



Ministerio
de Educación
y Cultura
URUGUAY

First Meeting of the New Regional Convention on Recognition (2019) Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay



13 - 14 April, 2023



First meeting

Conceptual Note + Agenda

Background

A common objective of the first UNESCO Regional Recognition Conventions adopted in the 1970s and 1980s has been to harmonise and ensure fair, timely and non-discriminatory recognition procedures among States Parties in order to facilitate greater academic mobility across regions. The revision process leading to the second edition of these conventions emphasised the need to include provisions to improve reliability and quality, such as regional qualifications frameworks, accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms. They also assume the need for greater transparency of national education systems through provisions for information exchange and networking, while respecting the prerogative of national authorities in the Recognition decision-making process.

To date four New Regional Conventions have been adopted: [Europe](#) (Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997), [Asia-Pacific](#) (Tokyo Convention, 2011), [Africa](#) (Addis Convention, 2014) and [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (2019). UNESCO is also providing leadership in the preparation of the [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education](#), which will enter into force on **March 5, 2023**.

Regarding the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, on 8-9 October 2015, during the "High Level Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Latin America and the Caribbean" held in Brasilia, the Member States of the region agreed to formulate a new Regional Convention taking into account the current challenges in higher education, especially within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the need to have schemes to strengthen regional education systems to ensure quality. During this meeting, the representatives agreed to "facilitate and support the review process, as well as the creation of new special mechanisms for its implementation". The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), as the Secretariat of the Convention 1974, led this review process with technical support from UNESCO Headquarters.

As part of the revision exercise, Member States requested IESALC to set up a Working Group to revise the [Convention 1974](#) and propose a new text to Member States in 2018. The first meeting of the Working Group was organised in Havana, Cuba, in February 2016; the second meeting was organised in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in August 2016; the third meeting was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in June 2017; and the fourth and final meeting was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in April 2018.

The text produced was adopted by twenty-three (23) Member States on **13 July 2019** (see [authentic document](#)) during a Member States international conference approved by the UNESCO Executive Council at its 205th session (see [Document 205 EX/27](#), Part II, Decision 27.II).

The New Regional Convention (Buenos Aires, 2019) entered into force on 23 October 2022 with the ratifications of this pact of wills by [Cuba](#), [Grenada](#), [Peru](#) and [Uruguay](#), making it a legally-binding instrument for the Parties. Because of this, the Secretariat of the New Regional Convention (Buenos Aires, 2019) convenes the States Parties to the First Meeting to be held in accordance with the agenda proposed in this document.

Justification

Internationalisation is considered to be one of the more important dynamics in the work of higher education institutions in the age of globalization. Its most visible aspect is undoubtedly academic mobility with student mobility being the most notable. In 2019, approximately 9 million students were pursuing higher education studies outside their country of origin, i.e., 2.6% of an enrolment of approximately 238 million students worldwide. However, Latin America and the Caribbean's student mobility is a mere 1.14% (IESALC 2022), and consequently they are considered the geographical block with the lowest student mobility.

Similarly, statistics show that skilled migration has increased rapidly in recent decades, and there is every indication that it will increase even more rapidly in the future due to previously recognised causes, to which climate ones are added.

Given the benefits that mobility brings to nations, both in the academic and labor fields, it is essential to have an instrument that harmonizes the processes of recognition of academic degrees that carry part of these human mobilizations, in order to take advantage of their talent in the scientific and technological leverage of the receiving countries, favoring the labor insertion that allows the deployment of human talent in circulation.

Objectives

Strengthen intra-regional cooperation and ensure quality and academic mobility in Latin America and the Caribbean through the implementation of the New Regional Convention for Latin America and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires, 2019).

Specific objectives

- Appointment of the New Regional Convention Committee
- Adoption of the Rules of Procedure governing the powers, composition and activities of the New Regional Convention Committee
- Election of the New Regional Convention Committee
- Develop a better understanding of the New Regional Convention (Buenos Aires, 2019) and its implications for higher education in the Region
- Agree and approve a Work Plan 2023-2024 for the implementation of the New Regional Convention
- Socialize recognition practices among States Parties and identify obstacles to be overcome, for a full implementation of the New Regional Convention
- Initiate the creation of National Information Centres on Recognition with a view to subsequently articulating them to become a network and operational arm that contribute to the implementation of the New Regional Convention (Buenos Aires, 2019)
- Envision activities from the Committee aimed at contributing to the ratification of the New Regional Convention by the rest of the signatory States.
- Increase awareness of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education and its complementarity with the New Regional Convention.

Participants

- The 5 ratifying States of the New Regional Convention
- The 19 signatory States to the New Regional Convention
- UNESCO Headquarters
- Convention Secretariat (IESALC)
- UNESCO Montevideo
- Observers:
 - Member States of UNESCO as stated in [“Definition of regions with a view to the execution by the Organization of regional activities”](#)

| Wednesday, 12 April 2023 | |
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| 19:30 – 22:00 | Welcome Cocktail - Sheraton Colonia Golf & Spa Resort (Continuación de la Rbla. de las Américas S/N, Colonia del Sacramento, Main Lobby) |
| Thursday, 13 April 2023 | |
| 08:30 – 09:30 | Accreditation of Participants |
| 09:30 – 10:00 | Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address by the Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay, Dr. Pablo da Silveira • Address by the Deputy Director General for Education, UNESCO, Dr. Stefannia Giannini • Address by the Director of UNESCO Montevideo, Dr. Ernesto Fernández Polcuch • Address by the Director of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, Dr. Francesc Pedró |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the Agenda Chair by: Mr. Gonzalo Baroni , Director of Education in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Uruguay |
| 10:15 – 11:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Rules of Procedure of the Convention Chaired by: Mr. José Antonio Quinteiro and Mr. Francisco Contreras , Secretariat of the New Regional Convention |
| 11:00 – 11:20 | Coffee / Tea Break |
| 11:20 – 11:30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of the Committee • Election of the Bureau Chaired by: Mr. José Antonio Quinteiro and Mr. Francisco Contreras , Secretariat of the New Regional Convention |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | The New Regional Convention and its implications for higher education in the region |

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| | <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <p>Speaker: Dr. Francesc Pedró, Director of IESALC</p> <p>Discussion</p> |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch |
| 14:30 – 15:15 | <p>Tracking the beginnings of the implementation of the Lisbon Convention (1997): a referential experience for the New Regional Convention (2019)</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Luca Lantero, President of the Lisbon Convention Committee (online)</p> <p>Discussion</p> |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | <p>The New Regional Convention (2019) and its Work Plan Proposal for 2023-2024</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <p>Speaker: José Antonio Quinteiro, Secretariat of the New Regional Convention</p> <p>Discussion</p> |
| 16:15 – 16:20 | <p>Closure</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> |
| Friday, 14 April 2023 | |
| 09:30 – 10:30 | <p>Strategy for the creation of National Recognition Information Centres as an auxiliary arm in the implementation of the New Regional Convention and its networking articulation</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <p>Speaker: Francisco Contreras, Senior Officer in the Swedish Higher Education Council (ENIC-NARIC)</p> <p>Discussion</p> |
| 10:45 – 11:30 | <p>Recognition of Foreign Diplomas: main obstacles to overcome for a full implementation of the New Regional Convention (2019)</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intervention by the Cuban representative (tbd) ● Intervention by the Grenadian representative (tbd) ● Intervention by the Peruvian representative (tbd) ● Intervention by the Uruguayan representative, Dr. Carlos Romero ● Intervention by the Holy See representative (tbd) <p>Discussion</p> |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Coffee / Tea Break |

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| <p>12:00 – 13:00</p> | <p>The Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education and its complementarity with the New Regional Convention (2019)</p> <p>Chaired by: President of the Committee Bureau</p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Andreas Snildal</p> <p>Discussion</p> |
| <p>13:15 – 14:30</p> | <p>Lunch</p> |
| <p>14:30 – 15:15</p> | <p>Final Declaration</p> |
| <p>15:15 – 15:30</p> | <p>Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President of the Committee Bureau - Director of IESALC - National Commission of Uruguay for Cooperation with UNESCO - Government of Uruguay – Dr. Ana Ribeiro, Undersecretary of Education and Culture of Uruguay and president of the Uruguayan National Commission for UNESCO |
| <p>After the close of the session</p> | <p>Tour of the historic Colonia del Sacramento (duration: 1,5hrs)</p> |