**Follow up resolution to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on promoting automatic mutual recognition of diplomas**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 128 (5) of the European Parliament's Rules of procedure by the Committee on Culture and Education**
2. **Reference numbers**: 2018/2838 (RSP) / B8-0492/2018 / P8\_TA-PROV(2018)0437
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 25 October 2018
4. **Subject:** Promoting automatic mutual recognition of diplomas
5. **Competent Parliamentary Committee**: Committee for Education and Culture (CULT)
6. **Brief analysis/assessment of the Resolution and requests made in it:**

Ahead of the adoption of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad by the Education Council on 26 November 2018, the resolution called on the Member States to make a political commitment and put in place mechanisms in this regard. These should include the use of new technologies to increase efficiency, decrease costs, improve transparency and build trust. Member States are also encouraged to ensure fair access to higher education institutions for all European students under the same conditions as own nationals. Parliament asks the Commission to support the achievement of these objectives by fostering mutual learning and exchange of good practice and by putting in place the European student card.

1. **Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

As follow-up to the European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2017, on 22 May 2018 the Commission adopted a proposal for a draft Council recommendation on promoting the mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary school education diplomas and periods of study abroad[[1]](#footnote-1), with full respect of the responsibilities and competences of the Member States in this area. The Council Recommendation invites the Member States to make a political commitment to introduce automatic recognition of diplomas by 2025. On 26 November 2018, the Education Council adopted the recommendation upholding the main elements of the Commission proposal.

The Commission welcomes the European Parliament resolution on promoting automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and confirms its strong commitment to support the Member States in pursuing the goals set out therein. Regarding the European Parliament's call on the Commission to foster the ‘regular issuing of “statements of comparability” of upper secondary school diplomas’, the Commission would like to underline that such statements of comparability will not be necessary because the Commission intends to – as welcomed also in the Council recommendation – establish a user-friendly European Union-wide online database of upper secondary education and training qualifications giving access to higher education in each Member State. Once this database is in place, higher education institutions or any other competent authority can get all the necessary information on an upper secondary diploma issued in any Member State.

In addition, the Commission will explore how digital technologies can facilitate automatic recognition and provide better services for both learners and education and training institutions, including through developing the European student card and studying the potential of blockchain technology.

As recommended by the European Parliament, the Commission encourages the Member States to make use of European funding to promote mobility at all levels of education and training and to improve cooperation with each other, including through participation in the European Universities and Centres of Vocational Excellence initiatives. To improve the inclusiveness of European mobility programmes, the Commission has proposed to render the future Erasmus programme more inclusive by promoting, amongst others, more mobility opportunities for pupils in school education and in vocational education and training.

The Commission agrees with the European Parliament that it is important to recognise the diplomas and learning outcomes of newly arrived migrants and refugees. Automatic recognition however can only work on the basis of improved transparency and mutual trust between the States committing to it. The aforementioned Council Recommendation therefore covers diplomas and learning outcomes from the Member States’ education and training systems and it also applies to third-country nationals who hold a qualification from one Member State and move to another Member State. However, the Commission provides support through Erasmus+ to a project run by National Academic Recognition Information Centres that aims to facilitate the recognition of qualifications held by refugees. In addition, the Commission’s Skills profiling Tool for Third Country Nationals under the New Skills Agenda supports the identification and documentation of skills and qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Commission notes that building mutual trust between the educational and training systems is a precondition for any progress in promoting automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. For this reason the Council agreed that the Member States should ensure that their national qualifications frameworks or systems are referenced to the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) with the referencing reviewed and updated when necessary. This can furthermore be done through further development of quality assurance mechanisms, as it is the case with the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). Similarly, the recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad is facilitated in the field of vocational education and training through the tools linked to the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training[[2]](#footnote-2). On the field of higher education, the Commission supports cooperation between higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and competent authorities in line with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 on further cooperation in quality assurance in higher education. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, which have been developed by the Bologna Process, and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education provides further basis of trust and recognition. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Systems are facilitating the recognition of learning outcomes in national legislation, including in the framework of mobility.

The Commission intends that progress made with the existing tools and initiatives developed under the Bologna process on comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications, the Copenhagen process on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training, the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and Erasmus+ Programme will facilitate the implementation of the European Education Area.

1. COM(2018) 270 final [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)