

Statement of the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region on the recognition of the qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation

We, representatives of Parties to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (hereinafter “the Lisbon Recognition Convention”) gathered in Paris (France) on 29 February 2016 for the Seventh meeting of the Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention,

Considering the current massive displacement of populations and refugees trying to reach Europe;

Aware of the sharp increase in the number of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation who seek recognition of their higher education qualifications;

Conscious of the fact that the right to education is a human right, and that higher education, which is instrumental in the pursuit and advancement of knowledge, constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society;

Considering that higher education plays a vital role in promoting peace, mutual understanding and tolerance, and in creating mutual confidence among peoples and nations;

Acknowledging initiatives launched by Parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and key stakeholders in higher education in Europe to facilitate the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons or people in a refugee-like situation for further study or for employment;

Recognizing that the ENIC/NARIC Networks play a key role in collecting and disseminating information on existing recognition tools and good practices; supporting competent recognition authorities and contributing to the development and implementation of standardized procedures for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons or people in a refugee-like situation;

Recalling Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention whereby each Party commits to take all feasible steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proved through documentary evidence;

Acknowledging the recommendation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee that Parties implement before the end of 2018 procedures for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation without documentation for their qualifications;

1. **Invite** Parties to implement fully provisions of Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;

2. **Invite** the Bureau of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee to develop a Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.