

10. Education: Qualification Systems [191]

“We will share information about qualification systems in our countries to increase understanding of national academic practices and traditions.”

*Education for Innovative Society in the 21st Century*⁴⁵⁵

Background

The G8 members agreed at St. Petersburg to promote education and labour mobility by sharing information about their national qualification systems and academic practices, and where possible entering into mutual recognition agreements. Distinctions are made between concerted efforts at the sub-state and state level towards this end, counting only the latter towards compliance. Full compliance requires public concerted efforts to share information about national standards of qualification (competence in a learned skill or concept), and attempted engagement into bilateral or multilateral equivalency agreements. One example of such an agreement is the European Qualification Framework, initiated by the European Union in 2005. This comprehensive agreement addressed issues such as informal (non-academic) learning, self-certification, and sector relationships with considerable transparency, and should serve as a benchmark for future qualification equivalency initiatives. While the G8 has long preached the importance of education in economic development and labour market mobility, but this is the first commitment specifically targeting academic qualification systems.

Team Leader: Jeff Claydon

Assessment

Interim Compliance Score			
	Lack of Compliance	Work in Progress	Full Compliance
Canada		0	
France			+1
Germany			+1
Italy		0	
Japan	-1		
Russia	-1		
United Kingdom		0	
United States			+1
European Union			+1
Overall			+0.22

Canada: 0

Canada has partially complied with its St. Petersburg academic qualifications commitment. The Canadian Constitution allocates education to provincial jurisdiction in Section 92. As such, the federal government has a limited capacity to influence education qualification standards and risks low compliance.⁴⁵⁶ The Council of Ministers of Education funds and operates the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, which provides the public with information with regard to education qualifications programs in Canada.

On 5 December 2006, the Canadian government signed the Agreement on Higher Education, Training, and Youth with the European Union, which committed the Canadian government to the promotion of increased bilateral cooperation on education qualification equivalency over the next eight years.⁴⁵⁸

~~However, Canada has failed to establish specific educational qualification frameworks with fellow G8 members, and though Canada signed the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications~~

⁴⁵⁵ Education for Innovative Societies in the 21st Century, G8 Russia (St. Petersburg) 16 July 2006. Date of access 14 January 2007. en.g8russia.ru/docs/12.html

Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (henceforth referred to as the Lisbon Convention) in 1997, it has thus far failed to ratify the conditions stipulated in the agreement.⁴⁵⁹

Analyst: Jeff Claydon

France: 0

France achieved only partial compliance with its St. Petersburg academic qualifications commitment. On 5 September 2006, the European Commission announced a recommendation for the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF). The EQF will provide a common language to describe qualifications which will help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems. The draft recommendations requires that Member States relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2009. This draft was developed following extensive consultation with member states and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2007 by the Council and the European Parliament.⁴⁵⁶ On 7 December 2007, the French government sponsored and hosted an Official Bologna Process Seminar, in Nice⁴⁵⁷, but France has done nothing concrete to implement the EQF any further domestically.

France continues to engage G8 members and other states in exchanges of information about education qualification programs. Direct cooperation with Germany is seen at the seventh Franco-German Council of Ministers meeting on 12 October 2006 in France. French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed the European competitiveness in the fields of research of energy, aeronautics and space, as well as the integration and equal opportunity for French and German youths in 2007.⁴⁵⁸

Analyst: Yinuo Geng

Germany: +1

The German government has achieved full compliance with the commitment made at St. Petersburg. On 5 September 2006, the European Commission announced a recommendation for the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning. The EQF will provide a common language to describe qualifications which will help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems. The draft recommendations commit Member States to a timeline with a target to implement a final EQF by 2009. This draft developed following extensive consultation with member states and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2007 by the Council and the European Parliament.⁴⁵⁹

On 1 January 2007, Germany assumed the presidency of the European Union, and declared European education initiatives a top priority. In a document released in December 2006 by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, titled *German EU Council Presidency 2007: Education and Research Policy Priorities*, the German government declared its continued support for the Lisbon and Bologna processes on educational reform, and that "it is our aim during the German Council Presidency to intensify the work on the EQF on the Commission proposal and in close cooperation with the European Parliament and, if possible, to conclude these activities."⁴⁶⁰ The German EU Presidency will also launch a European Research Council and continue to promote the SOCRATES and LEONARDO exchange programs. The Ministry of Education and Research contends that support for academic mobility and EU supported research (as opposed to national funding) will cause "greater synergy between European

⁴⁵⁶ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of access: January 11, 2007.

⁴⁵⁷ Latest News: Official Bologna Process Seminar Recommendations, Bologna Secretariat Website, Department for Education and Skills (United Kingdom), 10 January 2007. Date of access: 12 January 2007.
www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.view&NewsID=42&NewsCategoryID=1.

⁴⁵⁸ 7ème Conseil des ministres franco-allemand, L'actualité franco-allemand, (Palais de l'Élysées), 12 October 2006. Date of Access: 5 January 2007. www.france-allemande.fr/public/index.php?sess_id=Ls04FBOoT5PhR3qEmUODjjWqGTjS&id_menu=53&id_contentLanguage=1.

⁴⁵⁹ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of Access: January 11, 2007.

⁴⁶⁰ *German EU Council Presidency 2007: Education and Research Policy Priorities*, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Berlin), 20 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf.

measures.⁴⁶¹ The German government will host a launch conference for the SOCRATES and LEONARDO affiliated Lifelong Learning Programme on 6 May 2007 in Berlin.⁴⁶²

As part of the Bologna Process, Germany hosted the Official Bologna Seminar on Joint Degrees in Berlin on 21-22 September 2006.⁴⁶³ The German government, with the British government, will co-chair a Ministerial Conference in London, 16-18 May 2007. According to the Bologna Secretariat and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the objective of this conference is to agree to the next steps to be taken within the Bologna framework to realize the European Higher Education Area by 2010.⁴⁶⁴ Germany thus far failed to make concerted efforts to promote education qualifications synergy outside of the Bologna process and Europe. Yet, preexisting partnership programs with other G8 members such as Canada, the United States, and with businesses in Japan,⁴⁶⁵ should be acknowledged when considering German inaction outside of the Bologna process.

Analyst: Golta Shahidi

Italy: -1

Italy has not complied with its education qualification systems commitment. On 5 September 2006, the European Commission announced a recommendation for the establishment of the EQF for lifelong learning, which will help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems.⁴⁶⁶ There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Italy has taken any active measures to implement this recommendation or move the EQF forward since the St. Petersburg Summit.

Italy has also failed to commit fully to the convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. As of 31 December 2006, Italy is one of seven signatories out of fifty who has failed to ratify the treaty. Italian ratification is necessary to show a deeper commitment to broadening the recognition and understanding of Italian qualification systems to the rest of Europe and the world.⁴⁶⁷

Analyst: Eric Sehr

Japan: -1

Japan has not complied with its St. Petersburg academic qualifications commitment. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology announced the Third Basic Plan for Science and Technology on 28 May 2006, which promises increased funding for academic exchange and integration in East Asia from 2006 through 2010.⁴⁶⁸ In spite of the spirit of this action, it was completed before the St. Petersburg summit and does not count as compliance.

Japan has made no attempt to revive the European Union-Japan Pilot Cooperation in Higher Education initiative that was delayed in 2004 because of a lack of funding.⁴⁶⁹ Japan has not made significant efforts to share information about education qualification standards outside of East Asia and therefore receives a compliance score of -1.

Analyst: Yinuo Geng

⁴⁶¹ *German EU Council Presidency 2007: Education and Research Priorities*, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Berlin), 20 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf.

⁴⁶² *German EU Council Presidency 2007: Education and Research Priorities*, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Berlin), 20 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf.

⁴⁶³ *Joint Degrees: A Hallmark of the European Education Area?*, Bologna Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills (London), 1 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/Kurzversion_BFUG.pdf.

⁴⁶⁴ Bologna Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills (London), 10 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna>.

⁴⁶⁵ Programs offered through InWent, InWent Official Website (Berlin), November 2006. Date of Access: 23 January 2007. www.inwent.org/ueber_inwent/index.en.shtml.

⁴⁶⁶ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of Access: January 11, 2007.

europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr.

⁴⁶⁷ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region CETS No.: 165. Date of Access: January 19, 2007.

conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=165&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG.

⁴⁶⁸ Strategic Program for Building an Asian Science and Technology Community, Department of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology, 9 December 2006. Date of Access: 5 January 2007. www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2006/12/06120810.htm.

⁴⁶⁹ EU-Japan Pilot Cooperation on Higher Education, European Commission, Education and Training, 3 September 2006. Date of Access: 10 December 2006. ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu_others/japan/index_en.html.

Russia: -1

Russia has not complied with its St. Petersburg academic qualifications commitment. Russia's lack of action in this area can be illustrated by the federal ministry of education website, established in 1999, when Russia became a signatory of the Lisbon Process (Russia ratified the Convention in 2000).⁴⁷⁰ There is an area of this website entitled "The National Information Center on Academic Recognition and Mobility," that contains data on information sharing in various aspects of educational systems, recognition of qualifications and qualifications assessments.⁴⁷¹ As of 29 December 2006, this website indicated no initiatives to promote the sharing of information with other G8 members on national qualification systems during the compliance period.⁴⁷²

Analysts: Golta Shahidi and Maria Kaloshkina

United Kingdom: 0

While the United Kingdom has made considerable efforts in the past to promote the international exchange of information about education qualifications systems, the UK has taken insufficient measures to achieve full compliance with its St. Petersburg commitment on education qualification systems. The British government had already implemented several programs and initiatives aimed at promoting information about its national qualification standards before the 2006 commitment. In 1997, it established the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to oversee the development of national curriculums and qualifications standards. The QCA has since worked with national education bodies in Wales, and Northern Ireland to implement the National Qualifications Framework, the most recent version of which was implemented in January 2006.⁴⁷³ Prior to the summit, the QCA had established clear national qualification standards for the UK, and maintained a website with detailed explanations merits of the various accreditations issued in the United Kingdom.⁴⁷⁴

As a member of the EU, the UK actively participates in the development of the EQF recommended on 5 September 2006 by the European Commission.

In July 2005, the British government assumed the responsibilities of the Secretariat of the Bologna Process, which is intended to create a European Higher Learning Area by 2010.⁴⁷⁵ In this capacity, the Department of Education continues to co-chair Official Bologna Process Seminars, including the Nice Seminar 7 December 2006,⁴⁷⁶ and will host a ministerial Summit in London in May 2007.⁴⁷⁷

Analyst: Taleen Jakujyan

United States: +1

The United States has fully complied with its St. Petersburg education qualifications commitment. The United States has on several occasions reaffirmed its commitment to opening American up to greater number of foreign students as well as recognizing the need to give more American's the opportunity to learn abroad. On 9 November 2006 Karen Hughes, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs spoke about the American Governments focus on educational outreach from student and teacher exchanges, English language training, literacy classes and scholarships for girls to increase

⁴⁷⁰ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region CETS No.: 165: Date of Access: January 19, 2007. conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=165&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG.

⁴⁷¹ National Information Center on Academic Recognition and Mobility. Date of Access 29 December 2006. <http://www.russianenic.ru/english>.

⁴⁷² National Information Center on Academic Recognition and Mobility. Date of Access 29 December 2006. <http://www.russianenic.ru/english>.

⁴⁷³ Qualifications and Credit Framework, Department for Education and Skills - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (London). Date of Access: 18 November 2006. www.qca.org.uk/14459.html.

⁴⁷⁴ Qualifications and Credit Framework, Department for Education and Skills - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (London). Date of Access: 18 November 2006. www.qca.org.uk/14459.html.

⁴⁷⁵ Bologna Secretariat Official Website, Department for Education and Skills (London). Date of Access: 20 January 2007. www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna.

⁴⁷⁶ News release, "Official Bologna Process Seminar: Doctoral Programmes in Europe Conclusions and Recommendations 7-9 December 2006, Nice, France," Bologna Secretariat Official Website, Department for Education and Skills (London), 10 January 2007. Date of Access: 20 January 2007. www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.view&NewsID=42&NewsCategoryID=1.

⁴⁷⁷ Bologna Secretariat Official Website, Department for Education and Skills (London). Date of Access: 20 January 2007. www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna.

women's access to education. The American government has created 500 new consular positions in order to streamline the visa process for foreign students.⁴⁷⁸

On 16 November 2006, during International Education Week President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings all made statements that recognized the importance of facilitating international student exchanges to America not only so that Americans could come to better understand other education systems but also in recognition that students who return home from American schools often become leaders in their own countries spreading a greater understanding of American educational and cultural practices.⁴⁷⁹ America's willingness to be more accommodating to students around the world was highlighted by a three-country Asian tour involving Spellings, joined by Assistant Secretary of State Dina Habib Powell and twelve U.S. university presidents in an attempt to better understand what these countries were demanding in terms of qualifications, such as the types of skills businesses in China are looking for, as well as promoting America's exchange program.

Analyst: Eric Sehr

European Union: +1

The European Union registered a high level of compliance with its St. Petersburg commitment on education qualification systems. On 5 September 2006, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning.⁴⁸⁰ The new framework will allow for the use of a common language to describe qualifications in the EU. The intent is to help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems.⁴⁸¹ At the heart of the framework is a set of eight reference levels describing the individual's "learning outcomes", in other words, what he or she "knows, understands and is able to do ... regardless of the system where a particular qualification was acquired".⁴⁸² These reference levels provide a new approach that emphasizes the outcomes which a learner is able to produce based on his or her education, rather than the traditional factors such as the length of one's learning experience and the type of institution.⁴⁸³

The EQF will also function as a "translation device to make relationships between qualifications and different systems clearer."⁴⁸⁴ This will aid in the creation of a more transparent and accessible system across the board, increasing the general public's understanding of national academic practices and traditions, as the commitment requires, and eliminating mobility barriers in the employment market due to the lack of understanding member state standards.⁴⁸⁵

Furthermore, the European Union has committed EUR 18 million to a renewed eight-year education agreement signed between the EU and Canada on 5 December 2006. The renewed agreement will bring even more Canadians and Europeans together by tripling the available funding and expanding its scope to cover youth actions as well over the period 2006-2013 with a target of some 210 projects

⁴⁷⁸ Remarks to American Council on Education: A Strategic View of Study Abroad, 9 November 2006. Date of Access: 25 January, 2007. www.state.gov/r/us/77629.htm.

⁴⁷⁹ International Education Week 2006, November 13-17: Read Statements and Press Releases. Date of Access: 12 January, 2007. iew.state.gov/statements.htm.

⁴⁸⁰ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006.

⁴⁸¹ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006. europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.

⁴⁸² The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe," European Commission Education and Training Policy, (Brussels), 16 October 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006. ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁴⁸³ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe," European Commission Education and Training Policy, (Brussels), 16 October 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006. ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁴⁸⁴ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe," European Commission Education and Training Policy, (Brussels), 16 October 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006. ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁴⁸⁵ Frequently asked questions: why does the EU need a European Qualifications Framework? European Commission, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: 18 November 2006. europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/318&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr.

implemented and 4,430 EU and Canadian people participating in mobility activities over the duration of the program.⁴⁸⁶

Analyst: Taleen Jakujyan

⁴⁸⁶ EU-Canada relations: signature of new agreement to boost cooperation in higher education, vocational training and youth, (Brussels) 5 December, 2006. Date of Access: 11 January, 2007.
europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1684&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr.