

European HEI Data Record and Publication

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The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom
Oriel House
Oriel Road
Cheltenham GL50 1XP
e.: projects@naric.org.uk
w.: www.naric.org.uk

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Executive Summary

The following report relates to the extension of the European HEI Data Record project that has been completed by UK NARIC for the European Commission.

The principal aim of this project was to extend the scope of the database that had been designed for the original HEI Data Record Project, completed in 2006. This was achieved by including the history of higher education institutions from a further fifteen European countries, including the European Economic Area and Accession States. In addition, an update function was added to the database.

The database now provides a comprehensive overview of the history of every higher education institution in forty European countries since 1960, which could serve as a valuable tool for NARICs and admissions offices across Europe. Given its flexible nature, the database will be able to accommodate further additions to its content should they be required and can now be edited by users from across Europe so that it remains as up to date as possible.

1. Introduction

Following positive feedback on the original Data Record Project, as well as a reported increase in applications from non-EU students entering EU higher education, it was decided to expand the scope of the database to include Accession, pre-Accession and European Economic Area states.

Changes in status and title of HEIs have taken place in many of these countries as a result of political upheaval in the late eighties and early nineties. A detailed record of these changes is therefore a very useful tool when assessing and evaluating qualifications from the countries in question.

2. Scope

Until this extension work was undertaken, the database included all name and status changes of universities in 25 EU Member States that had occurred from the 1960s until the present day. The extension project has increased the scope of the database even further, so that now it includes historical information for 40 European nations. The countries included in the most recent work are:

- Albania
- Andorra
- Belarus
- Bosnia Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Iceland
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Norway
- Romania
- Serbia
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- Ukraine

These nations incorporate those forming part of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland¹), former EU Accession States (Bulgaria and Romania), current candidate countries for accession to the EU (Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia).

The former EU Accession States, potential candidate and candidate countries have all experienced a significant period of upheaval in their political systems which has in turn had a major impact on their education systems. Furthermore, all of the countries included in the extension work are signatories to the Bologna Process, the result of which for many nations has been a re-structuring of higher education provision.

¹ It should be noted that while Switzerland is not a legal member of the EEA, its citizens have the same rights as those from EEA member states

Documenting the changes that have taken place over a period of time stretching back to 1960 provides credential evaluators with a useful tool to ensure that documentation is credible and recognisable. The database records every change of name and status that has occurred in all HEIs in the above countries. In some cases, institutions may have changed name once or several times, in others certain institutions may have been granted university status relatively recently. Equally some institutions choose to merge for strategic reasons, while others are obliged to either separate or merge in accordance with national priorities.

3. Data Gathering

In order to collect the requisite information, desk-based researchers at UK NARIC contacted the governmental ministries responsible for the regulation of higher education institutions in each country. While the information provided in some cases, such as Albania, was extremely useful and documented name and status changes for all public universities, not all the historical information could be obtained in this way.

Indeed it was necessary in some cases to use other information sources, including:

- ENIC-NARIC network
- British Council offices
- Contacts in higher education
- Other government ministries
- Universities

In line with the standards set in the first report, translations of institution titles in foreign languages were only provided where an officially-sanctioned English name existed. Equally, where only an English-language title was officially recognised, this was the only one entered into the database. However, in the small number of cases where no information relating to a university could be located, the date and name change fields were left blank appropriately. It is hoped that the update form that was developed should allow for these gaps to be filled at a later stage.

3.1 Issues Encountered

Several issues were encountered in the data collection stage that deserve mention. Firstly, when compiling the institution lists it was found that in Ukraine and Belarus the institution titles appear in two different languages on the Ministry of Education websites. These are Ukrainian and Russian in Ukraine, and Belarussian and Russian in Belarus. Whereas in the Ukraine, Ukrainian is the official language, in Belarus, Russian is stated as the official language. Given that only the official language appears on the final degree certificates, it was decided to include only the title in the official language and in English in the institution listing.

Secondly, in some cases, particularly in the case of the newer institutions, the historical information was difficult to obtain from the Internet. In Ukraine, for example, there are a number of new private institutions, established after independence in 1991, which do not have websites. The Interregional Business Institute in Kherston is one such institution. In order to obtain the information required, UK NARIC researchers contacted the Ministry of Education which was

able to provide contacts for the institutions in question. Additionally, not all institution websites provided full historical information (such as secessions and mergers), therefore direct contact with the university was required to obtain a full overview.


Thirdly, whilst researching individual institutions included on the official Ministry lists, it was found that some of the institutions were in fact affiliates. Given that it is the name of the awarding institution and not the name of the affiliate that appears on the final degree certificates, it was decided not to include the affiliates in the final list of institutions. A similar situation occurred when researching the HEI list for Romania, where it was found that several of the institutions listed were indeed tertiary level, but only had affiliate or non-university status. In these cases, the institutions were not published in the database.

4. Database Features

In line with the activity description for this project, an updating feature was added to the existing database to allow HEIs from the participating countries to update their details should they so wish. This feature has been provided as an online form, which representatives of European universities or governments can fill in themselves and send via email to a database administrator at UK NARIC, who can then check and upload the details accordingly.

The link to the update form has been added to the list of options in the left-hand column of the homepage, below the user guide. The update form as it appears on the website can be found below.

Image 1: Update Form

Home >	Historical HEI Extension Work - Update Form
Search >	To update the details of your institution, please complete the appropriate section(s) of the form. Boxes marked with an asterisk (*) are compulsory.
User Guide >	
> Update Form	
Contact Us >	
Copyright >	
	
	English Title * <input type="text"/>
	Original Title * <input type="text"/>
	Date From <input type="text"/>
	Date To <input type="text"/>
	Inception Year <input type="text"/>
	Institution Type <input type="text"/>
	Accreditation <input type="text"/>
	Accreditation From <input type="text"/>
	Accreditation To <input type="text"/>
	Notes <input type="text"/>
	City <input type="text"/>
	Website <input type="text"/>
	Historical Information (eg. name changes, mergers, secessions) <input type="text"/>

Additionally, the updating process requires the user to fill out a short contact details form, so that UK NARIC can ensure that the information being submitted originates from a legitimate source. Below is the contacts page as it appears on the website.

Image 2: Contact Details

For our records, please also provide us with brief contact details:

Name *	<input type="text"/>
Institution *	<input type="text"/>
Position	<input type="text"/>
Email address *	<input type="text"/>

Preview

The link to this page of the website is:

<http://historicalheis.naric.org.uk/index.asp?file=updateform>

It is envisaged that this update function will be used to maintain an accurate contemporary record of the name and status of thousands of universities in 40 European countries. UK NARIC will circulate the database to representatives in the ENIC-NARIC network so that they could use and contribute to it, maintaining its value for credential evaluators across the continent.