

# Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Decisions

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# Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions

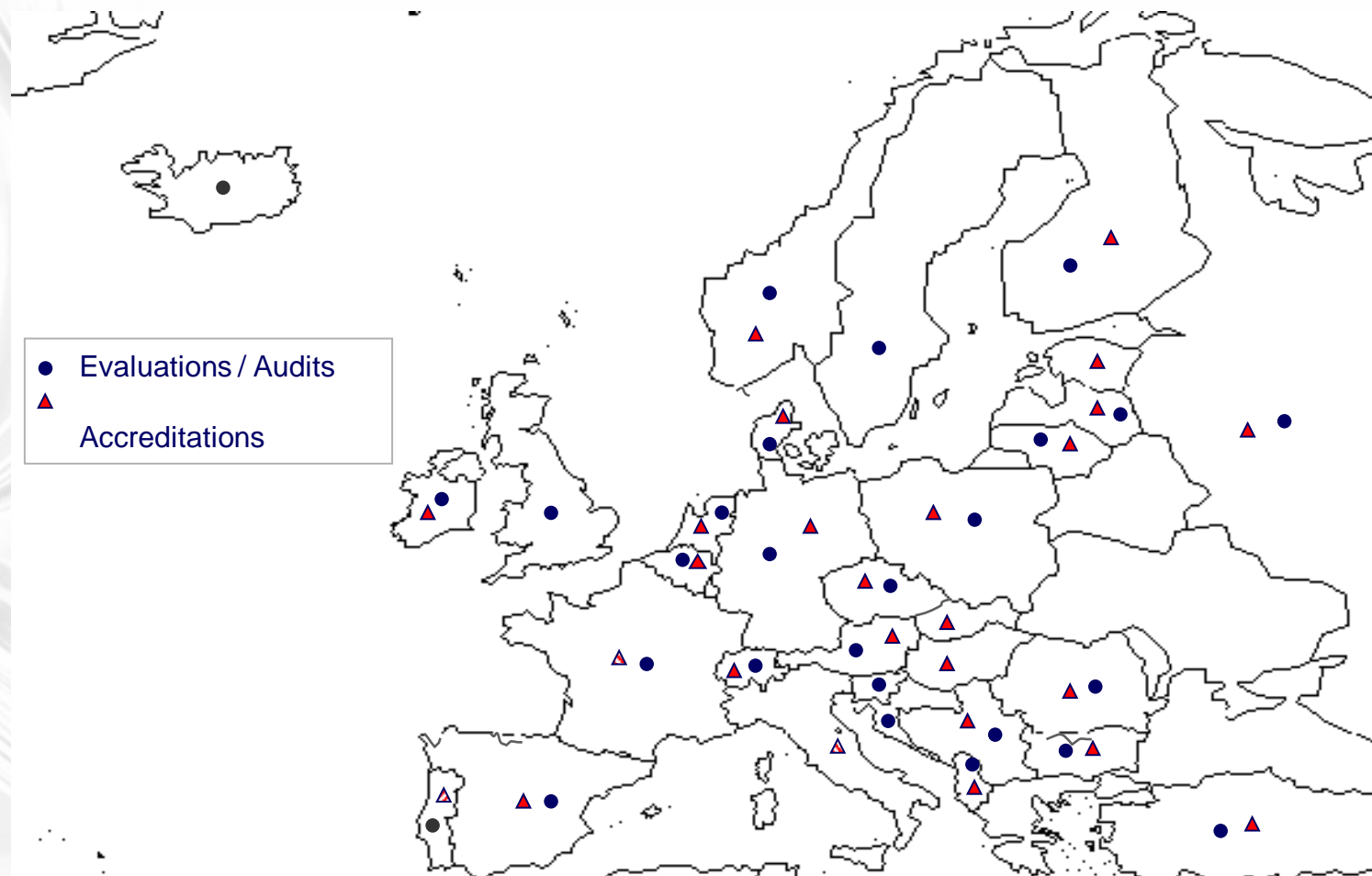
Speech R. Heusser:

1. Mutual recognition and the Bologna Process
2. ECA: goals, activities and achievements
3. Mutual recognition – open questions
4. Concluding remarks

## Mobility in Europe – Link to mutual recognition of QA- decisions

- Mobility key objective of Bologna process
- Bergen 2005: «still challenges to overcome»
- Recognition problems exist
- Recognition of foreign qualifications facilitated by transparent QA information
- Crucial role of national accreditation/ QA- systems

## National Agencies for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Europe, 2005



# Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions – Political basis

## Bergen conference 2005

« We underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions. »

## European Parliament 2005

« Hereby recommend that member states ... promote cooperation between agencies in order to build up mutual trust and the recognition of QA- and accreditation assessments, thus contributing to the recognition of qualifications for the purpose of study or work in another country. »

## ECA – Foundation and Aim

- Consortium of national accreditation organisations
- Established in November 2003
- 15 member organisations from 10 European countries:  
AT, BE, CH, DE, ES, FR, IE, NL, NO, PL
- Aim: mutual recognition of accreditation decisions among participating countries until 2007

## Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions - Purpose

- To increase transparency in higher education
- To remove barriers in the process of recognition of foreign qualifications
- To facilitate accreditation/recognition of joint programmes and other forms of trans-border education
- To enhance mobility of students and academic staff

## Mutual recognition agreements – Elements

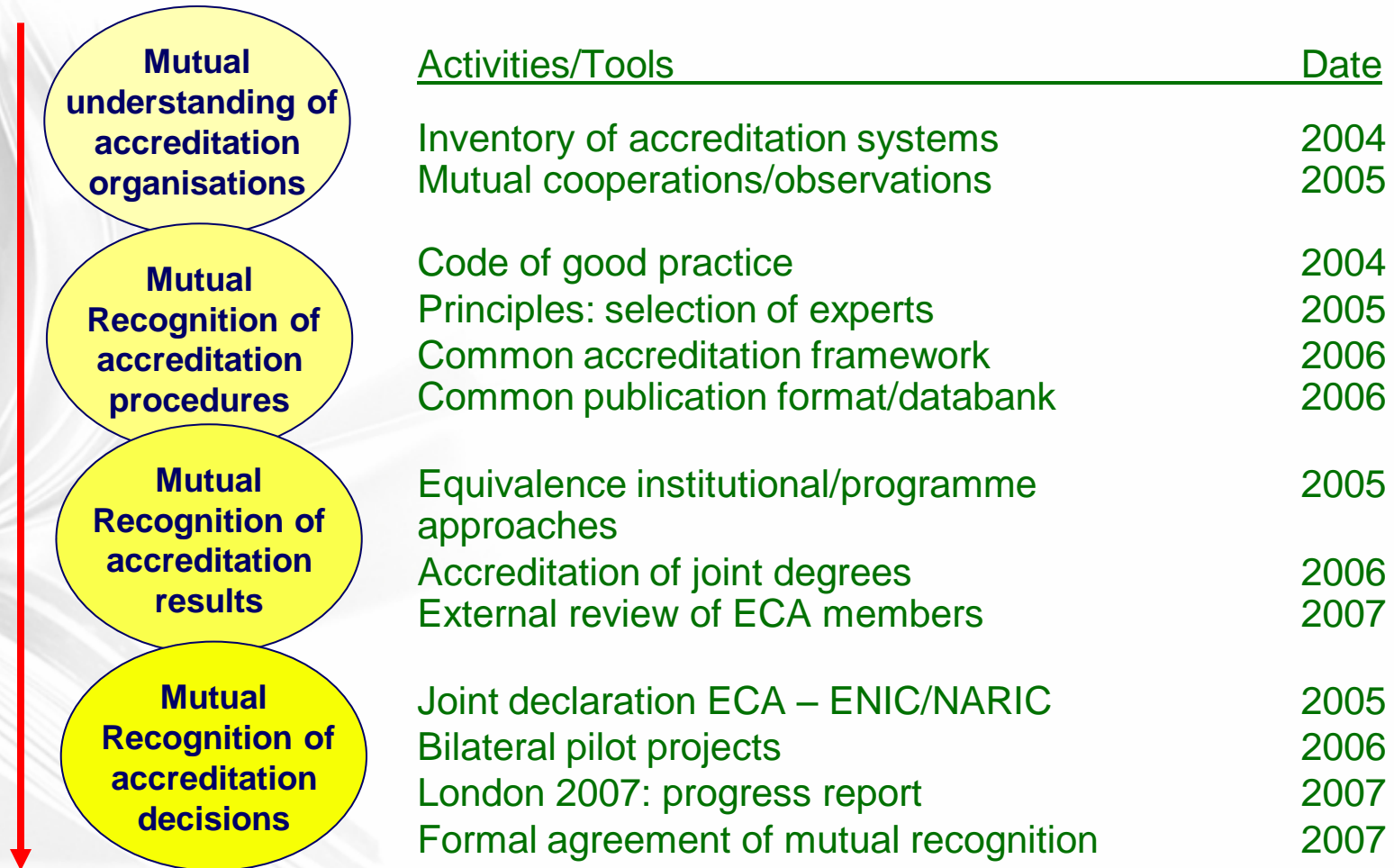
- Mutual trust needed
- Built upon mutual understanding
- Based on commonly agreed guidelines/tools
- Mutual cooperations in practice needed

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european consortium for accreditation



## ECA Road map to mutual recognition



## ECA – Inventory of accreditation systems

- Accreditation profiles of ECA member organisations:
- Information about national HE-system/ accreditation system
  - Legal background, role and status of accreditation body
  - Description of accreditation process and procedures
  - Accreditation experiences in practice

## ECA – Mutual cooperation projects

- Exchange of experts
- Observation of other members' accreditation procedures
- Joint accreditation procedures
- Staff exchange
- Etc.

## ECA – Code of good practice

- Guarantees comparability of accreditation procedures
- Defines internal quality assurance measures
- 17 standards - signed by all ECA member organisations
- Implementation of standards until 2007; external evaluation of all ECA members to check fulfillment of code

# Fundament of Mutual Trust ECA

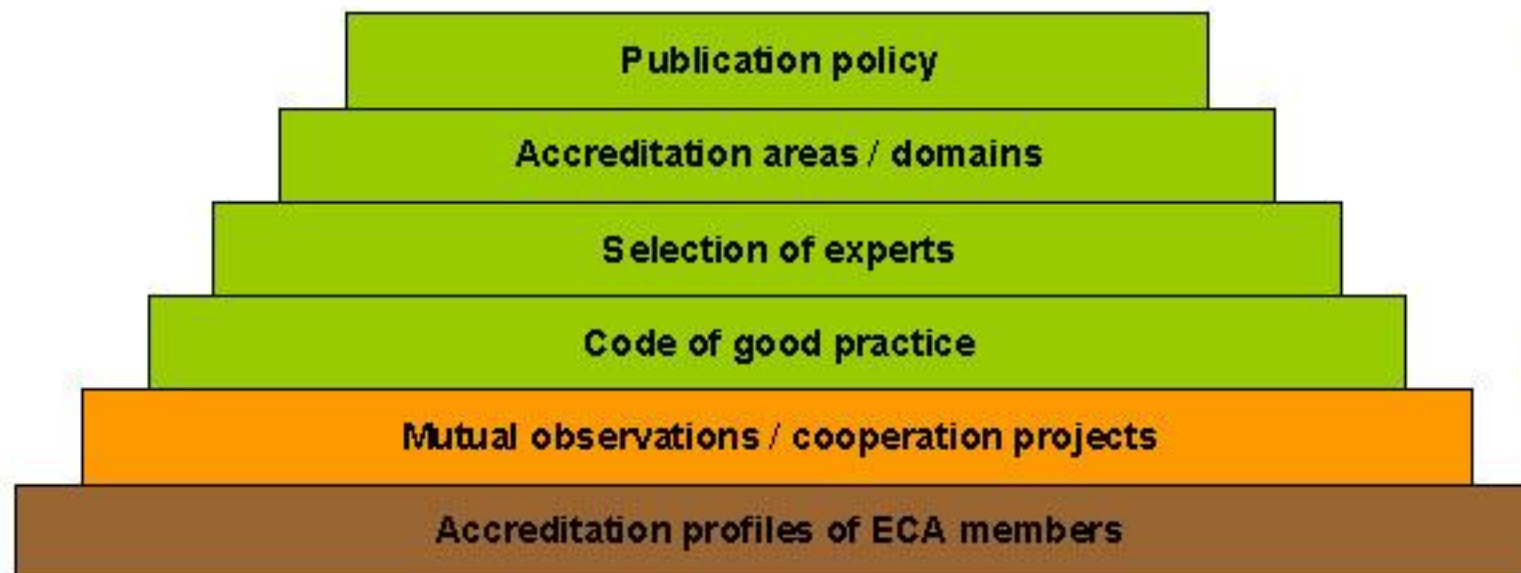
Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions  
(including legal consequences)

Joint declaration  
with ENIC/NARIC



Results from  
ECA pilot projects

Mutual recognition of assessment results  
among ECA members



Commonly  
agreed tools

Mutual  
cooperations

Transparent  
information

## Mutual recognition – Open questions (I)

- How to guarantee equivalency of institutional and programme approaches?
- How much trust is needed; what “security mechanisms” are needed?
- What does mutual recognition mean for participating countries (government, HEI’s, etc.)
- Is the subsidiarity principle a barrier?

## Mutual recognition – Open questions (II)

- What is the impact of the planned European register on the work of ECA?
- Future consequences of mutual recognition agreements: European quality label?
- Transferability of ECA work/results (to other QA decisions, to professional/private agencies, to other international partners) ?

## Conclusions

- Mutual trust has been built up successfully between ECA member organisations
- Code of good practice and mutual cooperation projects are essential elements
- Challenges: legal prerequisites and role of national governments and HEI's
- Mutual recognition agreements could substantially reduce existing barriers in the recognition of foreign qualifications
- Necessity to strengthen international cooperation in this area



## Further Information about ECA:

### Requests and information:

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