



Linking Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance

Aurelija Valeikienė, Deputy Director, SKVC

April 2018

Zaragoza

definitions

Academic recognition refers to a formal acknowledgment by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational activities. [LRC]

Quality assurance – an all embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. [UNESCO]

Consortium



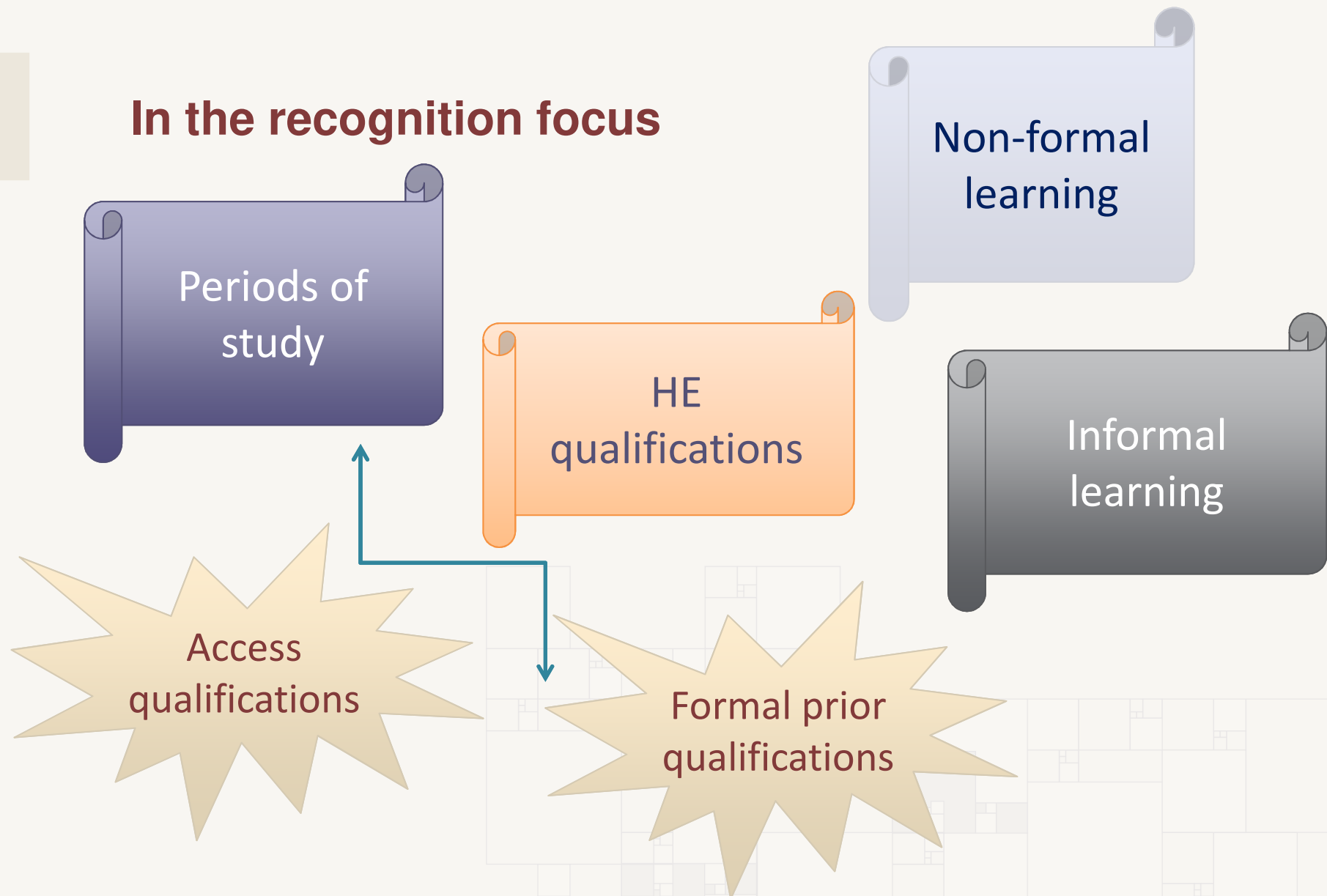
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG-2015)

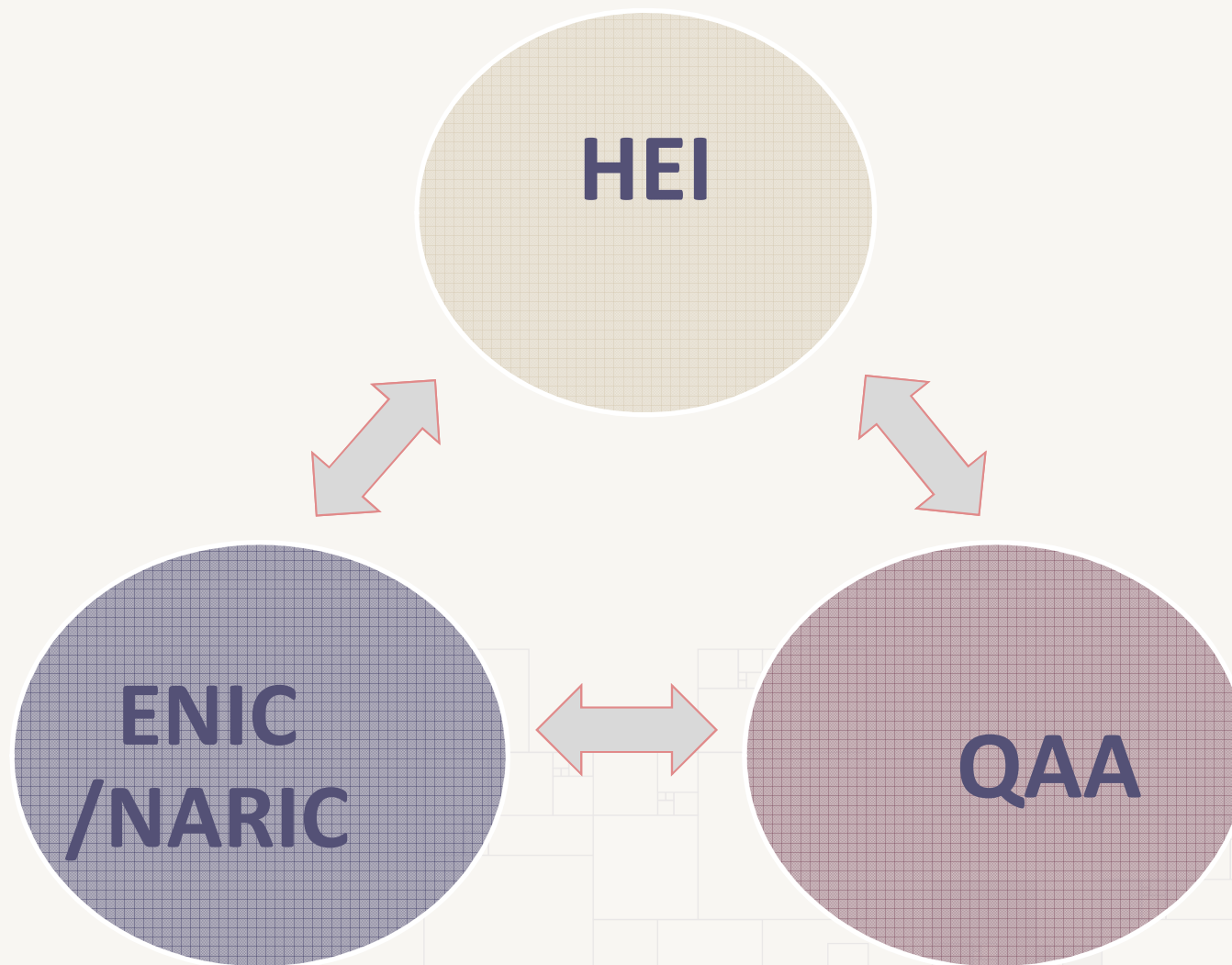
ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

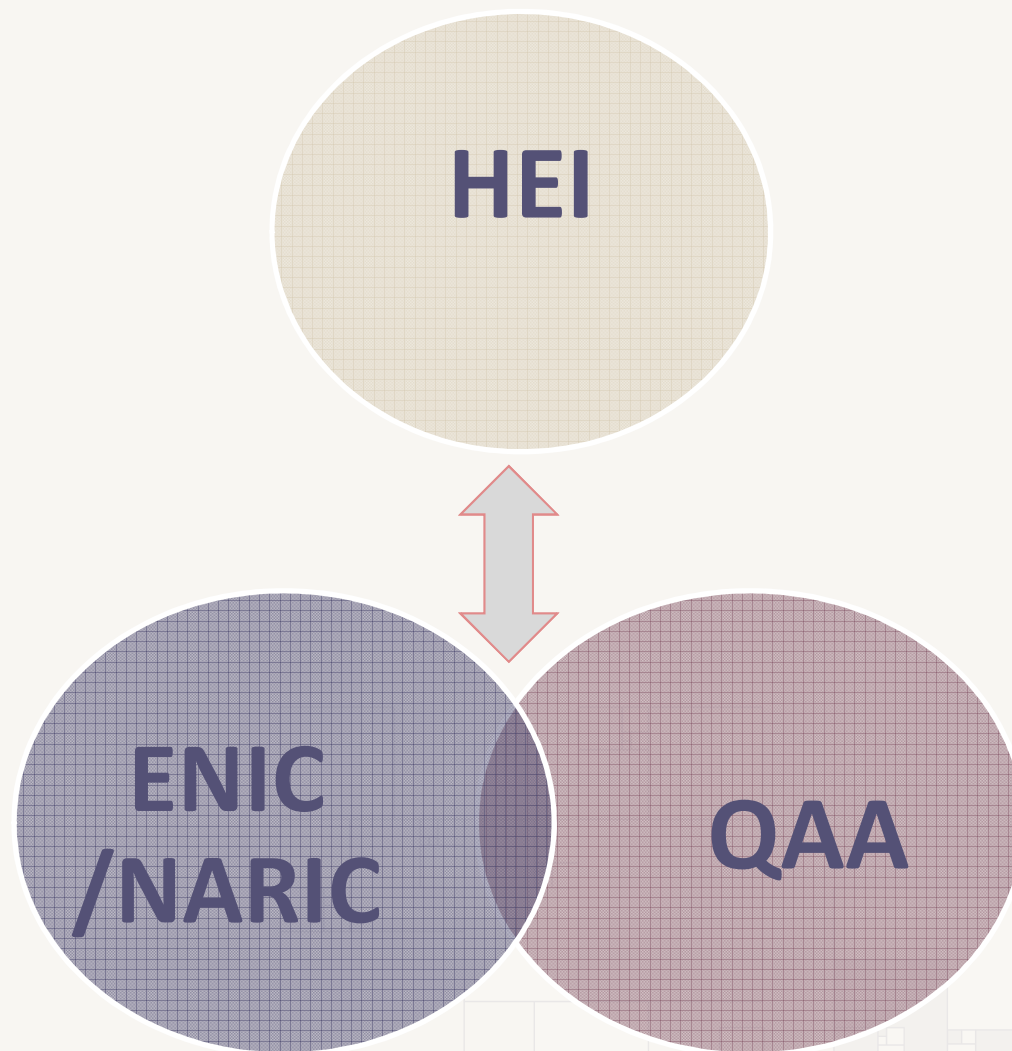
Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on

- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

In the recognition focus







Methodology

Recommendations are based upon desk research and three surveys
– of ENIC/NARIC centres, HEIs, QA agencies

Discussion with all members of ENQA

Discussion with ENIC/NARIC centres

Finalisation of recommendations

Dissemination



MAPPING OF THE STATUS QUO

Voluntary commitment

- EAR Manual, EAR-HEI Manual
- ECTS, Diploma Supplement,
- EQF, NQFs

LRCC recommendations (subsidiary texts) on:

- criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications
 - the recognition of joint degrees
- the use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition of foreign qualifications
 - international access qualifications
- Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education
- qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation

International treaties

- Multilateral ([Lisbon Recognition Convention](#); The Reykjavik Declaration, Benelux, EE-LV-LT, ...)
- Bilateral treaties



Networks

- ENIC and NARIC
- ENQA, CEENQA, ECA Consortium, NOQA, Baltic...
- EUA, EURASHE
- EAIE, NAFSA...
- RPL practitioner network in Ireland...

International and national resources:

- ENIC.NARIC.NET
- WHED
- SCAN-D, ANABIN, country profiles by Nuffic, UK NARIC, Australian ENIC...

Peer learning

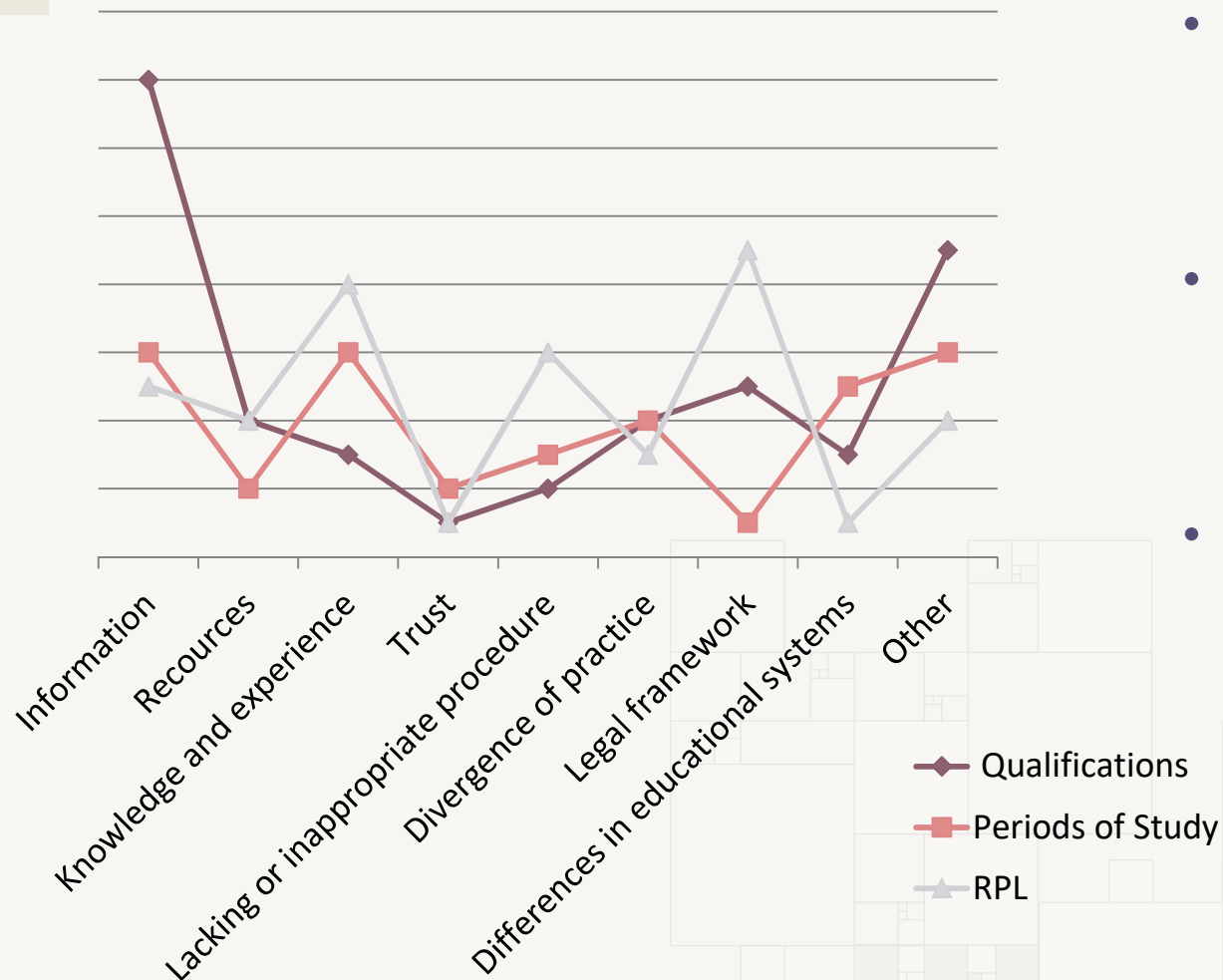
- SQUARE standards and guidelines
- events, projects

Findings

From ENIC/NARIC survey we learned:

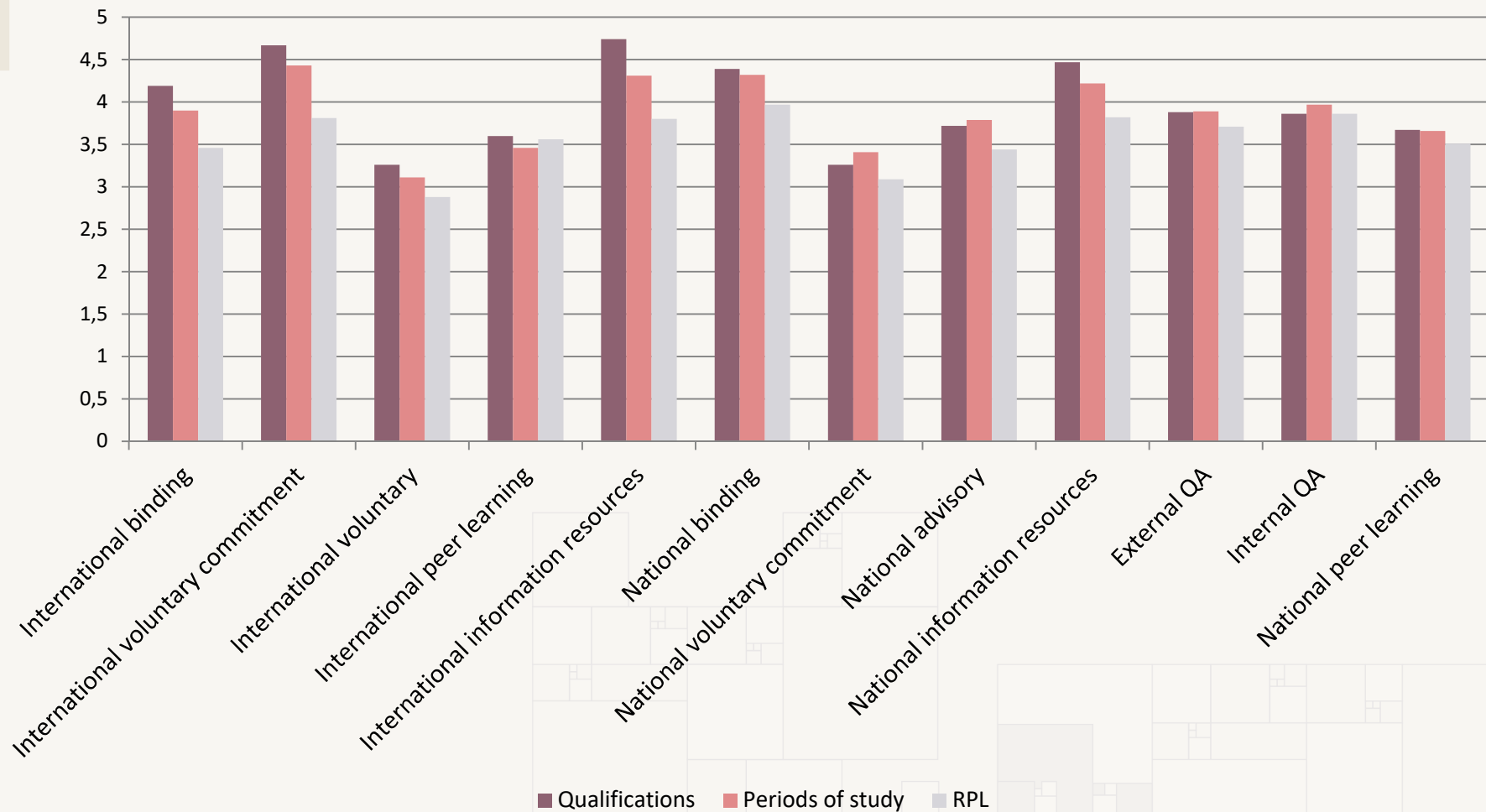
- Higher Education Institutions are among top beneficiaries of services (3,6 on the scale of 5)
- Primary object of work – full qualifications from abroad, little involvement in credit transfer, almost nothing to do with RPL
- Other services offered: training events, projects and policy development, consultations, development of databases
- The role ENIC/NARIC centres as they see themselves: provision of information, guidance, consultations, information on practices regarding recognition within HEIs

Main obstacles to fair recognition



- Qualifications:
 - Lack of information
 - Legal framework (overregulating)
- Periods of study
 - Lack of information
 - Lack of knowledge and experience
- RPL
 - Legal framework (non-existent)
 - Lack of knowledge and experience
 - Lacking procedure

The most effective instruments for fair recognition



Dimensions: international-national-institutional ; voluntary-obligatory

ENIC/NARIC expectations for interaction with QA agencies

- More than 1/2 strongly agree and agree that QA agencies are well placed to contribute to influence fair academic recognition within HEIs
- Currently there is some information exchange, occasional involvement with QA agency in activities
- This collaboration is essential, ca 40 % believe the relationship between ENIC/NARIC centres and QA agencies is likely to evolve
- What could be done? QA agencies might contribute towards assurance that HEIs comply with legal requirements



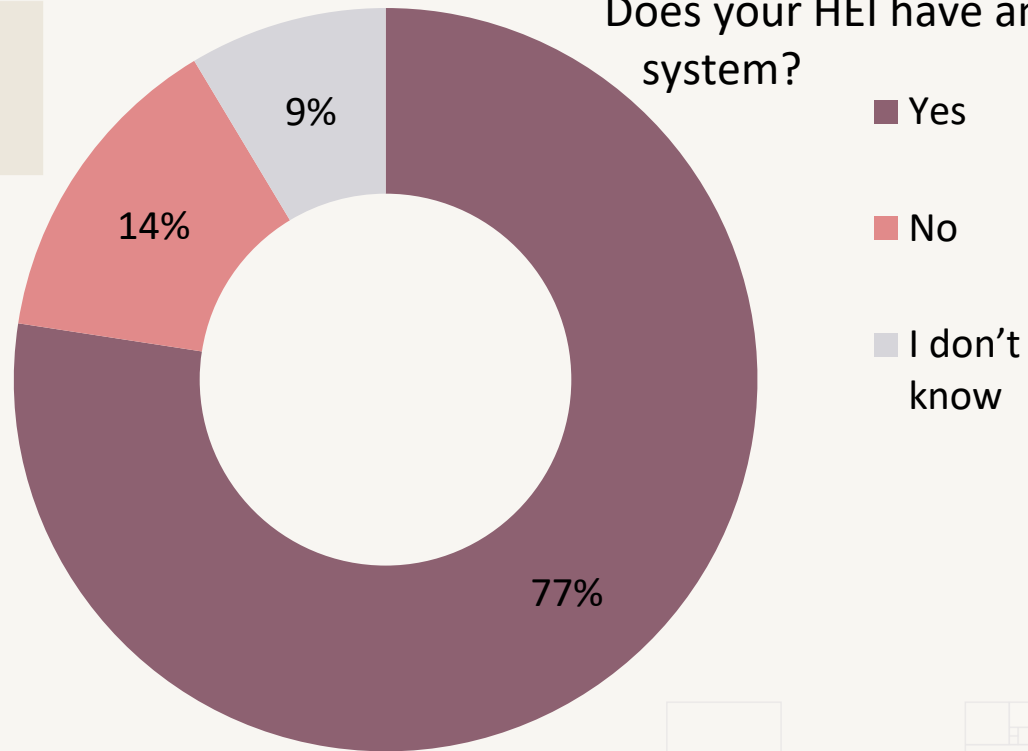
Survey of HEIs

Status quo

- In most cases full qualifications are recognised by a central administrative division
- Periods of study and RPL are in the hands of faculties
- We initially asked regarding the aspects of the 3 types of recognition, but differences statistically were not substantial
- 80 % say they have institution-wide policy for recognition
- 38 % of HEIs expect the relationship with the ENIC/NARIC will evolve

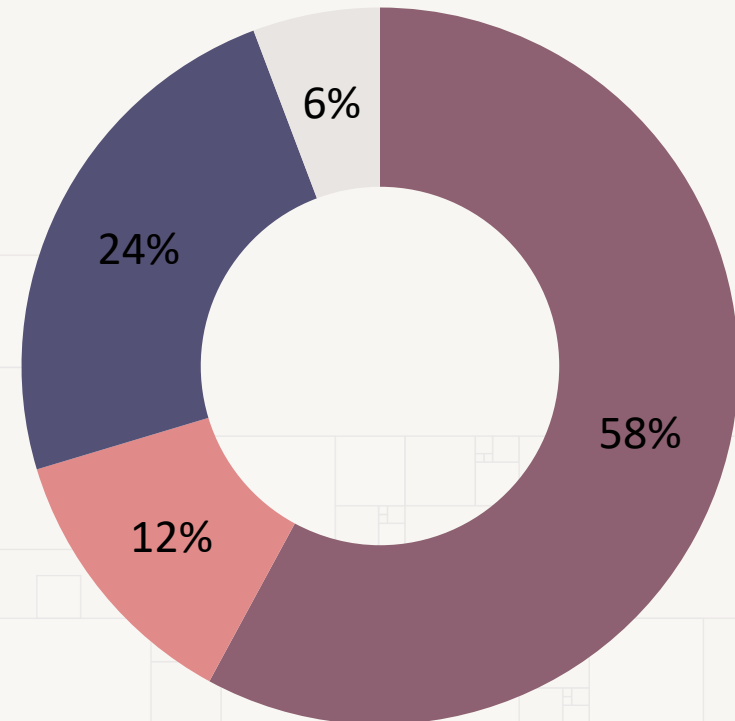
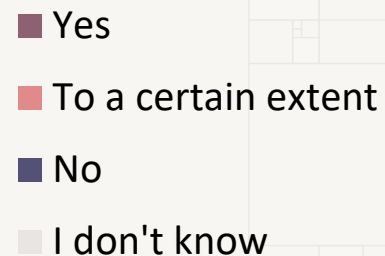
Recognition and IQA

Does your HEI have an IQA system?

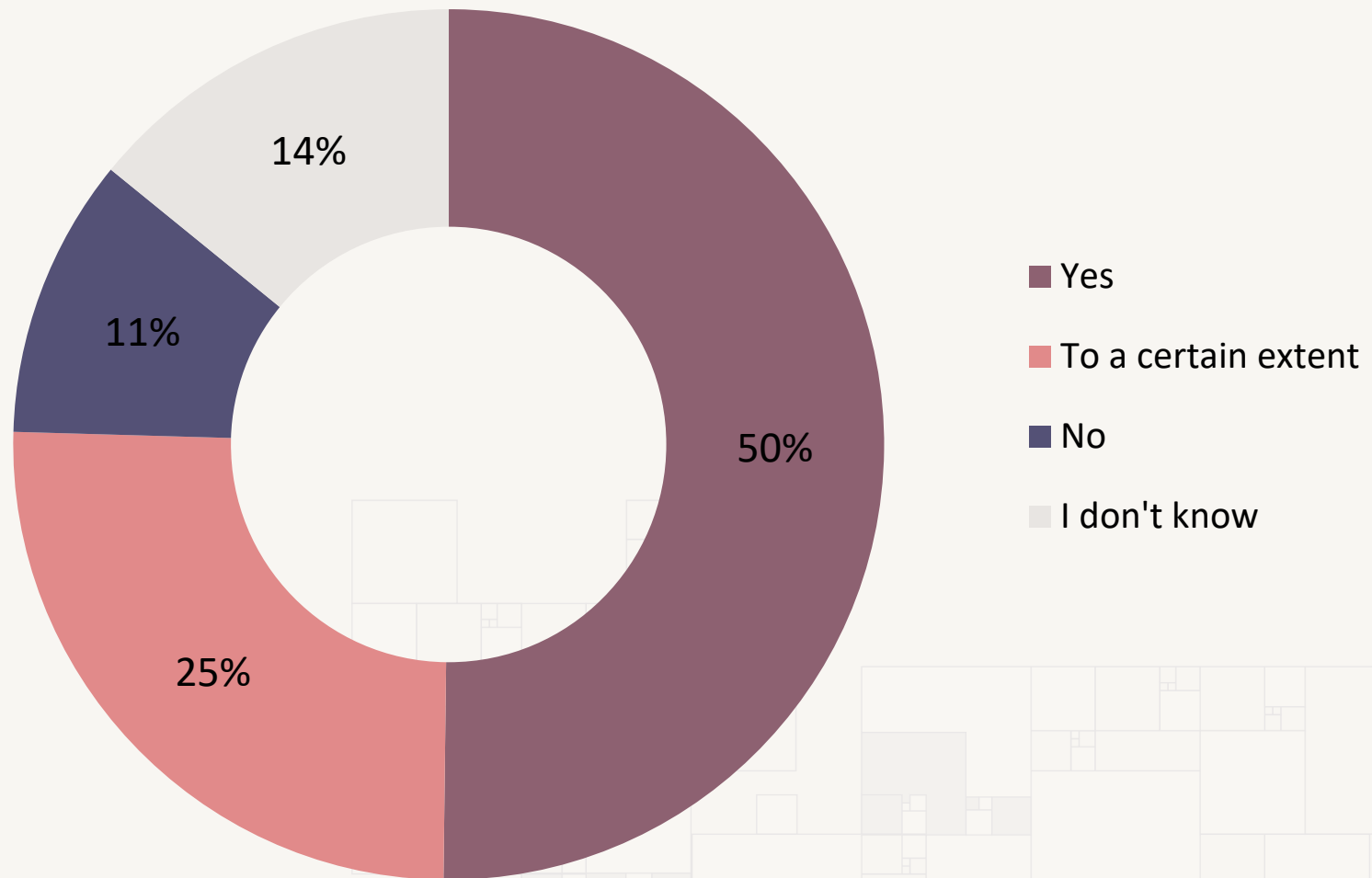


- Most institutions have an IQA system
- Only 58 % of those have incorporated recognition into IQA

If yes, is recognition incorporated into IQA?

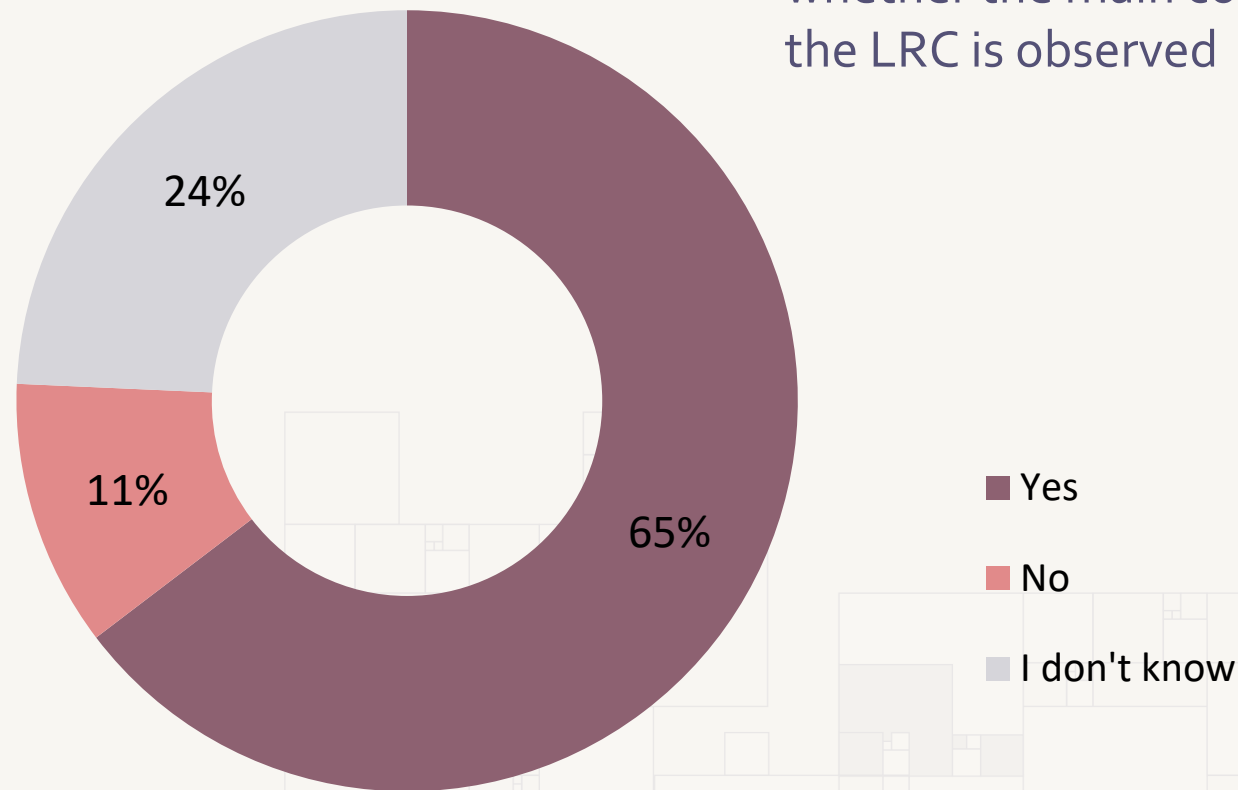


Clearly Established and Documented Procedure

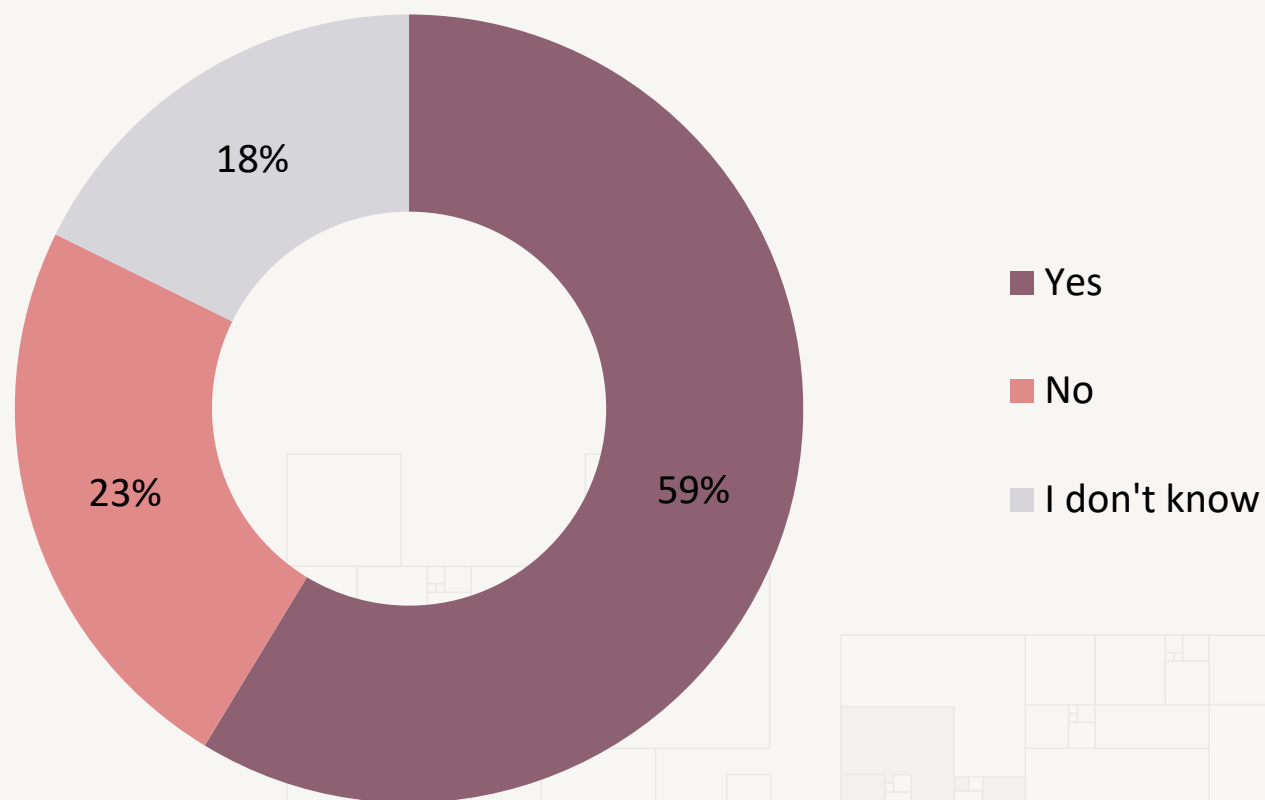


Is the Concept of Substantial Difference Applied in Recognition

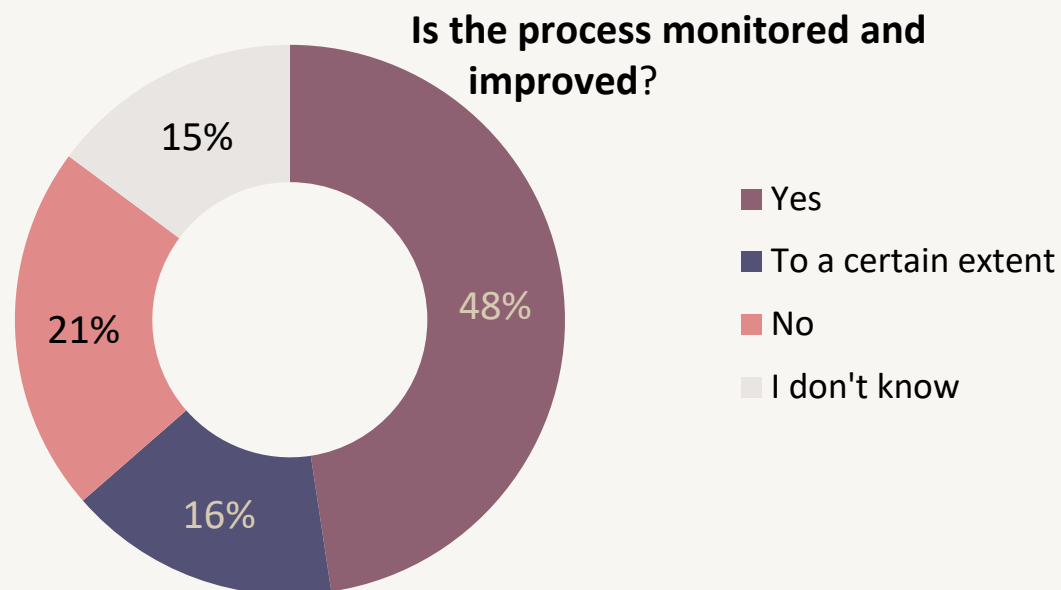
- The aim was to determine whether the main concept of the LRC is observed



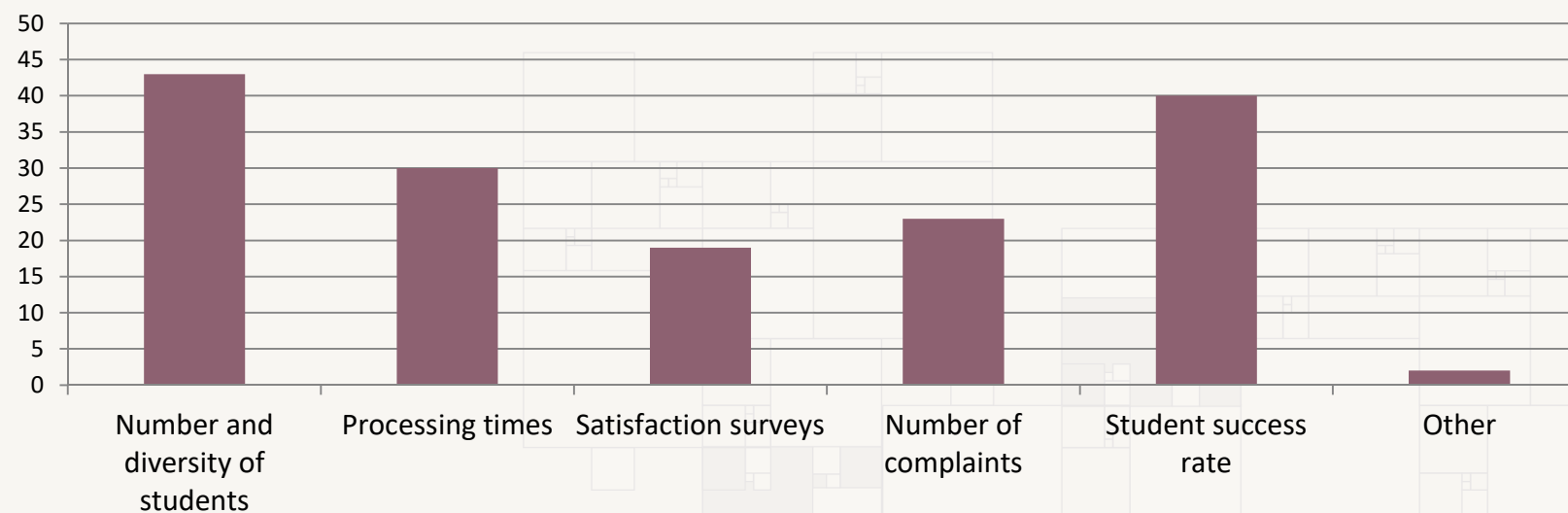
Possibility to Appeal



Monitoring and Improvement



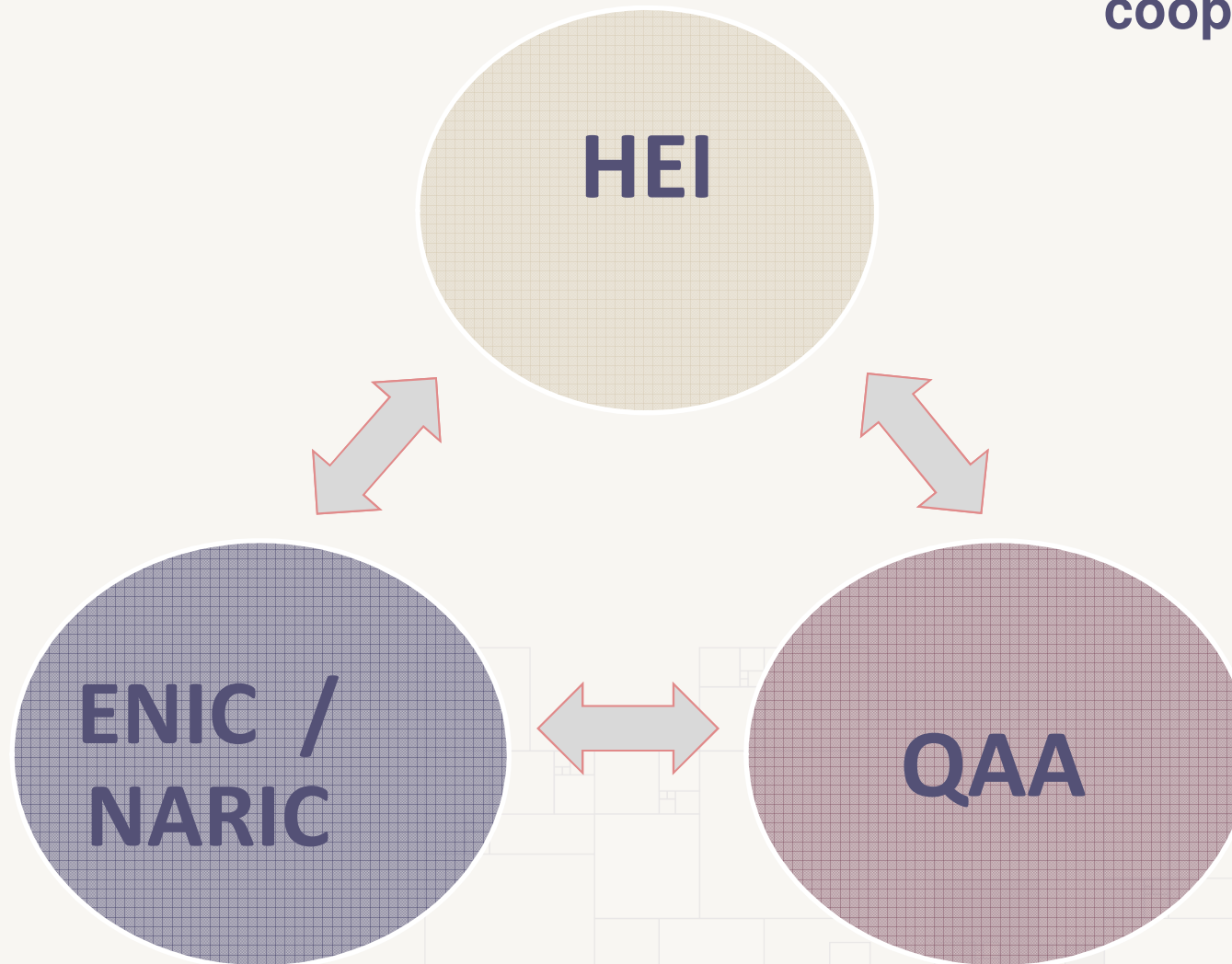
If yes, what are the performance indicators taken into account?





RECOMMENDATIONS

cooperation



Cooperation between QAAs, HEIs, ENICs/NARICs (1)

- Some potential for international legally binding instruments, like the global convention, treaties on automatic recognition
- Big potential for international voluntary commitment instruments, mainly through Bologna Process (EAR Manuals, NQFs, ECTS, DS...)
- Big potential in international and national information resources (databases, registers, publications...)
- Potential in international and national peer learning (events, visits...)
- Lowest impact would be if engaged in both international and national completely voluntary instruments (projects, codes of good practice...)

Cooperation between QAAs, HEIs, ENICs/NARICs (2)

- **Information management**
 - Producing, storing and sharing information
 - Engagement in dissemination and exchange of good practice
- **Capacity building**
 - Raising awareness of the already existing tools
 - Building capacity in application of existing tools
 - Building communities of practice
- **Development**
 - Contribution to creation of new instruments and services
 - Testing exercises
 - Direct application of the instruments
 - Provision of services
- **Monitoring implementation**
- **Networking**
 - In country
 - regionally
 - Internationally: between QAAs, HEIs, ENIC/NARICs and their networks

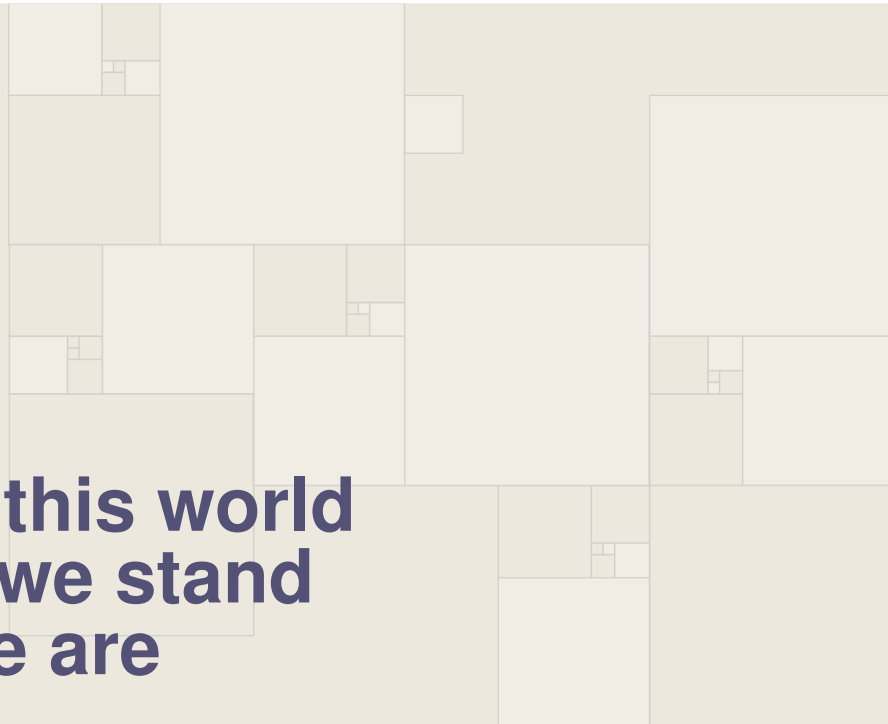
Quality assurance of and for recognition (1)

- **For QAAs :**
 - when involving stakeholders into development of external internal QA – include ENIC/NARIC centres in consultations
 - Selection of reviewers with expertise in recognition
 - Training of reviews in recognition
 - Address fair recognition in regular EQA procedures
 - Conduct *ad hoc* procedures, incl thematic analysis on recognition
- **For HEIs:**
 - to develop an IQA, and include recognition services into it
 - when developing IQA, consult ENIC/NARIC centre
 - manage information on programmes and qualifications awarded
- **ENIC/NARICs**
 - Engage in review of national legislation on recognition
 - Contribute to building capacity of HEIs and QAAs
 - Engage in a review of institutional practices for recognition (?)
 - Facilitate cooperation among HEIs and with QAA
- **For all:**
 - Engage in developing resources for recognition
 - gather and analyse feedback from students on how recognition works

Indicators, signaling compliance to LRC:

- There are internal policies on recognition of qualifications, study periods and for recognition / validation of RPL
- Responsibilities for recognition clearly assigned
- Information for those seeking recognition is provided on the procedure and requirements – clear, on time, in an accessible way
- Information on recognition is internally recorded
- **Recognition is granted unless substantial difference found (LRC, subsidiary texts and EAR Manuals applied)**
- There is a possibility to appeal decisions, information is provided to applicants
- Consistency of decisions assured in terms of staff competence and application of internal policies
- Practice analysed and policies regularly reviewed in order to apply the best practice in the field
- Human, financial, IT and other resources are allocated on a proper level to meet the demand for recognition services

- **What would you add / take out from recommendations?**
- **What do we miss in indicators?**
- **How to find a right balance between attention to procedures and content (qualitative aspects)?**
- **How to achieve impact on having more fair recognition beyond declarations?**



**“The greatest thing in this world
is not so much where we stand
as in what direction we are
moving.”**

/ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe /