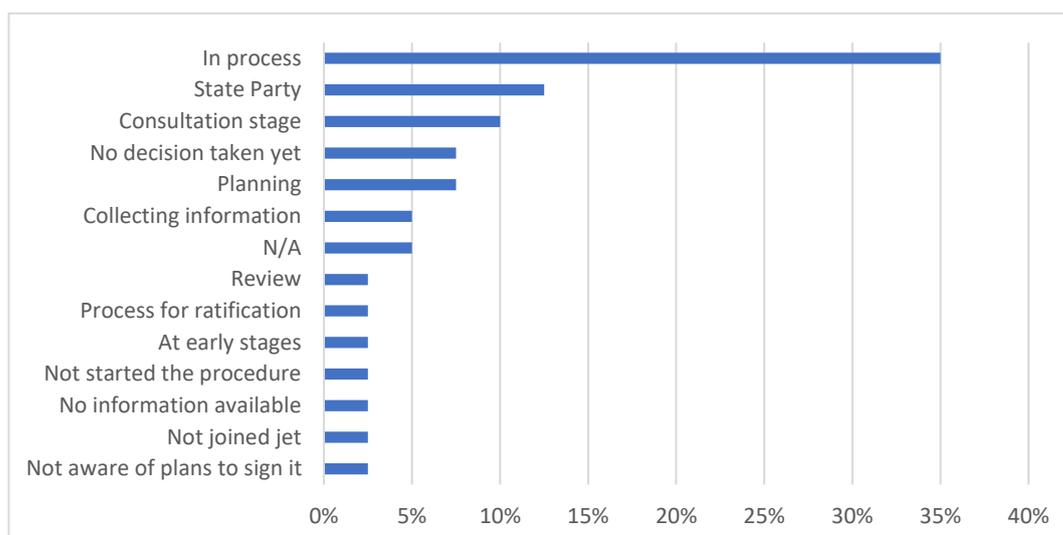
10% of respondents stated that they are taking steps to advise their governments about the Convention and seek a decision on whether to join and 7,5% declared that they have not taken a decision yet or that they are planning to start the decision process). 5% declared that they are collecting information on the Convention and the needed procedural steps. 2,5% of respondents declared that they are at a very early stage or that they do not have information on this matter.

Key findings:

The high response number of 32,5% that initiated the ratification shows a major interest from the ENIC-NARIC centres to join the Global Convention. Moreover, at time of writing already 12,5% are already a State Party of the Global Convention.

7 - Impact of COVID-19

The question in the survey was addressed to gain a first insight on impact of COVID-19 pandemic on quantity, characteristics, and geographical distribution of requests for recognition of qualifications of Higher Education systems outside the UNESCO Europe region.

Table 4 Impact of COVID 19 on recognition requests

Characteristics of recognition requests	Responses			
	Increase	Same	Decrease	Not answered
Number of requests for recognition	32,5%	37,5%	22,5%	7,5%
Number of incomplete/partial qualifications received	7,5%	52,5%	5%	32,5%
Number of "non-traditional" qualifications	12,5%	47,5%	5%	35%

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Number of requests from different countries compared to the past	15%	57,5%	10%	17,5%

Key findings:

- Almost one third of centres (32,5 %) had an increase of recognition requests during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is significant from an operational perspective given that these centres themselves were also affected by the pandemic. One fifth (22,5%) of the networks saw a decrease. For 37,5% the number of recognition requests remained the same;
- The 7,5% that did not provide answer could be explained with some centres that provide information on recognition, but di not directly answer to recognition requests and requests for assessment.
- Few countries reported a first decrease in recognition requests in 2020, followed by an increase in 2021;
- The number of incomplete/partial qualifications received had a slight increase compared to the past (7,5%), whereas for 52,5% of centres numbers remained the same, and a 5% saw a decrease. Some countries reported that they do not assess partial/incomplete and non-traditional qualifications;
- The number of "non-traditional" qualifications seems to show a higher increase (12,5%), whereas for 47,5% number remained the same, and 5% of centres reported a decrease.
- Regarding the number of requests from different countries compared to the past, for the majority of centres (57,5%) there was no a significant shift; 15% of centres reported an increase of requests from different countries compared to the past, while 10% reported a decrease.

These numbers leave the impression that while student mobility has been significantly affected by the pandemic, applications during the pandemic did not decrease and may even have increased. The increase and decrease may point to an initial shift in student mobility streams. Furthermore, this data provides first elements for an understanding on the impact of COVID-19 on recognition at a global scale, and leave space for further analysis and research in the field.

Conclusions

In the last years, the Networks have developed many instruments (at both practitioner and policy levels) linked to the global dimension. The ENIC-NARIC website, the NARIC projects, the participation of experts from different regions at networks meetings, the developments of international databases, etc,. are among the many initiatives taken. Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mobility and internationalisation needs still to be fully quantified and analysed.

Together with this, the networks follow closely the developments of the so called "second generation" regional Conventions and the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.

The results of the survey gives an overview of the current scenario of recognition at a global level, seen by the European perspective:

Recognition flows

Looking at the "flow" of recognition request, the top countries from which ENIC-NARIC centres received recognition requests in the last 3 years (2019-2021) are: UK, Russian Federation, USA, Ukraine, India, Turkey, Germany, France (those are the countries present in the "top ten" both

in absolute figures and as weighted sum). Excluding intra-regional recognition flows, i.e. analysing the top countries from which ENIC-NARIC centres received recognition requests without the European countries in the period 2019-2021, the countries are: India, USA, Iran, China, Pakistan, Brazil, Syrian Arab republic, Australia (present in the "top ten" both in absolute figures and as weighted sum).

Comparing this data with results of the two previous survey (dated 2015 and 2019), the "top countries" seems almost the same: looking to top countries including European region comparing 2015-2019-2022 survey results, there are UK, Russian Federation, USA, Ukraine, Germany, Italy and India. Excluding Europe region, comparing 2015-2019-2022 survey results, the recurrent top countries are 6: India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt and Brazil. Most recognition requests are originating from the (broader) Asian region, and only one Latin American and one African country is listed. This is in line also with cooperation activities with countries outside the ENIC-NARIC networks, that have Asia-Pacific as a major stakeholder. However ENIC-NARICs list African countries as of great interest (section 5).

In this sense, it appears the COVID-19 outbreak may not have impacted so much the geographical provenience of recognition flows to Europe region.

Cooperation activities and strategic developments

About 37% of the ENIC-NARIC centres are actively engaged in collaborations with countries outside of the Networks. This cooperation takes the shape mainly of projects, but also of activities with existing networks, and capacity building and information sharing. The majority of cooperation activities take place with Asia-Pacific countries, and this may partially be explained by overlap of signatory countries between the LRC and Tokyo Convention. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific is the only other region, together with Europe, where a network of National Information Centre is already established and active (Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres - APNNIC). Projects represent the main way to cooperate, but also activities within existing networks plays a role. Looking to topics of cooperation, there are recurrent ones such as automatic recognition. Other topics are less quoted as object of current cooperation, such as digitalization, but are seen as a strategic development for the networks (section 4).

Cooperation itself with regional network is seen as the first strategic developments, looking to the establishment of NICs in other regions and to the support the ENIC-NARIC networks can provide.

Looking to the other "top 5" strategic developments after cooperation and digitalisation, the role of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education is quoted, followed by non-traditional qualifications/learning, including online learning and micro-credential, and by the need of strengthening cooperation also among ENIC-NARIC networks. Also the development of global network of information centers is mentioned. In more general terms, the majority of respondents do see strategic developments for the ENIC-NARIC networks at global level (60%).

Information sources related to non-European regions/countries

44% of respondents stated that they have developed information sources related to other regions of the world. It is interesting to highlight that this percentage is higher than the one of ENIC-NARIC centres engaged in collaborations with countries outside of the Networks (37%, section 4). In other terms, beyond the cooperation, there is the need to have reliable information sources on countries outside the networks. The main tools developed are country profiles (37,5%), databases (16,7%), followed by internal databases or files stored for internal use (12,5%).

Internationalisation strategies

The first question of this section was aimed to showcase to what extent recognition is as a part of internationalisation strategy at national level. The majority of respondents report that they have no internationalisation strategy that impact also recognition (45%). This percentage is slightly higher than the one of countries that do have internationalization strategies impacting also on recognition (37%).

Part of the question was also addressed to indicate countries of interest. The countries of major interest partially overlap with the top countries from which recognition requests are received. But it is worth to mention that many countries if the Africa region are also mentioned, showing a strategic interest toward Africa.

Finally, bilateral or multilateral agreements to support recognition are used in the vast majority of countries, with 75% of respondents reporting having bilateral or multilateral agreements, both within the Networks as with countries outside of the Networks.

Global Convention

The state of play with regard to Global Convention shows a major interest from the ENIC-NARIC centres to join the Global Convention, with 32,5% of respondents have initiated national procedures for joining the Global Convention are initiated. In some cases, the decision of joining the Convention has been taken and relevant authorities are currently undergoing processes to allow its ratification. 12,5% are already a State Party of the Global Convention. The high response number of 32,5% that initiated the ratification shows a major interest from the ENIC-NARIC centres to join the Global Convention.

Impact of COVID-19

The question in the survey was addressed to gain a first insight on impact of COVID-19 pandemic on quantity, characteristics, and geographical distribution of requests for recognition of qualifications of Higher Education systems outside the UNESCO Europe region.

The first relevant information is that almost one third of centres (32,5 %) had an increase of recognition requests during the COVID-19 pandemic. One fifth (22,5%) of the networks saw a decrease. Few countries reported a first decrease in recognition requests in 2020, followed by an increase in 2021. An increase was reported also for incomplete/partial qualifications (7,5%) and for "non-traditional" qualifications (12,5%).

These numbers leave the impression that while student mobility has been significantly affected by the pandemic, applications during the pandemic did not decrease and may even have increased. The increase and decrease may point to an initial shift in student mobility streams. Furthermore, this data provides first elements for an understanding on the impact of COVID-19 on recognition at a global scale, and leave space for further analysis and research in the field.