INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE · RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

European Experience in Recognition of Qualifications

CIMEA digital tools and prospects for cooperation with Kyrgyzstan

A. Kulumzhanova

Director, CIMEA Central Asia Regional Office

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Session II · 12:30–13:00

TODAY

Three parts, one question: how do we build trust in qualifications?

01

The European framework

Recognition conventions and the shift from paper to digital practice

02

CIMEA's digital ecosystem

DiploMe, DiplomeChain, ARDI and the knowledge system behind them

03

Cooperation with Kyrgyzstan

What the CIMEA Central Asia Regional Office can offer, and next steps

WHO WE ARE

CIMEA: Italy’s ENIC-NARIC centre, working on recognition since 1984

Official national centre

Italy’s member of the NARIC network (EU) and the ENIC network (Council of Europe and UNESCO)

Lisbon Convention principles

Supports academic mobility and promotes fair recognition in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Integrity

Co-founder, with the Council of Europe, of the Centre for the Prevention and Combatting of Education Fraud (PCEF)

Regional presence

Regional offices, including CIMEA Central Asia, bring European expertise closer to partner systems

Four milestones that shape recognition today

1997

Lisbon Recognition Convention

European Region; fair recognition unless a substantial difference is shown

2011

Tokyo Convention

Asia-Pacific; in force since 2018, with transparency and information exchange at its core

2018

EU Council Recommendation

Promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher and upper-secondary qualifications

2019

Global Convention

In force since March 2023; 41 States Parties as of May 2026

Kyrgyzstan stands where the European and Asia-Pacific frameworks meet, which makes interoperable, digital recognition especially valuable.

THE SHIFT

Recognition is moving from paper procedures to trusted, verifiable data

1980s–1990s

Analog bureaucracy

Nostrification, legalisation, slow and open to forgery

Late 1990s

First digital steps

Basic databases; Lisbon Convention sets new principles

2000s–2010s

Digital transition

Email between institutions, but paper still verifies

Late 2010s–2020s

Digital transformation

Verifiable documents, blockchain, automatic recognition

2025 onwards

Human–AI collaboration

AI supports evaluators and fraud detection; people decide

A step-by-step digital transformation pathway

2019

DiploMe 1.0

First blockchain-based platform for CIMEA statements

2022

WIKI

Internal knowledge management system

2023

ARDI

Automatic Recognition Database – Italia

2024

DiploMe 2.0

Renewed, fully digital statement service

2025

DiplomeChain

CIMEA-owned blockchain, plus a Digital Transformation Unit

First the information architecture, then the workflows, then full digitalisation of input, processing and output.

ONE ECOSYSTEM

Four connected tools serve students, evaluators and universities

DiploMe

Online platform where holders request, store and share CIMEA statements

DiplomeChain

CIMEA's own blockchain that notarises every statement it issues

ARDI

Free database giving automatic correspondence for qualifications

WIKI and CRM

More than 40 years of structured knowledge, plus request management

Countering fraud

Building mutual trust

Fostering cooperation

TOOL 1 · DIPLOME AND DIPLOMECHAIN

Every CIMEA statement is digital, signed and on blockchain

1. Holder applies online on DiploMe
2. CIMEA evaluates the documents
3. PDF statement is digitally signed
4. Statement is notarised on DiplomeChain
5. Holder shares it; universities use Fast Verification

What it guarantees

Issued only digitally, no paper copies

Permanently verifiable and immutable

One account per holder, no intermediaries

Privacy-compliant (GDPR)

TOOL 2 · ARDI

Automatic recognition in three steps, free of charge

STEP 1
Qualification search

STEP 2
Evaluation

STEP 3
Statement of correspondence

Scope

Qualifications from Lisbon Recognition Convention countries

Policy basis

2018 Council Recommendation on automatic recognition and EHEA commitments

In practice

Italian universities ask applicants to download it at enrolment

TRANSFERABLE LESSONS

Six design principles any national centre can adopt

User-centricity

Designed for students, evaluators and universities

Privacy and security

Personal data protected by design

Interoperability

Systems that can talk to partners abroad

International standards

Convention principles built into every step

One-stop shop

One entry point instead of many offices

Structured, AI-ready data

Information stored so it can be reused and analysed

Central Asia is moving quickly on recognition

KAZAKHSTAN

Tokyo Convention

First in Central Asia to ratify; in force since 1 May 2026

UZBEKISTAN

Global Convention

Ratified December 2025; in force since 3 March 2026

KYRGYZSTAN

National Roadmap 2026–2028

Preparing to join the Tokyo and Global Conventions

A shared regional moment: the same principles, and increasingly the same digital expectations, across the region.

CIMEA CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

A bridge between European expertise and the region

Regional dialogue

Almaty, October 2026: 70+ participants from five Central Asian countries, with UNESCO Almaty and the British Council

Capacity building

Seminars on CIMEA digital tools for universities and recognition staff

Academic integrity

Link to the PCEF regional office for Central Asia, opened in December 2025

Access to networks

Direct connection to ENIC-NARIC and the Lisbon Convention community

PROPOSALS FOR KYRGYZSTAN

Five areas where we can work together

Area	What CIMEA Central Asia can offer	Roadmap link
National information centre	Peer advice on mandate, services and workflows; study visit to CIMEA	Convention compliance
Digital recognition	Know-how on verifiable digital statements and an automatic-recognition database	Digital documents, information services
Evaluator training	Case-based training for ministry and university recognition staff	Institutional mechanisms
Fighting education fraud	Verification practice and PCEF expertise on diploma mills	Transparent procedures
University partnerships	Support for joint and double degrees and recognition of mobility periods	Mobility, joint programmes

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

Aligned with the National Roadmap 2026–2028

2026

Agree

Memorandum of cooperation and a joint working group with the Ministry

2027

Build

Training cycle, support for the information centre, a pilot of digital verification

2028

Connect

Joint review of results; Kyrgyz centre active in regional and global networks

First step we can take this month: a working meeting with the Ministry and interested universities.

THREE TAKEAWAYS

Digital tools turn convention principles into everyday practice.

Trust is verifiable

Transparent information plus instant verification

Information first

Structure the knowledge, then digitalise the process

Cooperation multiplies

Regional partners make every national effort go further

THANK YOU

CA
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Let’s build recognition on trust, together.

Questions are welcome.

A. Kulumzhanova · Director, CIMEA Central Asia Regional Office

[email] · [phone]

cimea.it
cimea-diplome.it
ardi.cimea.it