

ASEM
Working Group on Recognition
5th to 6th December 2011, Vienna, Austria

Conclusions by the Chair

Referring to the Third Meeting of the Ministers for Education of the ASEM countries (ASEMME3), held on 10th May 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark, a Working Group, consisting of representatives of Austria, China, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the ASEAN University Network, and the ASEM Education Secretariat (Italy, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European University Association being excused), met upon the invitation of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research on 5th and 6th December 2011 in Vienna.

Following the suggestions made by the Ministers for Education of the ASEM countries (ASEMME3), the Working Group explored the “feasibility of setting up an ASEM Convention on mutual recognition of degrees and study achievements (including the establishment of National Information and Recognition Centres in all ASEM countries)”.

Based on the experiences in the application of the existing regional Conventions on mutual recognition, namely

- the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (“Lisbon Recognition Convention”), adopted on 11th April 1997 in Lisbon, Portugal, and
- the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (“Tokyo Recognition Convention”), adopted on 26th November 2011 in Tokyo, Japan,

the Working Group expressed its conviction that an “ASEM Convention” on mutual recognition would strongly contribute to a better understanding of higher education systems in the two regions and to the promotion of student mobility between the two regions.

Taking into account the immense importance of authentic and reliable information on the systems of higher education, the Working Group recommends that the Networks of National Information Centres established according to art. IX.2 of the “Lisbon Recognition Convention” and art. IX.3 of the “Tokyo Recognition Convention” be mandated to set up a permanent co-operation. This cooperation shall be supported jointly by the Secretariats of the Council of Europe and UNESCO as well as an Asian counterpart.

After intensive discussions, the Working Group considered it feasible to set up a bridging “ASEM Recognition Agreement” with reference to the two Conventions mentioned above rather than formulating a new “ASEM Recognition Convention”.

The Working Group, coordinated by Austria, has committed to prepare such a draft agreement, taking into account issues identified at the meeting, and to forward it to the ASEM Education Secretariat. The Secretariat will involve the respective stakeholders and submit a consolidated draft agreement to the Senior Officials Meeting in preparation of the 4th Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME4).

The Working Group will hold its second meeting in 2012 in China to finalize the Draft Agreement.

Vienna, 6th December 2011

On behalf of the Working Group:

Heinz Kasparovsky, Austria