

## Agreement

### among the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on the academic recognition of educational qualifications in the Baltic Educational Space

Desiring to enable all people of the Baltic States to benefit fully from the study opportunities in any of the States,

Considering that the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region adopted in Lisbon on 11 April 1997, (hereinafter "the Lisbon Convention"), should be fully implemented in order to strengthen the Baltic common educational space and to stimulate the academic recognition as well as the mobility of students and teaching staff among the Republic of Lithuania, Republic of Estonia and Republic of Latvia,

Considering that a follow-up to the ratification of the Lisbon Convention in the Baltic States in a form of Agreement regulating the recognition of the concrete educational qualifications among the Baltic States is desirable,

the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of the Republic of Latvia hereinafter referred to as "Parties" agree upon the following:

#### ARTICLE 1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Agreement, the following terms shall have the following meaning:

##### Assessment (of individual qualifications)

The written appraisal or evaluation of an individual's foreign qualifications by a competent authority.

##### Access (to higher education)

The right of qualified applicants to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education.

##### Admission (to higher education Institutions and programmes)

The act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme,

##### Higher education institution

An establishment providing higher education and recognised by the competent authority of a Party.

##### Higher education programme

A course of study recognised by the competent authority of a Party as belonging to its system of higher education, and the completion of which provides the student with a higher education qualification.

##### Period of study

Any component of a higher education programme which has been evaluated and documented and, while not a complete programme of study in itself, represents a significant acquisition of knowledge or skill.

##### Qualification

###### A. Higher education qualification

Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme.

###### B. Qualification giving access to higher education

Any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme and giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to higher education (cf. the definition of access).

##### Recognition

A 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.

#### ARTICLE 2. BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 1) The Baltic States - the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter, States) - agree to recognise each other's higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education unless there is an evidence of substantial differences.
- 2) This Agreement shall deal with the qualifications awarded after completion of study programmes, which are recognised in the home country.
- 3) A higher education qualification or a qualification providing access to higher education shall give its holder the same rights in the other Parties as it gives in the State in which it has been awarded.

### ARTICLE 3. SECONDARY EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS GIVING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BALTIC COMMON EDUCATIONAL SPACE

The Parties shall recognise the following qualifications giving access to higher education studies in the Baltic States:

#### Qualifications issued in the Republic of Lithuania:

- 1) *Brandos atestatas* (maturity certificate).

#### Qualifications issued in the Republic of Estonia:

- 1) *Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* (Secondary school leaving certificate)
- 2) *Lõputunnistus kutse- ja keskhariduse omandamise kohta* (Upper-secondary vocational school leaving certificate)
- 3) *Lõputunnistus keskerihariduse omandamise kohta* (Post-secondary professional school leaving certificate).

The qualifications 1 - 3 are only valid together with *Riigieksamitunnistus* (State Examination Certificate) as the access qualifications.

#### Qualifications issued in the Republic of Latvia:

- 1) *Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību* (certificate of General secondary education)
- 2) *Diploms par vidējo speciālo izglītību* (diploma of Secondary specialised education)
- 3) *Diploms par arodizglītību* (Diploma of vocational education), if the duration of programme is 4 years
- 4) *Diploms par vidējo profesionālo izglītību* (diploma of secondary professional education) – starting from year 2000.

### ARTICLE 4. SPECIFIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

The admission to the higher education programme in question may require fulfilment of specific requirements:

- specific subjects to be successfully completed by the applicant at the secondary education level,
- specific previous training or ability.

If fulfilment of such specific requirements is a precondition for admission of applicants from their own country, the same requirements may be applied for the applicants from the other States.

### ARTICLE 5. RECOGNITION OF THE FIRST ACADEMIC DEGREES FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The Lithuanian *Bakalauro laipsnis*, the Estonian *Bakalaureusekraad* and the Latvian *Bakalaura grāds* give equal access to further studies towards *Magistro laipsnis* in Lithuania, *Magistrikraad* in Estonia and *Maģistra grāds* in Latvia.

The same conditions apply for access to professional study programmes that have the first academic degrees as the entrance requirement.

In the case if the first degree in one of the States is awarded after a three-year study programme and the studies towards this degree do not include final thesis, the higher education institutions in the other States may impose additional requirements before admission of the holder to further studies.

### ARTICLE 6. RECOGNITION FOR ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

The Lithuanian *Magistro laipsnis*, the Estonian *Magistrikraad* and the Latvian *Maģistra grāds* or equivalent higher education qualifications which provide access to doctoral studies in the State where they were awarded, give equal access to further studies towards *Daktaro laipsnis* in Lithuania, *Doktorikraad* in Estonia and *Doktora grāds* in Latvia.

### ARTICLE 7. RECOGNITION OF DOCTORAL DEGREES

Each State shall recognise the doctoral degrees awarded in other States. Parties will take measures in order to give the holders of doctoral degrees from other States the same rights to pursue academic and research activities they have in the country in which the doctoral degree was awarded.

### ARTICLE 8. ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED AFTER COMPLETION OF HIGHER PROFESSIONAL STUDIES.

Each State shall recognise higher education qualifications awarded in the other States after completion of higher professional studies.

A qualification awarded after higher professional studies shall provide access to further studies towards *Magistro laipsnis* in Lithuania, *Magistrikraad* in Estonia and *Maģistra grāds* in Latvia, if it provides such access in the State in which the qualification has been awarded.

If a qualification awarded after higher professional studies does not provide access to further studies towards *Magistro laipsnis*, *Magistrikraad* or *Maģistra grāds* in the State in which it was awarded, the Parties should look for possibilities of recognising it as periods of study in applicants further academic studies.

## ARTICLE 9. RECOGNITION OF PERIODS OF STUDY

Each State shall recognise the periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education programme in the other States.

In cases when periods of study have been completed according to previous Agreements among higher education institutions, a full credit transfer shall be granted.

In all other cases the parties should look towards transfer of maximum credits relevant to the programme.

## ARTICLE 10. CONSEQUENCES OF THIS AGREEMENT REGARDING PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION.

The academic recognition of higher education qualifications awarded in other States should facilitate recognition of these qualifications also for professional purposes.

In these cases when the professional activity is regulated by national or international legislation binding to a State, the appropriate legislation applies to the professional recognition.

## ARTICLE 11. RECOGNITION OF SUCH QUALIFICATIONS WHICH ARE NOT AWARDED ANY MORE

Each State shall recognise higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education awarded in the other States during the transition period after re-gaining independence, and which are not awarded any longer, as following:

- qualifications which gave access to higher education and correspond to the present general access requirements in one State shall be given access in the other States;
- higher education qualifications which correspond to the certain qualification in the present higher educational system in one Party shall be recognised in other Parties.

## ARTICLE 12. THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIC RECOGNITION INFORMATION CENTRES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

The National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC/NARIC centres) shall fulfil the following functions towards implementation of this Agreement:

- provide the higher education institutions and/or employers of the appropriate State with the relevant information regarding educational systems, and qualifications awarded in other States;
- provide the ENIC/NARIC centres of other Parties with information on the educational system, and qualifications awarded in the appropriate State;
- evaluate the qualifications awarded in other parties;

- provide and regularly renew information about State recognised higher education institutions and programmes in their State

## ARTICLE 13. OVERSIGHT OF THE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

The oversight of the implementation of this Agreement shall be carried out by the Baltic Higher Education Co-ordination Committee (BHECC). Each year no less than one of the BHECC meetings shall be devoted to questions related to implementation of this Agreement. In particular BHECC shall facilitate implementation of decisions/recommendations of the intergovernmental committee of the Lisbon Convention in the Baltic area and suggest appropriate changes of this Agreement if necessary.

## ARTICLE 14. ENTERING IN TO FORCE

The present Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the third month, following the date when the Contracting Parties have notified each other through diplomatic channels of the fulfilment their internal legal procedures for its entry into force.

## ARTICLE 15. REMAINING IN FORCE

The present Agreement shall stay in effect for a non-fixed period. This Agreement can be denounced in writing through diplomatic channels by either Party and the Agreement will be no longer in force after the notification after one year.

The Agreement is done in three original copies at *Sallina* on the *18* day of *February*, 2000 in the Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, and English languages, all texts are equally authentic. In case of divergency in interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

For the Government of the  
Republic of Lithuania

For the Government of the  
Republic of Estonia

For the Government of the  
Republic of Latvia