

Finding path toward automatic recognition

Seminar on the Second Cycle

Zagreb, 12 April 2013

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Recognition

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Republic of Slovenia

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1. Background and Rationale

Background

- Recognition issues are in the **centre** of Bologna and HE **policy debate**.
- **A complex reality:**
 - Diversification of **qualifications**
 - **National** education systems
 - **Moving** between education systems
 - **Legal** framework
 - The ENIC and NARIC **networks**

Council of Europe higher education series No. 6



Qualifications — Introduction to a concept

Background

- Transparency tools:
 - ECTS
 - Diploma Supplement
 - EQF
 - Lisbon Recognition Convention
 - EAR Manual
 - EQAR
 - ECA
 - ...
- **Divergence** in recognition practices still exist.
- Recognition **obstacles**.

Rationale

- “Recognition is important for promotion **international education** and promoting cross-border **mobility** of students, researchers and workers. Moreover, it promotes mutual **understanding** and rapprochement among different nations.” *

AR as a policy tool

- Academic recognition constitutes an important policy tool for **achieving Europe 2020 goals** and reinforcing the European Higher Education Area.
- Without **commitment** to and implementation of EU 2020 and the EHEA policies **at national level** these cannot become an effective reality.

2. Bucharest Communique, 2012

Bucharest Communiqué, 2012



“Fair academic and professional recognition, including recognition of non-formal and informal learning, is at the core of the EHEA. It is a **direct benefit** for students’ academic mobility, it improves **graduate’s** chances of professional mobility and it represents an accurate measure of the degree of **convergence and trust attained.**”

Bucharest Communiqué, 2012

“We are determined to remove outstanding **obstacles** hindering effective and proper **recogniton** and are willing to **work together** towards the automatic recognition of comparable **academic** degrees, building on the **tools** of the Bologna framework, as a **long-term goal** of the EHEA.”

3. Bologna Pathfinder group on Automatic Recognition

Pathfinder group (PG)

- “Support the work of a **pathfinder group** of countries exploring ways to achieve the **automatic academic recognition** of comparable degrees” (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012)
- **Members** of PG (BE-fr, BE-fl, DE, DK, EE, LU, NL, PT, SE and SI).

Key points for AR*

- Need from equivalence of **individual** diplomas to a more **systemic**, generic level recognition.
- A common understanding of the levels of **qualifications frameworks**.
- Linking **Quality Assurance** processes with checking how **HEI's** tackle admission of foreign qualifications.

Key points for AR*

- Creating **diversity** of HES and building **mutual trust** is crucial!
- We have to take advantage of the **support and experience of others**.
- A step before AR is **mutual recognition**.
- **Mutual recognition agreements** contributes to the realisation of a space without barriers and restrictions – accept the diversity of others.

Agreements on mutual recognition

- Reduce difficulties and obstacles to those who having received a diploma in one country wish to continue their studies or pursue professional activities in another country.



Gradually building trust

4. Scope of the work

Goal of AR ?

- The PG will concentrate on recognition for the purpose of **further study**.
- The admirable “vision” without getting into “how” ?
- A **bachelor** should be recognised as a **bachelor** and **master** as a **master** anywhere within the EHEA.



1. PG - Scope of the work

- Focus on:
 - **academic recognition** of bachelor and master degrees issued by recognized HEI's,
 - qualifications at **system** level,
 - different **stakeholders**
 - How system level recognition interacts with HEI's decisions?
 - **Bologna and EU tools**
 - How available tools can be used and articulated more effectively with recognition procedures?

2. PG - Scope of the work

- **Key specific actions:**
 - Complete the **table with substantial elements in recognition** to map out the use of various tools and practices
 - Explore the **possibility of using DS** as common translation tool within the pathfinder group countries

3. PG - Scope of the work

- Use of **ICT tools** to simplify recognition
 - Open education resources – their implications for recognition and Quality assurance and assessment
- Identify **good practices and experience** of more automatic forms of recognition on a national, regional and international level.

4. PG - Scope of the work

Extend current forms of **regional cooperation**:

- 1) Continue developing the **BENELUX cooperation** in recognition matters
- 2) Pursue the possibility of **informal cooperation** between the Nordic and Baltic countries, with a view to include Germany as well
- 3) Continue developing the **Western Balkan cooperation** in recognition matters
- 4) Germany will **reflect on the possibility to develop regional cooperation** in recognition within the German speaking countries, or to join the Baltic - Nordic cooperation

5. Challenges

Challenges



Recognition

**What works?
What doesn't?**



Overview

Where do we stand? What has been developed?

What is the recognition chain?

How is the process conducted?

What is the end goal?

How can we reach this goal?



Stimuli for recognition? (1)

- **Quality** of recognition
- **Modernisation** - reducing the bureaucratic burden
- **Efficiency** – one - stop shop principle
- **Internationalisation** at home – openness towards admission of students holding foreign degree



ECA Seminar “Mutual recognition and the Bucharest Communiqué”

Venue: NVAO offices, Parkstraat 28, The Hague, The Netherlands

Wednesday 16 January 2013

**The long
and winding
road to
recognition**

e | c | a |



ECA Workshop 17 January 2013, The Hague

Rolf Heusser, Chairman of ECA



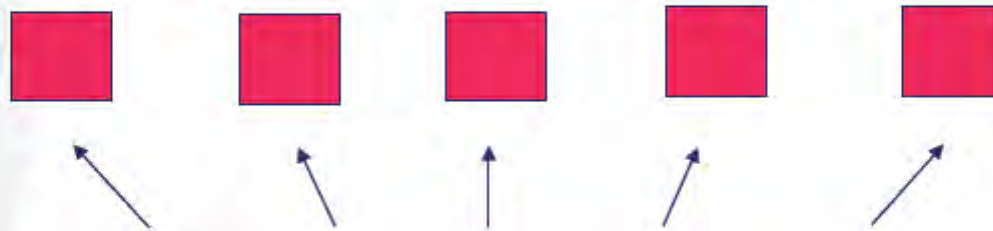
european consortium for accreditation

Questions of the seminar

- What are the major recognition obstacles ?
- How can we reduce these barriers ?
- Is an automatic recognition of qualifications desirable and is it feasible ?
- How can we increase mutual trust in the EHEA ? Who can contribute to this trust and how?
- How to intertwine the attempts of the various HE stakeholder groups to simplify recognition ?

ECA – Trust building process

Bilateral Mutual Recognition Agreements



e.c.a.

Models of academic recognition

Case by case recognition



Bologna
tools



Value 1

MR based recognition

Trust/Evidence



EAR manual
MR ECA



Value 5

Automatic recognition

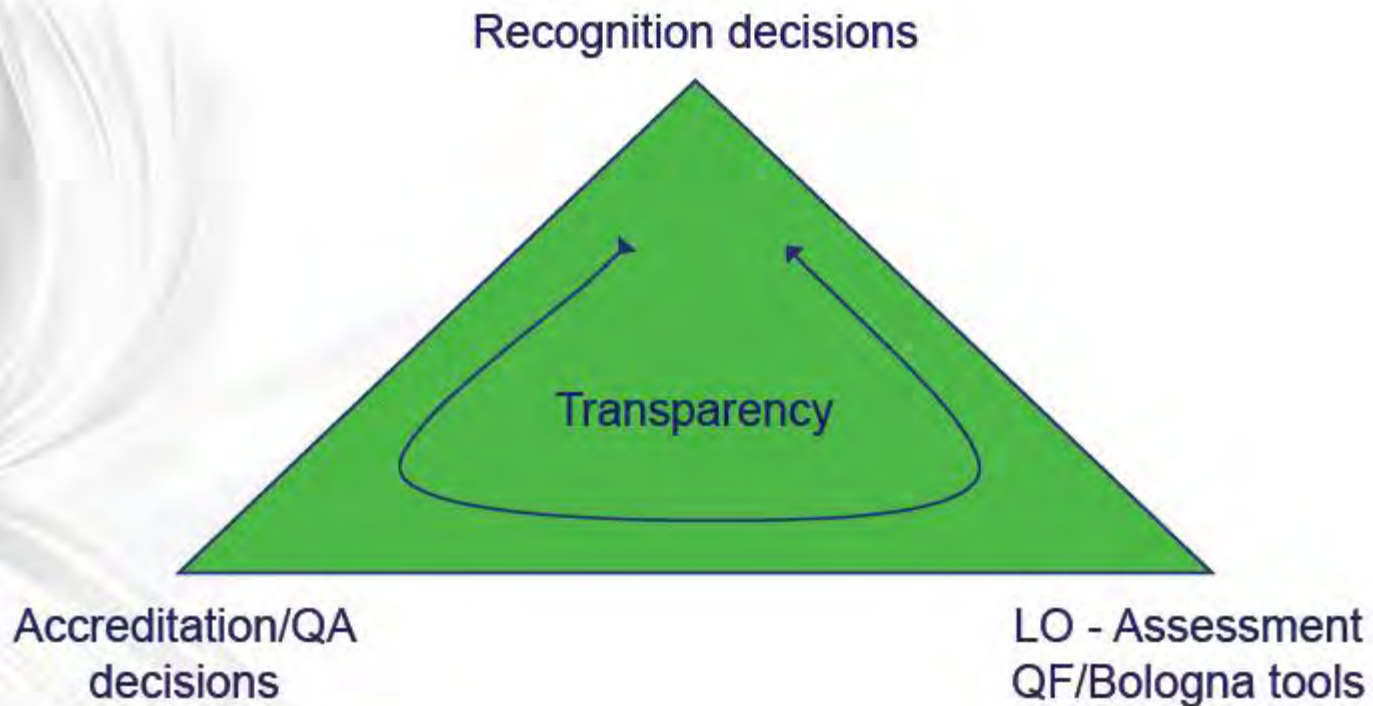


Political
decision



Value 10

The „magic triangle“ of recognition



e|c|q|

Summary and Conclusions of the Seminar (I)

- Recognition is important for promotion of international education and cross-border mobility of students and staff
- Recognition problems still exist but tools and models have been developed to overcome existing obstacles
- An evidence and trust based mutual recognition model might presently be the most suitable solution
- Triangle „LO/QF“, „QA, „Recognition“ should be highlighted and the elements should be interconnected

Summary and Conclusions of the Seminar (II)

- The EAR manual of ENIC/NARICs and the MR Agreements of ECA have the potential to be used in real world; they need support from HEIs and governments
- Close collaboration between HEIs, Recognition bodies, QAAs and governments is needed in order to solve recognition problems



“Automatic Recognition”

?

**ECA Seminar “Mutual
recognition and the
Bucharest Communiqué”**



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“automatic” =

... forced to ...

(top down)

... spontaneous ...

(bottom up)



Does “automatic recognition” mean:

***a directive by a
widely accepted “higher authority”?***

***a spontaneous treatment based on
trust, transparency and evidence?***



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The problems of “automatic recognition”
can be rather easily solved regarding:

level

workload

quality

and not so easily regarding

profile

learning outcomes



QUALITY =

clear profile, diversity of Institutions,
programs missions ...

VS.

clusters of similar programs, qualifications
following common schemes and models

...

“quality” (clear mission, profile, diversity, transparency)
“quality” (fulfilling of uniformed standards and benchmarks)



Do we want predefined profiles and learning outcomes of study programmes?

And who could do this?

Is the “tuning project” a way in this direction?



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“mutual trust” as key-concept for recognition

creating trust
– top down
or
- bottom up?

6. Initiative to establish a Western Balkan Regional (WBR) Platform on AR

Already established relevant cooperation in WBR (1)

a. Multilateral cooperation:

- Regional network of **ENIC-NARIC** centres
 - Regional ENIC Conference (Mostar, 2006)
 - Regular meetings
- Regional **Network on QF** (Council of Europe, Cetinje, 2008)
- New initiative: **Regional Platform** for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education (Founding Document, Croatia 2012)
 - University of Novi Sad

Already established relevant cooperation in WBR (2)

- Bilateral cooperation:
 - Slovenian cooperation with WBR is an important **policy priority**
 - Slovenia has **governmental agreements** with Croatia, Montenegro and FR of Macedonia (negotiation with BiH) in the fields of HES, mobility and R&D
 - No bilateral **mutual recognition agreements!**
 - Many forms of **institutional and branch cooperation** between HE institutions, departments and associations as well as R&D institutions

Good starting point:

- **We know and understand** (culture, language) each other
- We have some common institutional and individual **experiences**
- We are dealing with common **processes** (**mobility** of students and **recognitions** of academic education)
- Daily **cooperation** between WB recognition offices have developed mutual **trust**



General Recognition Standards in WBR

- Ratified the Lisbon recognition Convention
- ENIC-NARIC centers
- Bologna tools/mechanisms
 - ECTS
 - Diploma Supplement
 - EQF
 - EAR Manual
 - Quality Assessment
 - EQAR
 - ECA



Different level of implementation

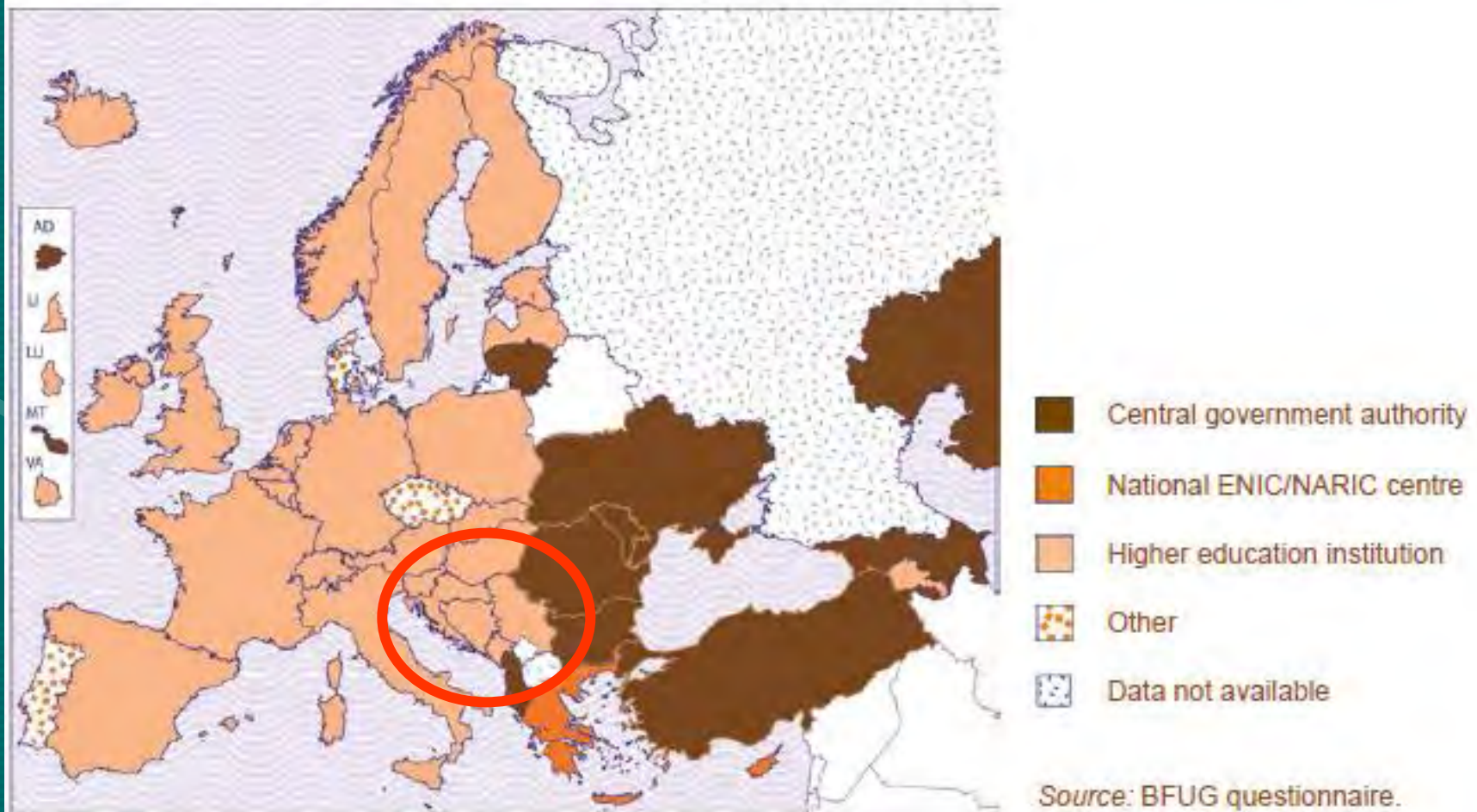


The European Higher Education Area in 2012:

Bologna Process Implementation Report

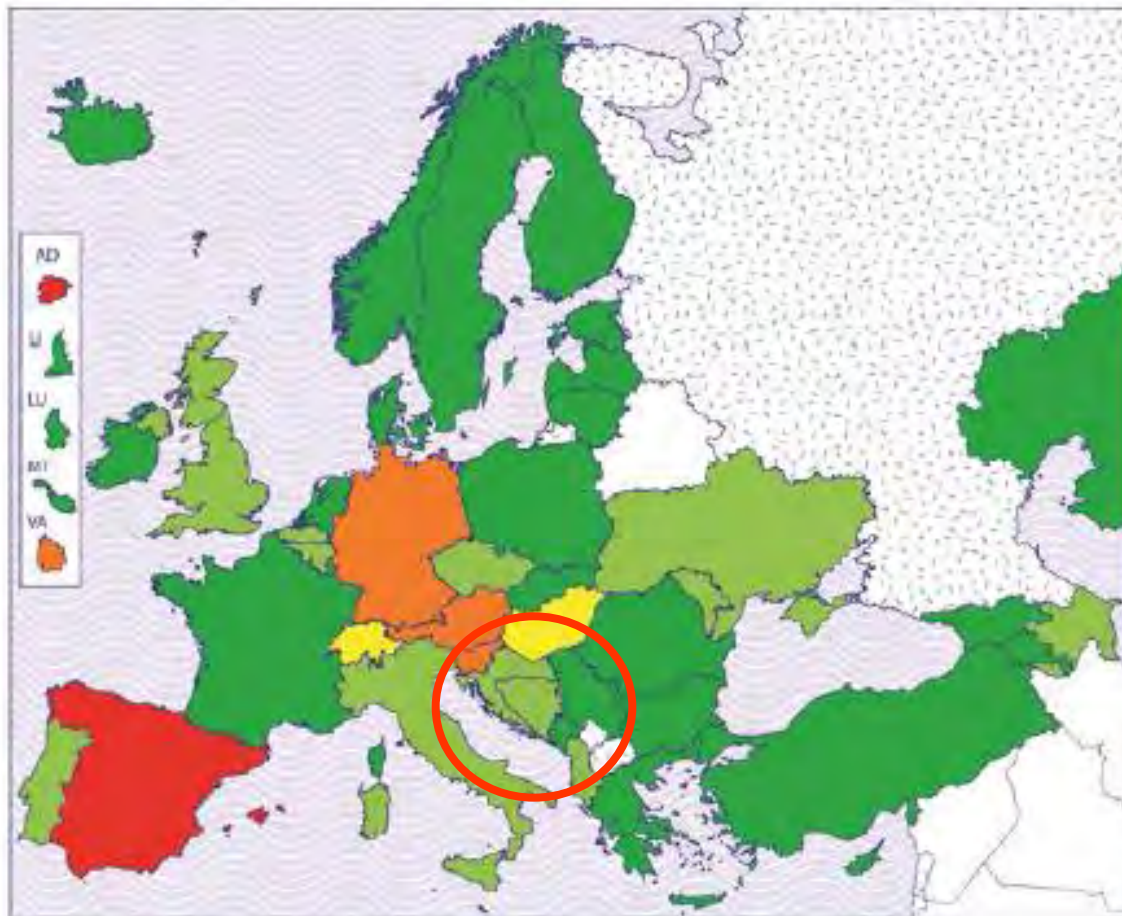
ENIC/NARIC centres

Figure 2.21: Institution which makes final decisions on recognising foreign qualifications for academic purposes, 2010/11



First and second cycle

Figure 2.1: Scorecard indicator n°1: Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle, 2010/11



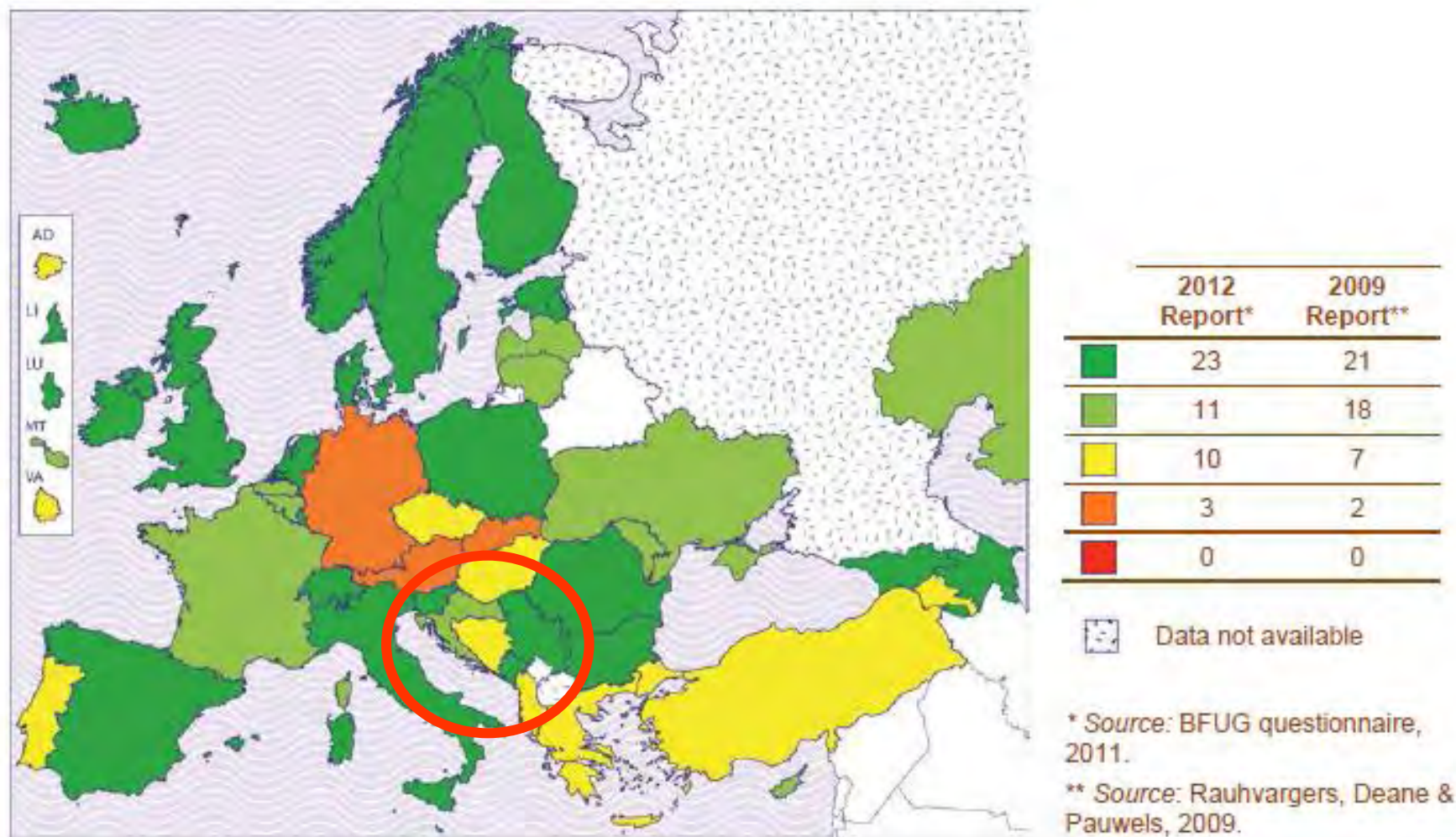
	2012 Report*	2009 Report**
Dark Green	26	31
Light Green	13	10
Yellow	2	3
Orange	4	3
Red	2	1

* Sources: Eurostat and BFUG questionnaire, 2011.

** Source: Rauhvargers, Deane & Pauwels, 2009.

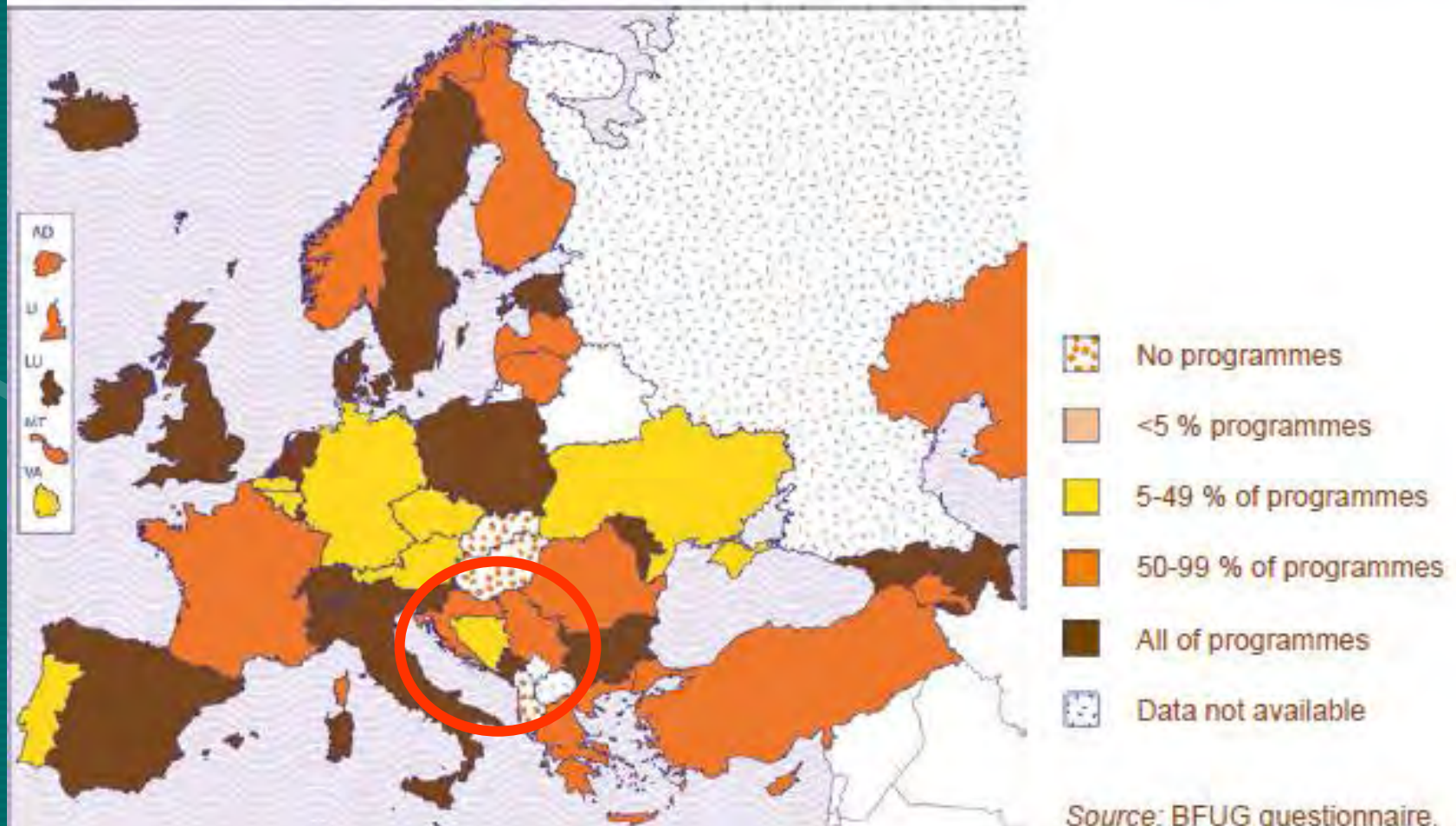
Implementation of ECTS system

Figure 2.15: Scorecard indicator n°8: Stage of implementation of ECTS system, 2010/11*



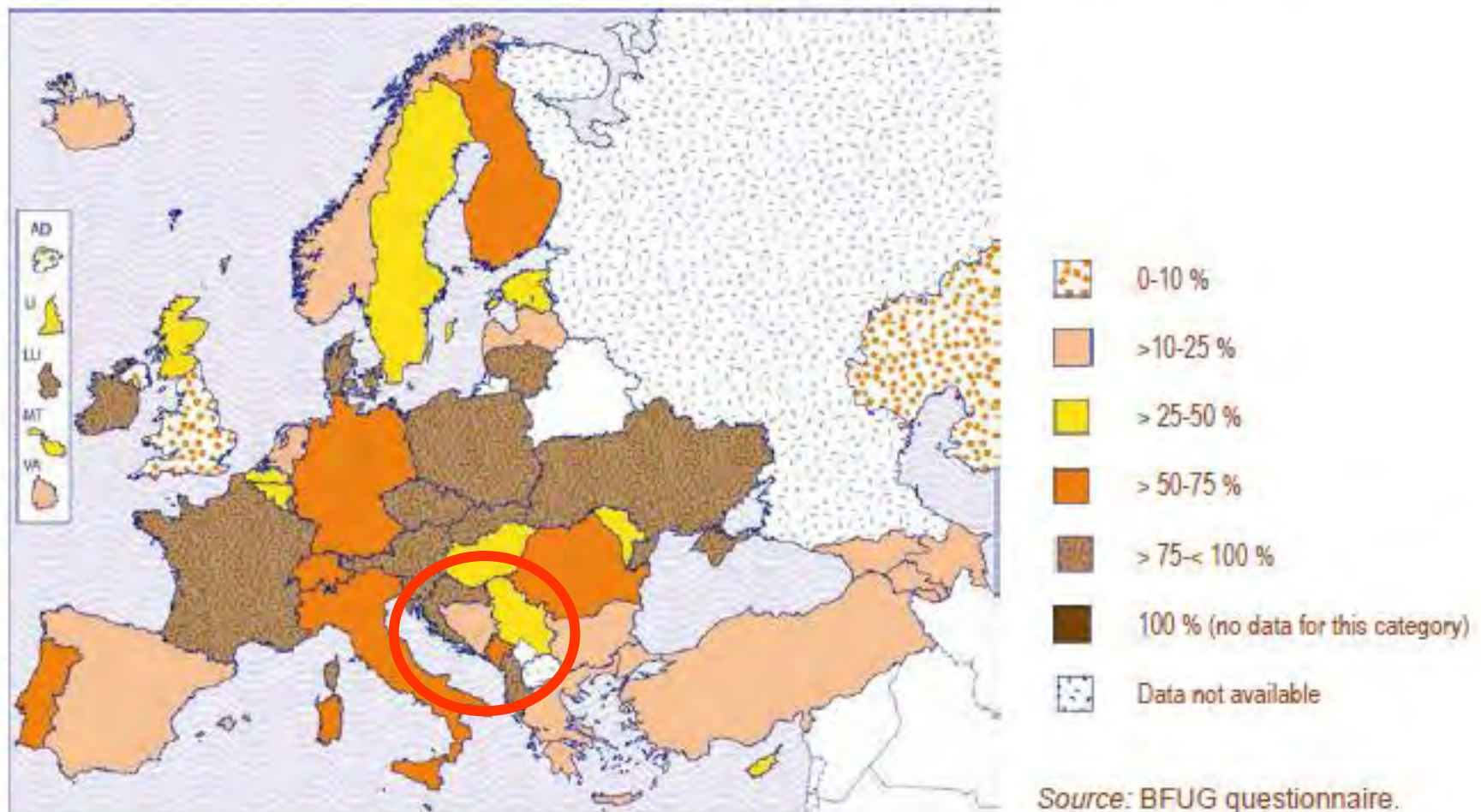
ECTS linked with LA

Figure 2.17: Extent to which ECTS credits are linked with learning outcomes in higher education programmes, 2010/11



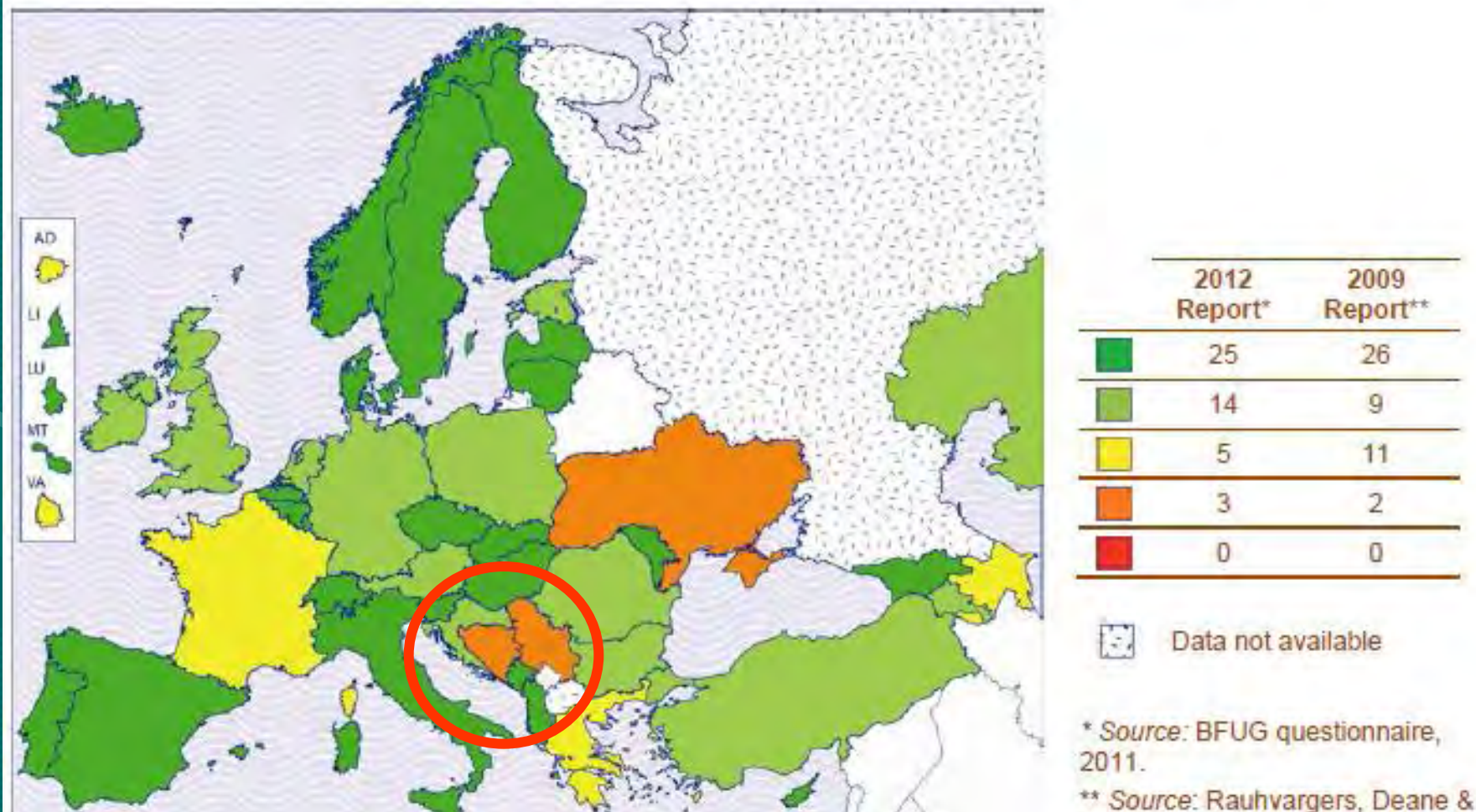
Transition from first to second cycle

Figure 2.7: Share of first-cycle students continuing studies in a second-cycle programme after graduation from the first cycle (within two years), 2010/11



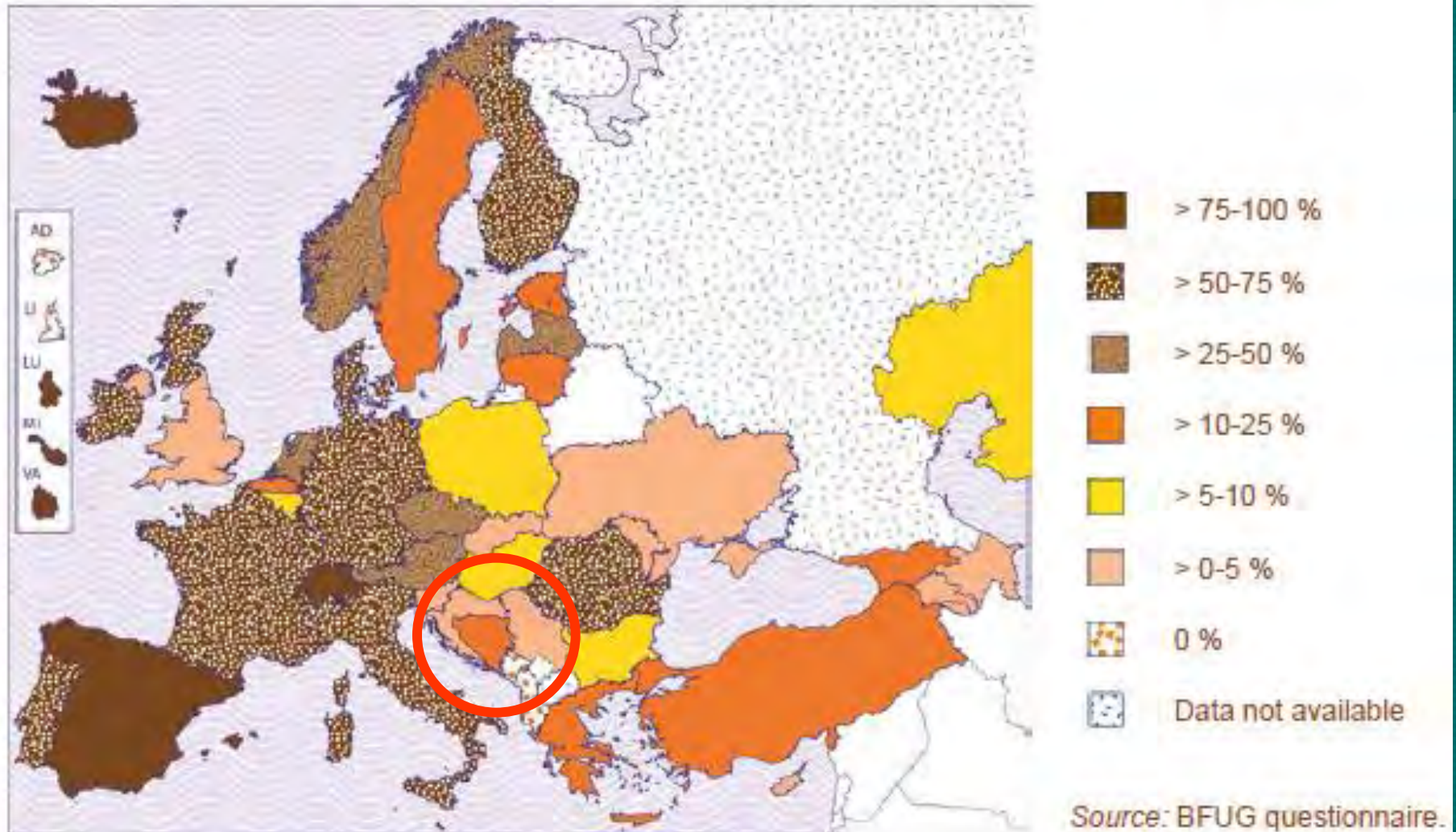
Diploma Supplement

Figure 2.20: Scorecard indicator n°7: Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement, 2010/11*



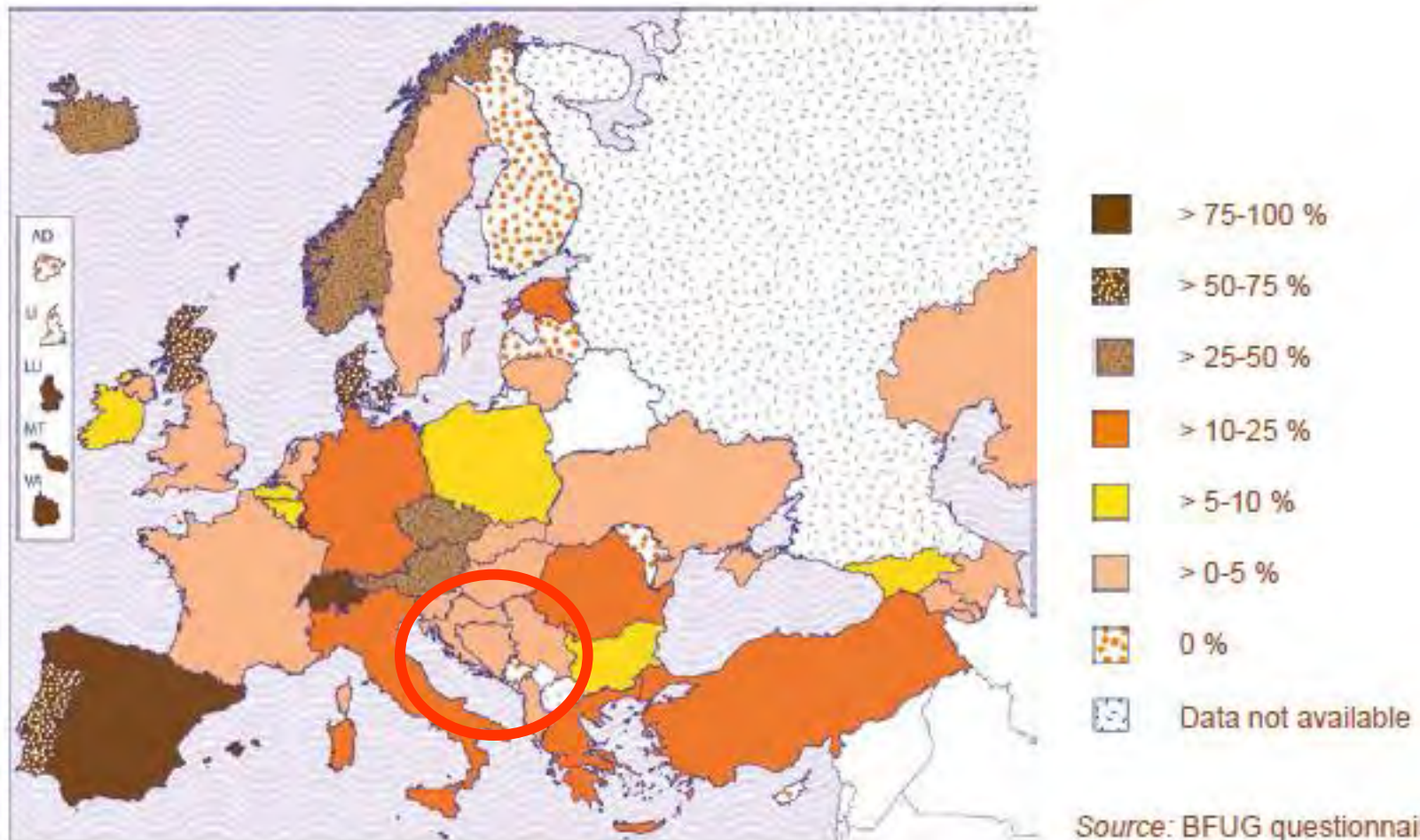
Participation in joint programmes

Figure 2.11: Estimated percentage of institutions that participate in joint programmes, 2010/11



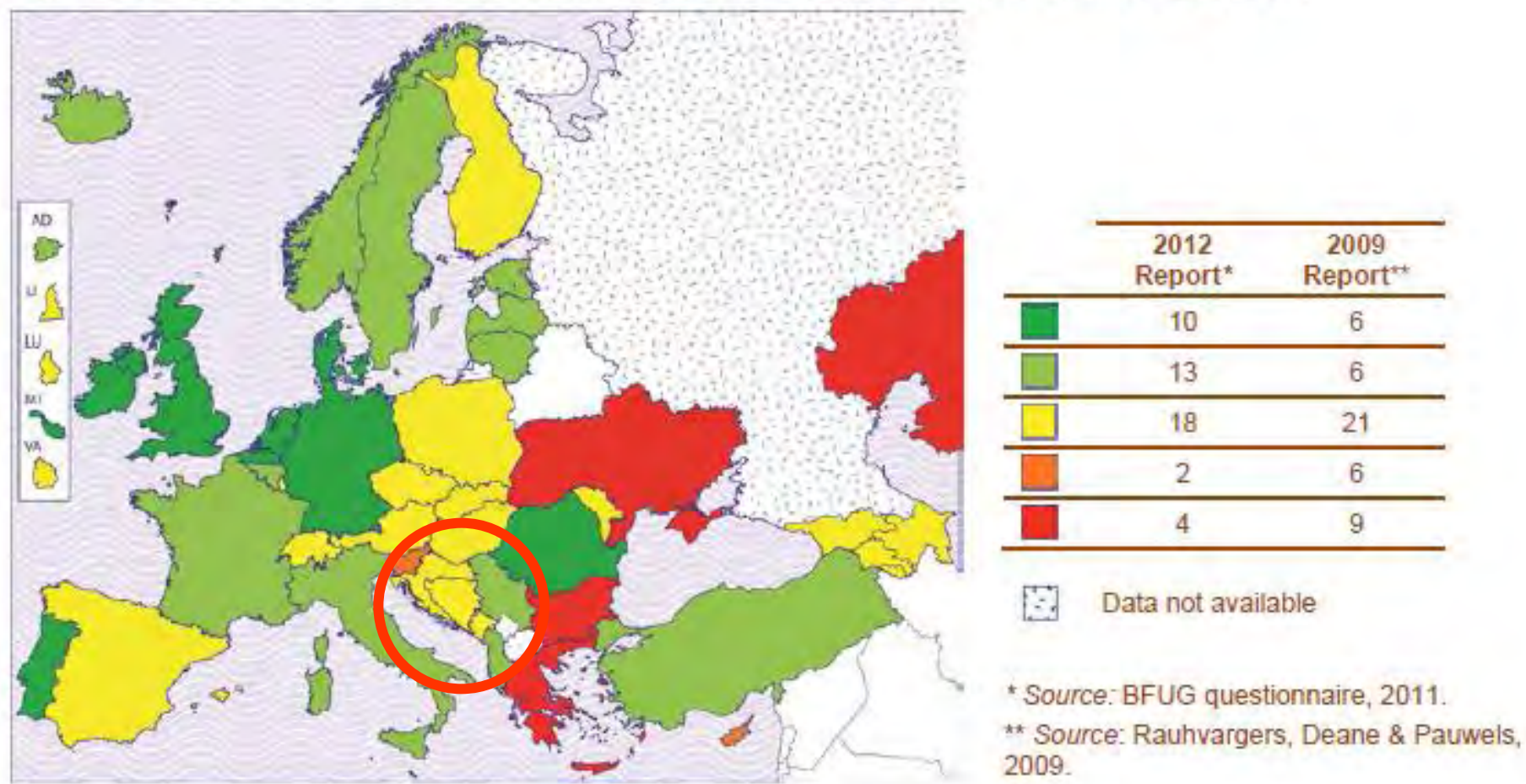
Joint degrees

Figure 2.12: Estimated percentage of institutions that award joint degrees, 2010/11



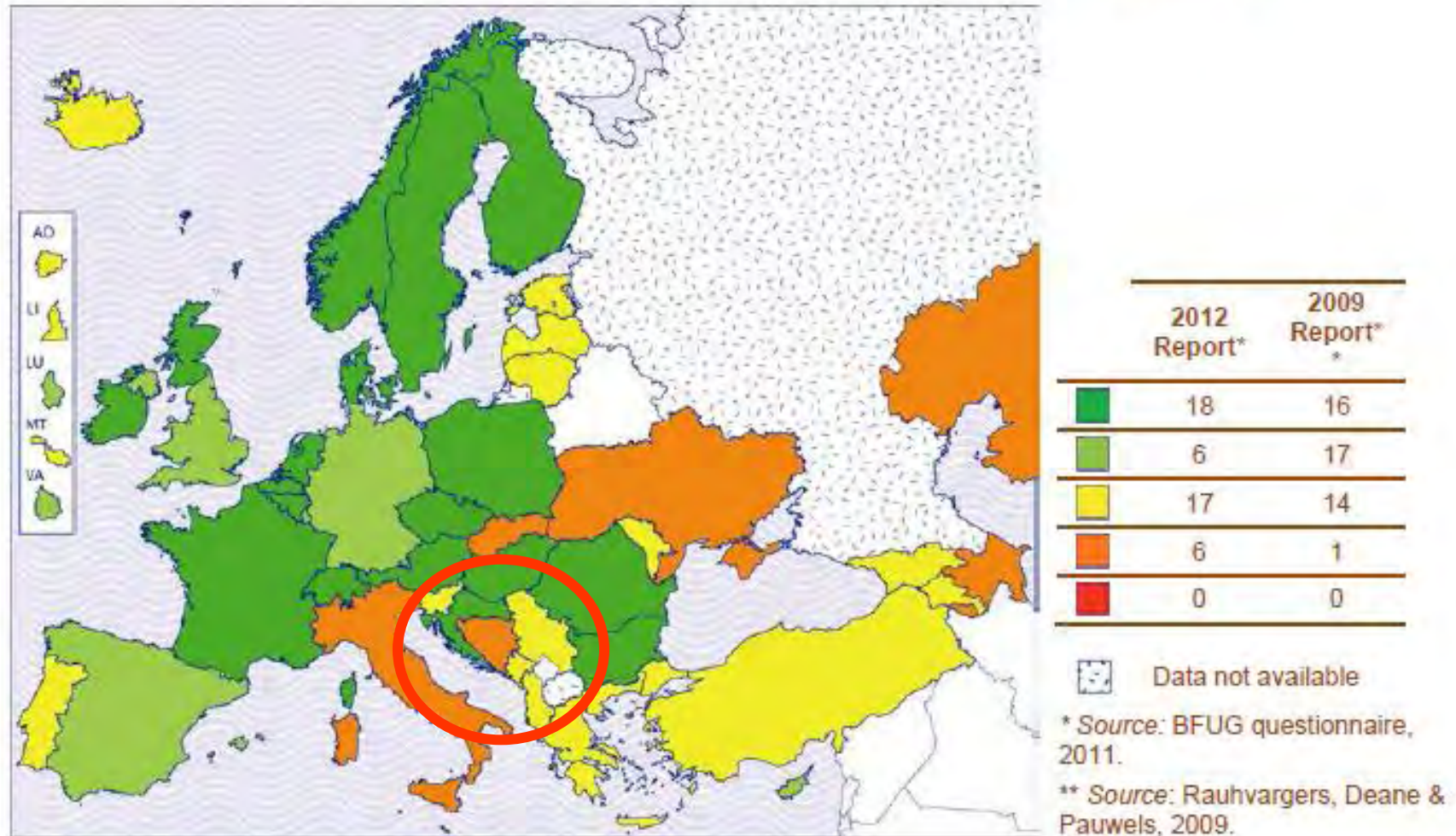
National qualification frameworks

Figure 2.13: Scorecard indicator n°3: Implementation of national qualifications frameworks, 2010/11*



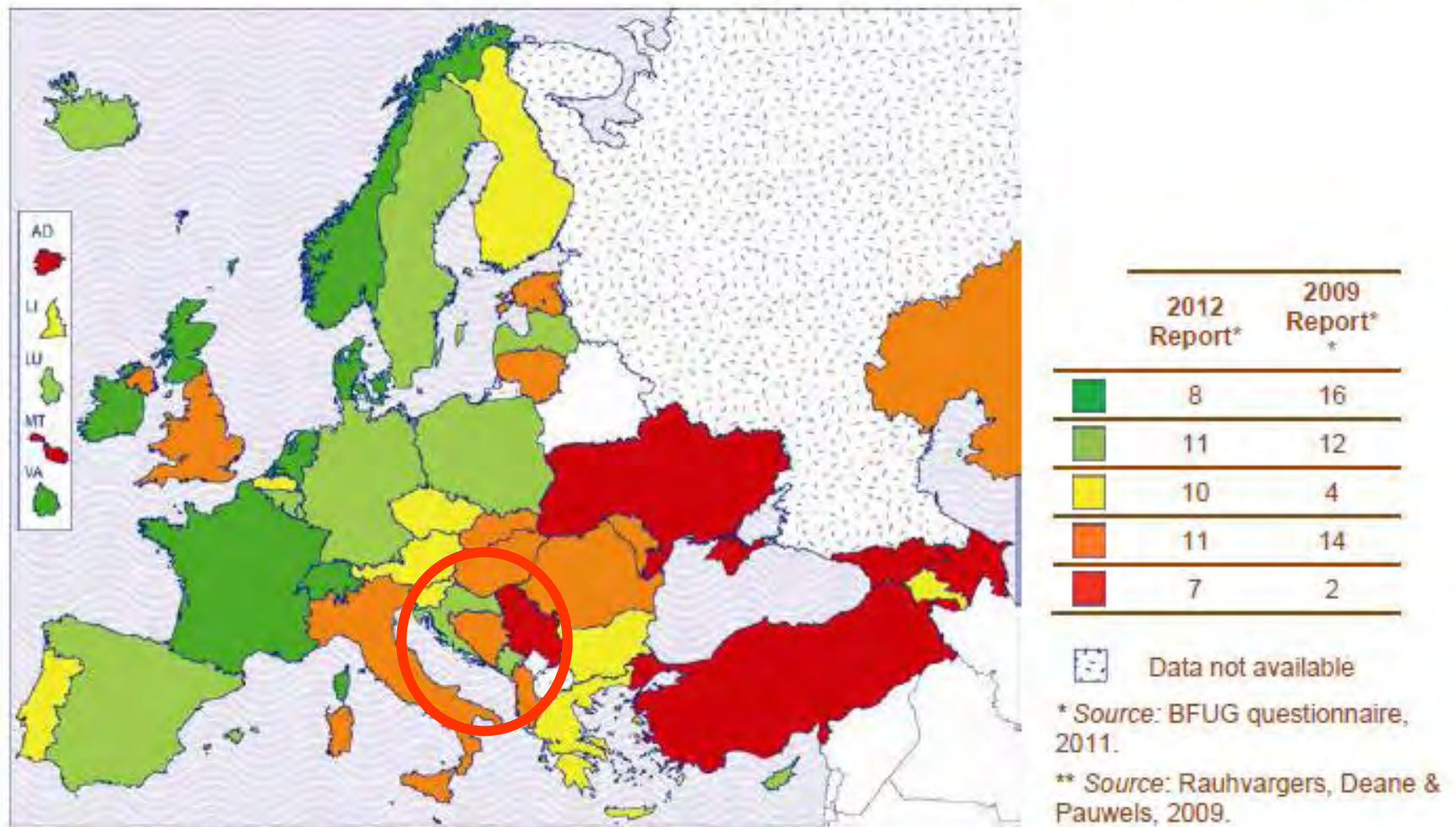
External quality assurance system

Figure 3.3: Scorecard indicator n°4: Stage of development of external quality assurance system 2010/11*



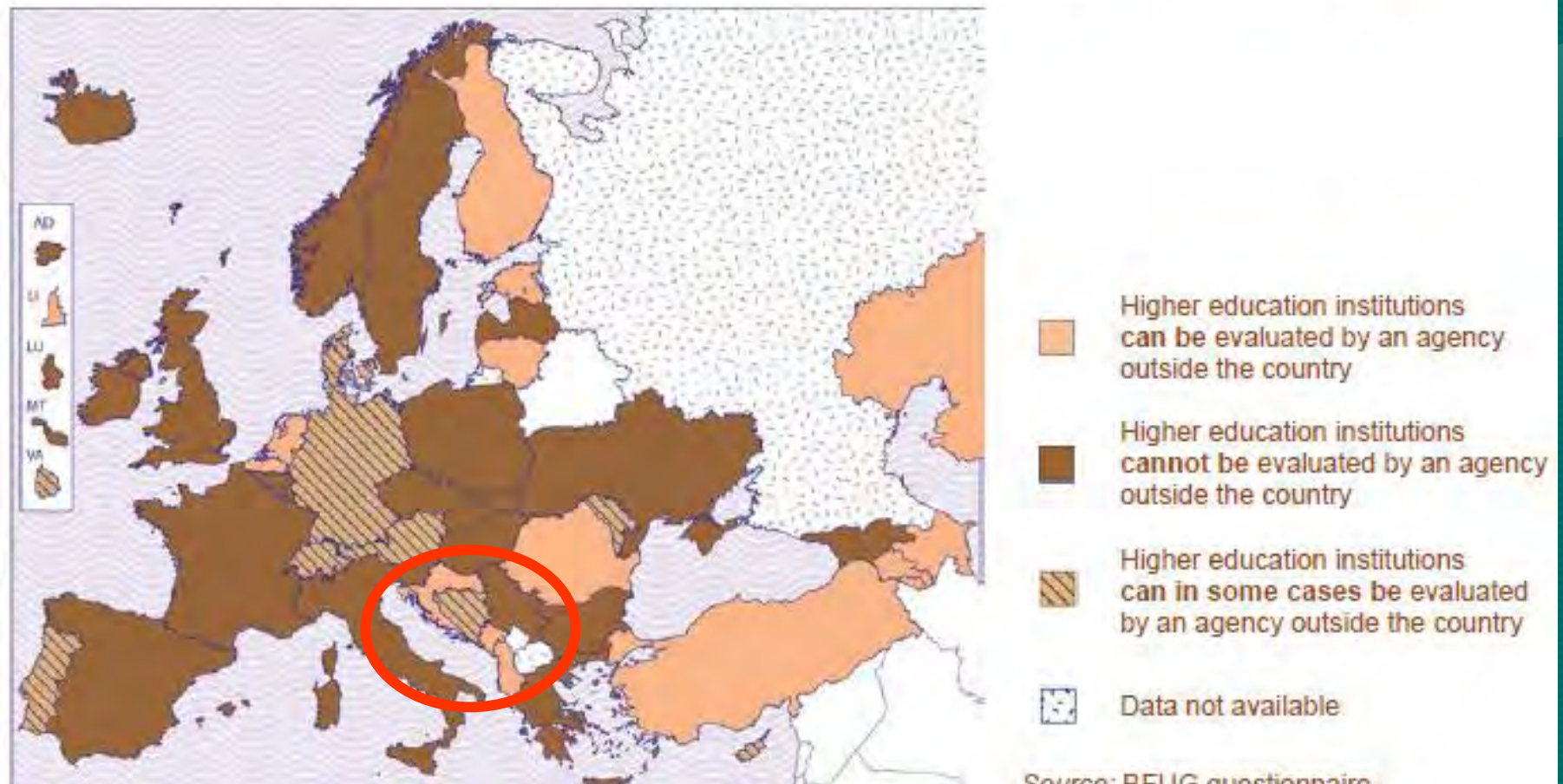
International participation in external quality assurance

Figure 3.5: Scorecard indicator n°6: Level of international participation in external quality assurance, 2011/12*



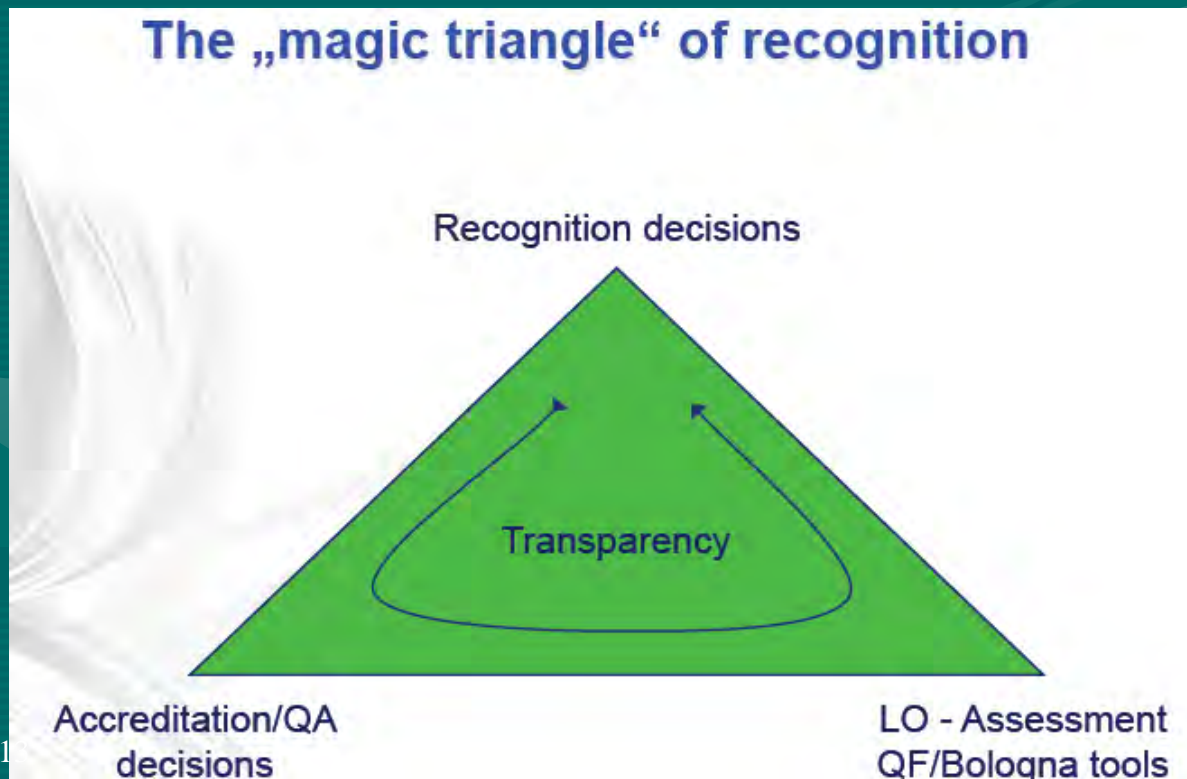
Evaluation by an agency (EQAR) outside the country

Figure 3.2: Ability for higher education institutions to be evaluated by an agency outside the country, 2010/11



There are many rooms for improvement!

- Strengthening **cooperation** and building **trust** between countries of WBR in the complex area of Automatic Recognition



What can we do together in WBR?

- Countries of WBR have an **opportunity** to establish broader initiative for creating the **Regional Area of Recognition** of comparable academic degrees.
- **Cooperation** between countries of WBR on long term goal of EHEA on automatic recognition shall give us **new possibilities for setting up a fast track** to recognising each other's qualifications.



Contact with BFUG members from WBR

- Positive response from:
 - Bosnia and Hercegovina
 - Croatia
 - Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
 - Montenegro
 - Serbia
 - I didn't make a contact with Kosovo and Albania.

The aim of the cooperation between countries of WBR

- **Promote and show others** how and what is possible amongst the WBR in terms of AR, **exchange of good practices between region and broader**, work on individual **disciplines** around which to organise a first phase of AR, organise **meeting and seminars**.
- The countries will closely cooperate **with Pathfinder group** on AR, members of BFUG and members of ENIC-NARIC centres in region and broader.

Proposal from Montenegro, Mrs. Biljana Mišović (1)

- “The recommendation would be to establish a **platform** for better **communication** between WB region as is the case with Nordic countries, and Belgian Flemish community. It would be of utmost importance to appoint, or involve ENICs in WG dealing with NQF/EQF so as to be **aware of all the developments in this area**. This especially relates to the NQF/EQF at the level of WB network.

Proposal from Montenegro (2)

- “Generally speaking, **the approach towards accepting of qualifications at system level** is very much favored, and it would solve a lot of misunderstandings with respect to recognition. The closer link should be established **between with the university** representatives. It would be necessary to appoint list of contact persons responsible for recognition at the level of HEIs, and thus **reinforce links between HEIs and ENIC centers**, enabling thus flow of information with respect to recognition issues. In such a way, all the documents dealing with recognition at the **European level could** be further disseminated and discussed at the level of country and within WB region.”

Regional Platform for WBR

Regional Platform

for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education



Search...



QA VS RANKING

AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP



Panel: Regional Area of Automatic Recognition and External Examiner System



Date: 19 February 2013

Venue: Hotel Habakuk, Pohorska ulica 59, Maribor, Slovenia

Moderators:

Stojan Sorčan, BFUG Pathfinder Group, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Slovenia

Ladislav Novak, Coordinator of 'Novi Sad Initiative' and STREW Tempus Project, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Introductory speech: *Regional Area of Recognition: Setting up fast track for recognition of qualifications*

Stojan Sorčan, BFUG Pathfinder Group, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Slovenia

[Rationale...](#)

[More about Automatic Recognition...](#)

[More about External Examiner System...](#)



Join the [Regional Area of Automatic Recognition and External Examiner System discussion](#) on our e-Forum (no login required)

Possible next steps

- **Pathfinder sub-group AR of BFUG members from WBR**
 - Exchange of views, experiences, practices, plans
 - Preparation of working plan
 - Collaboration between governments, recognition and accreditation offices
 - Detail monitoring of AR – transparency
 - Transfer of international experiences
- **Preparation of Workshop/Seminar on AR for WBR (2013)**



Thank you!