



Cooperation without
boundaries

Benelux-Baltics Treaty on Automatic recognition of higher education degrees

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Vibrant Cross-border labour markets
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Benelux cooperation in a nutshell

- *A bit of history...*



1944: Customs Union + common external tariff between NL, BE and LU



1958: Treaty establishing the 'Benelux Economic Union'



2008: Treaty establishing the 'Benelux Union'

Benelux cooperation in a nutshell

- *Regional cooperation... -> also with NRW, Baltic States, Nordic States*
- *Secretariat in Brussels*
- *Committee of Ministers / Benelux Interparliamentary Assembly / Court*
- *Facilitating cross-border cooperation*
- *And being a frontrunner/inspire within the European Union*
- *With own legal instruments...*
 - *Multilateral Treaty (such as the one on recognition of diploma's)*
 - *'Benelux Decision' -> legally binding instrument*
 - *Recommendations*

Benelux cooperation in a nutshell

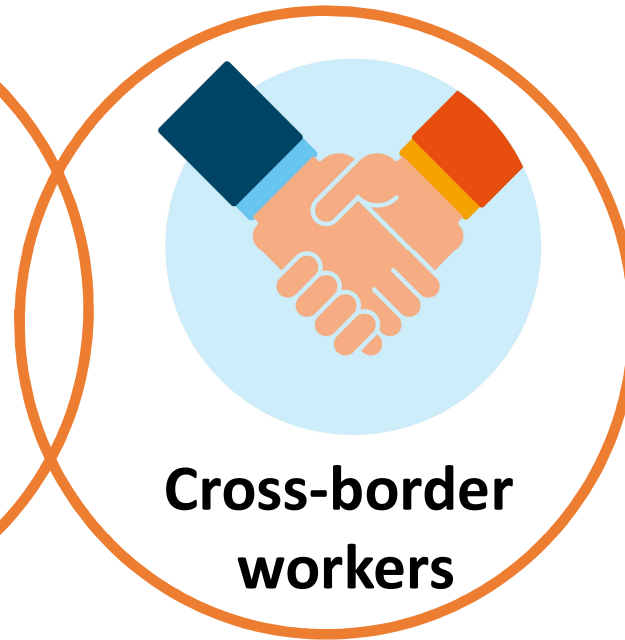
- *Themes of cooperation (amongst others – list not exhaustive)*



Mobility



Education



**Cross-border
workers**



Police cooperation

Cross-border mobility: a political priority



- More than 35% of the total EU cross border workers live within the Benelux area!

Automatic level-recognition: first steps

- 2015: adoption of ‘Benelux decision’ on automatic mutual recognition of officially recognized Bachelor or Master degrees obtained in the Benelux countries, without any recognition procedures
 - Mutual trust in each other’s educational systems & Quality Assurance Systems
 - Among the first within the European Union to introduce automatic recognition
 - Generic *level* recognition (Bachelor’s, Master’s (level 6 and 7 of EQF))
 - Not targeting the regulated aspects (under EU Directive 2005/36/EC Professional Qualifications) or study content of the diplomas

Further steps

- 2018: adding of level 5 ('associate degree') and of level 8 ('PhD') of EQF to the Benelux decision of 2015
- 2018: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania also enter into an agreement concerning the automatic academic recognition of qualifications (EQF levels 4, 6, 7 and 8).
- 2021: Multilateral Treaty between Benelux and Baltic countries on levels 6 and 7 and 8. Level 5 is optional.
- 2023: Ratification of Treaty is ongoing and potential joining of other States to the Benelux-Baltics Treaty

Advantages

- Legally enforceable rights to citizens
- Benelux and Baltics are frontrunners in the Bologna-process + Council Recommendation 2018
- Decrease of administrative workload: no waste of resources for Benelux or Baltic diploma's

Future

- Treaty is open to the accession of other parties/States
 - Ratification of Lisbon Convention
 - Trustworthy quality assurance systems (ESG)
 - Three-tier structure for higher education system
 - EQF for LLL
- Treaty is inspiration for other education-related developments: framework agreement between Luxemburgish and Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (2022)

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