

Report of the Working Group for Implementing ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration 26-27 March 2015 Hangzhou, China

1. Referring to the *Conclusions by the Chair* of the 4th Asia-Europe Meeting of the Ministers for Education (ASEMME4), China was tasked to establish a Working Group to explore concrete steps to implement the *ASEM Recognition Bridging Declaration*. The Working Group is composed of representatives from 12 ASEM countries— China, Austria, Belgium (French Community), Brunei Darussalam, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom. Japan participated in the second and third meetings of the Working Group.
2. The Working Group has held three meetings. The first meeting took place in December 2013 in Kunming, China; with the second in November 2014 in Riga, Latvia; and the third in March 2015 in Hangzhou, China.
3. The Working Group has drawn up a *Terms of Reference* to clarify its purpose and obligations ensuring an effective and smooth operating mechanism.
4. The Working Group has been working on the following three action plans:
 - to build Asian National Information Centres Coordinating Website (ANICCW);
 - to draft Guidelines, Principles and Practices on Recognition in the ASEM Region;
 - to establish Cross-border Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (CBQAN).
5. The ANICC website is primarily a professional platform for

qualification recognition (QR) for the Asian countries. Participating countries are expected to designate one collaborative organisation as the administrator of its country page, managing its page contents. The website helps to provide QR information, acting as a platform for QR professionals to exchange information including collaborative initiatives, joint research and cross-border education quality assurance. In addition, it serves as a communication channel for the participating countries between Asia and Europe. Furthermore, it is also a source of practical information concerning study overseas, scholarships, visa application and other practical matters.

The design of the website is now complete and approved by the Working Group. To date, Asian countries—China, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan have provided their country information. It is expected that the ANICC website will be launched officially at the ASEMME 5 in Riga, 2015.

The Working Group has held discussions with the UNESCO Asia-Pacific office (Bangkok) to explore ways of strengthening collaboration of websites between ANICCW and APARNET. A preliminary consensus was reached. The Working Group also agreed to forge closer links with the established ENIC-NARIC Networks.

The Working Group highlights the importance of continued efforts to ensure the effectiveness and the impact of the website.

6. The Guidelines are intended to provide a central reference point on qualification recognition, criteria, process and procedures, promoting mutual recognition among ASEM countries. The Guidelines can be used as an essential tool for government organisations, national information centres, higher education institutions and other QR bodies, and qualification holders.

The Working Group constituted the roadmap content structure of the Guidelines based on thorough and intensive research and analyses of existing tools. The Working Group concludes that the structure of the Guidelines is sufficiently comprehensive and fit-for-purpose, and the work will need to continue taking into consideration of emerging and common challenges in order to produce an ASEM Guidelines for Recognition of Qualifications.

7. With the increasing economic globalisation and education

internationalisation, cross-border education has experienced tremendous growth in scale and diversity. Quality of cross-border education has also become increasingly a cause for concern. Through CBQAN, the Working Group aims to build a platform to forge a “dialogue” between QA and QR bodies, and in turn promotes balanced and quality-assured mobility of students and academics.

The Working Group agreed to the proposed organisational charter (draft). Accordingly, the webpage of CBQAN has been designed and launched on the ANICC website. Organisations in Brunei Darussalam, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Kingdom and China have joined CBQAN as the first batch of members. Organizations from France, Belgium (French Community), Romania, Germany, Indonesia and Latvia have expressed their interests to join the network.

The Working Group agrees that after the ASEMME5, accelerated efforts should be made to disseminate information about CBQAN and to encourage wider participation of the ASEM member countries. Meanwhile, annual meetings, forums and other activities should be organized in order to increase the added value of the network.

8. In conclusion, the Working Group takes note of the progress with tangible results and pledges a strong commitment of pushing ahead with the three action plans after the ASEMME5 to ensure continuity and sustainability of work undertaken.

In addition, the Working Group embraces openness for other countries and international organisations in order to ensure wider participation and greater impact of the action plans of relevant ASEM priorities.