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Journey into automatic recognition in the EHEA: evidence from the national focus groups

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Andorra: focus group and Automatic Recognition

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Context in Andorra

Recognition system is centralised and regulated by the Ministry (ENIC Andorra)

ENIC responsible for recognition of foreign qualifications (access to HE & labour market)

Automatic recognition *de facto* for academic purposes

Higher education institutions (HEIs) handle:

- Admission
- Recognition of study periods

System characterised by:

- Very limited admission restrictions
- Predominance of private, recently established universities

Automatic recognition not systematically implemented

- Mostly applied via bilateral agreements

Legal framework perceived as

- Restrictive for institutional autonomy

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Main Benefits & Challenges of Automatic Recognition

Benefits

- Simplifies and speeds up procedures (less case-by-case assessment)
- Reduces administrative burden
- Enhances student mobility across countries
- Strengthens trust and cooperation in the EHEA
- Allows focus on learning outcomes rather than procedures

Challenges

- Limited experience and early-stage implementation
- Lack of tools, data, and systematic practices
- Difficulty ensuring equivalence of qualifications
- Legal constraints
- Concerns about quality assurance without individual checks

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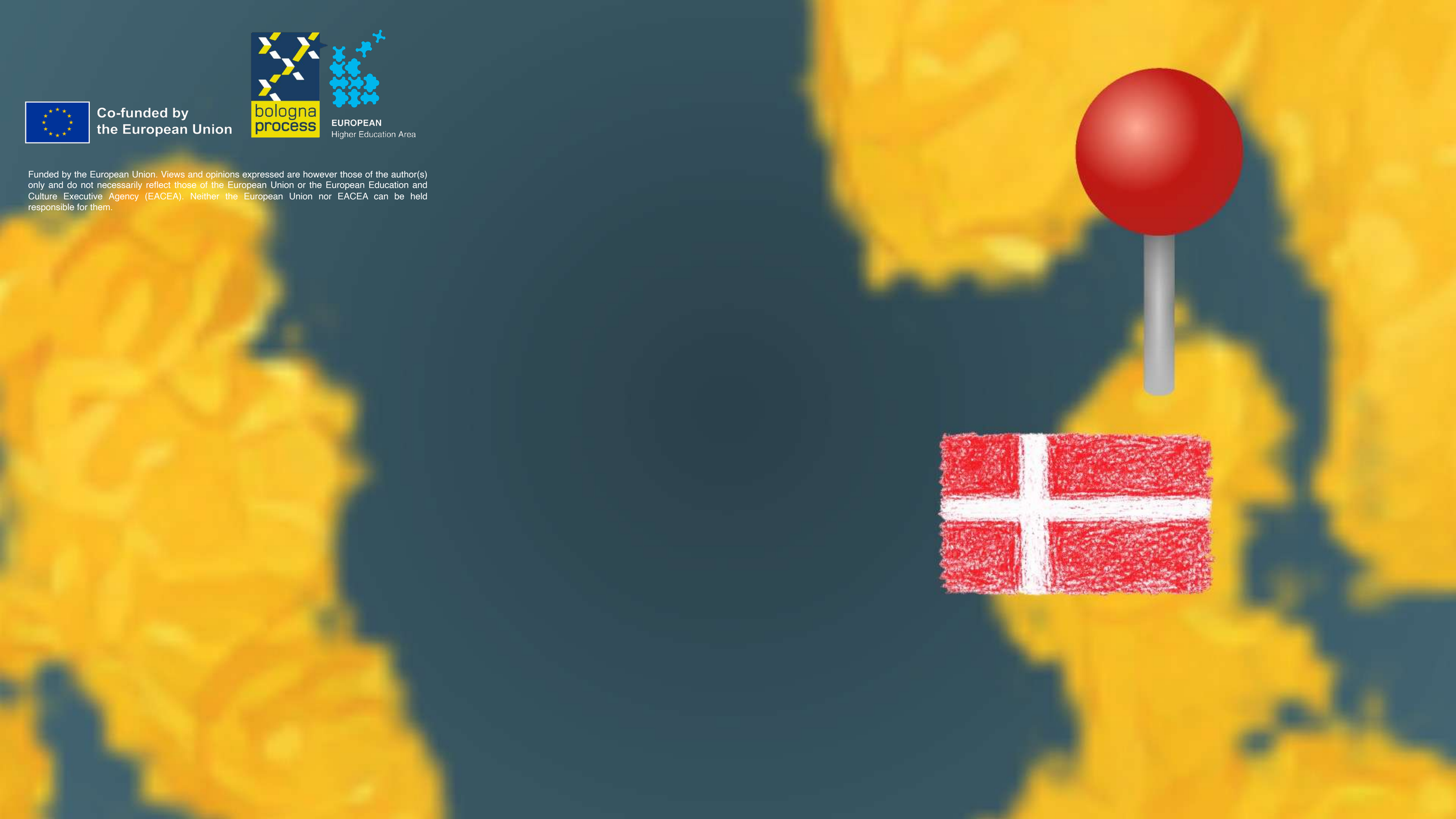

Ministry of Higher Education and Science Denmark

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DK: National Focus groups and automatic recognition

Allan Bruun Pedersen

The Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science

DK: National Focus Groups

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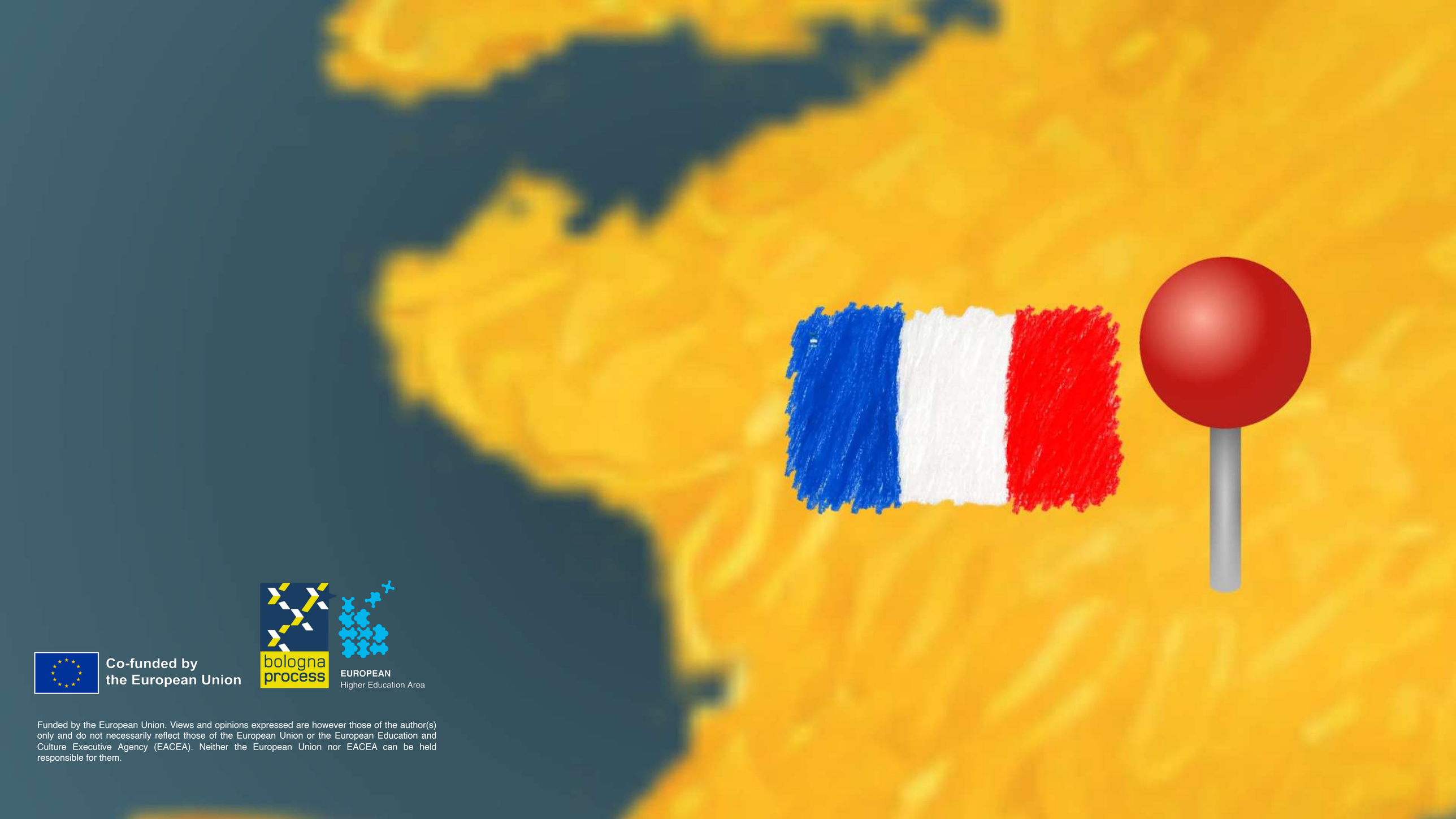
- Well established networks for admission officers: All DK HEIs represented
- Discussions and presentations of all aspects of the LRC and AR during many years in the networks
- AR indirectly implemented in Danish legislation on recognition: “The assessment (of the DK ENIC-NARIC) shall be binding on the decision on admission by a publicly recognised educational institution”
- All HEIs must follow the official recognition standards of the ENIC-NARIC
- All higher education qualifications from EHEA-countries are fully recognised at degree level. Recognition standards are published online in our country database



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France: National focus groups and Automatic Recognition

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FRANCE EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL | ENIC-NARIC FRANCE

National focus groups

Key challenges identified

Ambiguity in degree evaluation

- Challenges in evaluating intermediate-level degrees
- Hard to assess without reliable national information on foreign education systems

Fragmented tools and processes

- No standardised workflows across institutions, due to the autonomy of French HEIs
- No shared databases or common reference tools
- Decisions rely heavily on individual expertise and experience

Low awareness of the concept “automatic recognition”

The concept "automatic recognition" is largely unknown, yet most HEIs acknowledge applying it in practice once explained.

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FRANCE EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL | ENIC-NARIC FRANCE

National focus groups

Benefits & Expectations

Benefits experienced

- ECTS as a practical tool to apply AR
- ENIC-NARIC comparability statements as a safety net
- Small-group format valued

Expectations & needs

- Accessible, up-to-date documentation and tools
- A dedicated contact for professionals
- Regular updates & continuity

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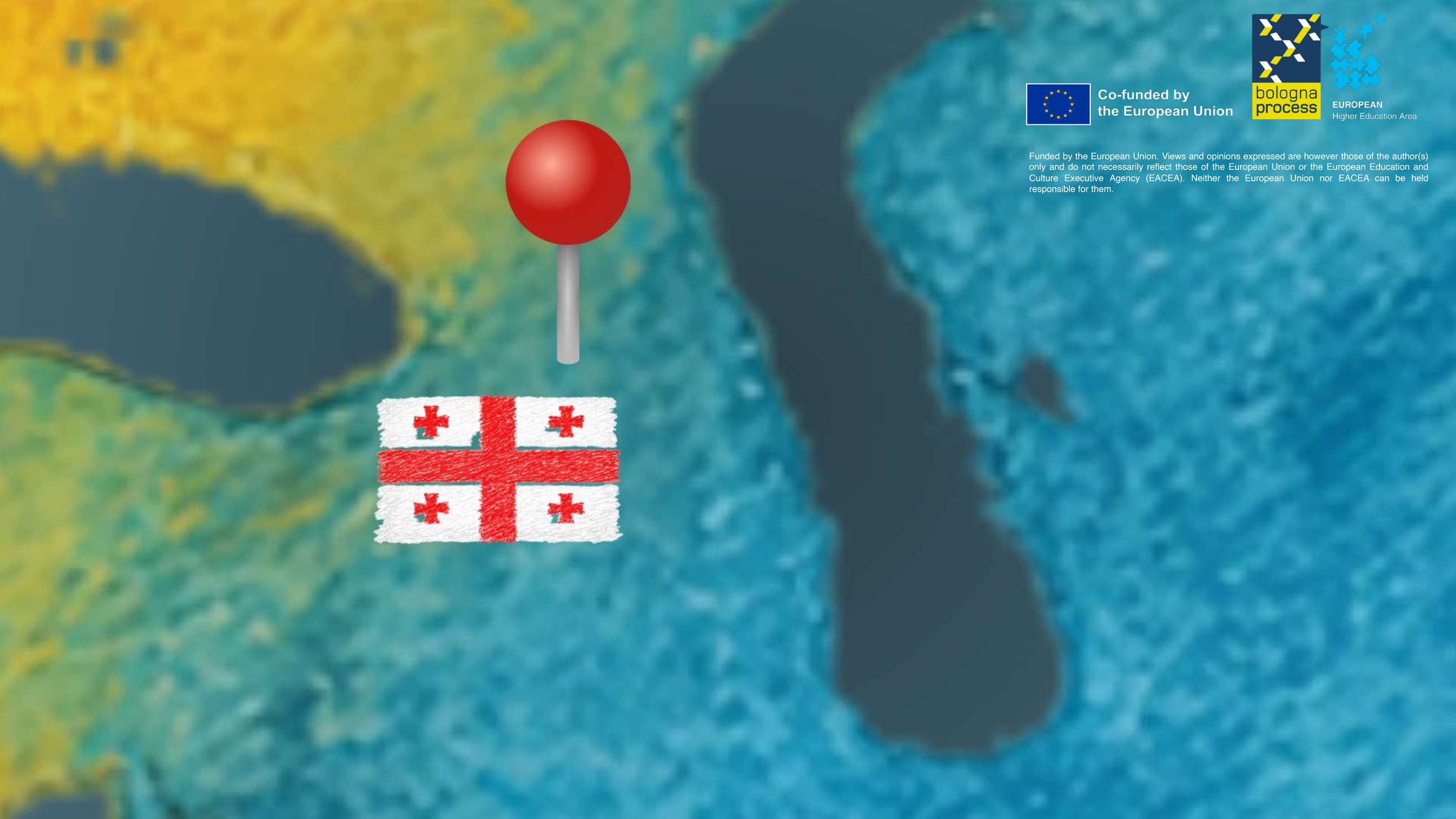

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GEORGIA · ENIC GEORGIA (NCEQE)

National focus group and Automatic Recognition

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GEORGIA · ENIC GEORGIA (NCEQE)

Main challenges identified

National focus group with Georgian higher education institutions | 10 March 2026

Starting point: no automatic recognition procedures currently exist in Georgia - at national or institutional level.

01 Legislative gap

No legal framework defines the scope, roles or thresholds for automatic recognition.

02 Limited digital infrastructure

Recognition is largely paper-based; no dedicated digital tools at institutional level.

03 New, unfamiliar concept

Automatic recognition is largely unknown; awareness of the 2018 Council Recommendation is limited.

04 System complexity

Comparing programme duration, credit systems and qualification structures across countries remains difficult.

05 Trust & quality dilemma

Without quality there is no trust; without trust automatic recognition cannot function.

06 Resources & capacity

Insufficient financial, human and training resources to build institutional capacity.

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GEORGIA · ENIC GEORGIA (NCEQE)

Perceived benefits of automatic recognition

How Georgian HEIs see the value of moving toward automatic recognition

Strong institutional interest in a phased, semi-decentralised model where ENIC Georgia keeps a supportive and oversight role.

01 Faster, simpler procedures

Less bureaucratic burden on students and institutions; resources freed from individual case-by-case review.

02 Greater student mobility

Smoother incoming and outgoing mobility, supported by clearer credit recognition rules.

03 International visibility

Georgian qualifications presented more clearly and understandably in the international context.

04 Institutional competitiveness

Stronger position for Georgian HEIs in attracting international students.

05 Alignment with the EHEA

Closer compliance with Lisbon Recognition Convention commitments and the 2018 Council Recommendation.

06 Mutual trust between systems

Reduced duplication between ENIC Georgia and HEIs; trust-building within the LRC framework.

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Italy: national focus group and Automatic Recognition

Emanuela Gitto

CIMEA, ENIC-NARIC Italy

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State of art

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Italian HEIs that took part in the focus group shared that:

- *Internal recognition procedures are periodically reviewed to enhance implementation of automatic recognition.*
- *Awareness of Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 generally limited to HEIs staff directly involved in credential evaluation and recognition procedures.*
- *Experience of automatic recognition linked to institutional bilateral or multilateral agreements with foreign institutions.*

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Challenges and opportunities

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Opportunities

- *Enhancing transparency towards students, ensuring foreign qualifications holders understand how their credentials will be considered thanks to information provided.*
- *Increasing opportunities for student mobility, by facilitating level recognition across different education systems.*
- *Developing communities of practices and common structured platforms for knowledge exchange among credential evaluators.*

Challenges

- *Clarifying the term "automatic", as it could be perceived as misleading.*
- *Balancing procedural simplification while maintaining rigorous attention to the verification of qualification authenticity and accuracy of evaluations.*
- *Obtaining information from external authorities (such as embassies) in a timely manner is seen as a factor that may delay recognition processes for applicants.*

CIMEA
THE ART OF CONNECTING ACADEMIA
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