

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*⁶¹²

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, entering into mutual recognition agreements where possible. Distinctions are made between concerted efforts at the sub-state and state level towards this end, though only the latter counts towards compliance. Full compliance requires 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, this is the first commitment specifically targeting academic qualification systems.

Team Leader: Jeff Claydon

Assessment

Interim Compliance Score		
	Lack of Compliance	Work in Progress
Canada	0	
France	0	
Germany		+1
Italy	0	
Japan	0	
Russia	0	
United Kingdom	0	
United States		+1
European Union		+1
Overall		+0.33

Canada: 0

Canada has partially complied with its St. Petersburg qualification standards commitment. The Canadian Constitution ensures provincial jurisdiction of education in Section 92. As such, the federal government has a limited capacity to influence education qualification standards and risks low compliance.⁶¹³ The federally funded Council of Ministers of Education in Canada funds and operates the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, which provides the public with information about education qualifications programs, however limited, in Canada. This centre promotes and supports the work of non-governmental organizations that hold international (though unofficial) conferences on International Qualifications regulation. One such conference is the Future of Professional Regulation in Canada Conference, to be held in Toronto in April 2007.⁶¹⁴ A 2 April

⁶¹² 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

⁶¹³ Section 92: Distribution of Legislative Powers, Canadian Constitution, Department of Justice (Ottawa), 29 March 1867. Date of Access: 20 November 2006. http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/const/c1867_e.html#distribution

⁶¹⁴ Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (Toronto), 1 November 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007. http://www.cicic.ca/en/index.aspx

statement released by the CMEC endorsed a quality assurance statement, and committed to broadening international understanding of the quality and relevance of degrees issued in Canada.⁶¹⁵ 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.⁶¹⁶

Canada is one of eighteen countries involved in the pilot project of the UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions. This is the first stage of a project that hopes to facilitate online access to information on recognized higher education institutions with an objective to providing authoritative and up-to-date information on the status of these institutions. UNESCO's pilot project has an objective "to build capacity in developing countries for collecting and sharing information (through a website) on recognized higher education institutions (including all means of identifying the recognition authority)."⁶¹⁷ Canada and other participating countries have concluded the Preparatory Phase and are now in the Implementation Phase; the whole pilot project is expected to occur over a twenty-one month period from January 2006 to September 2007. While this initiative debuted before the St. Petersburg summit, Canada's participation in the 19-20 March 2007 progress meeting should be considered in compliance with the spirit of the St. Petersburg commitment.

However, Canada has failed to pursue the establishment of specific education qualification frameworks with fellow G8 members, and though Canada signed of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (henceforth referred to as the Lisbon Process) in 1997, it has thus far failed to ratify the conditions stipulated in the agreement.⁶¹⁸

Analyst: Jeff Claydon

France: 0

France registered 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 require 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.⁶¹⁹ On 7 December 2006, the French government sponsored and hosted an Official Bologna Process Seminar,⁶²⁰, but has done nothing concrete to implement the EQF 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 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 2007.⁶²¹ However, in 2007, France has not provided any further sharing of information about education qualification standards beyond its prior responsibilities

⁶¹⁵ Ministers Responsible for Advanced Education Endorse a Statement of Quality Assurance on Degree Education in Canada, CMEC Press Releases (Toronto), 2 April 2007. Date of Access 5 April 2007.
<http://www.cmecc.ca/releases/press.en.stm?id=51>

⁶¹⁶ EU Canada Relations: Signature of a new agreement to boost cooperation in higher education, training, and youth, European Union, (Brussels), 5 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1684&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

⁶¹⁷ Quality Assurance and Recognition, UNESCO, (Paris), Date of Access: 17 April 2007.
http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52702&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁶¹⁸ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region
CETS No.: 165, Council of Europe, (Brussels), Date of Access: January 19, 2007.
<http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/Commun/CercheSig.asp?NT=165&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG>

⁶¹⁹ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of Access: January 11, 2007.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>.

⁶²⁰ 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.

⁶²¹ 7ème Conseil des ministres franco-allemand, L'actualité franco-allemand, (Paris), 12 October 2006. Date of Access: 5 January 2007.
www.franceallemande.fr/public/index.php?sess_id=Ls04FBOrOoT5PhR3qEmUODjjWqGTjS&id_menu=53&id_contentLanguage=1.

Analyst: Yinuo Geng

Germany: 1

The German government has thus far registered a high level of compliance with the commitment made at St. Petersburg. On 1 January 2007, Germany assumed the presidency of the European Union and declared European education initiatives a top priority for the duration of its presidency. In a document released 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, and that "it is our aim during the German Council Presidency to intensify the work on the European Qualifications Framework on the basis of the Commission proposal and in close cooperation with the European Parliament and, if possible, to conclude these activities."⁶²² The German EU Presidency will also launch a European Research Council and continue to promote the SOCRATES and LEONARDO exchange programmes. 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 measures."⁶²³ The German government will host a launch conference for the SOCRATES and LEONARDO affiliated Lifelong Learning Programme on 6 May 2007 in Berlin.⁶²⁴

As part of the Bologna Process, Germany hosted the Official Bologna Seminar on Joint Degrees in Berlin on 21-22 September 2006.⁶²⁵ The German and British governments, 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 determine the next steps to be taken within the Bologna framework to realize the European Higher Education Area by 2010.⁶²⁶ On 1-2 March 2007, the German Ministry of Education and Research hosted an informal meeting of European Education Ministers to promote greater understanding and synergy of continuing and vocational education practices across the region.⁶²⁷

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 former CIS states (including Russia) should be acknowledged when considering German inaction outside of the Bologna process.

Analyst: Golta Shahidi

Italy: 0

Italy has not registered full compliance 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.⁶²⁸ Italy has taken some steps to implement this recommendation and move the EQF forward since the St. Petersburg Summit. The most significant measure is the Italian-Russian cultural and education agreement. The agreement focuses on exchanging teachers and information as well as increasing contact between Italian and Russian university faculties, which goes a limited distance in improving the knowledge of each others

⁶²² 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.
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf

⁶²³ 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.
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf

⁶²⁴ 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.
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/EU-RP_InhalteSchwerpunkte_eng.pdf

⁶²⁵ 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.
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/Kurzversion_BFUG.pdf

⁶²⁶ Bologna Secretariat, Department of Education and Skills (London), 10 December 2006. Date of Access: 12 January 2007.
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna>

⁶²⁷ Informal Meeting of Education Ministers: March 2007, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, (Berlin), 3 March 2007, Press Releases. Date of Access: 4 April 2007. <http://www.bmbf.de/en/7311.php>

⁶²⁸ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of Access: 20 April 2007.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

education qualification systems.⁶²⁹ More commendable are Italy's recent agreements with Spain that focuses on supplying aid to help for student travel and stay as well as improving coordination on a large number of academic programs.⁶³⁰ Italy, however, has also failed to commit fully to the convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. As of 20 April 2007, Italy is one of seven (of fifty) signatories who have failed to ratify the treaty. Italian ratification is necessary to show a deeper commitment to broadening the recognition and understanding of Italian qualification systems throughout Europe and the world.⁶³¹

Analyst: Eric Sehr

Japan: 0

Japan has registered partial compliance 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 2010.⁶³² In spite of the spirit of this action, it was completed before the St. Petersburg summit and thus cannot be counted as compliance. Japan has made no attempt to revive the European Union-Japan Pilot Cooperation in Higher Education initiative, delayed since 2004 because of a lack of funding.⁶³³

On 12 January 2007, the first Trilateral Korea-Japan-China Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation was held in Seoul. The ministers of science and technology from the three countries "shared the view on the important role played by the technology intensive SMEs and venture firms for the economic growth, and reached a consensus on strengthening cooperation at the innovation clusters such as technoparks where these firms, research institutions and universities are clustered."⁶³⁴

Japan is one of eighteen countries involved in the UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions. This is the first stage of a project that hopes to facilitate online access to information on recognized higher education institutions with an objective to providing authoritative and up-to-date information on the status of these institutions. UNESCO's pilot project has an objective "to build capacity in developing countries for collecting and sharing information (through a website) on recognized higher education institutions (including all means of identifying the recognition authority)."⁶³⁵ Japan and other participating countries have concluded the Preparatory Phase and are now in the Implementation Phase; the whole pilot project is expected to occur over a twenty-one month period from January 2006 to September 2007. While this initiative was started before the St. Petersburg summit, Japan's participation in the 19-20 March 2007 progress meeting should be considered in compliance with the spirit of the St. Petersburg commitment.

Analyst: Yinuo Geng

Russia: 0

Russia has partially complied with its Saint-Petersburg academic qualifications commitment and receives a score of 0.

In February 2007 Russia has submitted to the OECD Education Policy Committee its Country Background Report, prepared in the framework of OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education project under the contract with the Federal Educational Agency by the State University – Higher School of

⁶²⁹ Programma esecutivo per la collaborazione nell'ambito della cultura e dell'istruzione tra la repubblica italiana e la federazione russa, nel triennio 2007-2009. (Rome). Date of Access: April 16, 2007. http://www.esteri.it/doc/4_28_67_81_91_89_120.pdf

⁶³⁰ Dipartimento per l'università, l'alta formazione artistica, musicale e coreutica per la ricerca scientifica e tecnologica, (Rome), 2 March 2007. Date of Access: April 16, 2007. http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/6228Azioni_cf2.htm

⁶³¹ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region CETS No.: 165, Council of Europe, (Brussels), Date of Access: 20 April 2007. <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/Common/ChercheSig.asp?NT=165&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG>

⁶³² Strategic Program for Building an Asian Science and Technology Community, Department of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology, (Tokyo), 9 December 2006. Date of Access: 5 January 2007. www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2006/12/06120810.htm.

⁶³³ EU-Japan Pilot Cooperation on Higher Education, European Commission, Education and Training, (Tokyo), 3 September 2006. Date of Access: 10 December 2006. ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu_others/japan/index_en.html.

⁶³⁴ Joint Statement of the First Trilateral Korea-Japan-China Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation Seoul. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, (Tokyo), 12 January 2007. Date of Access: 17 April 2007. <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/kagaku/07012314.htm>.

⁶³⁵ Quality Assurance and Recognition. UNESCO, (Paris), Date of Access: 17 April 2007. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52702&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

Economics. Chapter 2 "Overall description of the tertiary education system" includes comprehensive information on the Russian qualifications system, as well as national academic practices and traditions in the sphere. Chapter 9 "Assuring the quality of tertiary education" considers problems of international comparability of qualifications.⁶³⁶

An international workshop "Tertiary Education in Russia: Equity, Quality, Efficiency, Competitiveness. Wrap-Up International Seminar on the OECD project "Thematic Review of Tertiary Education" was organized on the 12-13th of April 2007 with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The workshop participants included representatives of OECD Directorate for Education. Issue of international comparability of the Russian qualifications system as a key factor of enhancing efficiency and competitiveness of the Russian tertiary education system was debated by the network of experts.⁶³⁷

In order to share information about qualification systems in Russia and European countries, and to increase understanding of Russian academic practices and traditions outside the country Russia jointed the international project "Tuning educational structures in Europe" (TUNING), which encompasses nearly 200 universities from 50 countries of Europe and Latin America, and seeks the elaboration of a framework of transparent, comparable, and compatible qualifications in the signatory countries of the Bologna process, which should be described in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. The "Tuning educational programmes in Russian HEIs" project (TUNING-Russia) is supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the National Training Foundation.⁶³⁸

On 19-21 October, 2996 an international workshop "Establishing common understanding of educational programmes, curricula and learning outcomes: methodology, methods and tools of "Tuning educational structures in Europe" project" was held in the framework of the TUNING-Russia project.⁶³⁹ More than 70 participants took part in the workshop, including heads of departments of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, representatives of the Delegation of the European Commission in Russia, academic staff from the leading Russian and European universities. During the workshop the questions of ensuring qualifications systems transparency and comparability in Russia and Europe were widely discussed.

So, Russia is participating in international projects, aimed at sharing information about qualification systems, on a Federal level. But as there is no special state programmes for sharing information about qualification systems with other countries in order to increase understanding of Russian academic practices and traditions abroad, Russia receives a 0 score for compliance with the commitment.

Analysts: Maria Kaloshkina and Katya Gorbunova

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, the British government established the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 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 2006.⁶⁴⁰ Prior to the summit, the QCA had established clear national qualifications standards for the United Kingdom, and

⁶³⁶ Russian version of the Country Background Report for Russia: http://www.oecdcentre.hse.ru/material/opublic/tertiary_education_review_in_the_rf.pdf. Date of Access 25 April 2007. The English version will be available on the OECD web-site by July 2007: www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Paris).

⁶³⁷ The State University – Higher School of Economics, (Moscow). 12 April 2007. Date of Access 25 April 2007. http://www.hse.ru/temp/2007/04_12-13_seminar.shtml

⁶³⁸ Tuning Educational Programmes in Russian HEIs, . The State University – Higher School of Economics, (Moscow). No publication date. Date of Access 25 April 2007. <http://www.iori.hse.ru/tuning/english.shtml>

⁶³⁹ Establishing common understanding of educational programmes, curricula and learning outcomes: methodology, methods and tools, The State University – Higher School of Economics, (Moscow)... Date of Access 25 April 2007. <http://www.iori.hse.ru/tuning/events.shtml>

⁶⁴⁰ Qualifications and Credit Framework, Department for Education and Skills, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (London), undated. Date of Access: 18 November 2006. <http://www.qca.org.uk/14459.html>.

maintained a website with detailed explanations merits of the various accreditations issued in the United Kingdom.⁶⁴¹

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 foresee that Member States relate their national qualifications systems to the 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.⁶⁴²

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 2010.⁶⁴³ In this capacity, the Department of Education continues to co-chair Official Bologna Process Seminars, including the Nice Seminar 7 December 2006,⁶⁴⁴ and will host a ministerial Summit in London in May 2007.⁶⁴⁵

The United Kingdom is one of eighteen countries involved in the pilot project of the UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions. This is the first stage of a project that hopes to facilitate online access to information on recognized higher education institutions with an objective to providing authoritative and up-to-date information on the status of these institutions. UNESCO's pilot project has an objective "to build capacity in developing countries for collecting and sharing information (through a website) on recognized higher education institutions (including all means of identifying the recognition authority)."⁶⁴⁶ The United Kingdom and the other participating countries have concluded the Preparatory Phase and are now in the Implementation Phase; the whole pilot project is expected to occur over a twenty-one month period from January 2006 to September 2007. While this initiative was started before the St. Petersburg summit, UK participation in the 19-20 March 2007 progress meeting should be considered in compliance with the spirit of the St. Petersburg commitment.

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 women's access to education. The American government has created 500 new consular positions in order to streamline the visa process for foreign students.⁶⁴⁷

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.⁶⁴⁸ America's willingness to be more accommodating to students around the world was highlighted by a three-

⁶⁴¹ Qualifications and Credit Framework, Department for Education and Skills - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, (London), undated. Date of Access: 18 November 2006. <http://www.qca.org.uk/14459.html>.

⁶⁴² The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels) 5 September, 2006. Date of Access: January 11, 2007. <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

⁶⁴³ Bologna Secretariat Official Website, Department for Education and Skills (London), undated. Date of Access: 20 January 2007. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/>

⁶⁴⁴ 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. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.view&NewsID=42&NewsCategoryID=1>

⁶⁴⁵ Bologna Secretariat Official Website, Department for Education and Skills (London), undated. Date of Access: 20 January 2007. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/>

⁶⁴⁶ Quality Assurance and Recognition. UNESCO. Date of Access: 17 April 2007. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52702&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁶⁴⁷ Remarks to American Council on Education: A Strategic View of Study Abroad.

⁶⁴⁸ International Education Week 2006, November 13-17: Read Statements and Press Releases. Date of Access, 2 April 2007. <http://iiew.state.gov/statements.htm>.

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. On 26 March 2007 the Assistant Secretary of State Dina Habib Powell was in India and reaffirmed America's goal "to make an American education possible for every international student who wishes to study in the U.S."⁶⁴⁹

The United States is one of eighteen countries involved in the pilot project of the UNESCO Portal on Recognized Higher Education Institutions. This is the first stage of a project that hopes to facilitate online access to information on recognized higher education institutions with an objective to providing authoritative and up-to-date information on the status of these institutions. UNESCO's pilot project has an objective "to build capacity in developing countries for collecting and sharing information (through a website) on recognized higher education institutions (including all means of identifying the recognition authority)."⁶⁵⁰ The United States and the other participating countries have concluded the Preparatory Phase and are now in the Implementation Phase; the whole pilot project is expected to occur over a twenty-one month period from January 2006 to September 2007. While this initiative was started before the St. Petersburg summit, UK participation in the 19-20 March 2007 progress meeting should be considered in compliance with the spirit of the St. Petersburg commitment.

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.⁶⁵¹ 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.⁶⁵² 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."⁶⁵³

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.⁶⁵⁴

The EQF will also function as a "translation device to make relationships between qualifications and different systems clearer."⁶⁵⁵ 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.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁴⁹ Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen P. Hughes Remarks at Business Partnerships in Higher Education Luncheon hosted by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, (Mumbai), Monday, March 26, 2007. Date of Access: April 16, 2006. <http://exchanges.state.gov/news/2007/032607.htm>

⁶⁵⁰ Quality Assurance and Recognition, UNESCO, (Paris). Date of Access: 17 April 2007.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52702&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁶⁵¹ The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: 15 November 2006.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

⁶⁵² The European Qualifications Framework: a new way to understand qualifications across Europe, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: November 15, 2006.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1148&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

⁶⁵³ 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: November, 15 2006.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁶⁵⁴ 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: November, 15 2006.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁶⁵⁵ 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: November, 15 2006.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html.

⁶⁵⁶ Frequently asked questions: why does the EU need a European Qualifications Framework? European Commission, (Brussels), 5 September 2006. Date of Access: 18 November 2006.

The European Union also hosted conference in Brussels, on 5 and 6 March 2007, to design the next phase of Tempus, the EU's flagship program for higher education cooperation with Europe's neighbours. Tempus is an EU funded program aimed to support the modernization of higher education in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region. For the period 2007-2013, the annual Tempus budget is expected to be in the order of € 50 million.⁶⁵⁷

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 implemented and 4,430 EU and Canadian people participating in mobility activities over the duration of the program. ⁶⁵⁸

Analyst: Taleen Jakujyan

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/318&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>.

⁶⁵⁷ TEMPUS: towards a new boost for the EU's international cooperation in higher education, (Brussels), 2 March 2007. Date of Access: April 16, 2007.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/273&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
⁶⁵⁸ EU-Canada relations: signature of new agreement to boost cooperation in higher education, vocational training and youth, (Brussels), 5 December, 2006. Date of Access: January 11, 2007.
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1684&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>