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The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA): Stakeholder Perspective

Final Report



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The Changing Role of NARICs: Stakeholder Perspective

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Foreword

In the 19 years since the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the international and national contexts in which individuals, higher education institutions, competent authorities and government agencies operate has changed significantly, and with it, undoubtedly the needs and perspectives of such stakeholders in relation to the work of national recognition centres (ENIC-NARICs). With ever growing mobility, increasing internationalisation and transnational education, fair recognition of international qualifications remains of critical importance. Since recognition is so closely linked to further study opportunities, employment and managed migration; recognition policy, processes and practice have profound and far-reaching implications, affecting the individual qualifications holders; those that recruit, employ, or advise them; and those at policy-level.

The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA) project conducted from 2012-14 addressed a pressing need to critically examine and self-reflect upon the evolution of the ENIC-NARICs over the preceding 15 years. In doing so, the study also reflected on the ways in which the work of Centres had evolved beyond the *Joint ENIC-NARIC Charter of Activities and Services*, and stimulated thought on the future of recognition.

Yet future directions must be determined both by the internal insight and experience of the Centres and the external perspectives and needs of the stakeholders served by the Networks. It is in this context that CHARONA II: Stakeholder Perspective was initiated. In 2014 UK NARIC with the support of five other ENIC-NARICs and the European Commission set out to investigate stakeholder perspectives on the role and work of ENIC-NARICs and the Networks to date, identifying different ways to ensure ongoing relevancy to stakeholders in a fast-changing world.

Dr Cloud Bai Yun
Head of UK NARIC

Acknowledgements

This report is based on analyses from stakeholder consultation and research, including an international survey with input from almost 4000 stakeholders ranging from individuals to universities, higher education institutions, professional bodies and many more; national ENIC-NARIC survey results enhancing the breadth and volume of stakeholder feedback; targeted consultation with key stakeholder organisations to ensure in-depth feedback; and a literature review, to contextualise the findings by examining the factors influencing stakeholder needs in relation to recognition.

In addition to UK NARIC, lead partner of CHARONA II, five ENIC-NARICs supported the study as project partners: the ENIC-NARIC offices of Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway. We would like to thank all staff involved in the project.

The project team would crucially like to thank the ENIC-NARIC offices for their support in the distribution of the international survey, and all of the stakeholders consulted during the course of this project for their valuable feedback and insight.

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Glossary of Key Terms

The ENIC Network (European Network of Information Centres)	Established in 1994 by the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES who jointly provide the Secretariat for the Network. The Network is made up of the national information centres of the States party to the European Cultural Convention or the UNESCO Europe Region. An ENIC is a body set up by the national authorities; while the size and specific competence of ENICs may vary, their purpose, as defined in their mandate, is “to facilitate co-operation between national information centres on academic mobility and recognition in the European Region”.
The NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres)	Established in 1984 by the European Commission, the network comprises the Member States of the European Union (EU) countries, the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and Turkey. The NARICs were designated by the Ministries of Education in the respective countries. The status and functions of individual NARICs may differ, however their scope of activities, as defined in their mandate, is to “collect and disseminate authenticated information, which is necessary for the purpose of academic recognition, also bearing in mind synergies with professional recognition of diplomas”.
Joint ENIC-NARIC Charter of Activities and Services	Adopted in 2004, the Charter seeks to elaborate on minimum services to be provided by every national ENIC-NARIC centre and outlines the minimum structural needs of an ENIC-NARIC in terms of political support, equipment, human resources and funding. The Charter defines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks and activities of a national ENIC-NARIC centre • Tasks and activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks • Resources and Expertise.
Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (often referred to as Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC))	The Lisbon Convention was developed by the Council of Europe / UNESCO Convention and adopted in 1997. It is the key legal instrument for recognition of qualifications across Europe and aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from one signatory country can obtain recognition for that qualification in another signatory country. The full text can be viewed on the Council of Europe website ¹ .

¹ Available at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp>

Executive Summary

The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA) project published in 2014 provided an unprecedented self-evaluation and critical analysis of the work of ENIC-NARICs and the ENIC-NARIC Networks through the eyes of the ENIC-NARICs themselves. The study concluded that overall the role and work of Centres had extended beyond the scope of work set out in the *Joint ENIC-NARIC Charter of Activities and Services*, and demonstrated the need to consider future directions. It is important though, that such evaluation and planning be based not only on the internal expertise and perspectives of the Centres, but also on external perspectives: those of the ENIC-NARIC stakeholders.

To this end, the project team, led by UK NARIC and supported by the ENIC-NARIC offices of Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway, embarked on a two-year project to gather stakeholder perspectives on the role and work of ENIC-NARICs and the Networks.

In doing so, the study sought to investigate four overarching research questions:

- To what extent are the role, work and expertise of ENIC-NARICs and the Networks known and understood by stakeholders, overall and by different stakeholder groups?
- What is the perceived relevance and usefulness of the role and work of ENIC-NARICs and the Networks to stakeholders?
- In what ways could ENIC-NARICs, and/or the Networks develop to further meet stakeholder needs?
- In combination with the findings of CHARONA I, how has the role and work of Centres and the Networks evolved beyond the baseline for services and activities defined in 2004?

The CHARONA II project comprised a number of research activities in order to address these questions. An international survey, designed for the purposes of this study and distributed widely to a range of stakeholders, drew respondents from 138 countries. This survey enabled the project team to gather feedback from stakeholders of Centres across the ENIC-NARIC Networks and to identify key themes and trends among stakeholder perspectives. Secondly, review and analysis of national survey findings across the project team served to further investigate these areas and increase the sample size of stakeholder perspectives encompassed within the study.

The third research activity, an extended period of targeted consultation, sought primarily to investigate the perspectives of those national, European and international organisations that were not direct users, but nevertheless worked in fields where the subject of recognition had a tangible relevance. Alongside these primary research activities, a literature review both served to contextualise stakeholder perspectives – by examining the external factors impacting their needs in relation to recognition – and to support the identification of key questions and stakeholders for inclusion in the targeted consultation phase.

The research has found firstly that there is scope for improvement in the visibility of both Centres and in particular, the Networks; and in the level of understanding about the remits and services of the Centres. A set of guidance documents, developed during the course of this project, help to illustrate the positioning and relevance of Centres specific to the needs

of different stakeholder groups and have established a sound basis on which to further address this area.

The high relevancy rating attached to the work of Centres across all stakeholder groups serves to demonstrate that the evolving work and services of Centres, identified in CHARONA I, remains largely congruent with the evolving needs of stakeholders. Nevertheless, two common overarching themes emerge from stakeholder feedback, including the desire for: (i) more detailed information, (ii) more tailored information and services specific to the needs of different stakeholder groups.

At a policy level, stakeholders are almost uniformly positive about the work of Centres and the Networks but for the most part, envisage collaboration continuing at a Centre- rather than Network-level citing one or more of the following reasons: (i) the relevance of the Networks to their specific work being less than that of individual Centres; (ii) the diversity of the individual Centres; or (iii) the current absence of coordination of Network-level involvement.

By considering the findings of CHARONA I and the stakeholder consultation of CHARONA II, in conjunction with the Charter, it was possible to identify a number of areas where the needs of stakeholders and the work of Centres has evolved beyond the baseline services set out in the Charter.

The findings have led to a series of recommendations which the Network and the Centres may wish to explore further, namely to:

- ✓ **Ensure clear positioning of the Networks and Centres so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remits and the expertise they have to offer**
 - The Networks could actively disseminate the overarching guidance documents created during the course of this project to key umbrella organisations or transnational / pan-European stakeholder associations.
 - Centres could similarly actively disseminate the guidance documents to policy stakeholders and users (including those organisations that may similarly advise users without being direct users themselves).
 - Within the Networks, a working group should be established to specifically address Centres' positioning among direct users.
- ✓ **Increase the global presence of the Centres and Networks and build stronger cooperative relationships with other recognition networks and centres both within and outside the EU**
- ✓ **Increase the Centres' and the Networks' involvement in policy developments particularly in relation to NQFs, EQF, quality assurance and internationalisation**

- ✓ **Improve relationships and close cooperation with a range of stakeholders including higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, the Bologna Follow-Up Group, the EQF Advisory Group, and Assistance Centres and Coordinators for professional recognition**
 - Establish the regular collation and analysis of stakeholder feedback as a baseline task and activity for centres.
 - Embed collating and analysing national reports to inform the identification of Network priorities as an integral activity in the work of the Networks.
 - Consider the creation of specialist Working Group(s) focussed on enhancing cooperation and representation with key European agencies and initiatives.

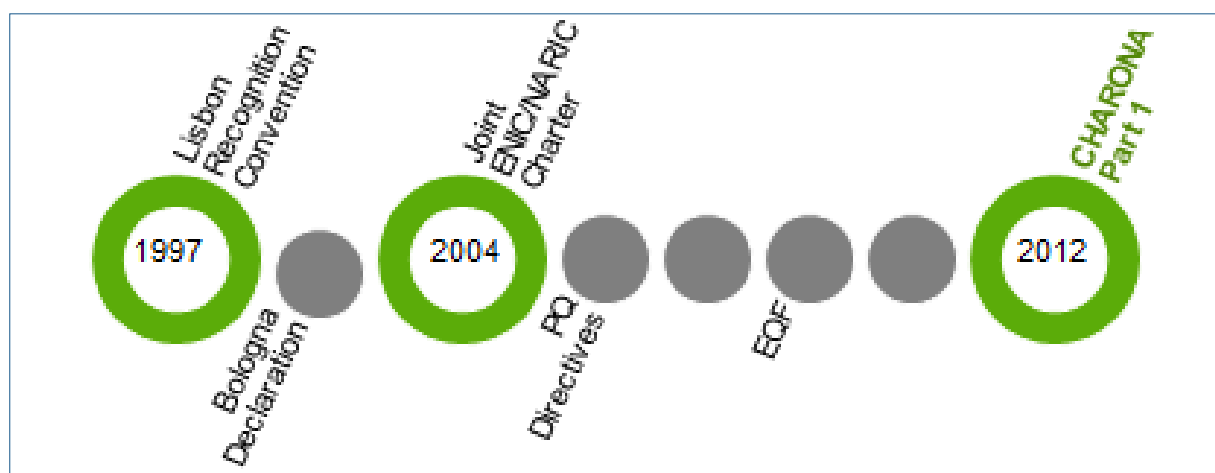
In view of the evolution of the role and work of Centres beyond the intended remit (as outlined in the Charter) and the need for and effectiveness of this evolution (demonstrated through stakeholder feedback), it is pertinent to consider a revision of the 2004 Charter to more fully reflect the role, activities and services of Centres as they operate and respond to the complex and varied needs of stakeholders today.

1. Introduction and Approach

1.1 Background to the CHARONA II Project

The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA I) study published in February 2014 provided an unprecedented, comprehensive and critical analysis and self-evaluation on the role and work of ENIC-NARICs (hereafter referred to interchangeably as the “Centres”) within the ENIC-NARIC Networks and how these have evolved in view of the extensive education reforms and developments seen in the preceding 15 years.

Figure 1: Origins and creation of the CHARONA (I) project



Over the two-year lifetime of the project, the project team² conducted extensive research centred around six research themes:

- The role and remit of the Centres
- Their scope of work
- The Bologna Process
- Qualifications frameworks
- The professional qualifications directives
- Managed migration policies.

Investigating and analysing these themes with reference to the *Joint ENIC-NARIC Charter of Activities and Services* (hereafter referred to as the Charter), enabled a valuable stocktake of the extent to which the work of Centres and the Networks had been shaped, and in some cases had shaped, developments in the wider sphere of international education.

Whilst the study highlighted considerable diversity among the Centres, both in terms of size, status and remit, the overarching conclusion was that the role and work of Centres had in many cases extended far beyond the scope of the original Charter drafted in 2004. The study also served to highlight areas for further development within and across the Networks leading to a series of recommendations, including ones related to positioning and cooperation of the Networks and Centres with stakeholders.

² Led by UK NARIC, with partner Centres from Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland.

It is in this context that the scope and necessity for the CHARONA II project emerged. CHARONA I provided an essential self-reflection, drawing on two network surveys and one network consultation process³, initiating thought and discussion on future directions of the Centres and the Networks.

In determining future directions, whilst continuing to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the Centres, it was essential to also draw on external perspectives, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders from across Europe and internationally.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the CHARONA II Project

CHARONA II seeks to simultaneously address several of the recommendations of the CHARONA I study (as summarised above) whilst investigating the extent to which the role and work of Centres are responding to stakeholder needs. Thus, the CHARONA II project aims to:

- i. increase awareness and understanding of recognition centres, their roles and remits
- ii. determine the extent to which the Centres' work is meeting the potentially varying and evolving needs of stakeholders
- iii. identify potential future directions and areas for development
- iv. consider recommendations for the Charter, combining the findings from the two studies.

1.3 Approach

From July 2014 – April 2016, the project team⁴ conducted stakeholder research, consultation and analysis. The purpose of this process was to:

- i. identify the range and common core stakeholder groups
- ii. engage with stakeholders who use Centres' services or have the potential to do so
- iii. gauge the extent to which stakeholders are fully aware of Centres' / Networks roles and remits, and the expertise they have to offer
- iv. draw representative⁵ feedback on the perceived relevance of NARICs and the extent to which the work of NARIC is meeting stakeholder needs
- v. explore ways to improve positioning of both the Centres and the Networks
- vi. pinpoint areas for development.

The stakeholder groups were based on consultations within the project team during the initial stage of the project. These encompassed the stakeholder groups who were direct users of the ENIC-NARIC services, and policy-level bodies identified in the CHARONA I study, namely:

³ The first survey, designed for Heads of Centres, sought to collate contextual information on the centres, core functions and scope of work and the processes and procedures employed. The second survey – to centre staff – focussed more specifically on the identified research themes. The consultation process, working with Heads of Centres, focussed on capturing views for future directions and developments.

⁴ Led by UK NARIC, with partner ENIC-NARICs from Croatia (ASHE – Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia), Denmark (Danish Agency for Higher Education), Ireland (Quality and Qualifications Ireland), the Netherlands (EP-Nuffic), and Norway (NOKUT – Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education).

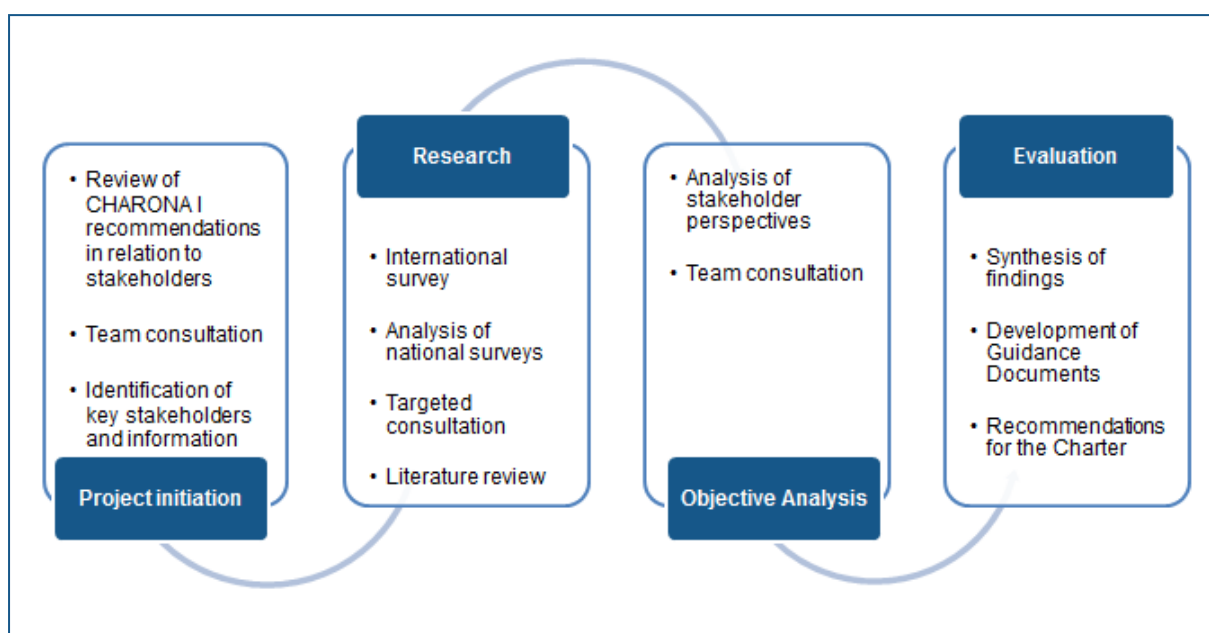
⁵ This meant reaching out to a wide range of stakeholders, covering different types of stakeholders, over a large geographical area.

Table 1: Initial identification of ENIC-NARIC stakeholder groups

User Groups	Non-User / Policy Groups
Individuals (past users)	Quality Assurance Agencies (national)
Further and Vocational Education Institutions	Transnational Quality Assurance Associations
Higher Education Institutions	EU Coordination Points / National Agencies
Other Education Providers	Other Recognition Networks
Competent Authorities/Professional Bodies	Bologna Follow-Up Group
Immigration Offices	National and/or European Associations of User Groups – such as university associations, student associations
Advisory Services (e.g. Careers and Guidance)	
Government departments	

The research process can be defined as follows:

Figure 2: Research process



1.3.1 International Stakeholder Survey

The first research activity was the design and distribution of an international stakeholder survey with the aim of capturing feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and across all centres, to enable identification of key themes and trends among stakeholder perspectives.

The project team decided, during the project kick-off and initial consultation for the project, that the international survey should focus primarily on the direct user groups, identified in Table 1, on the basis that the non-user groups could be better engaged through targeted consultation, with the scope to ask more specialised questions.

With the aim of getting more representative feedback relating to Centres across the network, a list of countries with ENIC-NARIC Centres not directly involved in the study was divided among the project team, with each partner responsible for contacting a small group of Centres, to request support in distributing the survey to their stakeholders.

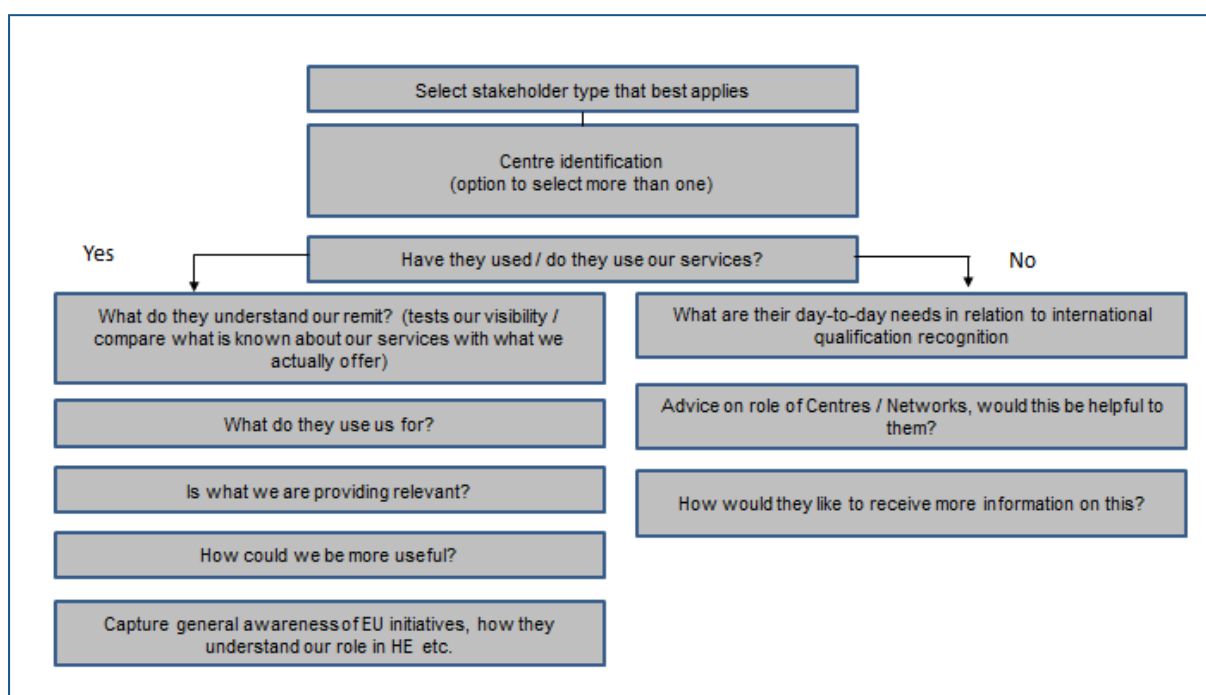
The survey was distributed through direct emails to individuals (past users) and organisations (past, current or potential service users), such as:

- Higher education institutions
- Further education, vocational institutions and other awarding bodies
- Employers
- Immigration offices
- NCPs
- Professional bodies
- Careers and guidance centres
- Other government departments (if applicable and appropriate)⁶.

Links to the survey were also posted on the project partners' websites, where appropriate, and the CHARONA II website, to allow for greater visibility of the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of Centre stakeholders, including which ENIC-NARIC centres they used, and how well they understand the services the network collectively provide. The survey included a variety of questions (see Annex 1 for the full list) that gathered demographic data from the stakeholders and determined what ENIC-NARIC centre and services they use. The questions were tailored to the type of stakeholder (Individual vs Organisation; Professional Bodies and NCPs) and measured how relevant they felt the centres were to them. The stakeholders were also asked how recognition centres (ENIC-NARICs) could be more useful to them.

⁶ It was intended that this category exclude the overarching department responsible for the Centre / for contracting the Centre but include departments which were service users or might be considered potential service users.

Figure 3: Direct service users / potential service users – key information needs

The survey was analysed to identify key and emerging themes (described further in Section 2) and to inform the identification of stakeholders and information requirements that would need to be considered during the subsequent targeted consultation phase.

1.3.2 Centre Survey Review

Acknowledging that many Centres conduct their own user surveys, the study encompassed a review of existing national centre (partner) survey results over a five-year period where available. This undoubtedly served to increase and widen the overall sample size of stakeholders and also provided a means to mitigate any language limitations associated with the international survey (see section 1.4). The particular information requirements for this review echoed those of the international survey: how satisfied were user groups with the work and services provided and in what ways, if any, could these be made more useful to stakeholders.

1.3.3 Targeted Consultation

For the targeted consultation, a list of stakeholders was drawn up, and agreed by the project team. Whilst by no means exhaustive, the project team felt in-depth consultation with some key stakeholder groups would provide a more constructive dataset to analyse.

Table 2: Stakeholder groups targeted during the consultation phase

Stakeholder Type	Centre User / Non-User (Policy)
Higher Education Institutions	User
Bologna Follow Up Group	Non-user
National Agencies:	Non-user
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Europass Centres 	Non-user
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Reference Point for Vocational Education and Training Qualifications 	Non-user
Recognition networks	Non-user
National quality assurance agencies and regulatory bodies	Non-user
National and European associations of user-stakeholders, such as the European Universities Association (EUA) and national level associations where needed.	Non-user

As evident above, the main focus of the targeted consultation phase was to gather feedback from non-user/policy groups, where feedback on the Networks as a whole could also be gathered. Higher education institutions were nonetheless included as a key user, providing the opportunity to further explore their perspectives.

Most of these stakeholders were contacted by email or by telephone. The specific questions were tailored to the stakeholder/stakeholder type but typically centred around three research questions/themes: their perspective on the link between their work and that of the Centres/Networks; the current understanding and level of work with the Centres/Networks; and where they felt Centres/the Networks could further help them currently or in the future.

These questions were also explored through a face-to-face focussed group discussion with representatives from regulatory and quality assurance bodies; further and higher education institutions as well as associations of institutions; competent authorities/professional bodies; an awarding body and a national government agency. The discussion paper can be found in the Annex 2.

1.3.4 Literature Review

The first CHARONA study considered the external factors impacting the role and work of NARICs and it follows that any study of stakeholder perspectives should similarly seek to contextualise those by considering the factors affecting their needs and work. The factors considered in CHARONA I provided the starting point for discussions whilst other factors were identified through consultation and desk-based research. Particular focus was placed on reviewing key publications relevant to or written by the key stakeholder groups identified above.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

Overall, this study has encompassed a large number of stakeholders, with differing professional/sectoral and national perspectives, and combining both the latest data from the international survey with longer term feedback from national centres serving to demonstrate the extent to which stakeholders' needs may have changed over a five year period.

Limitations of the research can largely be placed in two categories:

- The volume and detail of responses to the international survey
- The diversity of Centres and their associated stakeholders.

In terms of the international survey, the emphasis had been on maximising user group feedback hence disseminating it through a variety of channels: from the partners directly, from partner websites or other channels as appropriate, or from other centres contacted by the project team. The drawback with this is that an overall response rate cannot be calculated.

Nevertheless between September 1st 2014-November 3rd 2014 a total of 4,277 survey responses were received. After reviewing the data, some data inaccuracies and errors were found that needed to be removed from the survey data. In particular, the following survey responses were removed:

- Incomplete survey entries: Some respondents only answered the first two demographic questions (Question 1: Where are you from? and Question 2: Have you used a recognition centre?) and consequently these were excluded⁷.
- Duplicate entries: Some respondents completed the survey twice in succession, providing the same responses and/or contact email.
- Technical error in respondent data: In the targeted survey questions some respondents changed their answers and therefore provided answers to questions that no longer applied to them. These answers were removed, but the survey entries were kept in the final data sample. (This error often occurred for those that switched between 'potential' or 'past' user and 'individual' or 'organisation').

After removing these responses, a final total of 3,970 survey responses were left, with respondents hailing from 138 countries across the world. The following figure demonstrates the distribution of these stakeholders.

⁷ It should be noted that some respondents exited the survey at various points within the survey. Each question therefore has a different number of total respondents, and this total number was used for analyses (i.e. 'total respondents' often refers to respondents for that question, rather than the total survey respondents).

Figure 4: International Survey - respondent demographics

Inevitably the proportion of stakeholders responding in relation to each centre varied, with some centres better represented within the international survey than others: this could be attributed to the distribution/response rate of the survey but could equally reflect the size of the country and the specific remit of a given Centre. As would be expected, a significant proportion of these are past users/stakeholders of the Centres involved in this study (UK, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Norway) nevertheless, among the respondents, usage of ENIC-NARICs across all 55 countries represented in the Networks has been reported.

It was anticipated within the project team's initial consultation that distributing a single language version of the international survey (English) would enable easier and more cost-effective design, distribution and analysis. Some inaccuracies in the data were found that may have been a result of this limitation. For example, there appeared to be a selection of respondents that confused whether they had used the ENIC-NARIC as an individual (i.e. someone seeking information on the recognition of their own qualification) or as a member of an organisation (i.e. for the purpose of international admission and recruitment at a university).

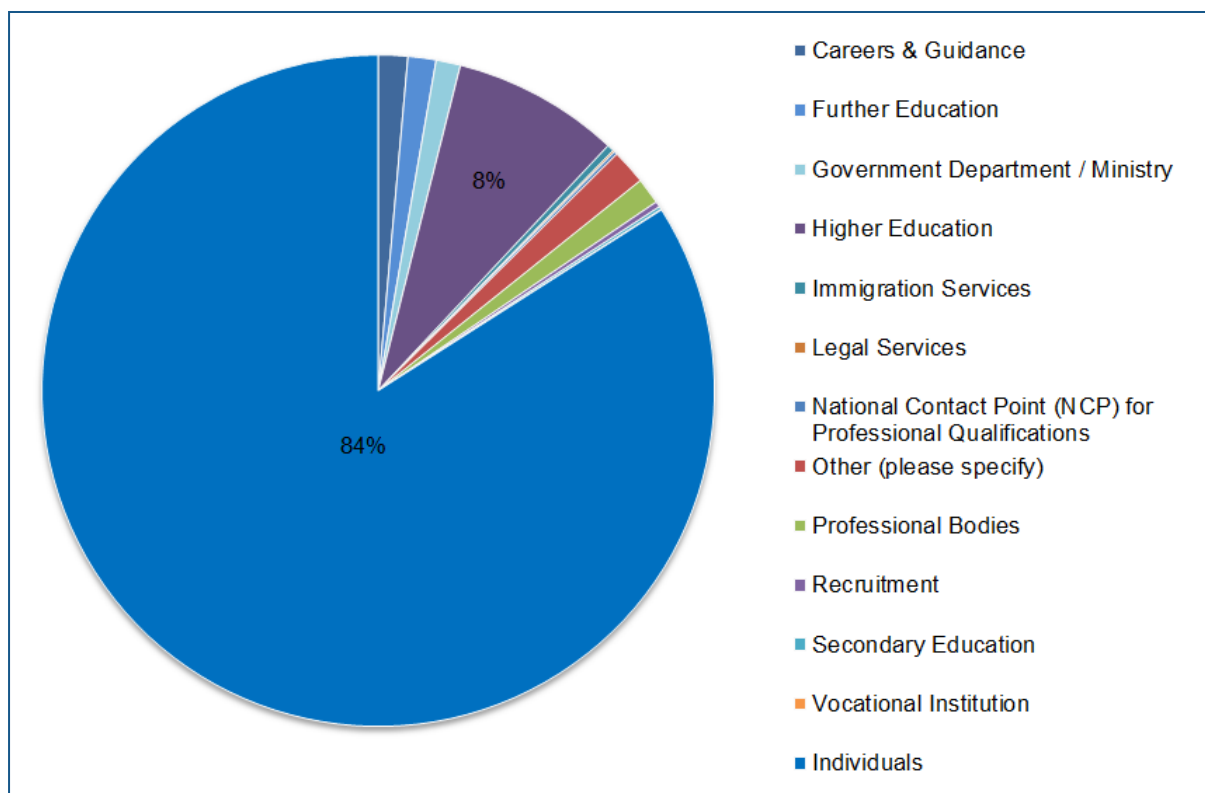
In CHARONA I, it was acknowledged that the diversity of the centres would make it difficult to make recommendations that apply to the Network as a whole. This diversity similarly posed challenges for CHARONA II. Firstly, when trying to gauge stakeholders understanding of what ENIC-NARICs offered, it was acknowledged that the range of services offered also vary by Centre and therefore, whilst it would be possible to compare the perception of services against the actual services provided by an individual Centre, overarching observations on the extent of understanding of ENIC-NARICs' work is more complex.

Similarly it was acknowledged that some stakeholders may have used more than one Centre, both attributable to individual mobility in and around the EHEA, and for organisations, the desire to use and cross-reference different sources of information on international education systems. In terms of the number of total centres each stakeholder used, the majority of overall stakeholders (95.17%) only used one centre. A small percentage (3.20%) had used two centres and 46 respondents (1.63%) had used more than three; however if organisations are looked at in isolation from individual stakeholders, the figures vary noticeably:

- One centre (85.78%)
- Two centres (5.06%)
- Three or more centres (9.16%).

As can be seen from the chart below, the international survey was answered by a range of stakeholder types with, as expected, individual past users accounting for the highest percentage of respondents.

Figure 5: Composition of the international survey respondents



Out of the 412 respondents that reported using ENIC-NARICs services as a member of an organisation, the following sectors were identified:

Table 3: Organisation survey respondents

Organisations - Sector	Percentage of organisation respondents
Higher Education	53.64%
Professional Bodies	8.25%
Further Education	8.01%
Careers & Guidance	7.77%
Other (please specify)	7.77%
Government Department / Ministry	6.31%
Immigration Services	2.67%
Recruitment	2.18%
National Contact Point (NCP) for Professional Qualifications	1.21%
Secondary Education	1.21%
Legal Services	0.73%
Vocational Institution	0.24%

Higher education institutions (HEIs), as seen in the table above, make up more than half of the organisation stakeholders who responded to the survey, indicating that they are one of ENIC-NARICs key stakeholders, after individuals.

2. Perspectives of NARIC User Groups

2.1 The Changing Landscape for Stakeholders and the Impact on Recognition Needs

CHARONA I asked Centres to identify any particular reforms, policies or instruments that had impacted / affected their work over the course of the preceding 15 years. Through review of internal and external factors the team had identified as affecting the role and work of centres, six key research themes emerged:

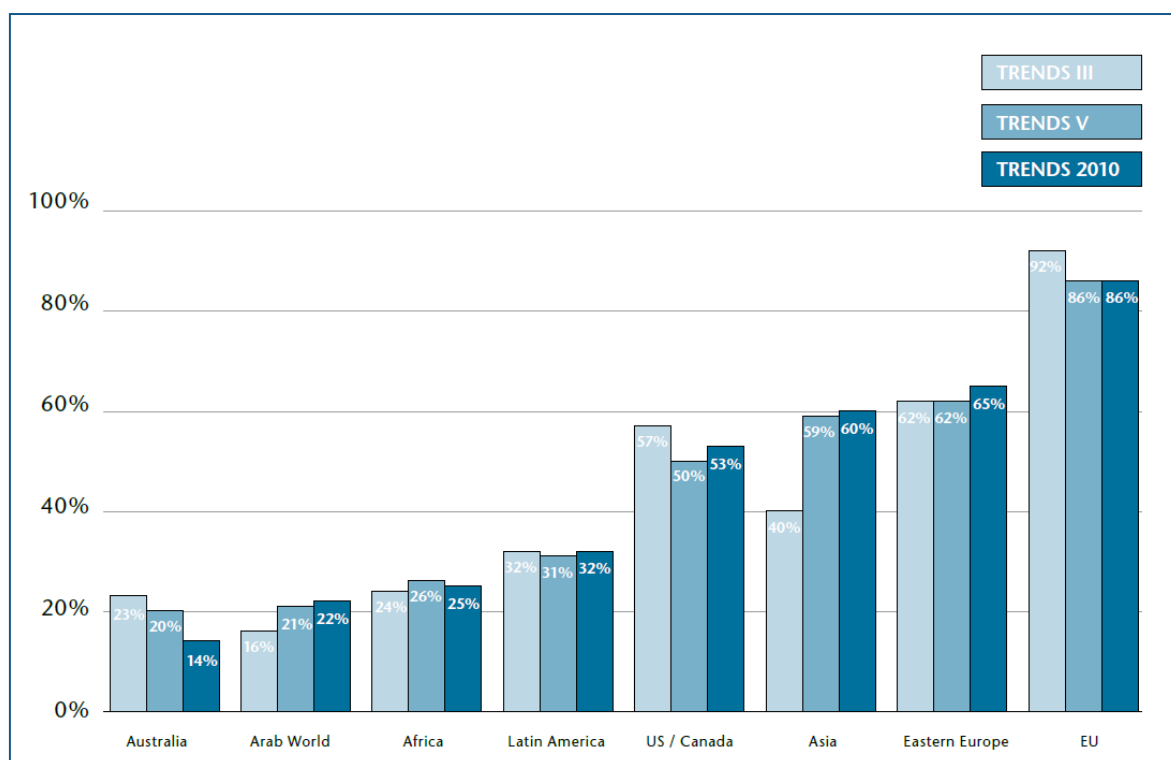
- Changing Scope of Work
- Bologna Process
- Managed Migration Policies
- National and Transnational Qualification Frameworks
- Professional Qualifications Directives.

These themes were used as the starting point for the research and analysis of stakeholders' evolving needs, whilst reflecting on further external factors identified through consultation and literature review. Where relevant, reference is made to these themes throughout the subsequent analysis.

To consider the external factors driving or influencing stakeholder needs for recognition, it is useful to consider overall political, economic, social and technological factors (PEST) and the impact of such factors on the different types of stakeholders served by the Centres.

Undoubtedly the enlargement of the EU has increased individual mobility for the purposes of work or study in another Member State or EEA country, thereby placing increased importance on the recognition and portability of qualifications. In terms of employers and sector skills bodies, the enlargement of the EU in 2004 had a significant impact with identified skill shortages in particular areas resulting in studies mapping skills and training systems in accession states to inform recruitment plans to address these shortages. For universities, the EU was identified as a key target area for student recruitment:

Figure 6: EUA survey response to “In which geographical areas would your institution most like to enhance its international attractiveness?”



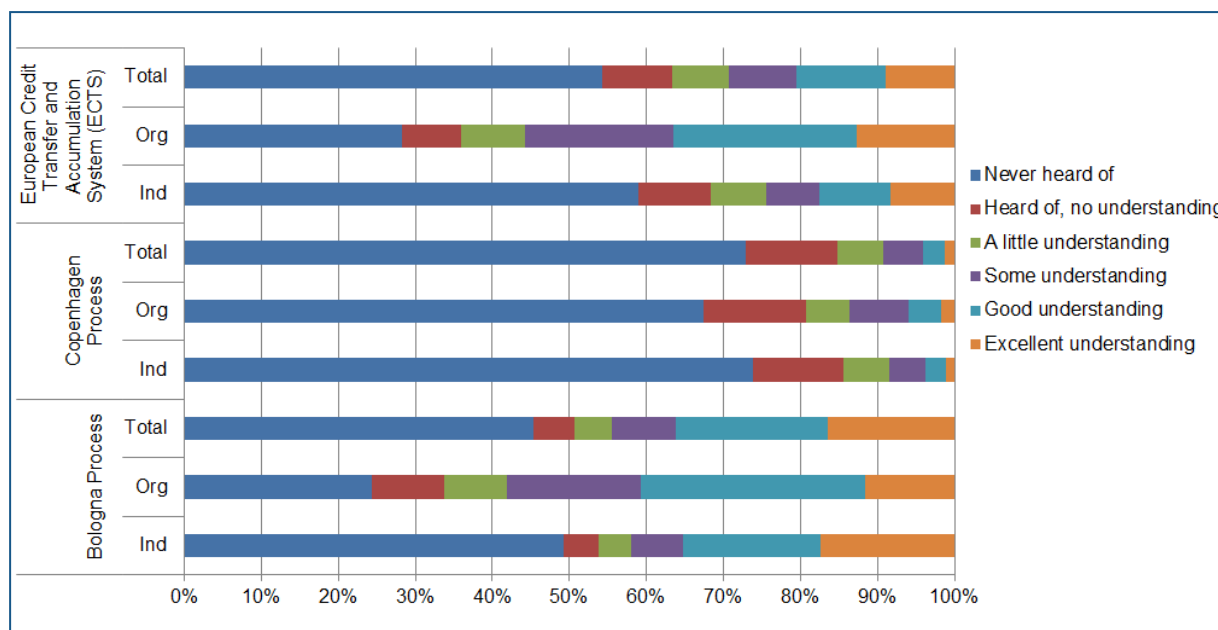
Source: Sursock, A and Smidt, H *et al* (2010). *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education*. European University Association: EUA Publications.

The introduction of initiatives such as Bologna, ECTS and Copenhagen Process have all sought to support this mobility and transferability of qualifications and skills. Subsequent tools and initiatives such as the Diploma Supplement (with automatic issuance agreed by 2005) and the adoption of the framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have all sought to increase transparency and harmonisation of higher education qualifications across the region. The Bologna Process has led to greater awareness of the education systems in different countries, facilitated partnership working and increased student and staff exchange activity. In turn this has increased institutions' confidence in engaging with international students and qualifications, with many universities devising their own admission guidelines for specific countries based on a combination of advice from Centres, and their own experiences with students from those countries.

The international survey conducted by the project team highlighted that individual awareness of these and related initiatives and tools may be low (Figure 6), but the impact of such tools can nonetheless be observed with few recognition challenges identified by individuals in applying for further study. Such developments have undoubtedly impacted the work and needs of organisational stakeholders, providing a wider, unrestricted⁸ market for recruitment of students and workers from the EHEA, whilst also increasing the need for clear information on the comparability of applicants' qualifications in the context of their national system.

⁸ By immigration policies.

Figure 7: Stakeholder awareness of selected EU initiatives



Arguably one of the key external factors influencing stakeholder needs has been immigration policies. For example, when asked to indicate their reason for using UK NARIC services, individuals selected the response of ‘visa / work permit’ at increasingly higher levels over a three year period reflecting parallel changes in national visa and immigration policy.

Depending on the nature of immigration policies (allowing relatively uncapped immigration on one end of the spectrum to stricter, capped immigration on the other), the impact for stakeholder needs can be great and far-reaching. Uncapped immigration can mean large volumes of incoming applicants to institutions, professional bodies and other organisations, necessitating clear, accessible and ready information on international education systems and qualifications to inform admissions and recruitment decisions. On the other end of the spectrum, stricter immigration rules can serve to diversify stakeholder needs. In the UK for example, institutions request advice on international qualifications not only to inform admissions decisions but also to support their compliance with immigration policy. In practical terms, this has seen a reduction in the number of university enquiries via telephone but dramatically increased the number of written enquiries as institutions seek to ensure a paper trail associated with their admissions decisions for international applicants.

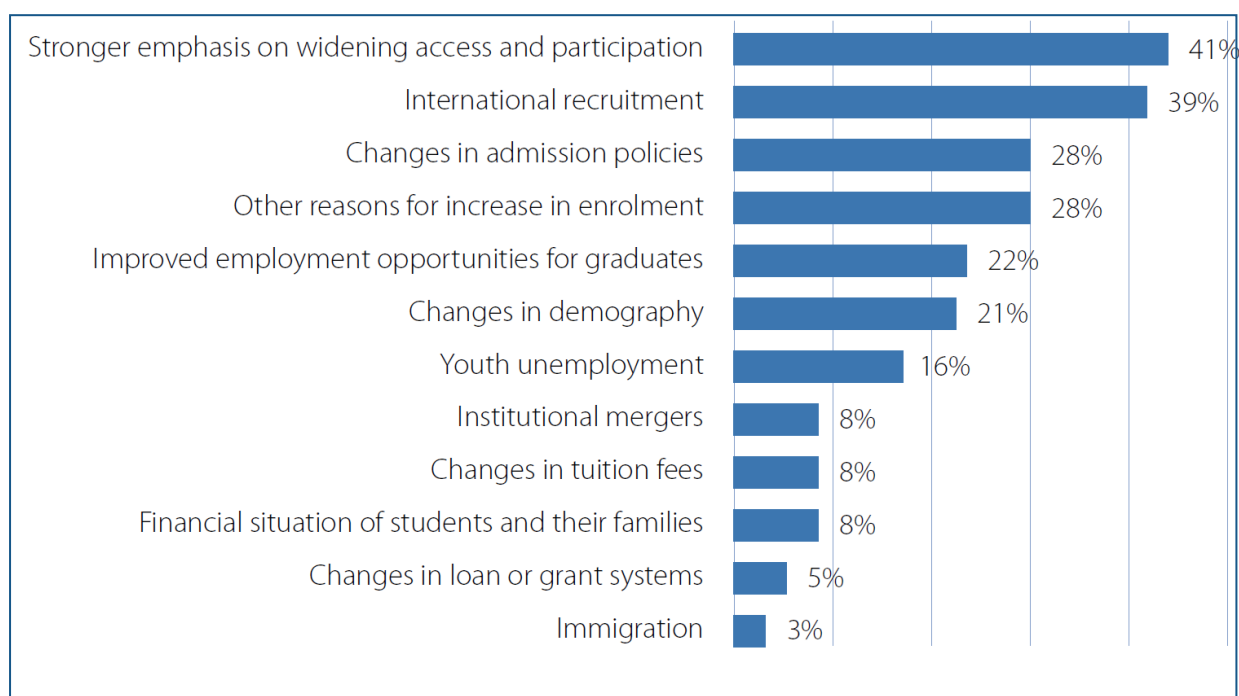
More widely however, immigration policies can contribute to changes in the educational landscape with visa restrictions cited as one of the reasons for which further and higher education institutions seek to establish transnational education arrangements. International branch campuses, franchise/twinning programmes, validation arrangements and distance learning programmes are just some of the ways institutions may seek to reach students affected by visa restrictions by providing the opportunity to study for a European degree in their home country, or a hub country. This is especially important to maintain the competitiveness of national systems as well as that of the wider EHEA, as evidenced by the publication of international education and growth strategies by not only EHEA countries, but also international countries such as Canada and Australia that set out plans to increase international student enrolments. Such developments bring both increased need, and increased opportunities for ENIC-NARICs to support education institutions by providing key

information on education systems to those looking to expand and establish new or collaborative provision in a given country.

The economic environment has also impacted stakeholders' needs for recognition in different ways. Recession and rising unemployment increases competition for work and thereby raises the importance to individuals of qualification recognition for the purpose of employment or admission for further study in order to upskill and improve employability.

At an institutional level, the financial value of international students to the university and the wider national economy is at least part of what drives international recruitment strategy. A study, *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*, released by the European University Association last year, found that 69% of European universities reported an increase in non-EU enrolment over the preceding five years. Whilst attributable to a number of factors, "the composition of the student body is changing as a result of specific institutional strategies, and in particular due to the major efforts undertaken to recruit international students from both EU and non-EU countries"⁹. Nearly all respondents in the EUA survey indicated they have an internationalisation strategy in place and this was supported by the findings of national survey reviews completed as part of this study.

Figure 8: Main reasons for increased enrolment in European universities



Source: European University Association, 2015. *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*, p.65.

⁹ European University Association, 2015. *Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities*.

For recognition needs, this signals not only increased enquiries from international students (requesting a statement/recognition advice on their own behalf, or institutions consulting Centres on students' qualifications), but also that over recent years and moving forward institutions will need information on a wider range of international systems and qualifications, as new markets emerge, with a quicker turnaround time and with more detailed information to support differentiation of students applying for heavily subscribed programmes.

The importance of social drivers – notably the increase in international experience / mobility highlighted in CHARONA I – has also increased, and as it continues this may see increasing calls from stakeholders for recognition centres relating to these experiences or study periods.

The evolving world of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) also plays a role in shaping stakeholder needs and perceptions. As the number of individuals applying to stakeholders (institutions, professional bodies, employers) increases, so too does the need for ready access to clear and up-to-date information. For Centres, this is likely to mean greater expectations for quicker and more easily understood sources of information, notification/alerts on updates, and direct communication with centres via email or portals.

One aspect not explored during the first CHARONA study, was the impact of the ongoing refugee crisis on stakeholders and their needs in relation to recognition and ENIC-NARIC services.

Whilst there has been guidance in place for the recognition of refugees' qualifications (where there may be a lack of supporting documentation), the conflict in Syria and Iraq have undeniably created a refugee crisis unprecedented since the creation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This has served to further highlight the issues relating to recognition of qualifications with incomplete or undocumented studies.

Stakeholders have raised the question of how to provide effective, fair and appropriate recognition of refugees' qualifications to ensure that the integration process into the local labour market, economy and education system is expedited, as smoothly and appropriately as possible.

Overall the ever-changing contexts and constraints within which ENIC-NARIC stakeholders operate, has and will continue to shape their perceptions on the relevance and usefulness of Centres to their needs.

2.2 Awareness and Understanding of the Work and Role of Centres

This section draws on both the responses to the international survey and the subsequent targeted consultation with user-groups.

2.2.1 Visibility of ENIC-NARICs and the Networks

One of the first questions posed to stakeholders in the international survey was "*Have you used a recognition centre (ENIC-NARIC) before?*"

This question was initially posed for two reasons. Firstly it was important to reach potential stakeholders (users), who may have use for an ENIC-NARIC but may not have done so. An answer of “no” to the above question would route respondents to questions that would, for individuals, ascertain whether they in fact had an international qualification and if so, whether they had experienced problems with recognition of that qualification for employment, academic or other purposes. Organisation respondents were asked about the context in which they dealt with international qualifications¹⁰, and to identify the sector in which they worked¹¹. A final question for those who had not previously used a centre asked respondents to select the reason(s) they’d not used a centre (findings from this question are detailed further on in this section).

Secondly, it was acknowledged that the inclusion of the survey link on project partners’ websites/social media could attract at least some non-users. Those who neither held international qualifications (individuals) nor dealt with them in a professional capacity were then directed to the survey end-page.

Overall, 70.86% of respondents identified themselves as being a past-user of a recognition centre (ENIC-NARIC), and in a few cases, respondents had used more than one. Interestingly however, the proportion does not fully tally with the distribution of the survey. Whilst there were general data collectors (e.g. those on websites/social media), it was anticipated that, as the primary source of contact details for the survey came from Centres’ own user databases, the proportion of past-users would be even higher. In particular, 231 individual respondents that were contacted because they *had* in fact used the services of a Centre (ENIC-NARIC) replied that they had *not* used a recognition centre. When asked subsequently where they sought advice from on international qualifications and recognition, they cited the name of an ENIC-NARIC. This raises questions on the “branding” of Centres as ENIC-NARICs. At the time of writing 50% of Centres included “ENIC”, “NARIC”, or “ENIC-NARIC” in their name whether as a distinct part of their name, or in brackets next to the name of the overarching organisation/ministry of which they form part. 27% of all Centres use the term “recognition” in their description. The survey has therefore demonstrated that the concept of ENIC-NARIC may not be fully understood amongst even direct users.

Of the stakeholders that identified themselves as a past-user of an ENIC-NARIC recognition centre, 2,398 (85.24%) were an individual user of these services, while 415 (14.75%) used the services as a member of an organisation (on behalf of the organisation): for example a higher education institution staff member using the services of an ENIC-NARIC to inform their admissions decisions.

Respondents who had confirmed they were past users were also asked where they’d heard about the ENIC-NARIC(s). For individuals, the top source was online (search engine / social media), accounting for a third of responses, closely followed by word of mouth (family / friends) at 30.28%. Other bodies identified as referring individuals to ENIC-NARICs included:

¹⁰ Response options included admissions for further study and/or credit transfer; employment; profession recognition / registration; accreditation; immigration; planning, partnerships or strategy; translations; other; or not applicable.

¹¹ Careers and guidance; further education; government department/ministry; public sector authority/organisation; higher education; legal services; professional body; recruitment; other.

- Competent Authority / Professional Body
- Employer
- Further Education Institution
- Government Department
- Higher Education Institution
- Immigration Service
- Job Centre/Unemployment insurance fund
- Legal Service
- Public Sector
- Quality Assurance Body
- Vocational Institution.

Of the total survey respondents, 29.14% (1157) indicated they had not used a centre before. When asked why, 738 responded with the reasons provided as follows:

Table 4: Reasons for non-use of Centre services among potential users

Key themes	Percentage (number) of respondents [1]		
	Individual (614)	Organisations (124)	All (738)
Did not know the services were available / Unaware of ENIC-NARICs	45.44 (279) <i>7.03</i>	41.13 (51) <i>1.28</i>	44.72 <i>8.13</i>
No challenges with understanding and recognition of qualifications	30.62 (188) <i>4.74</i>	23.39 (29) <i>0.73</i>	29.40 <i>5.47</i>
Did not see the relevance / usefulness of the services to their needs	8.14 (50) <i>1.26</i>	5.65 (7) <i>0.18</i>	7.72 <i>1.44</i>
Used the services of another organisation [2]	7.82 (48) <i>1.21</i>	12.90 (16) <i>0.40</i>	8.67 <i>1.61</i>
Cost of service	3.75 (23) <i>0.58</i>	8.06 (10) <i>0.25</i>	4.47 <i>0.83</i>
The services needed were not offered by the ENIC-NARIC(s)	4.23 (26) <i>0.65</i>	5.65 (7) <i>0.18</i>	4.47 <i>0.83</i>
Does not accept international qualifications (organisations only)	n/a	3.23 (4) <i>0.10</i>	-

Notes:

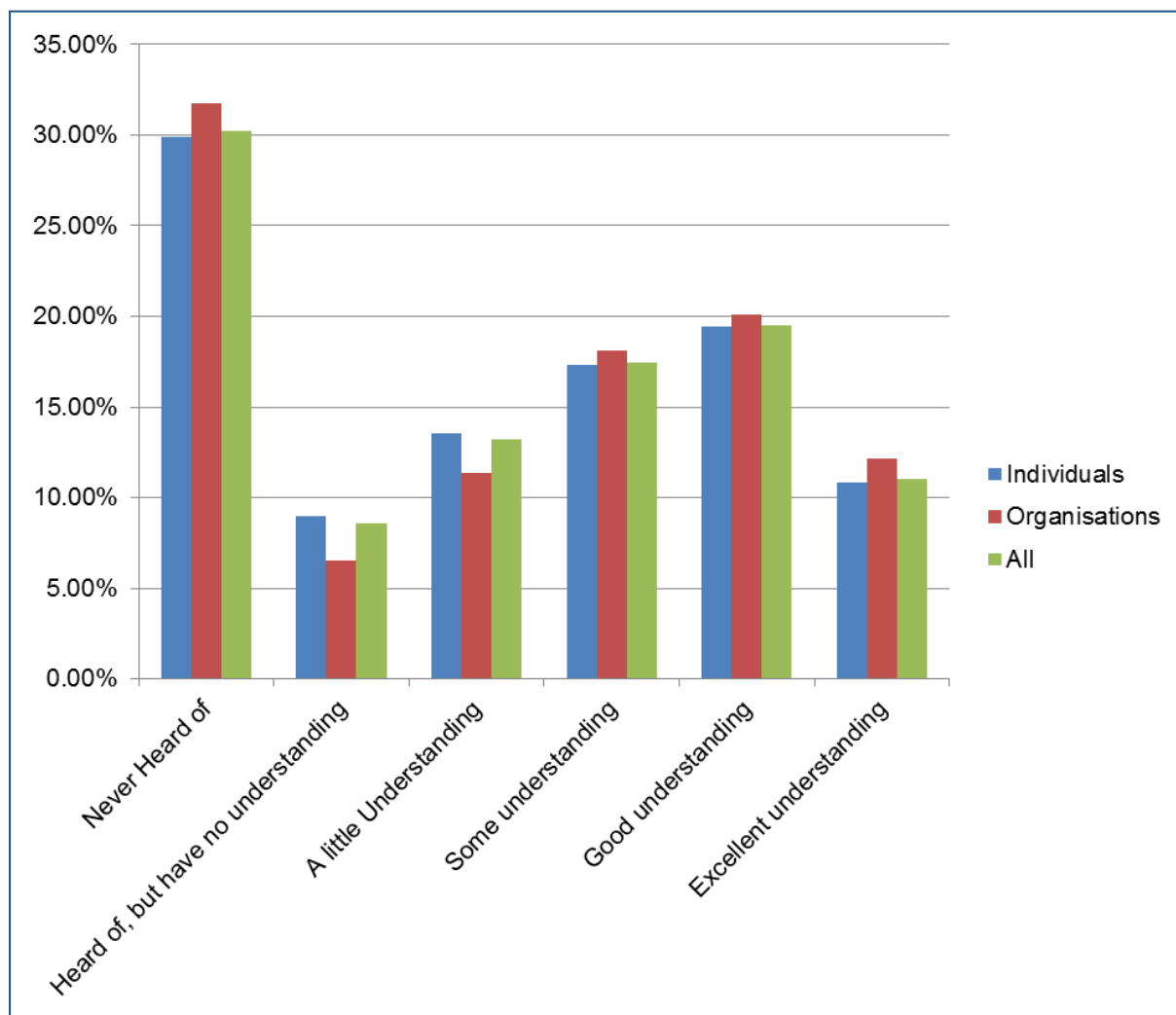
[1] Figures in green indicate the % in terms of the overall survey respondents

[2] As outlined above, some of these later named an organisation which in fact was an ENIC-NARIC centre.

There is nonetheless an inherent challenge in trying to determine the level of Centre visibility through the survey and targeted consultation: the project team approached those that were past users or those it would anticipate as potential users (due to their stakeholder type); nonetheless some targeted consultation with potential users revealed that centre visibility is by no means 100% even within core stakeholder groups.

Awareness of the Networks appears to be considerably lower among those same stakeholder groups. The question of visibility of NARICs and the Networks was first raised in the 2002 study, *External Evaluation of the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres*, which identified an apparent “need for a higher visibility and political presence of the NARIC Network”¹². When asked about the ENIC-NARIC Networks in the international survey, a lack of understanding was reported, as seen in the figure below:

Figure 9: Stakeholder understanding of the ENIC-NARIC Networks



2.2.2 Understanding the Work of ENIC-NARICs

Drawing both on the current services offered by ENIC-NARICs, as identified through the CHARONA I study and project team discussions in the initial stage of the CHARONA II project, a list of services was developed, with survey participants asked to select both (i) those they understood the ENIC-NARIC (centre(s) they had used) provided, and (ii) the services they had used.

¹² Pragmatic Network of Individual European Consultants (2002). *External Evaluation of the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) Final Report volume 1: main text*.

This proved to be a particularly pertinent set of questions given that, in the general comments for improvement, the usability of websites/transparency of services provided by a given centre was frequently cited by individuals as problematic.

The list generated by the project team deliberately included some false services in order to gauge the extent to which the actual work of centres was correctly understood. Overall, this demonstrated some discrepancies between actual services available and those understood by stakeholders to be part of the Centre(s) remit. In particular, stakeholders identified a number of services understood to be offered by Centres which in fact are not. For individuals, this mostly linked to signposting and employment-related services whilst of the organisations responding to this question in the international survey, 32.35% understood ENIC-NARICs to provide accreditation of institutions¹³. At the same time, none of the stakeholder groups fully identified services that *are* offered by Centres, suggesting that there is still work to be done in relation to the CHARONA I finding: that the Networks and Centres should ensure clear positioning so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remit and the expertise they have to offer.

Most striking was the understanding of the legal status of the information and statements provided by Centres. As identified in the first CHARONA study, there is a relatively even split between Centres providing legally-binding recognition statements (45.2%) and those providing advisory, non-binding, statements (51.6%)¹⁴, Cross-referencing the international survey responses by Centre used and the CHARONA I findings from Centre surveys revealed that among both individual and organisational stakeholders, more believed the statements issued by Centres to be legally binding than is actually the case¹⁵. Further consultation with an independent external advisor with experience with key stakeholder representative organisations as well as cooperation on several NARIC projects, supported this view: “the public (e.g. a potential student coming from a third country) can have no clear expectation of what an ENIC/NARIC centre can provide: a binding recognition decision, or specialist advice, or information without guidance”. This would suggest that at a Centre- and Networks- level, the status of statements, *before* application, could in places be clearer and account for varying levels of language proficiency among applicants.

2.3 Relevance and Usefulness of the Centres' Work to Stakeholder Needs

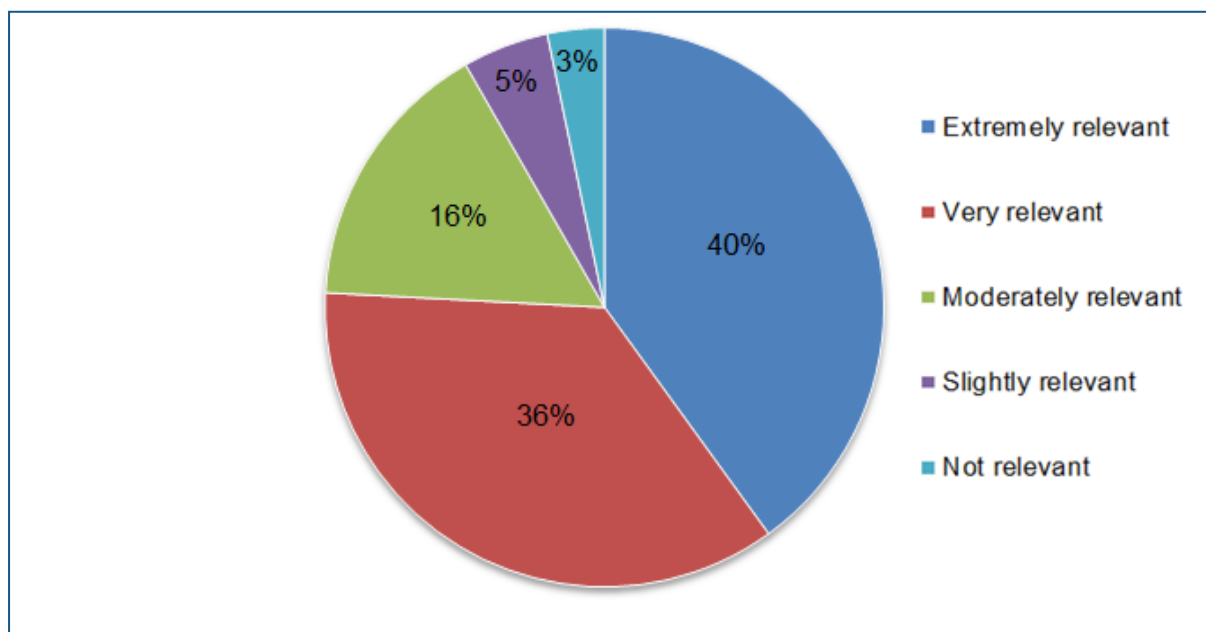
All stakeholders were asked whether the services provided by the ENIC-NARICs were relevant and useful to them. Overall the majority of all past service users reported that ENIC-NARICs were extremely relevant. A comparison of organisation and individual past-users can be seen in the figure below:

¹³ Whilst acknowledging that a number of Centres sit within Ministries of Education or other government agencies, which also house the designated office for quality assurance and accreditation, this is the function of the organisation and not the ENIC-NARIC itself.

¹⁴ One Centre (3.2% of those responding to the survey) did not issue recognition statements. Some Centres may issue both under different circumstances, for example using an advisory statement for the purposes of alternative recognition, where substantial differences have been identified.

¹⁵ Comprehensive cross-referencing by Centre could not be undertaken since Centres had the possibility to reply anonymously in the first CHARONA study, however cross-referencing where possible demonstrates discrepancies for several Centres between the actual status of the statement and the perceived status of the statement by the individual.

Figure 10: Overall relevance and usefulness of the ENIC-NARIC services to stakeholder needs (all stakeholders)



As indicated above, 75.84% of question respondents signalled that the services were either “extremely relevant” or “very relevant”, with 3.29% identifying the services as “not relevant”. Separating out those using ENIC-NARICs as organisations vs individuals revealed some variations, as might be expected, with the percentages for “extremely relevant”/“very relevant” at 84.93% for organisations and 74.29% for individuals. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the percentage of respondents identifying the service as not relevant to their needs was slightly higher among individuals (3.61%) than organisations (1.37%).

2.3.1 Findings by Stakeholder User Group

2.3.1.1 Individuals

Individuals are a key stakeholder for ENIC-NARIC centres, requiring recognition of their qualifications and expertise in a different country. The international survey was therefore heavily targeted at individuals; who were for the most part previous users of a centre. The perspectives of individual past users were also gathered during the review of national centre surveys, providing a strong dataset for analysis.

The individuals reached through the international survey fell into the following employment categories:

Table 5: Current employment status of individual respondents

Employment Status	Percentage of Individual Past Users
Employee	52.58%
Student	11.55%
Employer	3.56%
Professional	9.86%
Not currently employed	19.17%
Other [1]	3.29%

Note:

[1] The 3.29% of individuals that reported themselves in the 'other' category further specified what their status was, with the majority indicating they were self-employed or a freelancer. This category also included those that had retired or were volunteers.

Overall, one of the main sources for individuals is friends and/or family, although:

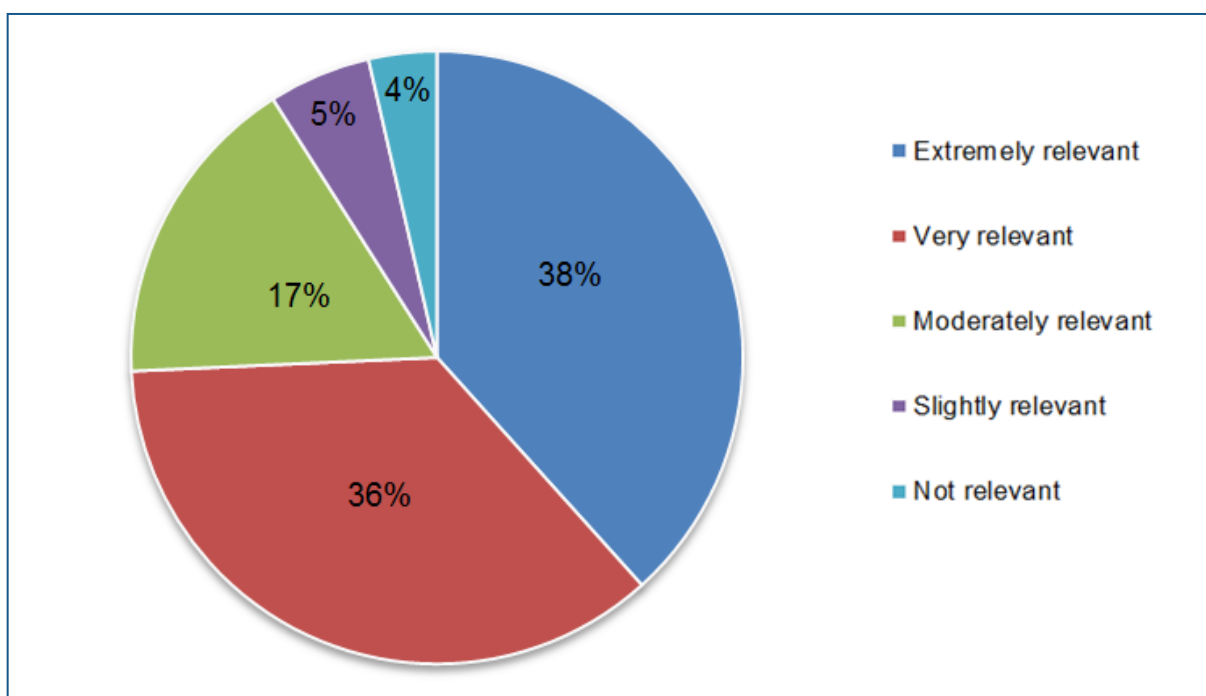
- employees and professionals, tended to find out about ENIC-NARICs online (social media, search engines, websites)
- students commonly found out about ENIC-NARICs from the higher education institutions they were applying to
- employers commonly found out about ENIC-NARICs from a government department, other public sector organisation or professional bodies.

This demonstrates on the one hand that ENIC-NARICs have some visibility across all these channels whilst also showing that stronger positioning can be achieved in part by building on these existing linkages, further consulting with potential referring organisations.

Nearly all of the individual stakeholders had only used the services of one (96.79%) or two (2.88%) recognition centres. A very small selection of individuals reported using 3 or more centres; however the data demonstrates this is not the norm.

When asking the individual stakeholders whether they felt that the services provided by the ENIC-NARICs were relevant and useful to them, the following responses were collected:

Figure 11: Relevancy and usefulness of centres [Individual users]

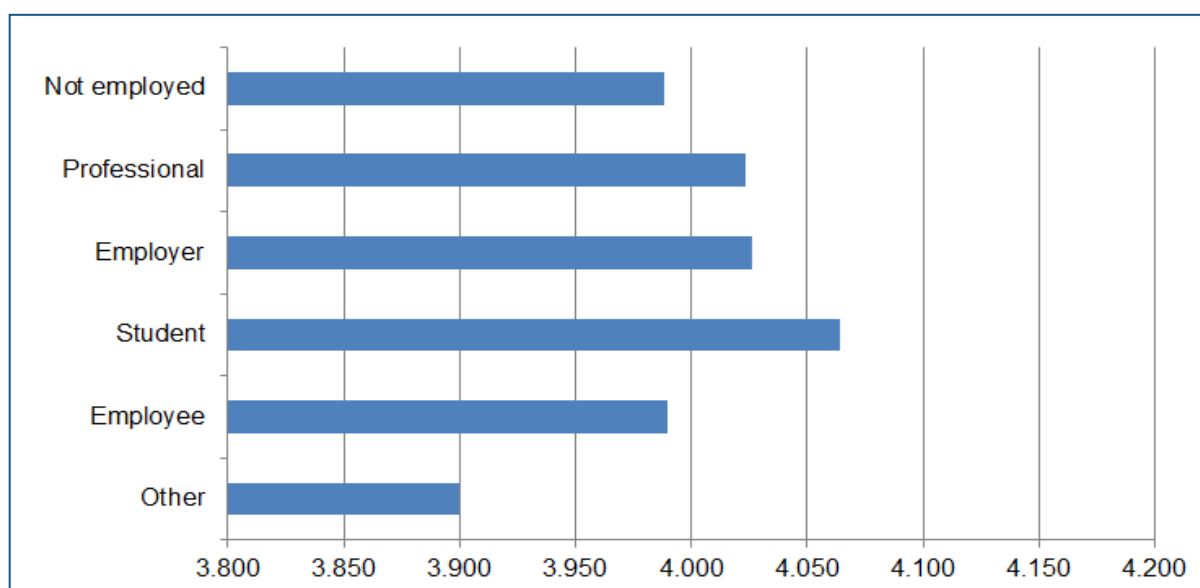


As seen in the chart above, the majority of the individuals felt that ENIC-NARICs services were relevant and useful: 74.29% of individual respondents reporting “extremely” or “very relevant”.

Very minor differences were found when comparing the different individual stakeholders on how relevant they reported ENIC-NARICs to be. When examining the level of relevancy on a scale of 1-5 (5 being extremely relevant), students demonstrate the highest rating with professionals and employers in close second.

The figure below demonstrates these differences.

Figure 12: Ratings on relevancy and usefulness of centres by individual type (1-5 scale)



The most common ENIC-NARIC service that individual stakeholders overall reported using was ‘credential evaluation and qualification comparisons’ (62.25%), with ‘legally binding recognition of qualifications’ the second most used service (30.76%) however there were 172 instances of individuals reporting having received legally binding statements for centres where this is not the case (statements are advisory) which suggested a misunderstanding of the status of recognition statements provided to them.

Individuals also selected a wide range of false services¹⁶ listed in the survey that had been purposefully included to determine the level of understanding of Centre services; whilst the international survey found low awareness on services that some ENIC-NARICs *do* provide. This supports earlier findings that the role and work of centres may not be fully understood by individuals and there is consequently clear scope to improve positioning and communication with individuals in this regard.

In response to how individuals felt ENIC-NARICs could be more useful, the table below provides a categorisation of comments, as raised by individual respondents. This categorisation was developed by the project team as a means of categorising the free-text responses to the international survey question.

Table 6: Summary of individual response categories for “How could the ENIC-NARIC centre(s) be more useful to you?”

Category
Change nothing / no problems / satisfied / positive (This includes neutral statements).
Increased level of detail provided in the statement (This typically included the content of decision, grade comparison or professional rights).
Further or alternative means of communication with the Centre(s) with a clear preference towards online communication but, to a lesser extent, also face-to-face communication.
Shorter wait or processing time for an ENIC-NARIC service.
Greater visibility of ENIC-NARICs and with greater definition and transparency on the services provided and uses for these. More information on changes / new services where possible.
Provision of information on suggested ‘next steps’ (including but not limited to education / funding and scholarships / careers or professional registration).
Would like ENIC-NARICs to have closer ties (and communication) with employers, universities and professional bodies, including activities to support wider acceptance of the comparability statement.
Lower cost services (including comments regarding access to different payment methods).
Recognition decision: Comments include a desired change to decision, unhappy with decision, or the lack of decision.
Suggestions for a specific ENIC-NARIC (typically related to customer service experience with a given Centre).
Provision of translation service(s) for educational documents.
Blank response / ‘I don’t know’/ ‘No comment’ or miscellaneous (unclear).

¹⁶ English language lessons / classes, tutoring, CV and cover letter review / guidance, job interview preparation and advice (mock interviews), comparison of grades or results achieved with a qualification.

From the above, the most common response among all individual stakeholders was positive or included a statement to change nothing. There were similarly those less positive, typically linked to the outcome of the statement or the acceptance of it by third parties – in all instances, the third parties were employers or professional bodies.

Students, professionals and employees also had a high instance of commenting on the level of detail in statements, qualification comparisons or other comparisons. Another somewhat common request (between 8-12% of stakeholders) among those not currently employed, employees, students, and 'others' was for job or career advice and help. Further information on professional rights associated with the individual qualification and next steps/signposting to relevant bodies in a country were also requested in both the international survey and national surveys.

Individual employers were more likely than other individual stakeholders to include statements that ENIC-NARICs are not accurate or as informed as they expected. Further, they were more likely to request workshops or activities that bring together centres and services. Other common requests among the different stakeholders from the list above included:

- A shorter wait or processing time for a service
- More information or notifications on changes to qualifications, comparisons, services, etc.
- The method of communication for providing services (i.e. online or in person).

2.3.1.2 Higher Education Institutions

As outlined in the Introduction, higher education institutions were the second highest group responding to the international survey after individual past-users, and were the top responding group among organisation contracts. Coupled with findings from the national surveys and the targeted consultation, this study has built up a significant pool of higher education feedback on the role and work of NARICs in relation to higher education institution needs.

Higher education institutions surveyed mostly (over 80%) reported using the services of a single centre but some did acknowledge instances where two, three or even more sources may be used both for cross-referencing purposes or where their information requirements were not as yet satisfied by a single source.

When examining how relevant and useful HEIs find ENIC-NARICs in comparison to other organisation stakeholders, it is clear that HEIs are more confident on the relevancy of ENIC-NARICs than government departments or other stakeholders (including employers).

Table 7: Relevancy of ENIC-NARICs to Higher Education Institutions

Percentage	Higher Education	Further Education	Government Department / Ministry	Others /Employers
Extremely relevant	56.35	58.62	36.36	44.58
Very relevant	34.01	34.48	45.45	28.92
Moderately relevant	8.12	6.90	9.09	19.28
Slightly relevant	0.51	0.00	4.55	6.02
Not relevant	1.02	0.00	4.55	1.20

In addition to the percentage of stakeholders that reported each level of relevancy (as seen in the table above), examining the same data on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not relevant and 5 being extremely relevant) shows that HEIs collectively place ENIC-NARIC's relevancy and usefulness at 4.44 out of 5 which is both encouraging – in that it reflects the extent to which Centres have developed and evolved their services to meet the needs of higher education institutions, whilst also leaving a small amount of room for improvement.

The survey feedback was echoed throughout the national surveys and the targeted consultation with the positive or neutral comments including:

Higher education institutions comments on the role and work of Centres

"The [Centre] contributes very positively and makes our work a lot easier"

"Invaluable for international admissions!"

I have used [Centre] since 2009 and I am satisfied with its quality and developments. It has positively contributed to my work as an admissions officer

"The service eases our work...there is no way we can function without the recognition office's service"

"We are, in general, satisfied with it"

Great job, but...more information could be provided on qualifications

In terms of being more useful, responses from both the international survey, the review of national surveys and the consultation yielded considerable useful data and highlighted recurring and emerging themes among a wide geographic range of HEI stakeholders.

Particularly in response to the survey question 'How could the ENIC-NARIC centre(s) be more useful to you?' roughly a third answered this question with a response that suggested they would like **more information, updates, or notification on changes to the information ENIC-NARICs provide**, for example by enabling institutions to sign up for alerts or similar where a new qualification was assessed by the Centres, or where information on accredited higher education institutions in a given country was updated. Some of the responses also suggested that information could or should be provided in a **different format** (i.e. to be more user-friendly or translated into different languages).

Two overwhelming themes could be drawn from the HEI consultation however, namely:

- i. A desire for **more detailed information**
- ii. A desire for **more tailored or specialist information, targeted to the varying needs both between and within higher education institutions.**

For the first, the highest recurring suggestion pertained to information on grading and grade distribution. Grade comparison information was considered especially helpful where available and some higher education institutions suggested this would be used as the threshold in their final decisions for admissions. In particular though, some institutions identified the value of actual grading distribution data for different qualifications, with this considered as a top priority for a number of larger higher education institutions. This data was considered to enable a certain norm-referencing to be incorporated within the admissions decisions where appropriate, acknowledging that understanding how someone performed within the cohort helped to establish the grade requirements set and/or accepted by admissions staff for the purpose of undergraduate or graduate admissions.

This was closely followed by requests for further support in relation to educational fraud. Counter-fraud training and guidance, whilst retaining a good level of relevance and usefulness to higher education institutions, was generally considered as a slightly lesser priority than access to a certificate bank and signposting to national verification sources.

Thirdly, higher education institutions were interested in further information on credit systems used by international institutions and their correspondence to those used in the EHEA and/or national contexts, citing this as particularly important where applicants were applying for credit exemption and/or top-up from a short-cycle style award to a Bologna Bachelor degree, or from an incomplete qualification.

Information on qualification frameworks and the referencing of frameworks was also requested during the targeted consultation. In particular, it was felt that qualification frameworks helped to provide a visual context for different awards HEIs may be presented with (i.e. their standing in the context of the overall national system) as well as show potential progression routes through the framework. As such greater information provision on qualification frameworks was of interest to some stakeholders.

Lastly, and to a notably lower extent than the other development areas described above, higher education institutions also highlighted the challenges surrounding historical qualifications, reflecting on the fact that ENIC-NARICs can similarly support understanding of the national system but also the increasing trend towards widening participation among institutions of the EHEA (29% of institutions surveyed by the EUA recorded an increase in the number of mature students within their institution over a five year period). Difficulty in obtaining information on historic or phased out qualifications was flagged as an area where HEIs felt Centres may be able to provide further support.

In terms of **more tailored or specialist information, targeted to the varying needs both between and within higher education institutions**, the findings of the international survey, national surveys and consultation undertaken within this project converged. In particular that within organisations as large and complex as higher education institutions, there were varying levels and types of needs that Centres may be able to address.

Firstly, increased competition for international students both from home country, fellow EHEA countries and other international destination markets, has meant that higher education institutions need to continually look to new markets and accordingly, to better understand the education systems and qualifications within those countries. Training on credential evaluation and country-specific sessions or modules is currently provided by a number of centres and the continuation and expansion of this (to cover emerging markets) as a service to higher education institutions is clearly supported by the institutions themselves. Requests for webinars and e-training as a means to provide flexible training were also noted, with these largely related to the distance/time constraints associated with face-to-face programmes, the need to have frequent/regular sessions accounting for staff turnover, and cost.

Beyond the scope of training however, the focus and pitch of training and consultation was also discussed. With increasing internationalisation, relevant users of Centres services within HEIs, often extends beyond that of admissions officers. At a European level, the EUA survey, as mentioned above, highlighted that a significant proportion of European HEIs had an internationalisation strategy in place. Within the CHARONA II consultation, HEI users of both the Dutch and UK centres have demonstrated clear interest in internationalisation. In the case of EP-Nuffic, 75% of national survey respondents had identified that their institutions were (very) active and ambitious in the field of internationalisation. In the case of the UK, UK NARIC has had a growing number of users in roles associated with internationalisation of higher education (including Associate Deans International, partnership development and collaborative provision managers). Increasingly UK NARIC has been asked for information and guidance on international education systems (qualifications, qualification frameworks, quality assurance and key agencies for example) to inform those looking to establish TNE arrangements, thereby providing relevant contextual information on the market but also the scope and nature of any quality assurance arrangements they may need to investigate further. For both the UK and Dutch centres, respondents have expressed clear interest in Centres alerting national HEIs to potential international opportunities.

That said, national surveys and further consultation in relation to TNE specifically, demonstrated differing levels of experience and therefore information needs among HEI stakeholders. Approximately half of those consulted wanted more information from Centres on transnational education from a recognition perspective, whilst others flagged this as a relatively low priority.

2.3.1.3 Professional bodies

Professional bodies/competent authority respondents overall had a lower level and narrower geographic range of responses, which to some extent was anticipated due to the distribution of the international survey (a smaller number of direct users in this category in comparison to other stakeholder groups and with lower responses from potential users identified); since professional qualifications recognition may, in some countries, be handled by separate organisations; and that the volume of applicants with international qualifications may naturally be lower, particularly for certain professions, than higher education institutions for example.

Principally findings on professional bodies, as derived from the international survey and supported by targeted consultation and reviews of national surveys (where available), draw primarily on feedback of professional bodies associated with the following countries:

- Australia
- Canada
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Latvia
- the Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Russian Federation
- UK.

For the international survey, the respondents under “professional bodies” were highest among existing users although the international survey had sought wider distribution. Of these existing users, none were fully aware of the services provided and this similarly tallies with findings of national surveys.

Also similar to other organisations, respondents from professional bodies reported using credential evaluation services the most; with information available on international education systems and qualifications also valued.

In addition to the international survey questions asked to all organisations, a set of questions were posed to professional bodies only. From this data, information specific to these stakeholders can be examined. First of all, 51.52% of professional bodies who responded offer qualifications (17 total) and 43.75% (7 out of the 16 who responded) have challenges with the recognition of these qualifications. According to the respondents, these challenges include:

- Countries that use homologous or very granular comparisons, inputs/time-served rather than outcomes/competence
- Determining overall comparability
- Recognition overseas of a very vocational qualification, where no similarly-focussed or oriented award existed.

Most of those who had reported recognition difficulties also indicated that they had liaised with the national ENIC-NARIC to support the outward recognition of the qualification.

As with all other stakeholders, the international survey also measured how relevant professional bodies think ENIC-NARICs are to their organisation. Out of a scale of 1-5 (5 being extremely relevant), professional bodies reported an overall score of 3.93. In comparison to other organisation stakeholders, professional bodies provided a slightly lower rating, however a 3.93 is roughly equivalent of ‘very relevant’ and therefore a positive rating on ENIC-NARIC relevancy.

Establishing how to increase this relevance and usefulness has nevertheless proved more difficult, both in terms of the international surveys but also from the subsequent national

survey reviews and targeted consultation. National surveys had revealed an interest in online training, but further consultation with professional bodies demonstrated only a “moderate interest” suggesting that whilst there is scope to more fully meet the needs of professional bodies, overall the perceived need for ENIC-NARICs to the work of professional bodies is potentially lower than for other stakeholder groups consulted in this study. Training would likely be of greater interest if tailored to the specific needs of professional bodies, acknowledging that much existing training is designed more fully to the needs of higher education institutions.

Information on whether a qualification was regulated by a professional body in the home country (in addition of course, to national regulations applicable to the education provider) was considered useful additional information Centres may be able to provide.

The general findings have been that, in other cases, professional bodies may use centres to establish the comparable level of a qualification (for example, determining whether it meets their general academic threshold of a Bachelor degree) before undertaking their own evaluation or mapping in relation to content and specific professional competencies associated with the qualification(s) in question. Respondents recognised scope for ENIC-NARICs to further support this recognition and mapping process, but this may need to be explored further, external to the scope of this project, to account for the potentially varying needs of different professional bodies by sector and by country. Nevertheless, the study demonstrates the value in positioning the work of ENIC-NARICs with professional bodies and competent authorities as part of a wider objective to support fair recognition of skills and qualifications.

2.3.1.4 Others

Of the international survey respondents from organisations, 22.57% fit into an “Other”¹⁷ category (93 respondents) and includes employers (other than those among the individuals / higher education institutions / professional bodies already discussed) and those that identified themselves as being from the following sectors:

- Careers & Guidance
- Immigration Services
- Legal Services
- Recruitment
- Secondary Education
- Vocational Institution.

Those that selected an ‘other’ category in the survey, and later specified a different organisation also fit into this category, and include those from different education sectors (i.e. primary, adult, religious, language schools), construction, regulatory and other miscellaneous sectors (IT, health, quality assurance, and research).

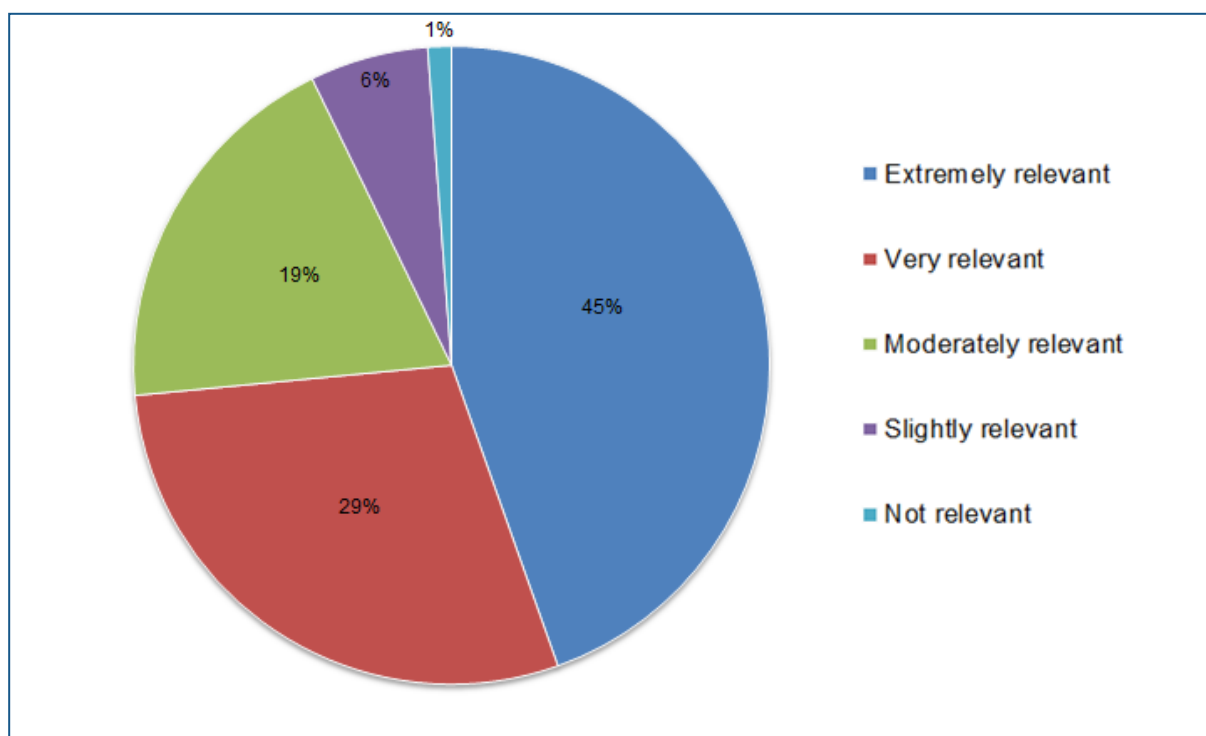
¹⁷ Distinct from individuals, higher education institutions and professional bodies/competent authorities already discussed.

Similar to organisations overall, the majority of stakeholders in this category used the services of one recognition centre. A small percentage (7.52%) used 3 or more recognition centres.

To better understand what services the 'other' stakeholders used, and therefore, what services they feel are relevant and useful, the CHARONA II survey asked stakeholders to select each of the services they previously or currently use. For this group, two services were reported as used by most of the respondents: credential evaluation and qualification comparisons (used by 74.42% of respondents in this category) and information on international education systems and qualifications (used by 55.81% of respondents in this category).

When asking these stakeholders whether they felt that the services provided by the ENIC-NARICs were relevant and useful to them, the majority reported that ENIC-NARICs are extremely or very relevant, as seen in the figure below:

Figure 13: Other stakeholders' ratings on relevancy and usefulness of centres



Despite a high reporting on the relevancy of ENIC/NARICs, a small percentage of stakeholders have visibly reported that they are slightly or not relevant. This percentage is better reflected when looking at the relevancy score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being extremely relevant). Respondents in this category collectively score ENIC/NARICs relevancy at 4.09 out of 5, which is only slightly lower than HEIs and further education stakeholders.

When reporting on how the centres could be more useful, the most common statement came from 16.67% of respondents in this category who provided positive statements or stated that they would change nothing. The second most common statement received from respondents were those regarding the level of detail included within qualification comparison statements

or certificate evaluations (11.90%). In particular for this stakeholder group, these were often related to wanting grade comparisons included in a qualification comparison statement. Some stakeholders similarly noted that further information (on qualifications comparisons, the national education system, or on qualifications) is needed in this context.

2.4 Summary of Findings

2.4.1 Visibility and Understanding of Centres' Role and Work

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, it became clear that visibility and understanding of the role, work and specific services could be much improved. This fully reinforced the recommendation made in the CHARONA I study, to “Ensure clear positioning of the Networks and Centres so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remits and the expertise they have to offer”¹⁸.

Accordingly, the project team agreed that the development of International Recognition Guidance documents that focussed on Centres' role, work and positioning in the context of different stakeholder groups, would serve to address the needs of the audience and the two project objectives:

- i. To address the aforementioned recommendation of CHARONA I in relation to positioning the Networks and Centres among stakeholders
- ii. Improve relationships and close co-operation with a range of stakeholders.

On the basis of the stakeholder feedback and project team consultation, the project team has developed a set of eight concise e-guidance documents providing information on the role of Centres, and the services and support they can provide. The concept of the e-guidance documents was also presented to representatives from a number of the different stakeholder groups.

Each one of the eight documents is tailored to a specific stakeholder group, including:

- Individuals
- Education and training providers (encompassing higher education institutions and further education colleges)
- Competent authorities / professional bodies
- Employers
- Quality assurance bodies
- Recognition networks
- Bologna Follow-Up Group
- European programmes and initiatives.

The documents have been designed to provide a visual flow of the work of Centres, and inform readers of the potential interaction(s) the individual stakeholder groups could have with the Centres and Networks. The guidance documents also highlight relevant signposting information the Centres could provide to each group, when the services of another agency or network would be valuable to the stakeholder group in question.

¹⁸ UK NARIC et al. (2014) *The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA)*.

Figure 14: Example of a guidance document



As can be seen in the above example, there is general information provided on the Centres and the Networks on the left (“Who are we?”, “What do we look like?”, “What do we do?”) and signposting to the ENIC-NARIC website. This is common across all guidance documents, whilst the text and flowcharts on the right hand side are designed with particular stakeholder types in mind. The intention is that this will clarify where stakeholders should contact their national centre and where cooperation at a Network level may be more appropriate. Signposting to other organisations or networks is included where appropriate in acknowledgement that in addition to not being fully aware of the role and remits of Centres and the Networks, it is also true that the some stakeholder requests of Centres may fall within the remits of other organisations.

The full guidance documents can be found in the Annexes to this report.

2.4.2 Perceived Relevance and Usefulness of Centres’ Role and Work to Stakeholder Needs, and Ways of Improving Moving Forward

Overall, the perceived relevance and usefulness of ENIC-NARICs’ work to stakeholder needs – as gleaned from quantitative and qualitative data gathered during this study – is very reassuring. The feedback on relevance and usefulness for individuals was largely positive¹⁹.

¹⁹ As mentioned above, 75.84% of question respondents (individuals) signalled that the services were either “extremely relevant” or “very relevant”.

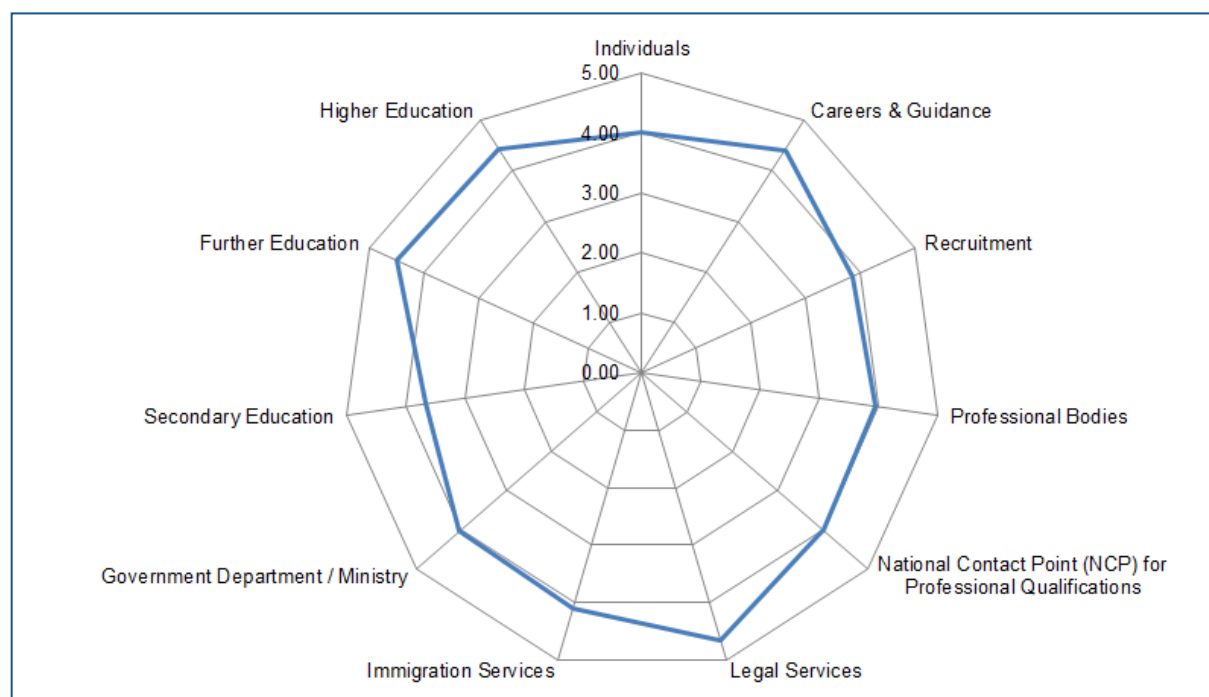
Table 8 provides an overview of some of the organisations’ responses to the international survey services are considered by stakeholders:

Table 8: Relevance and usefulness of ENIC-NARICs to stakeholder needs, by key groups

Percentage	Higher Education	Further Education	Government Department / Ministry	Others
Extremely relevant	56.35	58.62	36.36	44.58
Very relevant	34.01	34.48	45.45	28.92
Moderately relevant	8.12	6.90	9.09	19.28
Slightly relevant	0.51	0.00	4.55	6.02
Not relevant	1.02	0.00	4.55	1.20

Considering the same data on a scale of 1-5 (1 being “not relevant” and 5 being “extremely relevant”) shows the average score and the mode score for each group (separating out the groups defined under “other” above):

Figure 15: Relevance and usefulness rating by stakeholder group:



In terms of increasing relevance, there were some clear themes visible across all stakeholder types, which could be categorised into:

- **“Change nothing”**, implying that the way in and extent to which Centres have developed and evolved their services (as reflected on in the first CHARONA study) has been very successful in addressing evolving stakeholder needs.
- **“Provide more detailed information”**, from individuals to higher education institutions and professional bodies, it was clear that the level of detail provided further supported consideration of applications for further study, employment or professional registration.
- **“Provide more specialised information, targeted specifically at emerging user needs”** from many stakeholder groups. This acknowledges the value provided by diversified services some Centres have developed by user group (as identified in CHARONA I) whilst also indicating that Centre stakeholders needs are continually guided and impacted by various external PEST factors.

3. A Policy Perspective

In addition to consulting with stakeholders directly using ENIC-NARIC services, the CHARONA II project team also contacted stakeholders in a wide variety of partner organisations and policy bodies. These included: the Bologna Follow-Up Group, quality assurance agencies for higher education, and partner European network centres such as Erasmus+.

3.1. Views of policy bodies on links with ENIC-NARIC centres and the network

The policy-level stakeholders contacted had varying degrees of engagement and links with ENIC-NARIC centres and the network.

3.1.1 Bologna Follow-Up Group

“The ENIC-NARIC Charter does not directly reference the role of an individual Centre in the Bologna Process. However, the tasks listed in the Charter definitely support the Bologna Process.”²⁰

Table 9: Extract from the CHARONA I report – “Prescribed versus current role of Centres / Network

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
Promote cooperation with quality assurance bodies and networks, in particular ENQA in order to establish a common framework, share information and increase mutual trust between education systems.	Centres cooperate with a number of groups related to the Bologna Process as well, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bologna Follow-Up Group • The EQF Advisory Group • National Contact Point for the EQF.
Provide a forum for the debate and development of policies that promote and facilitate the recognition of qualifications in the European Region.	Interaction of the centres and Networks with the BFUG and other referencing or working groups is not mentioned in the Charter.
Enhance the European dimension in recognition in the Lifelong Learning context of the European Higher Education Area	Centres engage in a variety of activities supporting the Bologna Process: Working groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training provision • Research and consultancy • Advice and guidance • Information / conference presentations.

²⁰ UK NARIC et al. (2014) *The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA)* p. 70.

On the basis of these findings from CHARONA I, it was obvious that further consultation was required to determine what enhanced role the centres and networks might have in the Bologna Process and its own systems and structure.

The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) secretariat sees the value in the participation of the ENIC-NARIC network and has already collaborated with the network in the form of the network's input to national action plans to improve qualifications recognition. The secretariat further stated "Ministers welcome the support of ENIC NARIC in many EHEA Communiqués since 2003 to reviewing national legislation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention."²¹ The EAR manual was further cited as a valuable contribution from the ENIC-NARIC network, whilst the Yerevan Communiqué of 2015 affirmed a desire to "By 2020...achieve an EHEA...where automatic recognition of qualifications has become a reality."²²

More formal collaboration, however, would need to be approached within the strict confines of BFUG structures as either a BFUG consultative member or partner. Both would require the network to apply for membership to the secretariat and justify the added value of participation to the group.²³ The secretariat firmly stated that "Formalized relation with the BFUG can only be conceived under the status of Consultative member or BFUG partner. This being said, the BFUG work plan 2015-2018 allows national authorities and consultative members to nominate experts as part of their Working groups membership."²⁴

3.1.2 Quality assurance bodies

In the first CHARONA project, multiple centres identified cooperation with quality assurance bodies as being an area of further development. In response to the question "are there areas within both national and international legislation and policy development, where your Centre and/or the Network(s) could be more involved?", comments included ""There are two areas that our centre feels it could be more involved with. They are: NQF and Quality assurance" and "In quality assurance concerning academic recognition policies and practices of the HEIs in their functions as competent recognition authorities."²⁵

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the UK provided their feedback on engagement with UK NARIC and recognition processes.

The view of QAA was that "Robust quality assurance systems give security to decisions about the recognition of qualifications across international higher education systems. If a national higher education system has strong quality assurance mechanisms it provides confidence in qualification recognition decisions."²⁶

²¹ BFUG Secretariat consultation response

²² Yerevan Communiqué 2015

²³ See Annex 3: Criteria for consultative membership and BFUG Partnership

²⁴ BFUG Secretariat consultation response

²⁵ UK NARIC et al. (2014) *The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA)*. p. 47

²⁶ QAA consultation response

Case Study: UK

Do you work with UK NARIC, and does it assist with your work?

QAA are members of UK NARIC's Quality and Standards Group. UK NARIC is represented on QAA's advisory group on Qualifications awarded by more than one degree-awarding body, feeding into the work of the group and the resulting publication.

QAA redirects enquirers to UK NARIC when questions raised fall outside QAA's remit. Similarly, UK NARIC passes queries related to UK higher education qualifications onto QAA.

How could UK NARIC, or the NARIC network, further assist QAA?

QAA would welcome the opportunity to feed into and assist at an early point in areas of UK NARIC's work in which QAA has expertise. QAA would also appreciate meeting with UK NARIC on a regular basis to discuss any shared areas of interest.

QAA would also welcome the opportunity to understand how to engage with other NARICs through the NARIC network.

At a European level, individual centres have collaborated with ENQA surrounding issues of quality assurance and recognition; for example, the French centre has presented on the role NARICs to the ENQA Board. The Croatian representative on the ENQA network, ASHE, also acts as an ENIC-NARIC and therefore provided a valuable view of the links between the two groups. "The role of the ENIC-NARIC networks in Quality Assurance is in fact one of the essentials" due the fact that recognition of qualifications must be based on trust in education systems, particularly with regard to quality and quality assurance systems. "These are necessarily complementary issues and cannot exist without connections or mutual exchange of experience and knowledge, and further common reflection in order to better understand the national education system, but also improve QA procedures, as well as the recognition of foreign qualifications."

Greater cooperation could be achieved "through projects and activities that include principles, criteria and guidelines underlying QA procedures and issues related to adequate evaluation of foreign qualifications". However, at present, it is not known how many NARIC centres are engaged with national ENQA representatives and the network could also seek to be better connected to ENQA at a network level. Once again, joint activities often take place due to individual centres' initiatives rather than a coordinated effort.

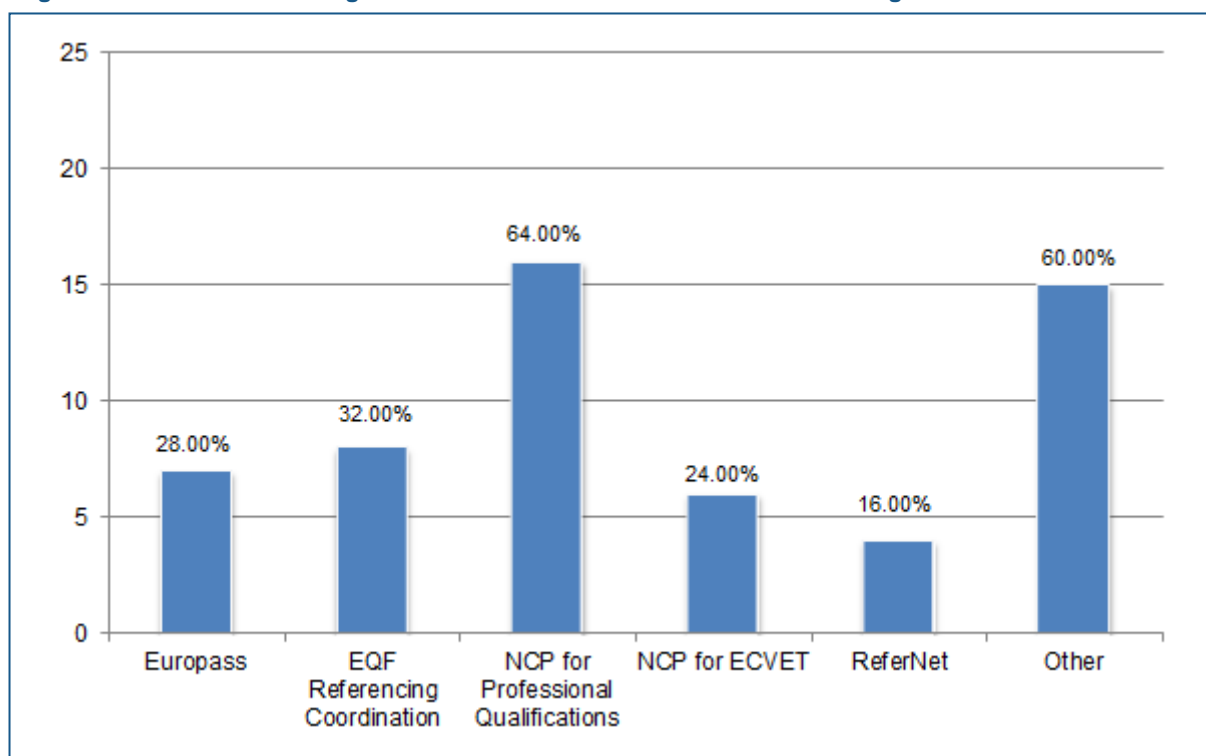
A recent report from ENQA named "ENIC-NARIC networks" (sic) as being amongst "several actors involved" in recognition including QA agencies and institutions; the report stated that it would be "beneficial to strengthen collaboration between these actors, in order to also make roles clearer"²⁷ but did not highlight any specific actions or suggest collaboration between the ENIC-NARIC network and ENQA, which might offer overarching benefits.

²⁷ Al-Sindi, T et al (2016). *Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education Final report of the QACHE Project*. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Brussels

3.1.3 European Partner Networks

The ENIC-NARIC network operates in a landscape of other European agencies and networks for associated work with qualifications, transparency and recognition. Some of these include the Europass network, the National Assistance Centres (formerly National Contact Points) for the Directive on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and EQF contact points.

Figure 16: CHARONA I findings on other services housed within the same organisation as ENIC-NARICs



Europass centres were particularly in favour of strong links with ENIC-NARIC centres. In the responses to the surveys of the first CHARONA project, it was indicated that 28% of ENIC-NARIC centres also house a national Europass centre (NEC) within the same organisation. The UK NEC sees a strong connection between the promotion of documentary tools such as the diploma and certificate supplements with the work of ENIC-NARIC centres in understanding the level and content of qualifications. However, some centres, such as the Netherlands, felt only “vaguely familiar” with the work of ENIC-NARICs. The Dutch NEC pointed to the areas of recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning as a potential area for collaboration.

The National Contact Points for professional recognition (now the National Assistance Centres) are also closely aligned with the work of ENIC-NARICs. In the first CHARONA project 64% of survey respondents stated that the NCP was housed in their organisation.

In this project, three respondents to the survey replied to the question “Do you feel your NCP needs more guidance/collaboration with an ENIC-NARIC? Do you need/want to work with one?”. Of those three, one replied “yes” and two did not know. This indicates that despite strong links, more could be done to engage with professional recognition services.

Qualification framework contact points

The CHARONA I findings noted that ENIC-NARICs have played a large role in the formulation of qualifications frameworks nationally and at European level. “The current role of Centres goes above and beyond the role outlined in the Charter. This suggests that, at least in the context of qualifications framework development, Centres have evolved beyond their initial remit and have become a recognised and established voice of expertise within national and international environments.”²⁸ Heads of Centre generally agreed that ENIC-NARICs possess valuable expertise useful for both initial referencing work and ongoing maintenance of qualifications frameworks. 32% of centres hold the role of EQF referencing coordination point for their country. In cases where the EQF NCP(s) are separate, it is important to ensure strong links between the agencies. The Dutch contact point (*Nationaal Coördinatiepunt NLQF*) reported that it saw the links between its role and the ENIC-NARIC role, with both organisations contributing to “transparency and comparability of education and training”. The coordination point was familiar with ENIC-NARICs, mostly at a national level and not with the network as a whole. When asked “How could individual ENIC-NARIC centres, or the ENIC-NARIC network, further assist the *Nationaal Coördinatiepunt NLQF*, or your network’s stakeholders?” the coordination point felt that “we should work together in making a coherent system for the transparency of education for the benefit of the citizen and labour market. It happens too much that we cannot answer questions of citizens or companies what the level of a specific qualification is, especially of older qualifications. In too many occasions we are referring to each other without being able to answer the question”. At national level in the Netherlands the relevant bodies seek to coordinate through meetings and discussions; more could perhaps be done at European level.

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ agencies have varied degrees of contact with NARICs, with the additional roles centres take on being a potential reason for collaboration. The Dutch Erasmus+ agency does not have much interaction with EP-Nuffic, whereas the UK agency is often in contact with UK NARIC due to the additional centre roles as the UK Europass Centre and ECVET Contact Point. In response to the question “How could individual ENIC-NARIC centres, or the ENIC-NARIC network, further assist ERASMUS+, or your network’s stakeholders?” the Dutch centre replied that “In Erasmus+ a new action has started...mobility with partner countries (non EU- countries). The action is about the mobility of students (and staff) worldwide...it would be useful for HEIs to have information about the HE systems worldwide, and be updated regarding the recognition mechanisms there...The ENIC NARIC network can fulfil an information role towards HEIs working with partners worldwide.”

²⁸ UK NARIC et al. (2014) *The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA)*.p. 91.

National Reference Points

In a number of Member States, including France, Slovenia and the Netherlands, the NRP does not sit within the ENIC-NARIC centre. In some countries it is separate while in others it is within the organisation delivering the Europass agency function. Given the strong links between the services, a need for cooperation is clearly seen. The Dutch NRP reported that they have formed a close partnership with EP-Nuffic for the evaluation of foreign credentials, and that ENIC-NARICs should use “the expertise of the NRP” and “make sure that they know who is the NRP in their own country and forward questions to the NRP” in countries where it is separate from the ENIC-NARIC.

3.1.4 International networks

The CHARONA I consultations indicated a desire to engage further with other networks such as MERIC and APARNET. “A minority (35%) of the Centres are involved in the recognition networks outside Europe. The most often mentioned networks are: the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Asia Pacific Academic Recognition Network (APARNET), the Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres (MERIC), and Asia-Pacific countries.”²⁹ Comments included “In our opinion there is scope for greater involvement for the network namely through the cooperation with other networks for instance MERIC, ANICs (Asia-Pacific Convention). This could also include each individual centre” and “We should use international organisations and consortia, like UNESCO, ASEM etc. Formally, the Bureau of the LRC Committee is important especially on policy level. Raise the ENIC-NARIC visibility as a network.”³⁰

The MERIC network was contacted and it became apparent that there has been a hiatus in terms of network activity due to a number of pressures, principally geo-political in nature. The French centre reported of the MERIC network that:

“It was launched in 2006 in Rabat (Morocco) and involved countries from the south and the north of the Mediterranean. The French ENIC-NARIC has acted as president of the MERIC network in 2007. The last meeting took place in Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 2010; the following meeting should have taken place in Alger in 2012, but due to the political changes in the countries of the South Mediterranean, no meeting was held and the network was kept in a standby mode...Now, the European Commission wishes to reactivate the network and the French ENIC-NARIC, along with the Italian center, expressed their willingness to do so and help the beneficiaries countries in this process. Thus, we are in the process of implementing a project aiming at reactivating the MERIC network.”³¹

Given the lack of activity, there is no clear option for engagement at present; however, as the French and Italian centres are involved, it is possible to keep apprised of development through their Heads of Centre and ensure that the ENIC-NARIC network may cooperate with the MERIC network in future.

²⁹ UK NARIC et al. (2014) *The Changing Role of NARICs (CHARONA)*, p. 41.

³⁰ Ibid p. 45

³¹ Consultation with MERIC network.

APARNET was unable to provide an official response to the consultation; however, in a similar way, specific individual ENIC-NARIC centres engage with the network. Through these centres it is possible to coordinate and keep updated on the network's activities.

In both cases, should more coordinated ENIC-NARIC network engagement be desired, the board could approach the involved ENIC-NARIC centres to establish greater cooperation.

3.1.5 European University Association

The European University Association (EUA) was approached during the targeted consultation both in its capacity as a representative body³² of higher education institutions, key direct stakeholders of ENIC-NARICs, and its role in commenting and influencing policy in the EHEA.

In line with the identified aims of the targeted consultation, the project team sought to explore four questions: the perspective on the role of the ENIC-NARIC; areas of interoperability or synergy between the EUA and the ENIC-NARIC Networks; the nature and scope of current cooperation with Centres; and how the Networks could further support the EUA and its members.

This found that the ENIC-NARIC Networks are considered to be important as a network and resource for EHEA in terms of their potential in promoting good practice in recognition. On a practical level though, the diversity of individual Centres (with the status, mission and operations varying from one Centre to the next) was raised as a challenge.

These differences are also reflected in the responses EUA has received in various questionnaires from its members regarding usefulness of their national centre or cooperation with the Centres (Trends 2010), which in some systems remains limited from the university perspective. Centres could further support universities through greater information/knowledge sharing and capacity building missions. The Association has observed, through its work with universities, that where problems arise in recognition, it is often related to a lack of awareness when it comes to the LRC and how its principles are expected to be / could be incorporated into the national and institutional contexts. The Association felt that some Centres may not be in a position to do this as yet, citing the aforementioned diversity of the centres.

In terms of communication and cooperation between the EUA and the ENIC-NARIC Networks, at this stage, cooperation is largely with individual Centres rather than the Networks as a whole with regular, albeit limited, contacts within the Networks. The Association takes part regularly in events and meetings on recognition and in that context meets NARIC representatives rather regularly. Similarly the EUA has taken part in a number of projects alongside national Centres, most recently the EAR-HEI (*European Area of Recognition – a Manual for the Higher Education Institutions*), STREAM project (*Streamlining Institutional Recognition: a Training Platform for Admissions Officers*) and the FAIR project (*Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition*) and currently, the IMPACT project led by EP-Nuffic.

³² The EUA represents 850 member universities and national rectors' conferences in 47 European countries.

At European level, collaboration between EUA and ENIC-NARIC Networks would make sense when the two have the same interest in promoting specific aspects of recognition. The EUA acknowledged that its portfolio of activities in the field of recognition remains rather limited and for the most part focuses on European policies. Therefore, whilst remaining open to possible future collaboration at a Network-level, it is not clear as yet what format this would take but would most probably be on an ad-hoc basis and be guided by the policy agenda.

3.2 Trends in stakeholder perspectives

Policy stakeholders were almost uniformly positive about the value and contributions of ENIC-NARIC centres and the network, but were less convinced regarding increased collaboration.

One trend in particular which emerged was a lack of knowledge about the activities of the network as a whole. While policy partners often have contact and varying levels of engagement with a national ENIC-NARIC, whether their national Centre or one engaged in relevant European projects, they tended not to have much awareness of the activities of other centres or the network. The diversity of Centres was also raised as a challenge; the varied activities, legal competences and status of centres may affect the coherency of policy cooperation and make meaningful discussion at a Network level more challenging. Due to these differences in the way in which centres operate and the degree to which they engage with stakeholders, it is evidence that policy stakeholders therefore cooperate with individual Centres on relevant projects, events or policy discussions, rather than with the network as a whole. Stakeholders consulted also commented that the profile of the network should be “sharpened” in order to clarify how policy level bodies might understand its functions and see a way forward to a greater degree of engagement.

Another trend was that the network and centres were seen as positive and beneficial, but that the policy stakeholders did not immediately understand the benefit of direct cooperation or how it might work in practice. This may result from a lack of understanding by stakeholders of the remit and activities of the Centres and Networks, and therefore how their own remits are linked to those.

A further theme was that individual centres are engaged in activities, but that coordination of involvement at an ENIC-NARIC network level does not exist. As echoed above, individual centres are active in specific networks or through particular projects, but these are driven by individual centres, and are not presented as network-wide activities.

4. The Work and Remit of ENIC-NARICs: The Status Quo vs the Charter

This section details the tasks and activities of a national ENIC-NARIC centre and of the ENIC and NARIC Networks as set out in the Charter.

The Charter was published in 2004, drawing on the recommendations of an external evaluation of the NARIC Network in 2002 that there was an “urgent need to prepare a “European charter of minimum NARIC services to be provided by every national NARIC”³³.

This section presents the prescribed tasks and activities defined firstly for Centres, and secondly for the Networks and considers differences emerging in the actual practices of Centres as identified through both the previous and current CHARONA studies.

Table 10: Comparison of prescribed versus current role and work of Centres/Networks, accounting for the perspectives of Centres and their stakeholders

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
<p>Provide adequate, reliable and authenticated information, within reasonable time as prescribed by the Lisbon Recognition Convention, national and EU legislation, on qualifications, education systems, and recognition procedures to individual holders of qualifications, higher education institutions, employers, professional organisations, public authorities, ENIC-NARIC partners and other interested parties.</p>	<p>Surveys conducted for the first CHARONA study identified that all of the above-mentioned stakeholders are considered target audiences by the centres (albeit identified by a relatively low percentage of respondents (25%-28% for most, with “other interested parties” at 5%)). Centres operating in countries with established managed migration systems are often heavily involved in providing information to the national immigration authorities.</p> <p>The CHARONA II research has shown that information is largely considered adequate and reliable with the timeframe for provision considered by most to be reasonable (though this can vary, particularly among individual users). Nevertheless there are some key themes to emerge in terms of the type and level of information stakeholders reported needing beyond current provision, as indicated in Section 2.</p>

³³ Pragmatic Network of Individual European Consultants, 2002. *External Evaluation of the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres.*

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
	CHARONA I had found that a number of Centres had developed differentiated services for different stakeholder needs. The findings of CHARONA II firmly support the value in ascertaining and acting on different stakeholder needs.
Provide information, advice or formal decision on the recognition of qualifications on the basis of their assessment by applying existing criteria and procedures developed by the Networks, as well as new criteria for assessment of qualifications described in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.	<p>CHARONA I research revealed a relatively even split between those (responding) centres providing legally binding statements and those providing advisory statements. The international survey for CHARONA II suggested that stakeholders may not always be clear on the status of their statement.</p> <p>Individuals also acknowledged some challenges in the acceptance of the statements, particularly among professional bodies.</p>
Serve as the main information point on the recognition of higher education and higher education access qualifications at national level.	<p>The CHARONA I study concluded that the scope of work for the majority of centres has moved beyond a strict focus on higher education and higher education access qualifications.</p> <p>This finding was reinforced through stakeholder consultation in CHARONA II with increased need for information on all secondary qualifications (not solely those used for access to higher education), vocational and professional qualifications and higher qualifications.</p> <p>Centres are typically the main information point, with a high level of perceived relevance and usefulness among stakeholders. In a minority of cases, stakeholders have reported instances of using multiple centres or multiple sources as needed.</p>
Cooperate in related matters with other information centres, higher education institutions, their networks and other	As information centres, ENIC-NARICs cooperate with each other in a range of ways (described further below). The first

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
<p>relevant actors in the national context.</p>	<p>CHARONA study found that centres are now engaging with a very broad range of national and international stakeholders. In the countries with established managed migration systems, the Centres tend to work very closely with their national immigration authorities. This cooperation is currently not explicitly reflected in the Charter.</p>
<p>In the EU context, and as far as NARICs have competence in professional recognition matters, cooperate with the National Coordinator and the competent authorities for the professional recognition of the regulated professions (EU Directives).</p>	<p>CHARONA found that Centres now have a broader role in relation to professional recognition; they may act as contact points for professional recognition, or as competent authorities. Many Centres act as professional recognition National Contact Points, or competent authorities for specific professions. In the cases where the NCPs sit outside NARICs, the Centres report good levels of cooperation with the above stakeholders; in a number of cases, NARICs also act as NCPs or competent authorities.</p> <p>In cases where the NCP (NAC) sits outside the NARIC, some NCPs report that additional cooperation with the NARIC would be beneficial in order to ensure consistency and coordination of services.</p>
<p>Contribute to higher education policy development and legislation at regional, national and European level.</p>	<p>CHARONA I found that centres may contribute to policy development though:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advising on legislation • advising on agreements • preparing draft legislation. <p>Contributions are usually at a national level depending on individual centres' specific engagement with national bodies; network engagement is less well demonstrated, which may lead to a fragmented or inconsistent approach amongst the different centres in the network, particularly on pan-European issues.</p>

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
<p>Co-operate within the ENIC and NARIC Networks on the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and accordingly contribute at national level to the further development of the education systems.</p>	<p>CHARONA I identified efforts by Centres to engage across the Network in the development of the EQF, notably participating in advisory groups or acting as National Co-ordination Points.</p> <p>Engagement is usually at individual centre level, therefore greater coordination by the network amongst the centres might ensure greater transparency regarding activities and input by those centres not directly involved in EQF activities.</p> <p>This finding was supported by CHARONA II, which showed awareness of individual centres but not necessarily of the wider networks.</p>
<p>Develop cooperation with relevant organisations in countries in other regions of the world working in the field of recognition.</p>	<p>Relatively few respondents reported that their Centres are involved in cooperation with the recognition bodies/networks outside Europe.</p>
<p>Where entrusted by the national authority, elaborate and maintain the description of the national education system to be included in the Diploma Supplement.</p>	<p>Europass centres report that this is an area for cooperation between themselves, HEIs and ENIC-NARICs.</p>
<p>Promote the activities of the ENIC and NARIC Networks in countries in other regions of the world.</p>	<p>International networks have been relatively inactive recently, and centres still engage on an individual level rather than with a coordinated, network-wide, approach.</p>
<p>Other tasks as decided through national regulations.</p>	<p>CHARONA I found the “other tasks” carried out by Centres to be numerous and varied. CHARONA II identified areas where “other tasks” in addition to the core tasks of Centres may not be fully understood by stakeholders.</p>
<p>Exchange information on the assessment of the qualifications and on the national qualifications system. <i>[the Networks]</i></p>	<p>Centres engage strongly with other Centres across the Network. The ENIC-NARIC website and email communication list facilitates this, adding to the body of knowledge on the assessment of qualifications and national qualifications systems across Europe.</p>

ENIC-NARIC prescribed activities and services	Differences identified between prescribed and actual activities and services
<p>Promote cooperation with quality assurance bodies and networks, in particular ENQA in order to establish a common framework, share information and increase mutual trust between education systems. [<i>the Networks</i>]</p>	<p>The close cooperation of recognition centres with quality assurance bodies was recognised as important and many centres actively engage with the national agency responsible for quality assurance.</p> <p>Centres cooperate with a number of groups related to the Bologna Process as well, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bologna Follow-Up Group • The EQF Referencing Group • National Bologna Experts Group. <p>CHARONA II found that quality assurance bodies themselves, while positive about the role of ENIC-NARICs, appear not to have a clear vision of how direct cooperation could work; further information sharing may be required to ensure an understanding of the shared aspects of work.</p> <p>Similarly, participation in groups such as BFUG is ordinarily at an individual centre-level and the 'network' may benefit from being engaged through a formal role such as partner or consultative member.</p>

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This project has investigated – at breadth and in depth – stakeholder perspectives on the role of work of ENIC-NARICs and of the ENIC-NARIC Networks. Overall the findings serve both to further reinforce and extend the recommendations made in the CHARONA I study.

This section provides a summary of the key findings from CHARONA II – a study consisting of:

- an international survey, encompassing participants from 138 countries and consisting of stakeholders representative of centres across the ENIC-NARIC Networks;
- detailed review of different national centre survey findings to identify core and emerging trends and themes in stakeholder needs;
- targeted consultation liaising directly with stakeholders at a user- and policy- level;
- a desk-based review and analysis of external factors influencing the needs of stakeholders.

Drawing on these findings, this Chapter will, in conjunction with the relevant findings of CHARONA I, formulate recommendations for the future.

5.1 Key Findings

Chapter 2 firstly analysed the external factors impacting the needs of stakeholders in relation to recognition, before exploring the level of visibility, understanding and perceived relevance of the role and work of Centres and the Networks in the eyes of their stakeholders. In doing so, the study identified:

- that many of the external factors identified in CHARONA I by Centres as impacting their work, have similarly affected stakeholder needs in terms of recognition
- scope for improvement in the visibility of both the Centres and the Networks: among those who *had* used the services of a recognition centre, there were stakeholders who were seemingly unaware that they'd used an ENIC-NARIC. Furthermore, in both the international survey and the subsequent consultation, there were stakeholders who claimed not to have heard of ENIC-NARICs prior to being contacted for the purpose of this study, despite forming part of key stakeholder groups
- the varying naming conventions for Centres inevitably has some role to play in the level of visibility and awareness of Centres.
- the level of awareness and understanding of the Networks, as gleaned from the international survey, is relatively low with 38.59% of respondents claiming little or no awareness or understanding of the Networks. Targeted consultation served to reinforce this finding
- there is more to do to ensure stakeholders are fully aware of the remits of Centres, and the expertise they have to offer
- that Centres score highly across all stakeholder groups in terms of the relevance and usefulness of services to stakeholder needs – this is most notable among higher and further education institutions but still overwhelmingly positive across all groups

- many stakeholders nevertheless are able to identify ways they feel Centres could be more useful to them.

Whilst the diversity among Centres identified in CHARONA I is similarly reflected in the diversity of Service users and needs by country, there are some overwhelming themes that can be seen when considering future work and directions, namely the desire for **more detailed information**. For organisations, this includes, but is not limited to:

- more detailed guidance on grading systems and comparisons (all user stakeholders), but for higher education institutions, additionally, the provision of actual grade distribution data to help admissions staff in differentiating applicants with qualifications of an otherwise comparable level
- guidance on medium of instruction and assessment, particularly in view of increased English Medium Instruction undergraduate and postgraduate degrees being offered across the EHEA
- accessible, comprehensive and dated certificate banks, and further support in countering educational fraud.

The key requests listed above will be by no means news to many Centres (particularly those gathering regular feedback from their organisational users), however that such commonalities can be seen in stakeholder needs across the countries included in the Networks, demonstrates the opportunity to consider more fully whether and how such needs might be best addressed whilst retaining the quality and effectiveness of Centres' work.

As well as commonalities however, Chapter 2, highlighted the desire for **more tailored information and services**, specific to the needs of different stakeholder groups. CHARONA I highlighted that many centres had developed specialist or differentiated services for different audiences and CHARONA II confirmed the growing importance of doing so. In particular such services took the form of more specialist advice, training and consultation such as:

- increased training / e-training on different international education systems, acknowledging that whilst many centres do offer such training, the markets for EHEA universities continues to evolve among increased international competition and varying immigration policies
- training re-focussed for emerging users, recognising that:
 - growing internationalisation and transnational education has extended higher education institutions' needs beyond the admissions office – training on international education systems targeted at those looking to develop partnerships or other transnational arrangements
 - economic factors have sparked an increased focus on professional and vocational education, which, along with further education, now represents a significant part of transnational education provision, meaning that the need for advice and guidance on international education systems to providers and support for inward and outward mobility for those holding such awards, continues to grow.

Chapter 3 reviewed the findings of consultation with a number of policy-level bodies, including the Bologna Follow-Up Group, international networks such as MERIC and European networks such as Erasmus+ and Europass. Though not ordinarily direct users of

ENIC-NARIC services, the work of these stakeholders has an impact on the work of ENIC-NARICs and vice versa. The chapter considers the rationale for further engagement based on the findings of CHARONA I, the feedback received from these stakeholders during CHARONA II, and the future actions indicated by these consultations.

Chapter 4 served to analyse and consolidate the findings of CHARONA I and II – research combining both the essential self-reflection and evaluation of centres and the perspectives of a broad range of relevant stakeholders – in reflecting on how the role and work of NARICs had, or should, evolve beyond the baseline tasks and activities set out in the Charter. The study found a number of areas where the needs of stakeholders have evolved beyond the Charter, which aligns with the experiences of the Centres as reported in the first CHARONA study.

These findings have therefore led to reinforce or build upon recommendations set out in CHARONA I.

5.2 Recommendations (for Consideration by the Centres and the Networks)

Below is a list of recommendations emerging from the two studies indicating where this study has supported these findings or indicating new recommendations to emerge during the course of this study. (Findings from the CHARONA I study not explicitly explored in this study are nonetheless included for ease of reference).

Key Recommendation 1: Ensure clear positioning of the Networks and Centres so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remits and the expertise they have to offer

CHARONA I	CHARONA II
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The first CHARONA project highlighted that this could be initially undertaken by:

- updating the Networks' and Centres' websites with clear information
- disseminating clear information at events and through publications.

This study served to further emphasis the need for clear positioning among key stakeholder groups, ensuring that such groups are fully aware of the roles, remits and expertise of Centres to stakeholders.

The combined recommendations of the first two studies would be best accomplished through an update of the Charter.

Drawing on the need identified in CHARONA I and reinforced by the findings of the international survey and initial targeted consultation, the project team developed a range of eight International Recognition Guidance documents specific to different stakeholder groups consulted throughout this project. The purpose of these documents is to support enhanced positioning of the Centres by demonstrating what Centres are or could be relevant to the work and needs of their respective audiences.

Recommendation 1a) For the Networks to actively disseminate the overarching guidance documents created during the course of this project to key umbrella organisations or transnational / pan-European stakeholder associations

Recommendation 1b) For Centres to similarly actively disseminate the guidance documents to policy stakeholders and users (including those organisations that may similarly advise users without being direct users themselves)

The guidance documents have been designed to provide a visual flow of the work of Centres and to inform the specific audiences of the potential areas of co-operation, support and interaction they could have with the NARIC centres and network.

The e-format is to facilitate and maximise dissemination and impact. Each document will be e-mailed to the Centres, can be translated and further tailored to the national context and centre remit if required and then further disseminated to each of the relevant stakeholder groups at the discretion of each NARIC centre. Dissemination can be through e-mail, print, within presentations or included within workshop manuals. On this basis, the documents are designed to be easily printable to enable hardcopy publication if required.

Recommendation 1c) Develop a Working Group for Positioning among Direct Users

Through the two consecutive studies, it is clear that there is a genuine need to improve positioning so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remits and the expertise they have to offer.

Key Recommendation 2: Increase the global presence of the Centres and Networks' and build stronger cooperative relationships with other recognition networks and centres both within and outside the EU

CHARONA I

CHARONA II

ASEM, MERIC and APARNET were all identified in the first CHARONA study as examples of networks with which the ENIC-NARIC Centres and Networks would benefit greater linkages.

The findings of CHARONA II indicated that while some centres are independently engaged with these networks, there is no coordinated activity by the ENIC-NARIC network as a whole. This leads to a fragmented approach to cooperation and results in some centres being unintentionally excluded from cooperative activities which may prove beneficial to their own development. Additionally, there has been a general lack of activity in the past several years by some of the networks mentioned, in particular MERIC.

Greater coordination by the ENIC-NARIC network at network level would ensure a joined-up approach and ensure benefits are felt on both sides of the relationship. While individual centres may still find independent engagement to be beneficial, the whole network would benefit from a network-level approach to cooperation.

Key Recommendation 3: Increase the Centres' and the Networks' involvement in policy developments particularly in relation to NQFs, EQF, quality assurance and internationalisation	
CHARONA I	CHARONA II

The first CHARONA study concluded that the Networks should, acting as a single body, "Increase involvement in policy development in relation to:

- quality assurance and recognition at HEIs
- development and application of NQFs and EQF
- institutional and national internationalisation strategies
- creation of standards/guidelines for the Centres and Networks (similar to ENQA) on quality assurance processes, self-evaluation and peer reviews."

The general findings of CHARONA II related to the involvement of centres in policy development is that involvement varies on a national basis and greater coherency, particularly at network level, would be beneficial.

Depending upon the exact situation in each country, the ENIC-NARIC may have greater or lesser involvement with policy and may or may not be the body for additional activities such as EQF coordination. Each ENIC-NARIC will be best placed to determine the level of involvement it should have nationally; however, at a network level, shared messages and activities would enable all centres to be involved in discourse on policy subjects and share best practices with each other to improve policy engagement as they see fit.

The first CHARONA study also proposed that Centres/the Networks explore opportunities for greater engagement at both "grass-roots" and policy level in support of internationalisation. The need for such engagement was reinforced substantially across this study. It's clear that the users within higher education institutions now include not only admissions staff but an increasing number of those in roles associated with internationalisation, including collaborative provision, international partnership development. Centres have extensive information and expertise on international education systems of relevance to these users, and there is scope to further develop the means through which this information is made available to users at a grass roots level through Centres' cooperation with national institutions or associations of institutions, whilst the Networks could support policy-level collaboration with overarching, pan-European associations.

Key Recommendation 4: Improve relationships and close cooperation with a range of stakeholders including higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, the Bologna Follow-Up Group, the EQF Advisory Group, and Assistance Centres and Coordinators for professional recognition.	
CHARONA I	CHARONA II

The first CHARONA study found that Centres should "continue to grow and nurture close working relationships with higher education institutions and other education providers...accomplished both a Network and at a Centre level through conferences and events, targeted information sessions on topics such as joint degrees and quality assurance, published information and guidance documents, as well as one-to-one meetings as needed".

CHARONA II found close collaboration and consultation with stakeholders, such as higher education institutions, essential in identifying specific stakeholder needs. Despite the varying needs identified across stakeholder groups, as shown above there were also some common themes raised across all, and ensuring the ability for Centres and the Networks to monitor such feedback will be critical to ensuring the continuing high level of relevance Centres have among stakeholders.

Recommendation 4a) Establish the regular collation and analysis of stakeholder feedback as a baseline task and activity for centres

During the course of this study, it was identified that many centres – including those of the project team – do gather some form of stakeholder feedback for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The importance of gathering such feedback should not be understated: it enables for key trends to be drawn and allows a continuing process of reflection on each Centres work. It is proposed that regular collation and analysis of stakeholder feedback could form a baseline task for all Centres.

Recommendation 4b) Embed collating and analysing national reports to inform the identification of Network priorities as an integral activity in the work of the Networks

Given the aforementioned parallels identified in stakeholder feedback, there is clear value in establishing a more concrete means of gathering and analysing this feedback at a Network-level, and using it to further inform key priorities and identifying the means through which such needs may be best addressed, whether in terms of advice and guidance, creation of specialist working groups or linkages to relevant funding for collaborative projects aimed at Centres developing solutions for the benefit of the Networks and the stakeholders.

Recommendation 4c) Consider the creation of specialist Working Group(s) focussed on enhancing cooperation and representation with key European agencies and initiatives

CHARONA I also identified that both Networks and Centres (e.g. through the ENIC-Bureau and the NARIC Advisory Board) should “take concrete steps to improve cooperation with quality assurance agencies at Network and national levels...via the Networks engaging with supra-national organisations such as ENQA [first]”.

CHARONA I suggested that the Networks “consider petitioning the Chairs and Vice-Chair of the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), via the Secretariat, for the Networks to be represented on the Group as a consultative member”. Similarly it was proposed that the Networks considered requesting representation on the EQF Referencing Group.

The findings of this project’s consultations indicated that greater work is needed to inform quality assurance bodies and qualification framework coordination points about the role of ENIC-NARICs in this area. While the bodies consulted were generally positive about the activities of ENIC-NARICs, they were less clear about how cooperation could be beneficial,

tending to see their work as distinct and separate from that of ENIC-NARICs. Possible steps might include forming joint working groups to explore the benefits of cooperation, or involvement by the network in European-level groups such as the EQF Coordination Group or ENQA. This could in turn lead to greater dialogue and benefits on both sides. In respect of membership in BFUG, the secretariat was positive about greater involvement by ENIC-NARICs and the network, and has indicated the formal process by which membership (consultative or partner) may be obtained. This process would need to be followed, at which point formal membership by network representatives could be considered by the BFUG secretariat.

Overall the two CHARONA projects have provided both an essential self-reflection on the role and work of Centres and the Networks, and an external perspective: the first since 2002. It is clear that the Centres and Networks have evolved in their roles, remits and activities, beyond the scope of the original charter: in doing so, maintaining a high level of relevancy and usefulness to stakeholders in the face of extensive developments over the last 17 years. It is hoped that this study, and the resulting recommendations, will provide a basis for discussion on the opportunities, challenges and future directions for the Centres and Networks, and a review of the Charter in light of these.

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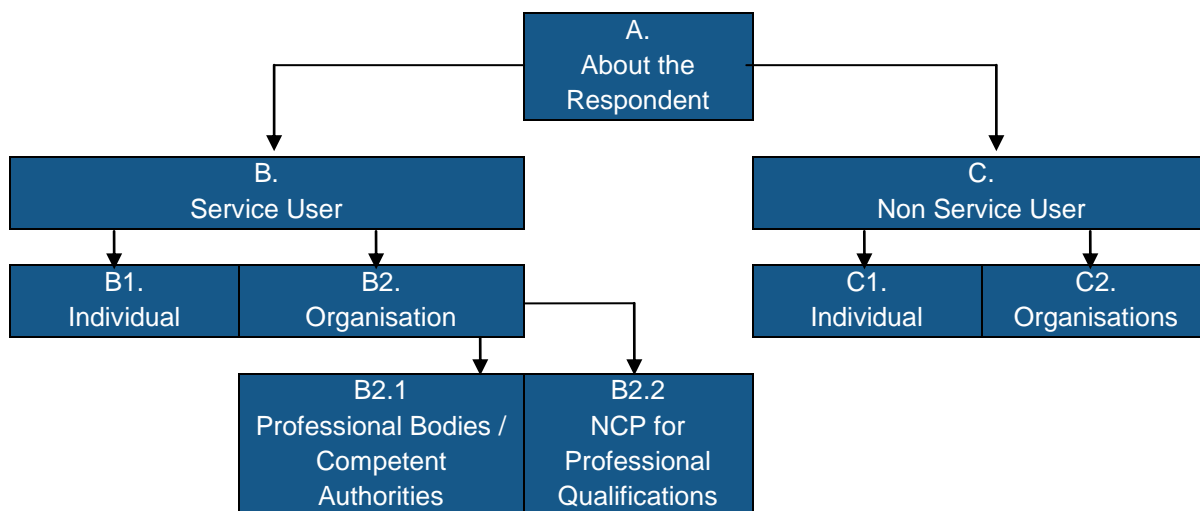
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Annex 1: International Survey Questions and Pathways

Structure of the survey

The survey was divided into different sections, with different pathways (skip logic) based on respondents answers:

Figure 17: Structure and pathways of the international survey



A. About the Respondent

- Where are you from?
[Drop-down menu of countries]
- Have you used a recognition centre (ENIC/NARIC before)?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes [proceeds to Section B]	<input type="checkbox"/> No [proceeds to Section C]
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B. Service User

- Please select the recognition centre(s) (ENIC/NARIC) used
[Alphabetical list of centres by country (multiple select option), derived from enic-naric.net]
- How did you find out about the ENIC/NARIC(s)
[Multiple select options]

<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Body <input type="checkbox"/> Public Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Further Education Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Competent Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Government Department <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Service
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- Legal Service
- Job Centre / Unemployment insurance fund
- Friend/Family
- Other (please specify) _____.
- Quality Assurance Body
- Employer
- Online (social media/website)

- Did you use the recognition centre (ENIC/NARIC) as an individual or member of an organisation?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Individual [proceeds to B1]
- Organisation [proceeds to B2]

B1. Service User: Individual

- What is your current employment status?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Employee
- Student
- Employer
- Professional
- Not currently employed
- Other (please specify)

- To the best of your knowledge, which of these services do/does the ENIC/NARIC(s) provide? And which of these services have you used? Please select all that apply.

[Multiple select options]

	Services provided	Serviced used
Credential evaluation, and qualification comparisons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legally binding recognition of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on international education systems and qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on the national education system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English language assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English language lessons/classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions guidance for universities on international qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice on careers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment guidance (i.e. for employers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional qualification assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional/occupational licences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on loans and scholarships for studying abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qualification verification services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Counter-fraud service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CV and cover letter review/guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job interview preparation and advice (mock interviews)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment on grades or results achieved within a qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify): _____.		

- Are the services provided by the ENIC/NARIC(s) relevant and useful to you?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Extremely relevant
- Very relevant
- Moderately relevant
- Slightly relevant
- Not relevant

- How could the ENIC/NARIC(s) be more useful to you?

[Free text field]

- Which of the following European Initiatives are you aware of? Please select your level of understanding for each

	Never heard of	Heard of, but no understanding	A little understanding	Some understanding	Good understanding	Excellent understanding
Bologna Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copenhagen Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and Training 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENIC-NARIC Networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Erasmus+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EURES – European Employment Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Euroguidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Europass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Europe 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(ECVET)						
European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Higher Education Area (EHEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eurydice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horizon 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisbon Recognition Convention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Contact Point (NCP) Directive 2005/36/EC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLOTEUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ReferNet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SOLVIT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B2. Service User: Organisation

- Please select the sector that best describes your organisation

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Careers & Guidance
- Recruitment
- Further Education
- Vocational Institution
- Secondary Education
- Higher Education
- Professional Bodies
- National Contact Point (NCP) for Professional Qualifications
- Government Department / Ministry
- Immigration Services
- Legal Services
- Other (please specify) _____

- To the best of your knowledge, which of these services do/does the ENIC/NARIC(s) provide? And which of these services have you used? Please select all that apply.

[Multiple select options]

	Services provided	Serviced used
Credential evaluation, and qualification comparisons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legally binding recognition of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online databases and publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshops and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on international education systems and qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on the national education system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research and consultancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conferences and events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions guidance for universities on international qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidance on complying with government policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accreditation of institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice on careers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidance on immigration (permits, visas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment guidance (i.e. for employers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning / Partnerships / Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional qualification assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional/occupational licences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on loans and scholarships for studying abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CV and cover letter review/guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qualification verification services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter-fraud services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job interview preparation and advice (mock interviews)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment on grades or results achieved within a qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify): _____.		

- Are the services provided by the ENIC/NARIC(s) relevant and useful to you?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Extremely relevant
- Very relevant
- Moderately relevant
- Slightly relevant
- Not relevant

- How could the ENIC/NARIC(s) be more useful to you?

[Free text field]

- Which of the following European Initiatives are you aware of? Please select your level of understanding for each

	Never heard of	Heard of, but no understanding	A little understanding	Some understanding	Good understanding	Excellent understanding
Bologna Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copenhagen Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Europe 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Higher Education Area (EHEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eurydice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horizon 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisbon Recognition Convention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Contact Point (NCP) Directive 2005/36/EC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PLOTEUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ReferNet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SOLVIT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B2.1 Professional Bodies

- Does your professional body offer qualifications?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 Yes [proceeds to next question] No [proceeds to fourth question]
- Does your professional body have any challenges with recognition of these qualifications?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 Yes No Not Sure
- Has your professional body used an ENIC/NARIC to support its outward recognition?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 Yes No Not Sure
- Is your professional body required (by law) to operate under Directive 2005/36 and 2013/55 on the recognition of professional qualifications?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 Yes No [proceeds to Competent Authorities questions] Not Sure
- As a competent authority, do you use a National Contact Point (NCP) for professional qualifications or an ENIC/NARIC?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 National Contact Point (NCP) for professional qualifications
 ENIC/ NARIC
 Both NCP and ENIC/NARIC
 Don't know
 Neither
- Do you feel you need more guidance on carrying out professional qualification recognition assessments?
[Radio buttons: single option selection]
 Yes No

- Does an ENIC/NARIC have a role or assist with your competent authority?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes No Don't Know

If yes, please specify what role that is: _____.

- Do you feel that ENIC/NARICs should cooperate with competent authorities?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes No Don't Know

Please specify why: _____.

B2. NCPs

- Is your NCP housed in the same organisation as an ENIC/NARIC?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes No Don't Know

- Do you feel your NCP needs more guidance/collaboration with an ENIC/NARIC? Do you need/want to work with one?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes No Don't Know

Section C: Non Users

- Are you responding as an individual or member of an organisation? (If you were to use ENIC or NARIC services, would you do so as an individual or through an organisation?)

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Individual
[proceeds to C1] Organisation
[proceeds to C2]

Section C1

- Do you have a qualification from a different country to where you live?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes

No

- Have you experienced problems with your qualification being recognised internationally (for employment and/or academic purposes)?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Yes

No

To find out how ENIC/NARIC may be able to help with recognition of your international qualification, please go to <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

- What is your current employment status

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Employee

Student

Employer

Professional

Not currently employed

Other (please specify)

- Please select the reason you have not needed or used an ENIC/NARIC's services before?

[Multiple select options]

My qualifications have always been accepted and understood

I did not know these services were available

The services I needed were not offered by an ENIC/NARIC

The services are too expensive

I used services from a different organisation

I did not think these services would be helpful

Other (please specify) _____.

Section C2: Organisations

- Please select the sector that best describes your organisation

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

Careers & Guidance

Recruitment

Further Education

Vocational Institution

Secondary Education

Higher Education

- Professional Bodies
- National Contact Point (NCP) for Professional Qualifications
- Government Department / Ministry
- Immigration Services
- Legal Services
- Other (please specify) _____.

- Please select the reason your organisation has not needed or used an ENIC/NARIC's services before?

[Multiple select options]

- I/we have no problem recognising qualifications
- I/we do not accept foreign qualifications
- The services I/we needed were not offered by an ENIC/NARIC
- I/we did not know these services were available
- The services were too expensive
- I/we used services from a different organisation
- I/we did not think these services would be helpful
- Other (please specify) _____.

- If you used the services of a different organisation, what organisation did you use?

[Free text field]

Section C continued

- Would you like to receive more information on ENIC/NARICs?

[Radio buttons: single option selection]

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

- Which of these sources do you have regular contact with?

[Multiple select options]

- Website
- Social Media
- Government
- Employers
- Higher Education Institutions
- Other (please specify)_____.

- If you would be happy for us to contact you should we have further questions, please provide your email address below:

[Free text field]

Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Paper

January 2016

The Changing Role of NARICs: Stakeholder Perspective (CHARONA II)

Brief aim of project and planned outputs:

The Changing Role of NARICs: Stakeholder Perspective (CHARONA II) is a two year project which aims to examine how well the role and work of recognition centres meet stakeholder needs.

The project seeks to build on the findings of the first CHARONA project, which identified areas where (from the perspective of NARICs) if centres had potentially evolved beyond the Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter of Activities and Services and provided recommendations for the centres and ENIC-NARIC Networks moving forward, namely to:

- “Ensure clear positioning of the Networks and centres so that stakeholders are fully aware of their roles and remits and the expertise they have to offer...”
- Improve relationships and close cooperation with a range of stakeholders”.

Thus, as well as being an opportunity to investigate perceptions of NARICs and evaluate how well the centres are facilitating and representing stakeholder interests, the CHARONA II project aims to: (i) increase awareness and understanding of recognition centres, their roles and remits; and (ii) identify potential future directions and areas that centres need to develop, perhaps beyond the *Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter of Activities and Services*.

There are two principal outputs envisaged:

- A research report summarising key stakeholder perspectives on the role and work of NARICs, encompassing as appropriate, **recommendations for the Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter of Activities and Services**
- The development of a series of guidance documents focussing on the role, work and positioning of NARICs in the context of the needs of identified stakeholder groups.

Members are asked to consider the work of NARICs and the following questions:

- **Current status:** Are the areas of the Charter that could be removed, revised or expanded to more closely reflect the current role and work of NARICs?
- **Future directions:**
 - In what ways could NARICs and the Networks contribute more effectively to European and wider policy and strategy?
 - Are there further stakeholder groups with which NARICs and/or the Networks could be working with?

Any further comments either on the role and work of NARICs / the Networks or the Charter are also welcome.

Annexes:

- Excerpt from the findings of the first CHARONA project
- Excerpt from the Joint ENIC/NARIC Charter (Section II Tasks and Activities)

Annex 3: Criteria for Consultative Membership & BFUG Partnership

1. Added value to the Bologna Process

Any new consultative member or partner of the BFUG should give the process an added value, meaning that their contribution should be relevant to the work of the BFUG.

Additional criteria on added value for new consultative members

Any new consultative members should also meet the following criteria:

- their contribution cannot be easily covered by an existing consultative member;
- cooperation with the BFUG may not be better covered at another level.

2. Relevance of the stakeholder group

Organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and the labour market are relevant to the Process. Organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and other educational fields may also be relevant.

Organisations representing special professions do not match the BFUG, which deals with general principles and structures in higher education.

- Organisations should have higher education as a central field of interest.
- The stakeholder group should be relevant to the principles, action lines and goals of the Bologna Process.

3. Representativeness

A new consultative member or a partner should not be a sub-organisation of a member or consultative member of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Additional criteria on representativeness for new consultative members

Any new consultative member should:

- be the most representative organisation in its field of interest,
- be a European organisation, or a European branch of an organisation,
- accept organisations from all the Bologna member states as full members,
- have full members from no less than 50 % of the Bologna countries,
- have full members from countries outside the EU/EEA and EU candidate countries.

4. Organisational form

A new consultative member or a partner should either be a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or an inter-governmental organisation.

Additional criteria on organisational form for new consultative members

Its mandate should reflect its relevance to the Bologna Process and its right to give an opinion on behalf of its members on matters relating to the Bologna Process.” (BFUG (BE/AL) 21_8 2015).

Annex 4: Guidance Documents

Below are screenshots of the Guidance Documents. Full copies of each are available separately.



Information about ENIC and NARIC centres

ENIC and NARIC centres – Who are we?

Established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the Lisbon Recognition Convention), the ENIC and NARIC Networks are primarily concerned with ensuring that there is a fair and consistent approach to the recognition of qualifications. On that basis the networks operate in an international legal framework supporting the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention as well as the European Union Directives on professional recognition and developing recognition policy and practices for the recognition of qualifications in the European Region.



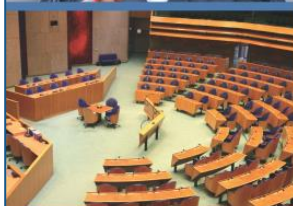
What do we look like?

No two centres are the same and not all offer the same services or guidance. Each centre has a unique name that may or may not include 'ENIC' or 'NARIC'. Some have a public office, while others are a small department within another organisation or the Ministry of Higher Education.



What do we do?

- On a general level ENIC / NARIC centres focus on higher education, but some have also broadened their focus to all ranges of education including primary, VET and professional qualifications. Our stakeholders are also varied and include professional associations, VET stakeholders, education policy groups, etc.
- Centres are heavily involved in policy development; including in relation to higher education policy, immigration policy, internationalisation agendas, and mobility and the transparency of qualifications. They are often involved in the development of national qualification frameworks.



To contact the ENIC-NARIC Networks or their members, please check the contact details listed on: <http://www.enic-naric.net/>



enic-naric.net
gateway to recognition of academic and professional qualifications

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Individuals

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

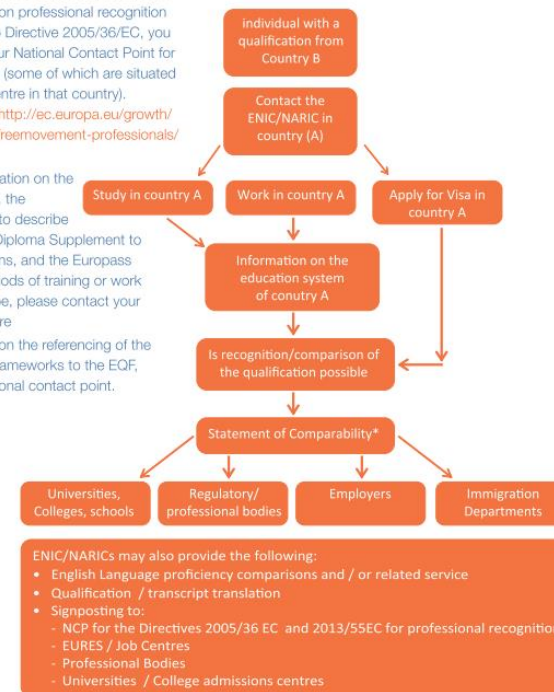
- As part of the process of application for potential employers internationally – to provide recognition of your qualifications
- As part of an application to further study overseas
- To understand how your qualifications fit in to a different country's education system
- To provide information on any regulatory requirements or recognition issues within another country that you are considering moving to for work or study
- As part of a visa application process when moving to another country.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To understand how it can facilitate mobility in the EU and internationally
- NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/freemovement-professionals/index_en.htm
- If you want more information on the use of the Europass CV, the Certificate Supplement to describe VET qualifications, the Diploma Supplement to describe HE qualifications, and the Europass Mobility to describe periods of training or work experience within Europe, please contact your National Europass Centre
- If you need information on the referencing of the National Qualification Frameworks to the EQF, please refer to your national contact point.





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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Training / Education Institutions

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

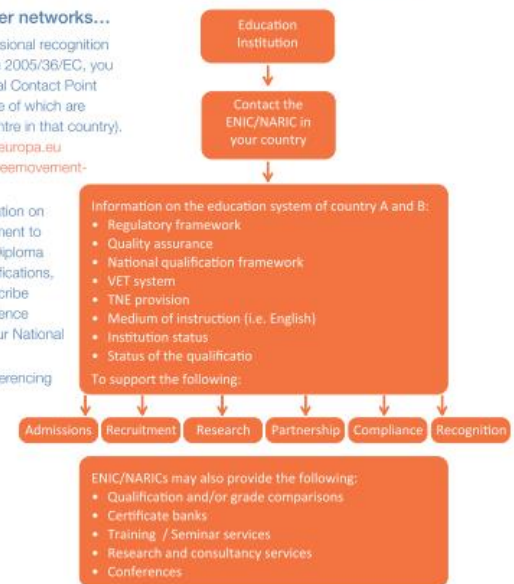
- When setting international admission requirements:
 - recognition of qualifications (academic/vocational) is a key element of providing appropriate and informed access to international students
 - Centres may or may not provide legally binding recognition of qualifications to individuals for use for applications to admitting institutions; they may also provide counter-fraud services on request
- If you need information on the national education system in a specific country: ENIC-NARICs often house a database or other information source on global qualifications
 - Centres may also provide qualification comparisons, grade comparisons, training and conferences.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To explore how the Networks address recognition of international qualifications to inform internal admissions processes and systems
- The NARIC network provides a range of resources to support Training and Education provider staff on recognition of qualifications
- The network provides potential partnership opportunities to access EU funding for different initiatives.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/freemovement-professionals/index_en.htm
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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Competent Authorities

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

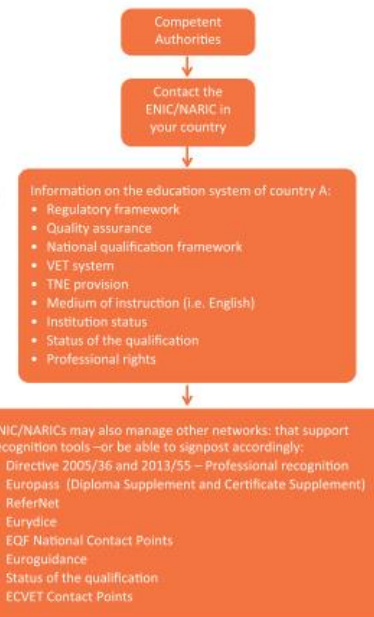
- To seek guidance on recognition decisions
- As part of the process of application for potential international members
- To understand potential new markets for membership or training provision
- To inform and support any mutual recognition agreements for professional status and practice with another country's competent authority / government.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To explore how the Networks work to improve recognition of professional qualifications
- To understand the impact of the different Network-wide projects and their impact on supporting a fair and consistent approach to recognition of professional qualifications
- ENIC-NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/index_en.htm
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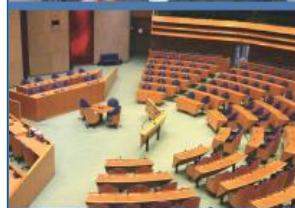
What do we look like?

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What do we do?

- On a general level ENIC / NARIC centres focus on higher education, but some have also broadened their focus to all ranges of education including primary, VET and professional qualifications. Our stakeholders are also varied and include professional associations, VET stakeholders, education policy groups, etc.
- Centres are heavily involved in policy development; including in relation to higher education policy, immigration policy, internationalisation agendas, and mobility and the transparency of qualifications. They are often involved in the development of national qualification frameworks.



To contact the ENIC-NARIC Networks or their members, please check the contact details listed on: <http://www.enic-naric.net/>



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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Employers

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

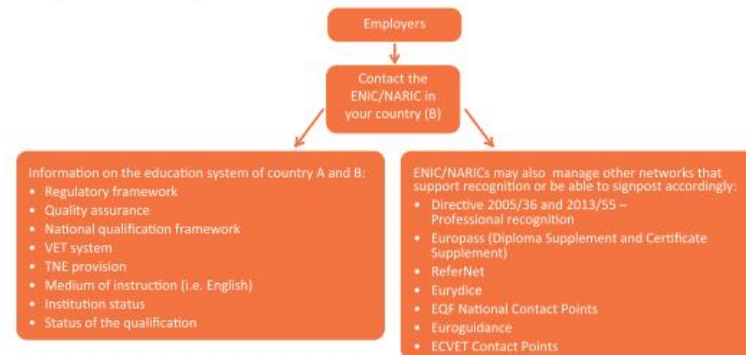
- As part of the process of application for potential employees internationally – to provide recognition of the individual's qualifications and information on their learning outcomes
- To understand potential new markets in other countries and the skills available for recruitment or development purposes
- To provide information on any regulatory requirements or recognition agreements for particular sectors within another country.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Network...

- To explore how the Networks work to facilitate the mobility of individuals
- To understand the impact of the different network wide projects and the instruments to support mobility and inform employers on individuals' qualifications, skills and competences
- NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/index_en.htm
- If you want more general information on the use of the Europass CV, the Certificate Supplement to describe VET qualifications, the Diploma Supplement to describe HE qualifications, and the Europass Mobility to describe periods of training or work experience within Europe, please contact your National Europass Centre
- If you need information on the referencing of the National Qualification Frameworks to the EQF, please refer to your national contact point.





Information about ENIC and NARIC centres

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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Quality Assurance Bodies

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

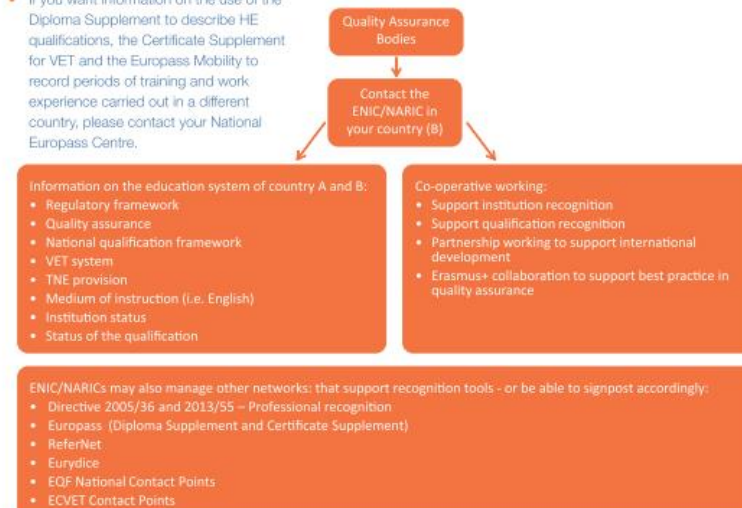
- When setting standards / if you are reviewing international admission practices at HEIs / FE Colleges / Schools
 - recognition of qualifications (academic/vocational) for access is a key element of quality assurance procedures for a range of stakeholders (HEIs, schools and other education providers)
 - Centres may or may not provide legally binding recognition of qualifications to individuals for use at admitting institutions; they may also provide counter-fraud services for all stakeholders
- If you need information on the national education system in a specific country; ENIC-NARICs often house a database or other information source on global qualifications
 - Centres may also provide qualification comparisons, grade comparisons, training and conferences
- As a partner in funded projects to support best practice / capacity building of quality assurance in HE / VET.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To explore how the network addresses quality assurance issues through networkwide projects and activities such as the CORE and EAR projects (<http://www.coreproject.eu/and> <http://www.eurorecognition.eu/>).

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/index_en.htm
- If you want information on the use of the Diploma Supplement to describe HE qualifications, the Certificate Supplement for VET and the Europass Mobility to record periods of training and work experience carried out in a different country, please contact your National Europass Centre.





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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Recognition Networks

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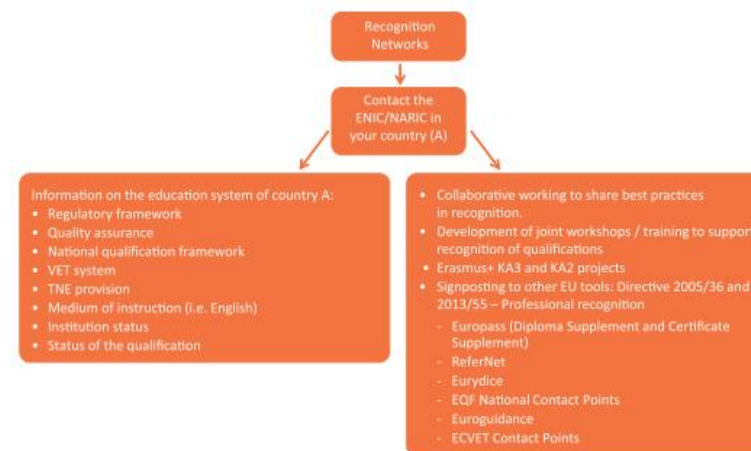
- Collaboratively to share best practices in recognition
- To share data, information and resources on different countries education systems
- To support the drafting of mutual recognition agreements between countries
- To partner in funded projects to improve practices and support innovation in recognition.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To discuss and develop good recognition practices with our networks
- To develop joint workshops or training on the recognition of qualifications
- To hold joint events to enable networking and sharing best practice in recognition amongst centres
- NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/index_en.htm
- If you want more general information on the use of the Certificate Supplement to describe VET qualifications, the Diploma Supplement to describe HE qualifications, and the Europass Mobility to describe periods of training or work experience within Europe, please contact your National Europass Centre
- If you need information on the referencing of the National Qualification Frameworks to the EQF, please refer to your national contact point.





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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - Bologna Follow-Up Group

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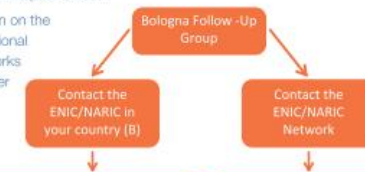
- When seeking an expert and practitioner's view on recognition instruments (EQF, Europass Documents, ECTS, ECVET)
- To understand European and national good practice in recognition and its impact on the EHEA
- To review the use and effectiveness of the Diploma Supplement in supporting recognition in the EHEA.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To appoint members of the networks (Bureau and NAB) in BFUG Working Groups relevant to recognition
- To explore how the Networks works to improve recognition in the EHEA
- To understand the impact of the different network wide projects and their impact on supporting a fair and consistent approach to recognition in the EHEA
- NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

- If you need information on professional recognition arrangements related to Directive 2005/36/EC, you may wish to contact your National Contact Point for professional recognition (some of which are situated alongside the NARIC centre in that country). A full list is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/index_en.htm
- If you want more general information on the use of the Diploma Supplement to describe HE qualifications, please contact your National Europass Centre
- If you need information on the referencing of the National Qualification Frameworks to the EQF, please refer to your national contact point.



- Information on the education system of country A and B:
- Regulatory framework
 - Quality assurance
 - National qualification framework
 - VET system
 - TNE provision
 - Medium of instruction (i.e. English)
 - Institution status
 - Status of the qualification

- Discuss and explore how recognition can be improved in the EHEA
- To receive an expert and practitioners view on recognition instruments (EQF, Europass Docs, ECTS)
- Learn about European and national good practice in recognition
- Explore network wide projects and activities, and how these contribute to recognition in the EHEA
- To access other resources on recognition

- ENIC/NARICs may also manage other networks: that support recognition tools - or be able to signpost accordingly:
- Directive 2005/36 and 2013/55 – Professional recognition
 - Europass (Diploma Supplement and Certificate Supplement)
 - ReferNet
 - Eurydice
 - EQF National Contact Points
 - ECVET Contact Points





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Information about ENIC and NARIC centres and what they can do for you - European programmes and initiatives

You might work with an ENIC NARIC...

- Develop and coordinate joint events to ensure synergy in the implementation of each of the initiatives on a national basis
- To share data, information and resources on different countries education systems
- To support the drafting of mutual recognition agreements between countries
- To partner in funded projects to improve practices and support innovation in the implementation, development and promotion of the EU tools for transparency and recognition.

You might work with the ENIC-NARIC Networks...

- To develop joint events on the promotion of the tools for transparency recognition of qualifications EU wide
- To share information and discuss synergies to ensure cohesive working between the initiatives
- ENIC-NARIC centres are also able to provide access to other resources on recognition.

You might want to work with other networks...

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