



Report on BRIDGE Project Action 2

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Spreading knowledge about Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures' activities among NARIC centers

Summary

This report describes the second activity designed under the EMNS-BRIDGE-NARIC project financed by the European Commission, which consists of a survey conducted from December 2010 to May 2011 among the NARIC centers, being the Estonian EMNS the main responsible for this activity. The double purpose of this study was firstly, to spread knowledge about the Erasmus Mundus Programme and its activities among the NARIC centers and secondly, to examine which type of cooperation between both networks EMNSs and NARIC Centers exists and how it can be improved and strengthened. The survey constitutes a qualitative and quantitative study with the use of a questionnaire as the technique applied to compile the targeted data. The questionnaire, which has been designed by means of an electronic on-line tool, consists of three blocks of questions with total 37 questions focused on qualitative and quantitative features. The target group of this study was 31 NARIC centers. The most significant results of this survey indicate that the majority of the NARIC centers have heard about Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures and their activities, seem to know about their competences and have occasionally established contacts with them to request for information. Other results reveal that less than the half of responded NARIC centers have invited their EM NS to participate in meetings and seminars as attendees and speakers, but the majority of them have been invited to events organized by their EM NS to participate in them as speakers and attendees, but only few NARIC centers have ever organized or carried out or issued joint events, projects and publications together with EM NS of their country. All of them have got success experiences and good practices. Finally, only few responders identify any weaknesses emerging from the relation with their EM NS and point out the need for more regular communication, contacts, interaction, exchange of information and joint activities (such as publications, joint events etc.) with their EM NS.

Therefore, according to these results we may conclude that 1) NARIC centers need clarification of the competences and activities of EM NS and more knowledge about the Erasmus Mundus Programme in general; 2) NARIC centers and EM NS need to know more about each other and about activities and

competences of each other and need some training on topics of interests for both, and 3) both networks need to increase their collaboration through organizing national meetings and national / international seminars for NARIC centers' representatives and EM NS in order to get to know each other mission and intensifying the cooperation between them, keep informed about the new developments.

Introduction

Since 2004 when The Erasmus Mundus Programme started to run in Europe, there has been a significant increase in the number of European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved in Erasmus Mundus joint Master and Doctorate programmes that have to deal with recognition issues during the different phases of the Erasmus Mundus Programme life.

Due to the fact that the NARIC Centers and EM NS run independently in most of the European countries and the contacts and cooperation between them are occasionally, the need of strengthening the cooperation among them has been identified, in order to exchange information that will enable NARIC centers to give effective support and advice to HEIs on recognition issues, diploma awarding and assessment of foreign qualifications. At the same time few European countries share both the status of NARIC Center and EM National Structure. This is the case of partners of the EMNS-BRIDGE-NARIC project: Estonia, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain. As a result of this, we think that the experience of the former countries could contribute to make possible to establish a fruitful collaboration between these two networks.

There are three main objectives of the present study: firstly, to spread knowledge about the Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures' activities among the NARIC centers; secondly, to examine which type of cooperation between both networks NARIC centers and EM NS exists and how it can be improved and strengthened, and thirdly, to identify topics and actions that could be implemented to increase their cooperation.

In the next sections the following parts of the report will be presented: first, the methodology applied in the survey with the description of the research design and methods, the research context, the target group and the phases of the study; following by the analyse of the results obtained; and finally the conclusions of the study.

Methodology

In this section the overview of the study will be given: the research design and methods, the research context, the target group and the phases of the study.

Research Design and Methods

The study is integrative insofar as it applies several different research methods – qualitative and quantitative. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, statistical information (quantitative) on the one hand should be collected and analysed; on the other hand, the analysis of the informational content of the data (qualitative) should be done to identify how the cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS could be reinforced and strengthened.

The method used to compile data was a questionnaire consisting of three parts with a total of 37 questions. Each part was focused on specific topic and objective:

The topic of **Part 1** is the “Level of knowledge of Erasmus Mundus programme” and consists of 12 questions (from 1 to 12) of different types: multiple choice, yes/no answers and open questions. By means of these questions NARIC centers were asked if they knew about the Erasmus Mundus Programmes, Erasmus Mundus National Structures and their activities, and if any contacts existed between these two networks.

Part 2 is focused on the “Types of cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS and identification of good practices and weaknesses” in order to identify, on the one hand, some examples of good practices between NARIC and EM NS and some weaknesses with the purpose to work on them, on the other hand. This part consists of 19 questions (from 13 to 31). These are mostly multiple choice questions to find out the frequency of the cooperation, if exists, and some open questions referred to the types of activities NARIC centers and EM NS are involved in as well as to good practices and weak points that should be strengthened.

In **Part 3** “How to improve cooperation between NARIC centers and Erasmus Mundus National Structures” NARIC centers were requested to make suggestions related to the topics and specific actions that could be implemented in order to get a closer cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS. This part includes 6 open questions (from 32 to 37).

The questionnaire model is provided in annex 1.

The main communication tools were electronic means of communication: the questionnaire was spread between the NARIC centers by the means of online tool and all instructions to filling it in and specifications about the study were provided in the accompanying e-mails.

Research context and target group

The Member States of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and Turkey were involved into the study. The questionnaire was sent to total 32 NARIC centers from the following countries:

Austria, Belgium (French and Flemish parts), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom.

Phases of the study

To carry out the present study, the following phases have been implemented:

1. Identification of target group
2. Questionnaire Design
3. Questionnaire Application
4. Analysis and discussion of results

5. Final Report Writing

Phase 1. Identification of target group

The target group consisting of 32 NARIC centers from the Member States of the European Union, the European Economic Area countries and Turkey was identified.

Phase 2: Questionnaire Design (from November 2010 till the end of January 2011)

In this phase a draft of the questionnaire was prepared according to the expected objectives, as explained previously in the section "Research design" and was circulated then by e-mail among all BRIDGE partners, in order to discuss its structure and content and make improvements, if necessary. After completion the questionnaire was downloaded in an on-line application tool for becoming available for the target group.

Phase 3: Questionnaires' Application (from February 2011 till the end of May 2011)

Three steps were necessary to apply the questionnaires.

In March 2011 all 32 NARIC centers received an e-mail with information on the general nature and objectives of the EMNS-BRIDGE-NARIC project, the specific instructions how to access the on-line questionnaire, how to fill in it and information about the deadline.

Answers from 23 NARIC centers out of 32 were received, which means that 72% of all respondents filled in the questionnaire.

Phase 4: Analysis and discussion of results

The results of the questionnaires were analysed and, thus, the Estonian EM NS partner, responsible for Action 2, prepared a report draft. This draft was presented and discussed by all the BRIDGE partners during the second consortia meeting held in Madrid on the 6th and 7th June 2011.

Phase 5: Final Report Writing

Final report was finalized by November 2011.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

As specified above, 23 NARIC centers out of 31 participated in the Bridge project, what means a high participation of 72%.

23 participating countries are Austria, Belgium (French community), Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

Non-participating countries are Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, and Turkey.

Next the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from 37 questions of three parts of the questionnaire will be presented.

Part 1. “Level of knowledge of Erasmus Mundus programme”

Objective: to spread knowledge about Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures and their activities.

Respondents (n) = 23

Questions (n) = 12

In the first part of the study by means of questions 1 to 4, the NARIC centers were asked if they knew about Erasmus Mundus Programme and the existence of EM NS and its activities.

The answers to the questions about the general knowledge of the Programme demonstrate that most of NARIC centers answered that they knew Erasmus Mundus Programme very well (63%) or at least know about its existence (27%); in contrast, only 30% of them knew very well aims and contents of the EM Programme and 70% have only quite general idea of it. Nevertheless all respondents know the Erasmus Mundus National Structure of their country (60% know it well and 40% heard about its existence). Regarding knowing the tasks of EM NS the majority of the respondents know grosso modo that EM NS gives information about EM Programme (87%) and assists HEIs in drafting EM applications (60%) on the one hand. On the other hand about 44% of the respondents think EM NS makes an assessment of EM applications submitted (only 22% are sure that it doesn't belong to the tasks of EM NS and 34% don't know anything about that) and 30% believe EM NS managing EM scholarships/grants (21% know that it doesn't belong to the tasks of EM NS and 43% don't know anything about that). That demonstrates that there is still high demand in promoting Erasmus Mundus Programme and EM NS activities among NARIC centers in order to increase their knowledge and awareness.

Questions 5-8 show if there is any communication among the NARIC centers and EM NS and to what extent.

70% of the respondents contact EM NS (very often, often or occasionally) mainly for purposes of getting information about:

- Assessment and recognition of EM degrees
- Partner HEIs of EM courses
- EM consortia

65% of NARIC centers admit being contacted (very often, often or occasionally) by their EM NS for clarifying issues regarding:

- Recognition/accreditation status of foreign HEIs
- National legislation on joint programmes
- Evaluation of foreign qualifications in compliance with the national legislation
- Procedure to award a joint DS

Concerning questions 9 to 12, NARIC centers were asked about their contacts to HEIs. As the responses show, HEIs contact respective NARIC centers, but quite seldom. Only 17% of NARIC centers have being contacted by their HEIs in order to evaluate a foreign qualification for the access to an EM

course (AT, IT, NL, PL). In contrast almost 40% of the respondents acknowledged being contacted by the HEIs for the evaluation of an EM joint/double/multiple degree (AT, DE, DK, IT, NL, SE, UK).

Part 2: “Types of cooperation and identification of good practices and weaknesses”

Objective: to examine which type of cooperation between both networks NARIC centers and EM NS exists and how it can be improved and strengthened.

Respondents (n) = 23

Questions (n) = 19 (from 13 to 31)

In the second part of the survey (questions 13 to 15) NARIC centers were asked if they had ever invited their national EM NS to their meetings and/or seminars, and if so, if they had participated and what role they had played. The answers demonstrate that more than a half of the respondents (n = 21) have never invited EM NS to their meetings/seminars (52,4%) and only 47,6% of NARIC centers often or occasionally invited EM NS to participate in their meetings/seminars. 81,2% from all invited EM NS also participated in NARIC meetings/seminars. The majority of them participated as attendees, but some of them also as speakers. These results are almost in accord with the answers given by NARIC centers in questions 16, 17 and 18, when they indicate that most of them (65,2%) have also been invited by their EM NS to participate in their meetings or seminars. All invited NARIC centers also participated in the EM NS meetings as speakers or attendees (almost 50/50 ratio).

It should be mentioned that the most events to which NARIC centers invited EM NS or were invited by EM NS, were not events jointly organized by both structures (27,3%), but just events organized by only one of the structures (72,3%). This demonstrates that there is a mutual interest for the activities of each other even if these activities are not corresponding to the direct responsibilities of NARIC centers or EM NS.

Questions 19 to 24 concentrate on the type of cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS. By these questions NARIC centers were asked whether they had carried out any kind of joint activities together with EM NS (joint events, projects and/or publications) and what had been the role they played.

73% of responded NARIC centers have never organized any joint events with their EM NS, only 9% have done it often (2 respondents) and 18% occasionally. In case of any joint events the topic of these events was related to following issues (questions 19-20):

- Diploma Supplements
- Joint degrees and their recognition
- Joint programmes and double degrees
- Learning outcomes
- Bologna

Similar to the previous results the majority of NARIC centers have never carried out joint projects together with their EM NS (78,3%). Only few of them have done it often (4,3%) or occasionally (17,4%). The topics were related to following issues (questions 21-23):

- BRIDGE project

- CIMEA ProJoint, a database on Italian joint programmes.
- Bologna
- Surveys about student exchange programmes

Related to joint publications issued jointly by NARIC centers and EM NS, 87% of NARIC centers state that they have never issued joint publications, being only 13% of them that have done it occasionally on the following issues (questions 23-24):

- “Joint Degrees in the Italian Context”
- “Study in Latvia”

Questions 25 to 28 focus on the identification of good practices and weaknesses emerged from the cooperation / lack of it between NARIC centers and EM NS. Question 29 focuses on whether any kind of information requested by NARIC centers from EM NS was useful to solve doubts and/or problems.

The responses to above-mentioned questions demonstrate that 52% of NARIC centers could identify some examples of good practices emerging from the relation with their EM NS (question 25); in contrast, only 22% of them could provide some weaknesses (question 27).

The list of good practices and weaknesses mentioned by NARIC centers is provided below (questions 26 and 28):

Good practices:

- Close cooperation seems to be necessary in order to lead to good applications and to take into account all necessary national and European legal requirements
- Both networks are part of the same department. Therefore, the contacts are constant
- It is good to cooperate in terms of information given to national HEIs. This will help to plan joint programmes/degrees that follow legislation
- Joint meetings on EM joint programme and share messages that we receive from the general public
- Create awareness within EM NS of the problems that exist in some countries with the recognition of joint degrees
- Create awareness within the NARIC of the selection and quality assurance existing within the EM programmes
- Good informal cooperation helping EM NS and HEI in the preparation of project application, informing about best ways how to reflect recognition issue and DS in applications (common publication)

Weaknesses:

- Lack of communication
- The occasional character of the current relations, the lack of joint projects, seminars, etc.
- The basic weakness in our relationship is that no matter how much information we provide to each other, we cannot ourselves solve the problem on non-recognition of joint degrees in certain countries, as this is related to technicalities in the accreditation status of joint programmes in combination with very strict recognition procedures of some countries.
- No exchange information regarding the degrees and institutions’ partners in an EM project

In the question 29 NARIC centers were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the information provided by their EM NS when they asked for information. Half of the respondents indicated that the answers given were useful to solve the problem (52%) and another half answered that the information was not useful (48%)

Last two questions of the second part of this questionnaire refer to the existence of the contacts to any other EM NS as the national one. Only one NARIC center indicated to be ever contacted by another EM NS in order to get information about the kick-off meeting of BRIDGE project in Rome and some EM NS asked for the information about the Italian legislative framework on joint programmes and degrees.

Part 3: "How to improve cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS"

Objective: to identify topics and specific actions that could be implemented to increase and reinforce cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS.

Respondents (n) = 23

Questions (n) = 6 (from 32 to 37)

In the third part of the questionnaire by means of open questions that range from 32 to 36, the NARIC centers were asked for suggestions on topics and specific actions that could be implemented to get a closer cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS. The last 37th question relates to the existence of any case studies about recognition issues arising from EM Programme that could be relevant in order to reinforce the cooperation between NARIC centres and EM NS.

As far as recommendations and suggestions for a closer cooperation concern (question 32), the majority of responses was related to topics concerning joint studies, such as recognition of joint degrees, awarding of joint diploma and diploma supplement, recognition / accreditation status of foreign HEIs, assessment of foreign qualifications (and EM degrees), organization of joint training courses and information days, better exchange of information. Other highlighted topics of interest were implementation of Bologna process, quality assurance of EM programmes, Erasmus Mundus applications, how to choose adequate HEI for common project, different higher education systems.

Related to the topics on which NARIC centers' staff could be trained by their national EM NS (question 33), the following points have been mentioned as the most useful ones:

- EM rules, policy, practices, activities and programmes
- Programme rules in general
- General knowledge on the EM degrees and the set-up of consortia
- Up-date of NARIC centers about the developments and changes in EM
- Evaluation of qualifications in compliance with national legislation
- Recognition and evaluation of diplomas
- Principles and practices for the interpretation and conversion of grades
- ECTS as a tool of measuring and comparing learning achievements, credit transfer
- Procedure to award a joint degree
- Procedures for the recognition of study periods
- List of the selected courses

Besides, when asked about topics on which EM NS staff could be trained by NARIC centers' staff (question 34), the following topics were mentioned as the most interesting ones:

- Recognition procedures, recognition of qualifications
- Recognition and accreditation status of foreign HEIs
- Joint Degrees and recognition
- Procedure to award a Joint Degree
- Higher education systems of different countries
- National legislation and documents required for the admission to an EM course

The suggestions given by NARIC centers' respondents for improving the cooperation between EM NS and NARIC centers can be sorted as general actions and specific activities as it is shown below (question 35):

General actions at both national and international

- To exchange information about Joint Degrees, DS, Bologna process implementation
- To receive and to give information about assessment of foreign qualifications
- To inform about the recognition/accreditation status of foreign HEIs
- To organize training course on different HESs and on policy and procedures to recognise foreign qualifications
- To present EM activities in general at ENIC/NARIC meetings
- To organize regular information meetings to update information on existing EM programmes, and changes in EM rules, practices and policy
- The NARIC Network should apply the policy to evaluate EM Joint Degrees with flexibility by accepting the selection procedure of EM programmes as a relevant system of quality assurance, instead of relying on requirements of formal accreditation that are currently almost impossible to fulfil for many joint programmes

Specific activities at both national and international level

- To organize joint international seminars for NARIC and EM NS networks (at least one per year)
- To invite representatives of NARIC centers and EM NS on their network meetings
- To have common projects and publications

To the question (36) related to how the European Commission could help to improve the relation between the two networks (ENIC/NARIC centers and EM NS), these are the suggestions and ideas given by NARIC centers:

- To promote Joint international seminars for NARIC and EM NS networks (at least one per year), inviting representatives of NARIC and EM NS on their network meetings
- To promote cooperation between networks, keep them informed about the new developments – financing joint projects
- To make sure all EM NS are aware of their NARIC centers and vice versa
- To present questions concerning recognition of joint degrees at the NARIC meetings
- To increase the information about main specific actions for cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS

- To make an effort to improve the EM Joint Degrees by providing guidelines to the NARIC network on how to evaluate EM joint degrees in the absence of formal accreditation status
- To organize common meetings on DS, joint programmes, EM actions and recognition issues

In a final question of the survey (question 37), NARIC centers were asked to provide some case studies about issues arising from EM Programme that could be relevant in order to reinforce the cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS. A lot of NARIC centers responded that they didn't have any case studies at all. Those, who responded, mentioned mostly different recognition and accreditation issues.

- Case study about the recognition of a Master EM
- ECA projects on recognition and QA of joint degrees
- University of Padua: selection of students in an EM course
- Polytechnic of Milan: different structure between HE systems (i.e. Italy and France) in order to organise an EM course

Conclusions

All three main objectives of the present study have been accomplished: firstly, to spread knowledge about the Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures' activities among the NARIC centers; secondly, to examine which type of cooperation between both networks NARIC centers and EM NS exists and how it can be improved and strengthened, and thirdly, to identify topics and actions that could be implemented to increase their cooperation.

Concerning the main objective set up in the first part of the survey, the results obtained allow specifying "the level of knowledge of Erasmus Mundus Programme". The most significant results have been grouped in two main topics: *Level of Knowledge of Erasmus Mundus Programme and Erasmus Mundus National Structures, and Frequency and types of contacts of NARIC centers with EM NS.*

Level of knowledge of Erasmus Mundus Programme

- The majority of NARIC centers knows Erasmus Mundus Programme very well (63%) or at least knows about its existence (27%); in contrast, only 30% of them know very well aims and contents of the EM Programme and 70% have only quite general idea of it. Nevertheless all respondents know the Erasmus Mundus National Structure of their country (60% know it well and 40% heard about its existence).
- Regarding knowing the tasks of EM NS the majority of the respondents know grosso modo that EM NS gives information about EM Programme (87%) and assists HEIs in drafting EM applications (60%) on the one hand. On the other hand about 44% of the respondents think EM NS makes an assessment of EM applications submitted (only 22% are sure that it doesn't belong to the tasks of EM NS and 34% don't know anything about that) and 30% believe EM NS managing EM scholarships/grants (21% know that it doesn't belong to the tasks of EM NS and 43% don't know anything about that).
- That demonstrates that there is still high demand in promoting Erasmus Mundus Programme and EM NS activities among NARIC centers in order to increase their awareness and knowledge.

Frequency and type of contacts between NARIC centers and EM NS

- 70% of the respondents contact EM NS (very often, often or occasionally) mainly for purposes of getting general information about assessment and recognition of EM degrees, partner HEIs of EM courses.
- 65% of NARIC centers admit being contacted (very often, often or occasionally) by their EM NS mostly for clarifying issues regarding national legislation on joint programmes and accreditation issues, evaluation of foreign qualifications in compliance with the national legislation.

Following conclusions arise from these results:

1. Both NARIC centers and EM NS need to know more about each other, about the respective activities and competences.
2. NARIC centers need clarification of the competences and activities of EM NS.
3. The majority of NARIC centers contacts their EM NS with more frequency than the latter ones contact them; nevertheless, their contacts are mostly occasional, not regular.

The second objective of the survey addressed in the second part was to examine, which type of cooperation between both networks NARIC centers and EM NS exists and how it can be improved and strengthened. The results listed below are classified into two main topics: *type of cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS* and *Identification of good practices and weaknesses*.

Type of cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS

- 47,6% of NARIC centers often or occasionally invited EM NS to participate in their meetings/seminars. 81,2% from all invited EM NS participated in NARIC meetings/seminars. The majority of them participated as attendees, but some of them also as speakers. 65,2% of NARIC centers have also been invited by their EM NS to participate in their meetings or seminars. All invited NARIC centers participated in the EM NS meetings as speakers or attendees (almost 50/50 ratio).
- The majority of NARIC centers (73%) have never organized any joint events with their EM NS, only 9% have done it often and 18% occasionally. Organized events were related to diploma supplements, joint degrees and their recognition, joint programmes and double degrees, Bologna issues.
- The majority of NARIC centers have never carried out joint projects together with their EM NS (78,3%). Only few of them have done it often (4,3%) or occasionally (17,4%). These were mostly European Projects on higher education issues.
- 87% of NARIC centers state that they have never issued joint publications, being only the 13% of them that have done it occasionally.

Identification of good practices and weaknesses

- 52% of NARIC centers could identify some examples of good practices emerging from the relation with their EM NS; in contrast, only 22% of them could provide some weaknesses.
- Regarding the effectiveness of the answers got from EM NS half of the respondents indicated that the answers given were useful to solve the problem (52%) and another half found that the information was not useful (48%).

- The issues that have been identified as “weaknesses” by NARIC centers are mostly lack of communication and the occasional character of the current relations, the lack of joint projects, seminars.

From the above mentioned results we can conclude the following:

1. Few joint projects, joint events (conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.) and joint publications have been carried out by NARIC centers and respective EM NS.
2. Only half of NARIC centers are satisfied with the answers given by EM NS when requested the information.
3. A more sustainable, regular and formal relationship between NARIC centers and EM NS should be developed, both at national and international levels.

By means of the answers obtained in the third part of the survey we have reached the last objective of this study and identified topics and actions that could be implemented to increase and reinforce the cooperation between NARIC centers and EM NS. The results are provided under the following headings: *Topics for a closer cooperation*, *Topics for receiving training* and *Actions to be implemented*.

Topics for a closer cooperation

- The majority of responses was related to topics concerning joint studies, such as recognition of joint degrees, awarding of joint diploma and diploma supplement, recognition / accreditation status of foreign HEIs, assessment of foreign qualifications (and EM degrees), organization of joint training courses and information days, better exchange of information.
- Other highlighted topics of interest were implementation of Bologna process, quality assurance of EM programmes, Erasmus Mundus applications, how to choose adequate HEI for common project, different higher education systems.

Topics for receiving training

- Topics on which NARIC centers’ staff could be trained by their national EM NS relate mostly to EM rules, policy, practices, activities and programmes, programme rules in general, general knowledge on the EM degrees and the set-up of consortia, procedure to award a joint degree and procedures for the recognition of study periods.
- Topics on which EM NS staff could be trained by NARIC centers’ staff are mainly concerning recognition procedures, recognition of qualifications, recognition and accreditation status of foreign HEIs, joint Degrees and recognition and procedure to award a Joint Degree

Actions to be implemented

As the most important actions and activities needed in order to strengthen the cooperation between the two networks better and more regular exchange of information between NARIC centers and EM NS, regular national and international meetings and events, updated information on accreditation and recognition procedures, joint projects and publications were mentioned.

The results of the third part of the study lead to the following conclusions:

1. A wide range of topics, general actions and specific activities for a closer cooperation among NARIC and EM NS networks have been identified (national and international joint events, meetings, projects and publications on relevant common topics, as well as European professional visits for staff)
2. The need of training on relevant issues addressed both NARIC and EM NS staff has been highlighted by NARIC centers, having also been identified a high number of targeted topics.
3. Joint events of different types (workshops, seminars, conferences, meetings, training sessions etc.) should be organized and projects and publications should be promoted and carried out at national and international levels.
4. The European Commission has also an important role in strengthening the cooperation among NARIC centers and EM NS.

The results of this study indicate two main challenges that should be addressed in the coming years:

1. Dissemination of the knowledge of NARIC centers and EM NS competences and missions among them.
2. Definition of joint activities of mutual interest and benefits for the promotion of the European Education and Research all over the world.