



**Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue ('Africa' sub-group)
of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) - European Higher Education Area**

Recognition for Lifelong Learning

Perspectives in the European Higher Education Area, Africa and the Near East

**6th June 2023, 11.00 – 13.00 Central European Summer Time (on-
line)**

Background

In the **Rome Ministerial Communiqué** of 19 November 2020, the Ministers responsible for higher education of the **European Higher Education Area** committed to support higher education institutions in bringing their educational, research and innovation capacities to deploy resources to ensure that higher education systems contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The EHEA Ministers welcomed the adoption of the *UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications* concerning Higher Education and committed to ratifying it promptly, in order to facilitate a *fair recognition of qualifications and periods of study from outside the EHEA*. They stressed that learners must be offered up-skilling and reskilling opportunities in a *lifelong learning* perspective, and enabled to develop and apply *new technologies* and approaches.

The Ministers also committed to reviewing their legislation, regulations, and practice to ensure *fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in refugee-like situations*, even when they cannot be fully documented, in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and welcomed the *European Qualifications Passport for Refugees*.

The tasks of the **Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue** of the Bologna Follow-Up Group include promoting the development and use of transparency and quality tools for mobility and recognition; creating contacts and supporting reciprocal referencing of existing or developing qualifications and qualifications reference frameworks in the EHEA *and other macro-regions*, and developing dialogue about the challenges and opportunities offered by the shift towards *digital learning* environments.

References

The 2019 [**Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education**](#)¹, entered into force in 2023, reaffirms the States Parties' responsibility to promote inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels and lifelong learning opportunities for all. It defines *lifelong learning* as "a process which refers to all learning activities, whether

¹ [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education | UNESCO](#)



formal, non-formal, or informal, covers the entire lifespan and has the aim of improving and developing human capacities, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies”. Objective 9 of the Convention is “to promote, through the recognition of qualifications, inclusive and equitable access to quality higher education and support lifelong learning opportunities for all, including refugees and displaced persons”.

In the **1997 Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region** (drafted jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO), “*recognition*” is defined as “formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.”

In the **European Union**, the 2018 **Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning**² identifies eight key competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion.

In the framework of the **European Year of Skills 2023** the EU champions skills policies and investments globally, and the European Commission is committed to cooperate with third countries and international organisations. EU actions such as the *EU Global Gateway* strategy and the *EU Youth Action Plan* prioritise investments in quality education systems in partner countries. The *Team Europe* approach contributes to skills development, for example through supporting teacher training and vocational education and training related initiatives. The European Year of Skills involves information exchange, mutual learning and strengthened collaboration among public and private organisations, as well as social partners, at international, European, national, regional and local level.

In the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, lifelong learning is increasingly seen as a cross cutting issue, inherent in all aspects of the Bologna Process. The following steps are deemed necessary for the implementation of lifelong learning: widening access to higher education; creating more flexible, student-centred modes of delivery; improving the recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning; developing national qualifications frameworks; improving cooperation with employers, especially in the development of educational programmes.

Under the 2014 **[Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications on Higher Education in African States](#)**³, parties have agreed, with a view to promoting adult education and *life-long learning*, to adopt procedures, criteria and standards that allow the validation of acquired relevant experience and prior learning for access to higher education programmes.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

² [Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning | European Education Area \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States. | UNESCO](#)