Summary of the Dissertation

"MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND ACADEMIC DEGREES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION"

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The aim of the present study is to do an analytical review of the process of recognizing educational documents in the EU to identify the basic requirements, criteria, and indicators for validating acquired secondary or vocational education, educational-qualification, or academic degrees in individual Member States, or respective groups of Member States, through the prism of the potential for their future harmonization across the entire Union. Particularly important is the three-tiered cyclical system of higher education (bachelor's, master's and doctoral), created based on the European reference frameworks such as the Bologna Declaration, the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, and the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which emerged with the aim of creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The essence of the study is the identification of the specifics in the regulatory framework of the procedure for mutual recognition of educational documents in the EU and Bulgaria through two scientific hypotheses.

The first is that the creation of a pan-European mechanism for automatic recognition of educational qualifications for secondary, higher, and academic education, as well as periods of study abroad, would facilitate the validation of competencies acquired under different conditions and would promote a sense of social integration and European identity among European citizens.

The second hypothesis is that the gradual implementation of automatic mutual recognition of educational qualifications in the EU would allow this to

happen relatively smoothly and in accordance with national law, EU law and the national specificities of the member states.

The dissertation represents a critical review of the main sources of law and systematizes the best practices for recognizing education, qualifications, or degrees in the EU based on the experience of educational experts from various Member States. The aim is the theoretical development of a standard for a fair, transparent, and effective institutional recognition procedure across the EU.

The relevance of the topic stems from the lack of sufficiently comprehensive scientific studies on it, while the more significant contributions of a scientific and practical nature are in view of the fact that by 2025, the national legal frameworks for mutual recognition of the Member States are still applied in parallel within the Union and therefore need current harmonization.

Operational definitions have been proposed to help understand the legal framework and the functioning of the educational sector in Bulgaria.

Changes in the structure of the national education system, as well as in higher education as an element of this system, have been systematically tracked. Through a comparative analysis of the national educational practice and the leading European educational system, both the areas of convergence and the most significant differences have been outlined.

The main indicators for future empirical research have been identified in the work. The main problems in the process of mutual recognition of educational qualifications within the EU are also summarized and grouped as follows:

1. main issues that hinder the increase in the number of higher education graduates in Bulgaria;

2. problems within the higher education system that lead to the production of a large number of insufficiently qualified graduates, often in entirely unnecessary specialties;

3. weaknesses in the financial structure of education in Bulgaria, from which most of the aforementioned problems originate.