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The consolidation and international openness of the European higher education area

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2005 (2012)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken due note of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2005 (2012) on "The consolidation and international openness of the European Higher Education Area" and welcomes the Assembly's support for the Council of Europe's contribution in this field.

2. The Committee of Ministers attaches the greatest importance to education in the values of the Council of Europe to promote cohesive democratic societies which respect human rights and equality of opportunity. The Programme and Budget for 2012-2013 in the education field strives to promote these values through education systems and their institutions and through the development of qualifications and their recognition. It also covers the Council of Europe's strong contribution to making the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) a reality, with a focus on competences and values.

3. In the context of the EHEA, the Council of Europe works along the lines of the Assembly's recommendations in paragraph 4.2, particularly in the context of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and the EHEA Working Group on Structural Reform, which it co-chairs. The Council of Europe is, *inter alia*, responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the development of national qualifications frameworks in the higher education field. Furthermore, the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee is to prepare a draft instrument on the role of qualifications frameworks in facilitating fair recognition of qualifications, following on closely from the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165).

4. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of the Assembly's suggestion that exchanges of good practices in higher education reform be developed between EHEA member and non-member countries, as well as co-operation with partners outside Europe. The Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE) favours this approach in so far as its budgetary resources allow.

1. Adopted at the 1161st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (5 February 2013).