



The First Working Group Meeting on Implementing ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration

Consensus

Kunming, P. R. China

December 11, 2013

Referring to Paragraph 16 of the *Conclusions by the Chair* of the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting of the Ministers for Education (ASEMME4) held on 13~14 May 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Ministers welcomed China's offer to coordinate a working group to explore concrete steps to implement the *ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration* (hereinafter referred to as *Beijing Declaration*), China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC), entrusted by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, organized the First Meeting (Inaugural Assembly) of the Working Group on Implementing ASEM Recognition Declaration in Kunming, China, on 10~11 December, 2013.

The Working Group was constituted through the support of the ASEM Education Secretariat, in consultation with the Ministry of Education of China.

The Working Group is composed of representatives from 12 ASEM countries, five of which are from the Asian region (China, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea), and seven the European region (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, UK). The Working Group is chaired by China. Nine designated and further 23 participating delegates from Brunei Darussalam, Estonia, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Republic of Korea and UK attended this Inaugural Assembly. Regional Center for Higher Education and Development under South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO RIHED) and ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) participated as observers. Austria, Belgium and Germany, as members of the Working Group, were unable to attend, but provided written comments (Belgium-French).

The First Meeting focused on the coordination and collaboration in mutual recognition of qualifications in higher education in the ASEM region, with particular reference to two priority areas: the first was to discuss the Terms of Reference of the Working Group to confirm the mandate, activities, working mechanism of the group; the second was to discuss and agree on action plans for implementation.

The meeting proceeded in a congenial and active atmosphere, with significant input from members of the group. Common understandings were reached as follows:

- I. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Implementing ASEM Recognition Declaration were approved;
- II. The action plan for building a website for the Asian NIC-NARICs was approved in principle. Members of the Working Group agreed that building a website for the Asian NIC-NARICs would be major contribution to enhance transparency of qualifications in higher education of the ASEM Asian member countries, to facilitate communications among the Asian bodies responsible for qualification recognition, and to promote exchanges and cooperation in this regard. The Working Group supported China and Indonesia to take forward the proposal of building the platform for the Asian NIC-NARICs determined in the ASEMME4, taking into consideration of communication strategies and technical development. It was agreed testing of the website would take place in the first half of 2014 and be officially launched after being approved in the ASEMME5 in 2015.
- III. The Working Group agreed to the action plan for drafting the Handbook of Guidelines, Principles and Good Practices on Recognition among ASEM NIC-NARICs. The Group asked China and UK to take forward the agreed plan and to submit the draft Handbook to the second meeting in 2014, which would be submitted for approval in the ASEMME5 in 2015.
- IV. The action plan for establishing the Cross-border Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (CBQAN) was agreed in principle, an element highlighted in Paragraph 12 of ASEMME4, reflected in the terms of reference of the Working Group. Members of the Group noted that quality assurance was one of the important pre-requisites for qualification recognition. In order to ensure the credibility and validity of recognition, the ASEM member countries shall collaborate in quality assurance and qualification recognition in the field of

cross-border education. The Working Group supported China's initiative to take forward the establishment of CBQAN determined in the ASEMME4. The Working Group asked the Secretariat (China), with the support of Malaysia and UK, to prepare a detailed report to its second meeting in 2014, with the view to submitting to ASEMME5 for approval in 2015.

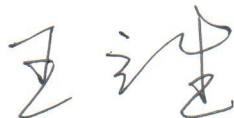
V. The implementation of the agreed action plans will be supported by participants of the Working Group.

VI. The Chair of the Working Group would formally communicate the agreed action plans and proposals to the ASEM Education Secretariat.

The Working Group agreed to have its second meeting in Riga in the second half of 2014. The Group expressed its appreciation to Latvia.

The Inaugural Assembly expressed gratitude to the strong support from the Ministry of Education of China, the Provincial Government of Yunnan, and hospitality from Yunnan Agricultural University.

11 December, 2013 Kunming



Chair of the Working Group on Implementing ASEM Recognition Declaration