



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# Mind the gap- Recognition and RPL

*Opportunities and assets for  
recognition in a mobile world*



# The myth of stasis

- 103M people are forcibly displaced
- 53.2M people are internally displaced,
- 32.5M people are refugees
- 5.3M people need international protection
- 4.9M of us are asylum seekers

More than 7 out of 10 people who need International Protection come from just 5 countries:

- Syria
- Venezuela
- Ukraine
- Afghanistan
- South Sudan

Most come with qualifications, including some which partially documented. Everyone has history.

NARIC Ireland has Comparability Statements for qualifications from each of these countries among our total 1500+, and 'Rough Guides' for Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan\*.

[UNHCR - Refugee Statistics](#)

[Recognition of foreign qualifications | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#)

*Boy with life tube III, John Behan RHA.*



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# Our binding obligations- the Lisbon Recognition Convention

## Article VII

- *Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable 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 proven through documentary evidence.*

## 2017 Recommendation & Explanatory memorandum

- Qualifications should be recognised unless a substantial difference is shown
- Assessment is an entitlement for access purposes
- The 2010 Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the assessment of Foreign Qualifications applies where qualifications cannot be fully documented
- Includes periods of study
- *CETS 165 - Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (coe.int); Woman with suitcase 2022 Behan*



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# Where does Recognition stop and RPL begin?

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The 'European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual' is a set of Guidelines developed by the ENIC NARIC Network to support Credential Evaluators, including with specific chapters on

- Refugees
- Substantial Difference
- Alternative Recognition
- Non-traditional learning (RPL is included under this heading, and treats mainly the recognition of qualifications achieved through RPL)

**The underlying orientation, informed by outcomes, is whether the applicant is ready, sufficiently prepared for the desired activity?**

**Clear gap- experiential, informal learning can be recognised through RPL processes, including RPL for access, exemptions and awards.**

Processes supporting recognition where qualifications and other documentation is missing have been developed through two collaborative projects of the ENIC NARIC Network led by NOKUT:

- **ARENA** ([ARENA | Nokut](#)) (Borundi, Yemen, Sudan, Palestine, Rwanda)

and

- **REACT** ([REACT – Refugees and Recognition | Nokut](#)) (Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Venezuela, DRC)



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Issued: 14.03.2017  
Valid through: 14.03.2022

**Personal information**

Surname: Nasy  
Father's name: Alamy  
Date of birth: 28.08.1983  
Nationality: Syria

Given names: Ahmad  
Author's name: Rabaa  
Place of birth: Deir Ez-Zor, Syria

**Assessed qualifications**  
Highest achieved qualification: (2011) Bachelor in Electrical Engineering, University of Damascus, Syria<sup>1</sup>

**Additional relevant information from the applicant**  
Languages: Arabic (native speaker), Arabic (language of instruction), English (language course)  
Work experience: 5 years of teaching experience in Syria<sup>2</sup>  
Inquiries and documentation assessment is conducted by (check all applicable from CEC/NEO participating in the project):

Attached to the passport: ☐ Translation certificate  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a non-credential document, not a replacement for the national recognition system, but a document intended to be of help to countries with applications for recognition/transfer and studies. The evaluation is based on available documentation and a structured interview with a professional contextual evaluation. This document is only valid together with the application form.

<sup>2</sup> No available documentation:

<sup>3</sup> No available documentation:

## • The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees

- Bologna (2020); new legal instrument - Council of Europe/ MS by end 2023
- Coordinated by the Council of Europe, individual applications directly to them
- Process results in a **standardised document** outlining educational level, work experience, and language proficiency
- Through a panel-based (2) evaluation process involving a structured interview and assessment of available documentation (background paper)
- Twenty participating Countries, sharing and growing expertise
- *Supported by UCD, UL, MTU(Cork), RPL in HE, NARIC Ireland- Training from Jan 2023*

# Minding the gaps...

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'I came back from that frugal republic

With my two arms the one length, the customs

woman having insisted my allowance was myself.

The old man rose and gazed into my face and said that was official recognition

That I was now a dual citizen.

He therefore desired me when I got home

To consider myself a representative

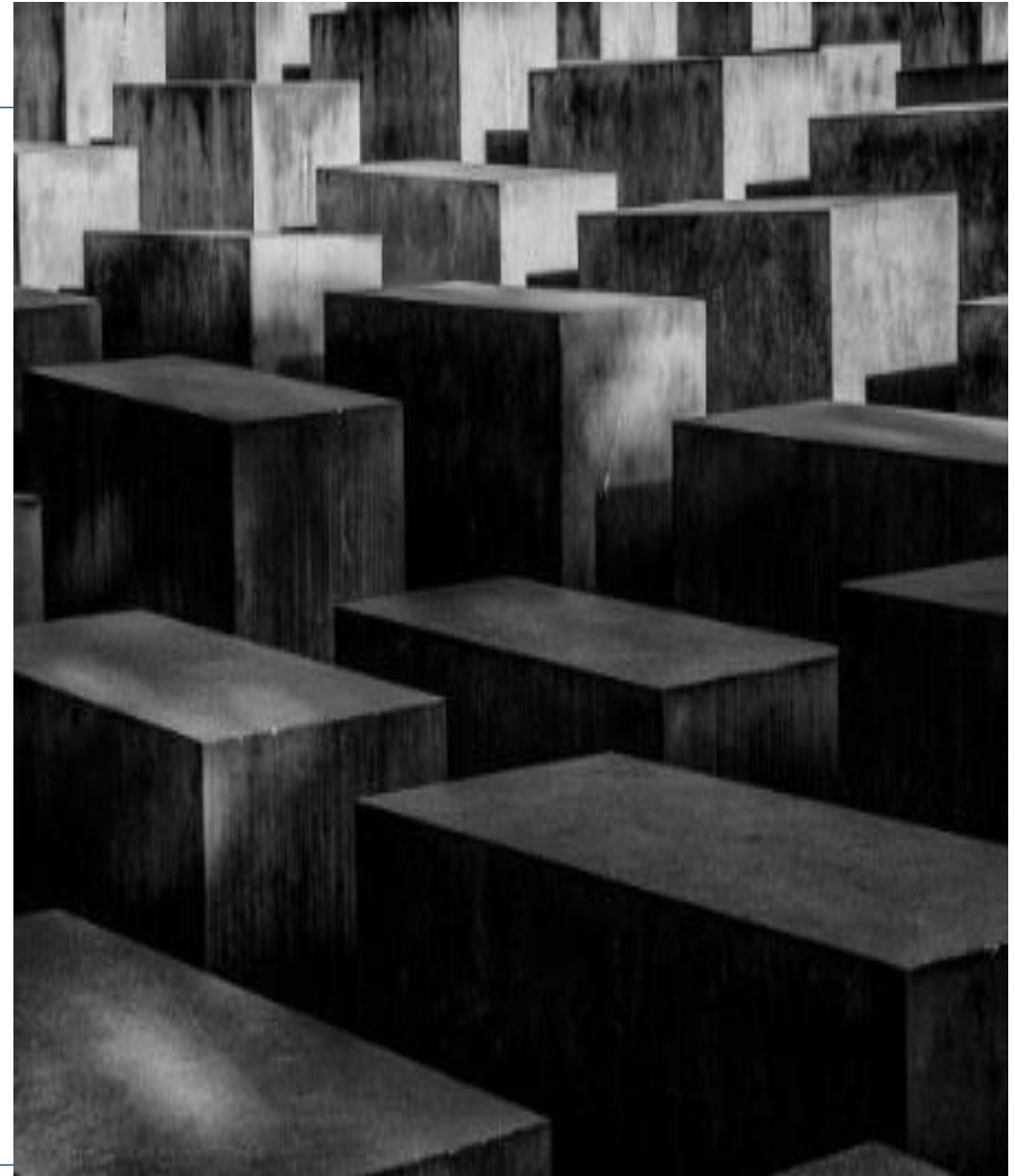
And to speak on their behalf in my own tongue.

Their embassies, he said, were everywhere

But operated independently

And no ambassador would ever be relieved.'

*'From the Republic of Conscience' ...Heaney*



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