

MaxiPAC

OUTCOME 3

How to implement the procedure in universities

Summary Report Prepared for Collaborative Universities, Policy-makers, and other Experts
on the MaxiPAC.eu Procedure to Maximize Previously Acquired Competences
(Degrees and experiences) of Refugees and Third-Country National Students in European Higher
Education

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Acronyms

EAC = elsewhere acquired competences

EAQ = elsewhere acquired qualifications

ENIC/NARIC = The use of the ENIC (European Network of Information Centers in the European Region) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centers in the European Union) in one term refers to the network of collaboration between the national information centers on academic recognition of qualifications of in total 55 countries. The national information centers operate under the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997).

EHEA = European Higher Education Area

EQS = European Qualification Scan

HEI = Higher Education Institutions (Universities & Universities of Applied Sciences)

IOM = International Organisation for Migration

MaxiPAC = Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences

RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning

General Introduction

The MaxiPAC.eu project (Maximize Previously Acquired Competences at European Universities) started on 31st of December 2019 and concludes on 31st December 2022, with co-funding from the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. Its target group, third country national student, persons in refugee-like situations, and persons coming from non-European countries who have acquired a skill, qualification, and do not have documentary evidence such as certificates for proving their previously acquired competences for various reasons. Its partner Universities include: The University of Lapland in Finland; EKKE (The National Centre for Social Research) in Greece; AEGEE (The European Student Organization) in Belgium; the University of Bari Aldo Moro in Italy, and the project lead Thomas More University in Belgium. To achieve the goal of the project, partners took upon Outcomes 1-5:

1. Uniform Procedure to valorize previously acquired competences (Thomas More Kempen – Belgium)
2. Modalities and organization aspects at the University (Bari Aldo Moro – Italy)
3. How to implement the procedure in Universities? (Thomas More Kempen – Belgium)
4. How to deal with languages? (University of Lapland – Finland)
5. E-learning support (EKKE - Greece)

On the legalities and rationale for addressing the above problem, the Bologna Declaration (1999) specifies that European Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in Europe have the autonomy to valorize the qualifications and competencies acquired elsewhere according to their standards. Further, the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) did raise the need for EU countries to develop procedures to assess whether groups as refugees and displaced persons fulfill the relevant requirements for access to higher education and places of employment, even when the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence. However, despite this autonomy, the targeted migrant group and those in refugee-like situations who travel to Europe continue to experience numerous challenges. In particular, where their previously acquired competencies are not recognized in Europe making them unable to work or study. Other barriers they face include inadequate access to e-services and language support services, among others. In some cases, dealing with University program requirements, learning procedures, and employment needs can be difficult, especially where information is made available in languages other than those of the target group.



To address the above challenges, MaxiPAC has developed a **procedure** with the following contents to make it easier for persons of the targeted migrant group to access higher education. The procedure also makes available, various steps that can be adapted to the overarching admission procedures for student enrolment in degree programs at European Universities. It takes into consideration, the following:

- **Structured scan:** A means to provide reliable information about the applicant's educational qualifications, work experience, and language skills. A scan that applies to all European higher education institutions upon taking.
- **Multiple short cases:** An initial and low-cost step to measure the feasibility of the student and the chosen program.
- **A portfolio:** This includes various forms of assessments offered to the applicant as the main step of the EAC procedure.
- **Psychosocial support:** Support provided to the student throughout the application process. Such support Integration training coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication the student services of the relevant higher education institution with other local services that can support the refugee Integration training coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication process. This step is rather a continuous process during the procedure.

1. Introduction Outcome 3

We make a separate outcome for the implementation of the procedure composed of two parts:

- a. Change management: a nice procedure does not yet guarantee that the universities will use it. That is why we provide a separate outcome for this, so that we maximize the chance that universities will also implement the procedure.

Aspects of consideration:

- Body within the university that best implements such a procedure in its operation
 - The necessary functions/provision to assess the third-country nationals
 - Administrative elements necessary to implement the procedure
 - Leaflet (on paper and on website) to address third-country nationals
- b. Cost/benefit analysis: unless universities are convinced that the cost of assessing previous competences balances with the benefit of yielding financial benefits (enrollments and public support), the willingness to do the necessary investments will be low. Therefore a calculation model will be built. Apart from financial benefits, also non-financial benefits might be identified, e.g. doctorands might be recruited amongst this group of students (extra pool of talents). Potentially multiple models might be yielded (e.g. a Scandinavian model, a Southern European model, a Western European model), based on the calculations of the 4 involved partner universities from Greece, Italy, Finland, Belgium.. The impact from this output is in essence that universities might be convinced to invest in the required change.
 - c. We will end with policy recommendations on the European level, the national and the level of the Higher Education Institutions. This chapter will outline a series of policy recommendations that can help to promote the recognition and valorization of these competences, in order to support the career and professional development of third country nationals in Europe. The recognition of competences acquired elsewhere is a crucial aspect of the integration process of third country nationals in Europe. The implementation of these policy recommendations would support the integration of third country nationals into the labor market and society, and promote the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills across Europe.

2. Change management

2.1 Change management on different levels

The integration of refugees into higher education is a complex and multifaceted process that requires collaboration between universities, government agencies, and other organizations. Change management is a critical component in the implementation of effective programs and policies for refugees in higher education. This chapter will examine the change management process in universities in regards to refugees in higher education.

Step 1: Assessment of the Current State

The first step in the change management process is to assess the current state of the university in terms of its policies, programs, and resources for refugees in higher education. This assessment should include a review of the current enrollment of refugees, the types of support services available to them, and the barriers to their access to higher education.

Step 2: Stakeholder Analysis

The second step is to conduct a stakeholder analysis to identify key stakeholders in the integration of refugees into higher education. This includes government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other organizations that provide services and support to refugees. It is important to engage these stakeholders in the change management process to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account.

Step 3: Development of a Strategic Plan

The third step is to develop a strategic plan for the integration of refugees into higher education. This plan should include specific goals and objectives, a timeline for implementation, and the resources and support necessary to achieve these goals. The plan should also identify the key stakeholders who will be involved in the implementation of the plan and the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

Step 4: Implementation

The fourth step is the implementation of the strategic plan. This includes the development of policies and programs that support the integration of refugees into higher education, such as language classes, mentorship programs, and financial support. The implementation process should also include ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the policies and programs and to make necessary adjustments.

Step 5: Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The final step is the evaluation and continuous improvement of the policies and programs for refugees in higher education. This includes collecting and analyzing data on the enrollment and graduation rates of refugees, as well as the effectiveness of the support services provided to them. The results of the evaluation should be used to identify areas for improvement and to make necessary adjustments to the policies and programs.

2.2 *How to realize change management regarding accessibility for third-country nationals*

Refugees and third-country nationals face unique challenges when trying to access services and opportunities in a new country. As such, it is important for organizations to be proactive in making their services and workplace accessible to this population. Change management is a crucial component of this effort, and requires a comprehensive approach that involves assessing the current situation, engaging stakeholders, and developing a clear vision and action plan. The following recommendations provide a starting point for organizations looking to improve accessibility for refugees and third-country nationals.

1. **Assess the current situation:** Conduct a thorough assessment of the organization's current policies, procedures, and practices in regards to accessibility for third-country nationals or refugees.
2. **Develop a clear vision:** Develop a clear vision of what the organization wants to achieve with respect to accessibility for third-country nationals or refugees, and ensure that this vision is shared and understood by all stakeholders.
3. **Engage stakeholders:** Engage all relevant stakeholders, including employees, third-country nationals or refugees, and relevant government agencies, in the change management process.
4. **Develop a comprehensive action plan:** Develop a comprehensive action plan that outlines the steps the organization will take to improve accessibility for third-country nationals or refugees.
5. **Provide training and support:** Provide training and support to employees to ensure they are equipped to support third-country nationals or refugees in a culturally sensitive and effective manner.
6. **Monitor progress:** Regularly monitor progress and make adjustments to the action plan as needed.
7. **Celebrate success:** Celebrate and recognize the successes of the change management process, both internally and externally, to reinforce the importance of accessibility for third-country nationals or refugees.

2.3 *Body within the university that best implements the procedure*

The recognition of EAC starts with the universities themselves. They must have a clear policy on the recognition and validation of EAC, which should be accessible to all students and staff. This policy should include the procedures for assessment, recognition and validation, as well as the criteria for awarding credits for EAC. By implementing a structure that supports the recognition of EAC, European universities can contribute to the development of a more dynamic and flexible education system that responds to the needs of society.

Universities should also ensure that their staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to recognize and validate EAC. This may involve providing training and support for staff to develop their understanding of the EQF and the recognition of EAC.

Credit Transfer and Recognition of EAC

The recognition of EAC can lead to credit transfer, which enables students to receive academic recognition for the competences they have acquired outside the formal education system. This can be particularly valuable for students who have acquired competences through work experience or other life experiences.

Universities should have clear and transparent procedures for the credit transfer of EAC, including the assessment of the competences, the number of credits that can be awarded, and the criteria for recognition. This will enable students to make informed decisions about their academic progression and to plan their studies effectively.

Universities can foresee clear credit transfer of competences acquired elsewhere through the following steps:

1. Developing a clear and transparent policy on credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL).
2. Establishing partnerships with other institutions to facilitate the transfer of credits.
3. Developing assessment criteria and procedures that are fair, consistent, and transparent.
4. Ensuring that the assessment process accurately reflects the competences acquired and aligns with the university's standards.
5. Offering opportunities for RPL assessment, such as credit by examination or portfolio review.
6. Clearly communicating the process and criteria for credit transfer and RPL to students, staff, and other relevant stakeholders.
7. Keeping records of all credit transfers and RPL assessments for future reference and review.

Framework for the implementation of Credit Transfer and Recognition of EAC

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) aims to promote mobility and facilitate the recognition of qualifications and competences acquired in different countries. To achieve this, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Bologna Declaration have established frameworks for the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences in European universities. In this chapter, we will discuss the implementation of the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences in European universities through existing services.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Bologna Declaration have established several services for the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences in European universities. These services include the National Academic Recognition Information Centers (NARICs) for the national recognition of a diploma; but also the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) on the level of the universities themselves.

We want to clear up the confusion surrounding the responsibility of NARICs on the one hand and the universities themselves on the other. The primary responsibility of NARICs is to provide information and advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications and competences within a specific country. They assist individuals in determining the comparability of their qualifications and competences to those offered in the labor market. But universities are responsible for the actual recognition of elsewhere acquired competences for admission and academic credit purposes. This involves evaluating an individual's qualifications and prior learning experiences to determine if they meet the university's admission requirements and if academic credit can be awarded for relevant courses or experiences.

The existing services for the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences, such as ECTS and EQF, provide a framework for the recognition of qualifications and competences acquired in different countries. These services play a key role in ensuring that the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences is implemented effectively in European universities.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a credit system designed to facilitate the recognition of qualifications and competences acquired in the universities in Europe. It provides a common framework for the comparability of qualifications and allows students to transfer credits from one university to another. The ECTS also supports the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning by allowing students to accumulate credits for these activities. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common reference framework for the recognition of qualifications in the EHEA. It provides a common language for the comparison and recognition of qualifications, regardless of the country in which they were acquired. The EQF also supports the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning by allowing for the recognition of these activities at different levels of the EQF.

Each European university is obligated to install a service for the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences of potential students as outlined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Bologna Declaration. It is therefore appropriate to include the MaxiPAC procedure in these services. MaxiPAC fits perfectly into the structure already under construction and should therefore be included immediately in the further implementation of elsewhere acquired competencies of European students.

The implementation of elsewhere acquired competences at the universities begin with the identification of the competences that students have acquired. This is typically done through a self-assessment process, where students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and identify the skills and knowledge that they have acquired. Once the competences have been identified, the next step is to evaluate them. This involves comparing the competences to established standards or frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework, to determine their level of proficiency and relevance. Once the competences have been evaluated, they are then integrated into the Association's activities and programs. This may involve providing students with opportunities to use and further develop their competences, such as through volunteer work, leadership roles, or participation in special projects. The universities also provide recognition for the competences, such as through certificates or transcripts, which can be used to demonstrate their skills and knowledge to potential employers or other organizations.

The implementation of elsewhere acquired competences at the universities faces nowadays several challenges and opportunities. This is no different for third-country nationals using the MaxiPAC procedure as it is for the recognition of Europeans' skills acquired elsewhere. The challenge include the lack of standardization in the evaluation process and the difficulty in assessing the validity and reliability of the competences. These challenges can be addressed by establishing clear guidelines and procedures for the evaluation and recognition of competences, and by engaging in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that the process is transparent and fair. In addition to these challenges, the implementation of elsewhere acquired competences also presents several opportunities, such as the potential to foster a more inclusive and supportive community, to increase student engagement and motivation, and to develop more relevant and effective programs and initiatives.

The Importance of Student Involvement

In order for EAC to be successfully recognized and valued, students must be involved in the process. This includes providing information and guidance on the recognition of EAC, as well as opportunities for students to discuss their EAC with academic staff.

Specifically, what can universities do to engage and help students from refugee-like backgrounds?

- Universities can help refugees find their certificates in home country institutions. Higher Education Institutions can provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their EAC through assessments or projects. This allows students to apply their EAC in a meaningful and practical way, and provides evidence of their competences for recognition and validation.
- Universities can provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their elsewhere acquired competences by incorporating portfolio-based assessments or projects into a foreseen curriculum. These assessments or projects can be designed to allow students to reflect on their experiences and showcase how their prior learning, skills and experiences relate to the course outcomes.
- Universities can offer opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning activities such as internships, co-op programs, or service learning projects where they can apply their acquired competences in a real-world setting.
- Furthermore, universities can collaborate with local employers to provide students with work-based learning opportunities that allow them to demonstrate their competences in a professional setting. These activities can provide students with valuable recognition and validation of their elsewhere acquired competences.
- Higher Education Institutions can ensure that students from refugee backgrounds can have inexpensive healthy meals. It allows these students to focus on their studies and not have to deal with 'survival'.
- Universities should engage in more projects with poor countries, such as countries of Africa or of Latin America. This would reduce the distance with students from those countries. The added value of these students would also be clearer and more visible that way.

2.4 *The necessary functions to assess the third-country nationals*

In today's globalized world, many students bring to their academic programs knowledge and skills acquired through life and work experiences, as well as through formal training and education obtained outside of the traditional classroom setting. These competences, known as elsewhere acquired competences (EAC), need to be recognized and valued in order to enhance the educational experience and career opportunities of students. However, assessing EAC can be a complex and challenging process, as it requires a combination of various functions and roles.

Functions of Assessment in EAC

- **Identification and Documentation of Competences**
The first function of assessment in EAC is to identify and document the competences that a student has acquired through various sources. This process can involve reviewing previous academic records, conducting an interview with the student, or using self-assessment tools. The documentation should be comprehensive and reflect the student's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a clear and concise manner.
- **Validation of Competences**
The second function of assessment is to validate the competences that have been identified and documented. This process typically involves a review by experts in the field, who can determine the authenticity and relevance of the student's competences in relation to the learning outcomes of a particular program.
- **Comparison to Learning Outcomes**
The third function of assessment is to compare the student's competences to the learning outcomes of the academic program. This step is critical in determining the extent to which the student's EAC aligns with the objectives of the program, and it can help to identify any gaps in the student's knowledge or skills.

Roles in Assessment of EAC

Student

The student plays a crucial role in the assessment of EAC, as they are responsible for providing information about their competences and for demonstrating their skills and abilities. Students should be encouraged to take an active role in the assessment process and to provide detailed and accurate information about their competences.

Academic Advisor

The academic advisor is responsible for guiding the student through the assessment process and for providing support and assistance as needed. The academic advisor should also play a key role in evaluating the student's competences and determining their relevance to the learning outcomes of the academic program.

Expert Evaluators

Expert evaluators are professionals in the field who are responsible for reviewing and validating the student's competences. Expert evaluators should be selected based on their experience and expertise, and they should be able to provide objective and impartial evaluations of the student's competences.

Institution

The institution plays a crucial role in the assessment of EAC, as it is responsible for ensuring that the process is fair, transparent, and consistent. The institution should also ensure that the assessment process is aligned with the learning outcomes of the academic program and that the results of the assessment are used to enhance the student's educational experience.

Assessing students with EAC is a complex and challenging process that requires a combination of functions and roles. However, it is also an opportunity to recognize and value the competences that students bring to their academic programs and to enhance their educational experience and career opportunities. By following a systematic and transparent process, institutions can ensure that the assessment of EAC is fair and consistent and that the results are used to benefit both the student and the academic program.



3. Leaflet to address third-country nationals

PARTNERS









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MORE INFORMATION



Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences at European Universities

For more information about the procedure, please contact us:

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A CHANCE TO STUDY WITH MAXIPAC.EU



Do you have an academic experience or a degree that does not receive the right recognition? Then be sure to read on and find out how you can obtain a recognized degree without having to follow subjects that you have already mastered.

WHAT IS MAXIPAC.EU?

MaxipAC.eu, acronym for 'Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences at European Universities', is an Erasmus+ project that aims to maximize previously acquired competences (degrees and experience) of third country nationals in European higher education.

When a governmental organization does not recognize the degree (e.g. incomplete learning path; problem of matching competences; etc.), every university uses its own program or trajectory. MaxipAC.eu presents a uniform procedure within higher education.

WHO IS MAXIPAC.EU FOR?



MaxipAC.eu was founded for third country nationals. This specifically concerns people who have a degree or competences from outside Europe that are not recognized in the country. Are you a third country national with non-recognized competences who would like to obtain a national degree? Do not hesitate and find out more on the MaxipAC.eu website.

THE PROCEDURE

Step 1:
European Qualifications Scan (preliminary)

This is a document providing an assessment of the qualifications and competences of a third country national of higher education on the basis of available documentation and an interview.

An initial orientation of the knowledge and skills of the third country national on the basis of short, written case studies in the course concerned.

Step 2:
Multiple Short Cases (preliminary)

Step 3:
Portfolio and Assessment (core)

You will have to put together a portfolio and will receive additional assessments depending on the application file.

Exploring the psychosocial situation of the third country national to see the possibilities. The third country national then receives a Go - No go with advice and timing.

Step 4:
Assessment of the psychosocial situation

4. Cost/benefit analyses

Universities have the opportunity to attract students from all over the world and provide them with education and training that will prepare them for their future careers. In order to make higher education more accessible, some universities have implemented shortened programs for third country nationals, which are designed to provide students with a fast-track to their degrees. The goal of this chapter is to examine the costs and benefits of these shortened programs, in order to determine if they are a worthwhile investment for universities.

It's impossible to give concrete data material on the costs and benefits of shortened programs for third country nationals in European universities, because there are so many differences between the national policy of the different European countries. However, we can provide a general overview of the potential costs and benefits.

Costs

1. **Reduced course offerings:** Shortened programs may require universities to limit their course offerings in order to fit everything into a condensed timeframe.
2. **Increased staffing costs:** Providing support and resources to a larger number of students in a shorter amount of time can be more resource-intensive, which could increase staffing costs for universities.
3. **Decreased revenue from tuition and fees:** Shortened programs may result in lower tuition and fee revenue, as students pay less overall for their education.
4. **Reduced Tuition Revenues:** One of the main costs of shortened programs is the reduced tuition revenue that universities will receive. These programs are designed to be completed in a shorter period of time, meaning that students will pay less in tuition fees. This reduction in revenue can be significant, especially if a large number of students choose to enroll in the shortened program.
5. **Increased Expenses:** In order to accommodate the accelerated pace of these programs, universities may need to hire additional staff, provide additional resources, or make other changes to their operations. These additional expenses can be substantial, and can offset the reduced tuition revenue that universities receive from these programs.
6. **Reduced Quality of Education:** Another potential cost of shortened programs is a reduced quality of education. In order to complete the program in a shorter period of time, students may need to sacrifice some of the hands-on learning opportunities and practical experience that are typically included in traditional degree programs. This can result in a lower quality of education, which could negatively impact the reputation of the university.
7. **Not investing in the valorization of EAC's** means a loss for the those potential students at a personal level but also for the economy and society in general: it is a loss of human capital.

Benefits

1. **Increased Enrollment:** Shortened programs can increase enrollment at universities, especially among third country nationals who are looking for a fast-track to their degrees. These programs can also attract students who may not have otherwise considered attending university, making higher education more accessible to a wider range of individuals.
2. **Increased diversity among students** is indispensable to make programs “future proof”: how do people with other roots perceive the topics and methods studied, how to collaborate with a diverse group of students etc. This is really an asset for the students and the programs. More enrollment of third country nationals will contribute to this.
3. **Improved Career Opportunities:** By completing their degrees in a shorter period of time, students in shortened programs can enter the workforce earlier and take advantage of career opportunities that may not have been available to them otherwise. This can result in a more fulfilling and lucrative career path, which can be a significant benefit to these students.
4. **Positive Impact on the Economy:** By attracting more students from other countries, shortened programs can have a positive impact on the local economy. These students will spend money on housing, food, and other necessities, which can boost local businesses and stimulate economic growth.
5. **Increased enrollment and diversity:** Shortened programs can attract a wider range of students from different countries and backgrounds, which can help increase enrollment and diversity at universities.
6. **Improved international reputation:** Offering fast-track programs for international students can improve a university's international reputation, as it demonstrates a commitment to making higher education more accessible and inclusive.
7. **Increased revenue from tuition and fees:** While shortened programs may result in lower overall tuition and fee revenue, they may also increase revenue by attracting more international students who are willing to pay higher tuition rates.

It's important to note that the costs and benefits of these programs can vary depending on a number of factors, such as the specific program offerings, the size and resources of the university, and the demand for fast-track programs among international students. It's important for universities to carefully evaluate the costs and benefits of these programs, and to track the financial impact over time, in order to determine if they are a worthwhile investment. This could involve analyzing the costs associated with staffing, resources, and course offerings, as well as the revenue generated from tuition and fees, and considering factors such as the demand for fast-track programs among international students.

Overall, the costs and benefits of shortened programs for third country nationals at universities are complex and interrelated. While these programs have the potential to increase enrollment, improve career opportunities, and have a positive impact on the local economy, they also come with a number of costs, including reduced tuition revenue and a potential reduction in the



quality of education. Universities must carefully consider these costs and benefits when deciding whether or not to implement these programs, in order to make informed decisions that will benefit both their students and their institutions.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Policy Recommendations at the European level

In today's globalized world, people are increasingly acquiring competences and skills through various means outside of formal education and training systems. These elsewhere acquired competences can include work experience, volunteering, and other forms of learning and training. However, these competences are often not recognized or valued by employers, educators, and other stakeholders, making it difficult for individuals to leverage their skills and experience to advance their careers.

To address this challenge, it is important to develop policy recommendations that will facilitate the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences at the European level. This chapter will outline a series of policy recommendations that can help to promote the recognition and valorization of these competences, in order to support the career and professional development of third country nationals in Europe.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Develop a European Framework for the Recognition of Elsewhere Acquired Competences:** To promote the recognition and valorization of elsewhere acquired competences, it is essential to develop a clear and comprehensive European framework that outlines the criteria and processes for recognizing these competences. This framework should take into account the diverse range of competences that individuals can acquire through different means, and should be flexible enough to accommodate the changing nature of work and the skills and competences required for different careers.
2. **Promote the Use of Assessment and Recognition Tools:** To facilitate the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences, it is important to promote the use of assessment and recognition tools, such as portfolios, work samples, and other forms of evidence-based assessment. These tools can help to demonstrate the value and relevance of an individual's competences, and can be used to support their recognition by employers, educators, and other stakeholders.
3. **Provide Training and Support for Stakeholders:** To support the implementation of the European framework for the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences, it is important to provide training and support for stakeholders, including employers, educators, and other decision-makers. This training and support can help to increase awareness and understanding of the value and relevance of elsewhere acquired competences, and can also help to ensure that these competences are recognized and valued in a consistent and equitable manner.



4. Foster Collaboration and Partnerships: To support the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences, it is important to foster collaboration and partnerships between stakeholders, including employers, educators, and governments. These partnerships can help to promote the exchange of information and best practices, and can also help to ensure that policies and initiatives related to the recognition of elsewhere acquired competences are informed by the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders.

5.2 Policy Recommendations at the national levels

The recognition of competences acquired elsewhere is a crucial aspect in the integration process of third country nationals in a new country. This process enables individuals to have their skills, qualifications, and experiences acknowledged, which can help facilitate their entry into the labor market and contribute to the overall economic and social development of the country. In Europe, several countries have implemented policies aimed at recognizing the competences of third country nationals. However, there is room for improvement in the implementation of these policies on a national level in different European countries.

The objective of this chapter is to provide policy recommendations for the recognition of competences acquired elsewhere by third country nationals in Europe. These recommendations aim to support the integration of third country nationals into the labor market and society, and to promote the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills across Europe.

Recommendations

The following policy recommendations are aimed at promoting the recognition of competences acquired elsewhere by third country nationals in Europe:

1. Establishment of a single national agency responsible for the recognition of competences: This agency should be responsible for the assessment, recognition and validation of competences acquired by third country nationals. This would simplify the recognition process and ensure that the evaluation of competences is transparent and consistent.
Establishment of a single national agency in charge of the orientation of new comers with an educational perspective. The agency should do a first assessment of EAC's, language skills and screen ambitions; refer to the right language centers; advice on how to proceed with the EAC's (recognition procedure and/or EAC-procedure).
2. Development of a database of recognized qualifications: The database should include information on recognized qualifications, skills and experiences acquired by third country nationals. This would enable employers to easily access information about the



competences of third country nationals and support their integration into the labor market.

3. Implementation of a credit transfer system: This system would allow third country nationals to transfer their acquired competences from one country to another. This would support the mobility of individuals and promote the recognition of their competences in different European countries.
4. Promotion of language proficiency: The promotion of language proficiency is crucial for the integration of third country nationals into society and the labor market. European countries should provide language courses and support for language acquisition to help third country nationals develop the necessary language skills for successful integration. It is key to get people as soon as possible at the right language course (level and purpose), hence the importance of a good initial assessment at an early stage in the immigration pathway.
5. Encouragement of professional development: European countries should encourage the professional development of third country nationals through training programs and workshops. This would support the growth of their skills and qualifications, and contribute to their successful integration into the labor market.

5.3 Policy Recommendations at the level of the Higher Education Institutions

In today's globalized world, the mobility of people, goods and ideas has been greatly increased. This has led to a growing number of individuals who acquire competences and skills in different countries, often referred to as “elsewhere acquired competences”. The recognition of these competences is essential for the full integration of these individuals into the European labor market and society. The purpose of this paper is to provide policy recommendations for the implementation of recognition of elsewhere acquired competences for third country nationals in European universities.

Policy Recommendations

1. Standardization of Recognition Procedures
It is important that European universities adopt common recognition procedures in order to ensure the transparency, fairness and consistency of the recognition process. This can be achieved through the development of common standards, guidelines and frameworks that outline the steps involved in the recognition process.
2. Improved Access to Information
The lack of information and understanding of the recognition process is a common barrier for third country nationals seeking recognition of their elsewhere acquired competences. It is therefore important that universities provide easily accessible and



comprehensive information on the recognition process, including the documentation and evidence required, the criteria used to assess competences, and the opportunities available for recognition.

3. Flexible Recognition Approaches

In order to meet the diverse needs of third country nationals, it is important that universities adopt flexible recognition approaches that allow for the recognition of a wide range of competences, including both formal and informal learning. This may include the use of assessment methods such as portfolio assessments, work-based assessments, and peer assessments.

4. Collaboration with Other Stakeholders

In order to achieve effective recognition of elsewhere acquired competences, it is important that universities collaborate with other stakeholders such as employers, professional bodies, and national recognition bodies. This will ensure that the recognition process is aligned with the needs of the labor market and that the recognition of competences is recognized and valued by other stakeholders.

The recognition of elsewhere acquired competences is a key aspect of promoting the integration of third country nationals into the European labor market and society. The implementation of effective recognition policies and practices in European universities will play a crucial role in promoting the recognition of these competences and in enabling third country nationals to make the most of their skills and abilities. The policy recommendations outlined in this paper provide a starting point for universities seeking to implement recognition of elsewhere acquired competences for third country nationals.

6. Conclusion

The paper discusses how to implement the MaxiPAC-procedure into higher education. The implementation consists of two parts: change management and cost/benefit analysis. The change management process involves 5 steps: assessment of current state, stakeholder analysis, development of a strategic plan, implementation, and evaluation and continuous improvement. The university must have a clear policy on the recognition and validation of refugees' prior educational and work experience (EAC), provide staff training, and involve students in the process. The cost/benefit analysis will determine if the cost of assessing refugees' EAC balances with the financial and non-financial benefits to the university. The paper aims to maximize the chance of universities implementing the procedure by addressing these two aspects.

The policy recommendations aim to promote the implementation of recognition of competences acquired outside of formal education and training systems by third-country nationals in Europe. The recommendations include developing a European Framework for Recognition, promoting the use of assessment and recognition tools, providing training and support for stakeholders, and fostering collaboration and partnerships. At the national level, the recommendations include establishing a single national agency responsible for recognition, developing a database of recognized qualifications, implementing a credit transfer system, promoting language proficiency, and encouraging professional development. These recommendations aim to support the integration of third-country nationals into the labor market and society and promote the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills across Europe.