UNESCO Higher Education Activities to September 2018

UNESCO has been undertaking a number of activities in 2018 with relevance for members of the Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area, especially with respect to recognition of higher education qualifications and quality assurance:

A. UNESCO Conventions on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention).
UNESCO and the Council of Europe, as co-secretariats to the LRC Committee, are currently supporting LRC Parties to implement the Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation, adopted in November 2017. The Recommendation establishes common procedures for the States Parties to the LRC that take into account the recognition of qualifications where refugees' qualifications cannot be adequately documented. The importance of the new recommendation was recently highlighted in UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay's message to the EHEA Ministerial Meeting in Paris. The Director-General emphasized that also the Global Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, expected to be adopted in 2019, will take into account issues relating the recognition of refugees' qualifications across regions.

Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications
A Drafting Committee established in March 2016 met four times between in 2016 and 2017. At its last meeting in June 2017, the Drafting Committee considered comments and amendments received from 40 Member States in an initial consultation round, and finalized a Preliminary Draft of the convention text. Between July and September 2017, UNESCO organized a series of information meetings with Permanent Delegations at Headquarters in Paris. The 39th session of the General Conference in November 2017 examined a progress report and the Preliminary Draft, approving the way forward towards adoption at the 40th session of the General Conference in November 2019. An intergovernmental Consultation Meeting to review the draft text of the Global Convention will take place between 5-7 December at UNESCO in Paris to which all Member States and some 50+ international stakeholder groups have been invited.

A second intergovernmental meeting is foreseen in spring 2019 to finalize the draft that will be submitted for adoption at the 40th Session of the General Conference in November 2019.

Other Recognition Conventions

- The *Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education*, adopted in 2011, came into force on 1 February 2018, after five Member States had ratified the Convention: China and Australia in 2014, New Zealand in

2016, and recently Japan and the Republic of Korea in December 2017. The Holy See has since ratified the Convention and will participate in first meeting of the Tokyo Convention Committee which will take place in the Republic of Korea from 16-19 October 2018. The Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centers is intended to be launched in 2018 in close collaboration with European ENIC-NARICs.

- The *Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States* was adopted in 2014 in Addis Ababa. The Addis Convention received its first ratification in February 2018 from Togo. Since then 5 further Member States from the region have ratified the Convention (in chronological order): Gambia, Congo, Djibouti, Mauritius, Senegal. Member States in all parts of the region have initiated the ratification process or are preparing the deposit of their ratification instrument with UNESCO.

- Following the October 2015 ministerial meeting in Brasilia, a working group has finalized a draft for a revised *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean,* which was examined at an intergovernmental consultation meeting in Buenos Aires on 5-6 April 2018. A second intergovernmental consultation meeting will take place in Córdoba, Argentina on 14-15 June, and the revised convention is foreseen to be adopted at an International Conference of States in Buenos Aires in April/May 2019 subject to the approval of UNESCO's Executive Board in October 2018.

- In November 2017, the 39th Session of the General Conference approved the launch of a revision process of the 1978 *Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States*, and a working group of experts endorsed a draft convention at a meeting in Rabat in March 2018. The revised convention is foreseen to be adopted at an International Conference of States in the spring of 2019.

B. Quality Assurance in Higher Education

International Conference of Quality Assurance
Within the framework of Education 2030, UNESCO is organizing an International Conference on Quality Assurance in cooperation with the International Consortium of Distance Education (ICDE), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation/International Quality Group (CHEA), the World Bank, the international Association of universities (IAU), and DAAD. The overarching objective of the conference is to establish a platform of discussion for educationalists, government representatives, quality assurance agencies as well as international organizations dealing with sustainable development and higher education to explore the ways in which higher education and its quality assurance mechanisms could better contribute to the SDGs. The outcomes of the QA in Higher Education initiative will feed into the proposed 3rd World Conference on Higher Education in 2021.

In preparation to the International Conference, eight regional consultation meetings are being organized to identify the key regional concerns and priorities for QA in HED with a focus on the quality enhancement of private, and on-line/distance HE learning. For Europe, two consultation meetings were organized during the first half of 2018: for Western Europe in Geneva on 15-16 February 2018 under the title "The role of Quality Assurance in Higher

Education: challenges, developments and trends", co-organized with the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ), and for Eastern Europe in Moscow on 23-24 April, co-organized with the Russian Federation (NAA) and the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development (AKKORK). A second meeting on QA in Africa for the Anglophone and Lusophone spheres will be convened in Johannesburg from November 19-21 in the presence of 15 Minsters from the regions, the UNESCO ADG for Education Ms. Stefania Giannini and the African Union.

QA projects in Africa:

- UNESCO-Shenzhen Municipal Government Cooperation in Higher Education. In cooperation with the Shenzhen Municipal Government of China, UNESCO launched in 2017 a project to strengthen quality assurance systems in higher education in African countries by a). supporting the establishment of quality assurance agencies in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Togo; b). building institutional capacity for established quality assurance agencies in Egypt, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal, The Gambia, and Zambia, and c). strengthening quality assurance network on the African continent. The project has delivered tangible achievements since its implementation: Cote d'Ivoire validated three evaluation frameworks for higher education institutions and programmes in March 2018; The National Assembly of Mali approved the establishment of a National Quality Assurance Agency in May 2018. By August 2018, 10 capacity-building workshops have taken place to boost both human and institutional capacity in conducting quality assurance activities in project countries.
- *UNESCO-CAMES Cooperation in Higher Education*. On 8 March 2016, UNESCO and the African and Malagasy Council for the Higher Education (CAMES) signed a cooperation agreement in for the development of quality assurance higher education. The general objectives of the cooperation between CAMES and UNESCO include joint efforts for advocacy and capacity building in the quality assurance of higher education with a focus on the development of good practices in the enhancement of quality assurance, as well as fostering a quality culture among national quality assurance bodies in the CAMES region and collaborating with similar bodies in other regions of Africa and around the world.
- *Training Modules in Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education.* UNESCO in partnership with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has developed training modules in Internal Quality Assurance in higher education. Each module identifies major tenets and requirements aimed at implementation of QA policies, procedures and instruments of the IQA systems of higher education institutions.

C. ICTs for Higher Education and Lifelong learning

MOOCs
The publication *Making Senses of MOOCs: A Guide for Policy-Makers in Developing Countries* was published in June 2016 and is now available online in English (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002451/245122E.pdf). Spanish, French and Russina versions are also available on line coutesy of the UNESCO Chair at La Rioja Univertisty in Spain: http://research.unir.net/blog/los-mooc-no-son-una-revolucion-en-el-mundo-educativo/?lang=es

The Guide is designed to raise general awareness amongst policy makers in developing countries as to how Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) might address their concerns and priorities, particularly in terms of access to affordable quality higher education and preparation of secondary school leavers for academic as well as vocational education and training.

D. Higher Education in Emergencies (HEiE)

UNESCO, the only UN agency with a higher education mandate, has initiated work on a strategy for Higher Education in Emergencies (HEiE). UNESCO is seeking to identify areas of intervention that will best support member states, policy makers, researchers, and practitioners. In order to meet this objective, UNESCO is developing an initial study, including landscape review outlining current mechanisms, large-scale actors and initiatives in HEiE, and a survey that points to the challenges, gaps and proposed innovative solutions. The study is expected to be followed by an international conference on Higher Education in Emergencies. UNESCO will also be presenting the topic at side-events during the UN General Assembly in September and the Global Education Meeting in Brussels in December 2018.

E. UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Network

Since January 2018, 31 UNESCO Chairs and **2 Networks** have been established in 18 Member States and 32 HEIs in the European region: 14 within education; 6 within natural sciences; 5 within culture; 4 within social and human sciences, 2 within communication and information and 2 within Gender.

Country	Chair/Network Title	University/Institution	UNESCO Sector
Armenia	**Network on Research and Postgraduate Education in Biophysics, Biotechnology and Environmental Health**	Life Sciences International Postgraduate Educational Center	Natural Sciences
Belgium	UNESCO Chair on Adult Education	Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Education
Cyprus	UNESCO Chair on Digital Cultural Heritage	The Cyprus University of Technology	Culture
Finland	**Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education**	University of Lapland	Education
Finland	UNESCO Chair on Educational Ecosystems for Equity and Quality of Learning	The University of Helsinki	Education
Finland	UNESCO Chair on Values, Dialogue and Human Rights	The University of Helsinki	Education
France	Chaire UNESCO en éducations et santé	Université Clermont-Auvergne	Education
France	Chaire UNESCO en éthique, sciences et société	L'Université Fédérale de Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées	Social and Human Sciences
Germany	UNESCO Chair on Global Understanding for Sustainability	Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena	Social and Human Sciences
Greece	UNESCO Chair on Women, Peace and Security: Building Capacity and Resilience	University of Macedonia	ODG/GE

	through Education and Research		
Ireland	UNESCO Chair on Tackling Bullying in Schools and Cyberspace through a Global Partnership for Equality and Wellbeing	Dublin City University	Education
Italy	UNESCO Chair on Intersectoral Safety for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience	University of Udine	Natural Sciences; UNESCO Venice Office
Italy	UNESCO Chair on Education for Human Development and Solidarity among Peoples	Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	Education
Lithuania	UNESCO Chair on Media and Information Literacy for Inclusive Knowledge Societies	Vytautas Magnus University	Communication and Information
Poland	UNESCO Chair on Cultural Property Law	University of Opole	Culture
Portugal	UNESCO Chair on Education for Global Peace Sustainability	Universidade de Lisboa	Education
Portugal	UNESCO Chair on Education, Citizenship and Cultural Diversity	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias	Education
Portugal	UNESCO Chair on Life on Land	The University of Porto	Natural Sciences
Portugal	UNESCO Chair in Humanities and Cultural Integrated Landscape Management	Instituto Politécnico de Tomar	Social and Human Sciences
Portugal	UNESCO Chair in Arts and Cultural Management, Cities and Creativity	Polytechnic Institute of Leiria	Culture
Portugal	UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Dialogue on Heritages of Portuguese Influence	Universidade de Coimbra	Culture
Romania	UNESCO Chair on Engineering for Society	University Politehnica of Bucharest	Education
Romania	Chaire UNESCO en culture des droits de l'homme et éducation au développement durable dans l'enseignement préscolaire et primaire	Université Chrétienne "Dimitrie Cantemir"	Education
Russian Federation	UNESCO Chair on Health Education for Sustainable Development	The North-Ossetia State Medical Academy	Education
Russian Federation	UNESCO Chair on Global Education	Institute for Strategy of Education Development of the Russian Academy	Education
Spain	UNESCO Chair on Appropriate Technologies for Human Development	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	ODG/GE
Spain	UNESCO Chair on Evaluation and Assessment, Innovation and Excellence in Education	Universidad de Cádiz	Education
Spain	UNESCO Chair on Sustainability	Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya	Natural Sciences
Spain	UNESCO Chair for Human Rights and Public Authorities	University of the Basque Country	Socian and Human Sciences

Switzerland	Chaire UNESCO en formation médicale numérique	Université de Genève	Natural Sciences
Turkey	UNESCO Chair on Cultural Policy and Cultural Diplomacy	Istanbul Bilgi University	Culture
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety and the Issue of Impunity	The University of Sheffield	Communication and Information
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	UNESCO Chair on Geoscience and Society	University of Plymouth	Natural Sciences

UNESCO. 14.09.2018