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Equivalence of agricultural diplomas

Report¹

Committee on Culture, Science and Education

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1. 1958 - 10th Session - Second part



A. Draft Recommendation

The Assembly,

Conscious of the grave shortage in Europe of qualified scientists and technicians, particularly in the field of agriculture;

Believing that adequate professional training of agriculturists and other agricultural producers is the basis of an efficient production of foodstuffs;

Convinced of the necessity to encourage exchanges of agricultural technicians between member countries of the Council of Europe in order to develop the common stock of knowledge in agricultural matters and thereby to improve agricultural training;

Considering the conventions on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to universities and of periods of university study signed by the member countries of the Council of Europe;

Having been requested by other international organisations to examine the possibility of concluding a European Convention on the Equivalence of Agricultural Diplomas,

Recommends to the Committee of Ministers:

1. that it should conclude a new convention on the equivalence of diplomas awarded on completion of university studies, and of diplomas awarded by institutes of agricultural studies, notably for purposes of economic and scientific research;
2. that it should invite the appropriate Committee of Experts to study proposals whereby holders of agricultural diplomas awarded in one Member State could exercise their professions in the other Member States of the Council of Europe;
3. that it should instruct the Committee of Experts which will undertake this study to take into account the work done by the organisations which have already concerned themselves with the problem.

B. Explanatory Memorandum

1.

1. In January 1958, the Assembly referred to the Cultural Committee for the substance, and to the Committee on Agriculture for an opinion, a Motion for a Recommendation on the equivalence of agricultural diplomas tabled by M. Charpentier and a number of his colleagues ([Doc. 778](#)).

2. The origin of this matter was a suggestion made by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations which, in August 1957, proposed that the Council of Europe might take up this question. The earlier history of this matter was as follows.

3. The question had been examined in April 1956 by the Sub-commission on Extension and Vocational Training (Agriculture Division) of F.A.O. which regarded it as being one of the factors making for a speedier development of vocational training in the countries of Europe and recommended that a study be made of the comparative validity of certificates issued by agricultural schools of secondary and higher levels first for European countries and, later, on a world-wide basis.

4. In September 1956, the Fifth International Congress on Agricultural Teaching organised by the International Confederation of Technical Agriculturists recommended that " an International Convention relating to the recognition and the equivalence of university degrees in agriculture be prepared after appropriate study ".

5. Meanwhile, at the meeting of international organisations dealing with agriculture in Europe organised by the F.A.O. in February 1958, which was attended by, inter alia, O.E.E.C., UNESCO, the International Confederation of Technical Agriculturists, the International Association of Agricultural Students and the International Association of Universities, it became apparent that the preparation of a Convention on the equivalence of agricultural diplomas was of considerable interest to agricultural circles in Europe and throughout the world.

6. The Conference recognised that the Council of Europe was the most appropriate body to undertake this task. It also recommended that the Council invite other organisations which have already taken up this question to participate in its work (cf. Appendix I).

7. The Council of Europe has already done a good deal of work relating to the equivalence of diplomas. In December 1953, the Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to admission to Universities was signed and has now been ratified by all Member States except Sweden. In December 1956, a Convention on the equivalence of periods of university study spent abroad was signed and has now been ratified by seven Member States.²

8. The Committee of Cultural Experts is now working on a further convention relating to the equivalence of diplomas awarded on completion of university studies. It would appear reasonable that while this convention is being drafted the question of the equivalence of diplomas awarded by institutions for agricultural studies should also be included and this is the intention of the first paragraph of the draft Recommendation. A further step would be to provide that the holders of agricultural diplomas awarded in one Member State should be able to exercise their professions in other Member States of the Council. This is the intention of the second paragraph of the draft Recommendation. These two paragraphs have been adopted in their original form in M. Charpentier's Motion.

9. Arrangements to permit the holders of agricultural diplomas awarded in one Member State to exercise their professions in other Member States would, in effect, extend in this field the provisions of the European Economic Community Treaty relating to establishment (Articles 52-58) from the Six to the Fifteen.

10. As mentioned above, a number of other international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, have already worked on this problem. It is significant, and a cause for satisfaction to the Council of Europe, that they have invited it to take the matter up and work out a European convention to give effect to their aspirations. This occurred not only through the original request by the F.A.O. to the Assembly's Committee on Agriculture, but also at the meeting of the international organisations interested in agriculture in Europe (mentioned in paragraph 5 above and Appendix I). The question has, however, many technical aspects on which the specialised organisations are better informed than the Council of Europe and on which they have done valuable preparatory work. Amongst other things, the F.A.O. has arranged for the preparation

2. Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, United Kingdom.

of an " International Directory of Institutions for Higher Education in Agriculture ", a provisional edition of which has already been published in December 1957. It is clearly desirable, therefore, to consult these organisations and use their material in the drafting of the proposed European Convention. This is the intention of paragraph 3 of the draft Recommendation, which meets the wish expressed by the other organisations at the meeting in Paris in February 1958.

11. In accordance with the Assembly's reference to committee of January 1957, this question has been studied by the Cultural Committee, which on 8th September 1958 approved unanimously the draft Recommendation set out at the beginning of this Report.

12. The Cultural Committee's Report was then transmitted to the Committee on Agriculture for its opinion, and a favourable opinion was expressed by 14 votes to 0 at the Committee's meeting on 13th September 1958.

13. The draft Recommendation is therefore submitted to the Assembly for adoption and transmission to the Committee of Ministers.

Appendix Extract from the Report of the fourth meeting of international organisations for the joint study of programmes and activities in the field of agriculture in Europe held in Paris, 3rd-8th February 1958

Equivalence of Higher Education Diplomas in the field of Agriculture

The Meeting proceeded to examine the many studies carried out by the various participating organisations, and agreed unanimously on the need for co-ordinating all the initiatives that might lead to a solution of this problem, which includes questions of form, prestige and professional protection under two aspects: academic value of the degrees, on the one hand, and the practical professional value, on the other, with the object of facilitating the interchange and the collaboration between the various countries.

The Meeting noted with interest that the Committee on Agriculture of the Council of Europe is concerning itself with this question.

The Council of Europe has already obtained the signatures of two conventions:

in 1953, for the Convention on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to university institutions ;

in 1956, for the Convention recognising the equivalence of periods of university study in all the signatory countries.

These two conventions would appear to be applicable to higher agricultural education.

A third convention regarding the academic recognition of university degrees is under consideration, as well as a fourth which proposes to eliminate the restrictions concerning the employment of duly qualified scientific and technical personnel in the different countries.

C.I.T.A. (the International Confederation of Technical Agriculturists), which groups the associations of agricultural technicians of all countries and which has about 30 years' experience, has often approached the problem of the equivalence of higher education diplomas in the sphere of agriculture. Following two extensive enquiries in all countries, its Secretary-General presented a report on this question to the World Congress on Agricultural Education held in Rome in September 1956. The problem is difficult to solve since, although higher agricultural education is practically unified in various countries such as Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, etc., this is not the case in other countries such as Belgium and France.

O.E.E.C. has published in its review *Fatis* the results of an enquiry on professional agricultural education up to university level, and a similar enquiry on university studies is under way. A further project of OEEC/EPA provides for a meeting of representatives of the agricultural-faculties of universities and institutes for agricultural education of a similar status in Europe to discuss common problems and the problems of productivity arising out of the movement for greater European integration.

The International Association of Universities (A.I.U.) is carrying out for F.A.O. a worldwide enquiry on higher agricultural education. This document is almost completed, and CITA, as well as other interested organisations expressed the wish to consult this document before final publication. In turn, CITA, which has studied the equivalences of agricultural degrees, will put all of its documentation at the disposal of the interested organisations.

The Permanent Assembly of the Presidents of the Chambers of Agriculture of France (A.P.P. C. A.) which is at present carrying out an enquiry on professional agricultural education, in co-operation with the National Union of Agricultural Students, will shortly supply complementary elements of judgment.

The Meeting decided that the Committee on Agriculture of the Council of Europe shall be the organisation in charge of collecting all the documentation and of co-ordinating all action in this field, and noted with satisfaction the statement of the representative of the Council of Europe that, in the course of the elaboration of the convention on the equivalence of higher education diplomas in the sphere of agriculture, it will be possible to call upon qualified experts. The wish was expressed that the opinions of the organisations which have already studied this problem will be taken into account in connection with the appointment of these experts.