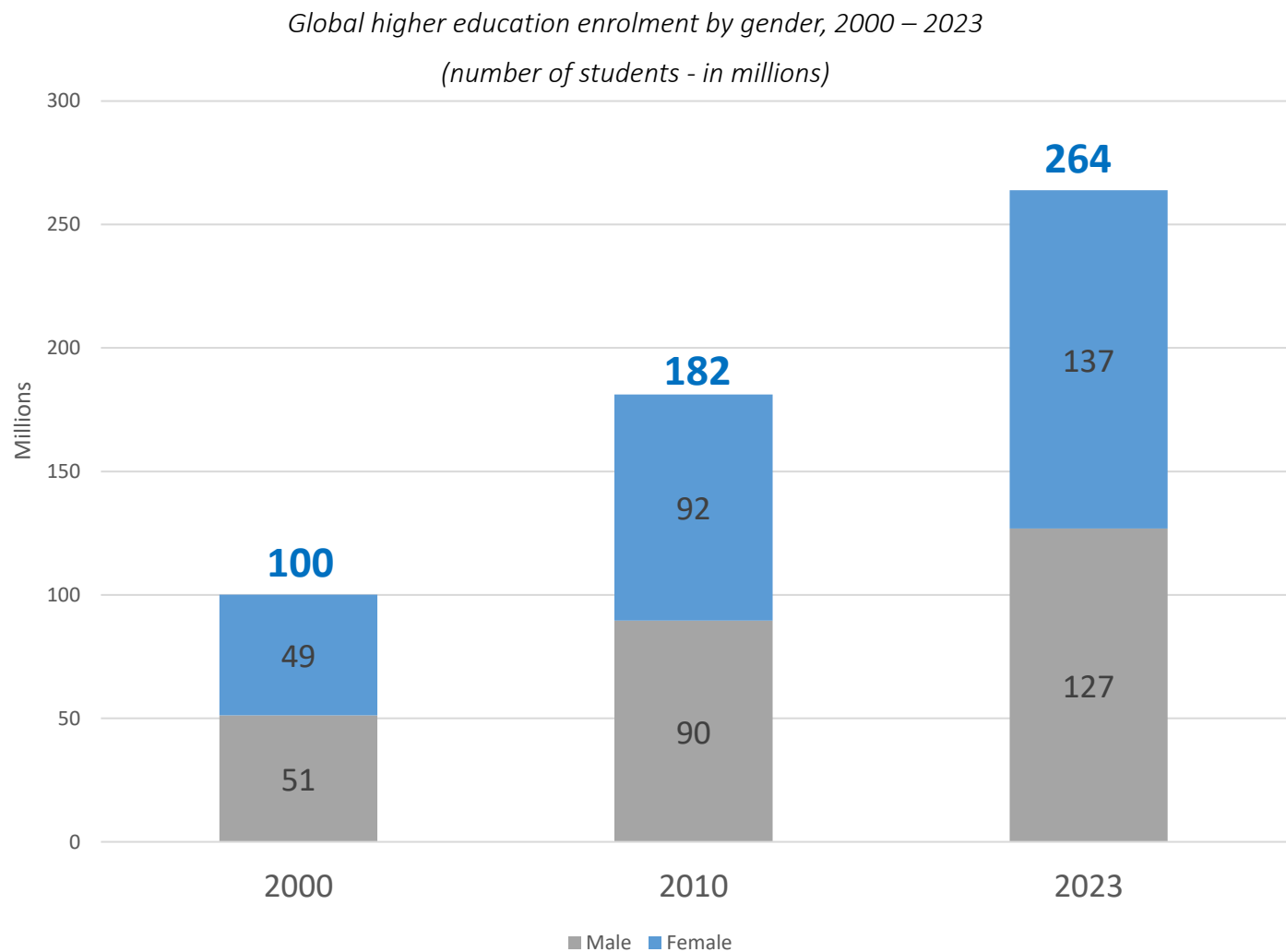




Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education

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UNESCO

Global higher education enrolment continues to rise with 264 million students in 2023

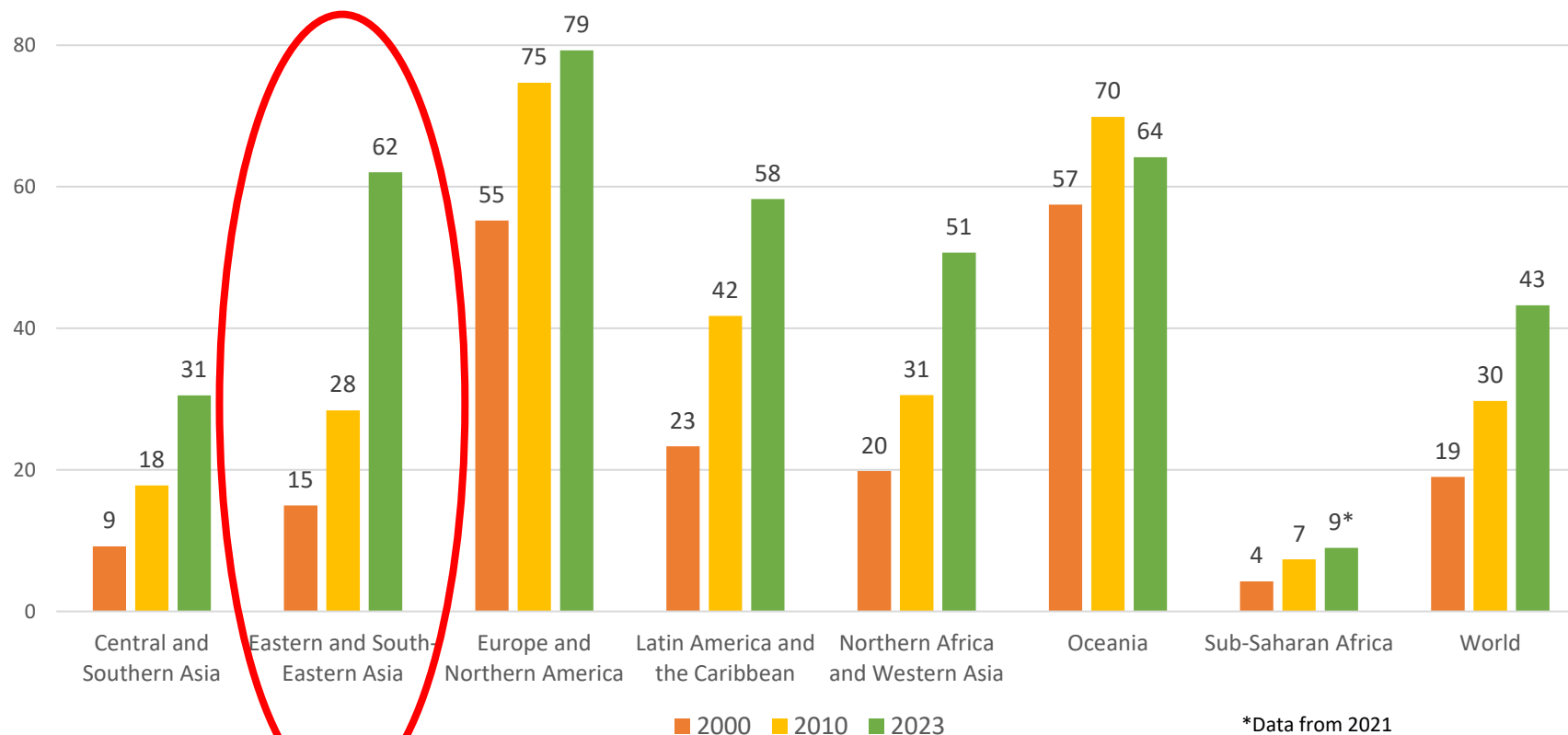


The number of students in higher education globally **more than doubled** over the past two decades up to **264 million**, with women now outnumbering men.

Enrolment in tertiary education, all programmes, both sexes:
Individuals officially registered in ISCED 5 - 8 programmes, or stage or module thereof, regardless of age.
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

More students than ever before are enrolled in higher education

Gross enrolment ratio (%), by region, 2000 – 2023



19% to 43%

The average world's gross **enrolment ratio** for higher education more than **doubled**, increasing **from 19% in 2000 to 43% in 2023**.

79% vs 9%

The global enrolment average masks **large disparities** in access to higher education, with the highest world region at 79% and the lowest at just 9%.

Gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education, ISCED levels 5 to 8:

Total enrolment in tertiary education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population in the 5-year age group immediately following upper secondary education.

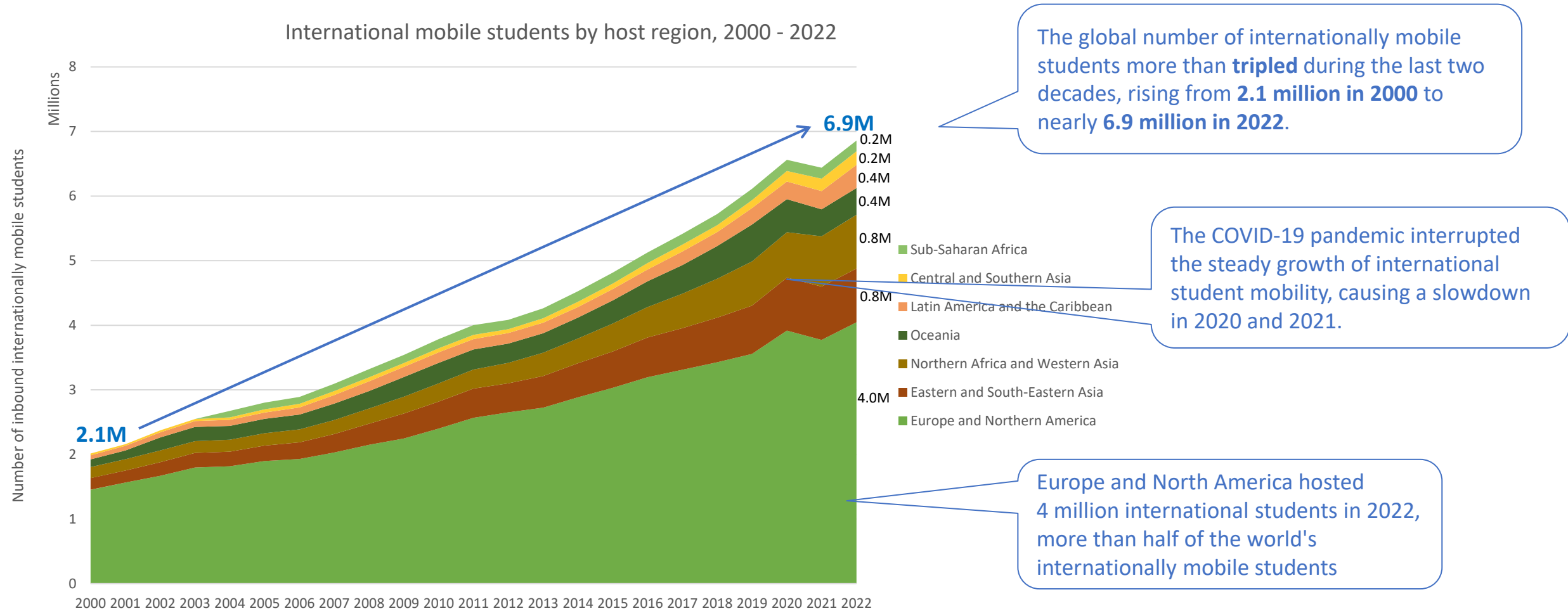
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics



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The number of internationally mobile students continues to rise



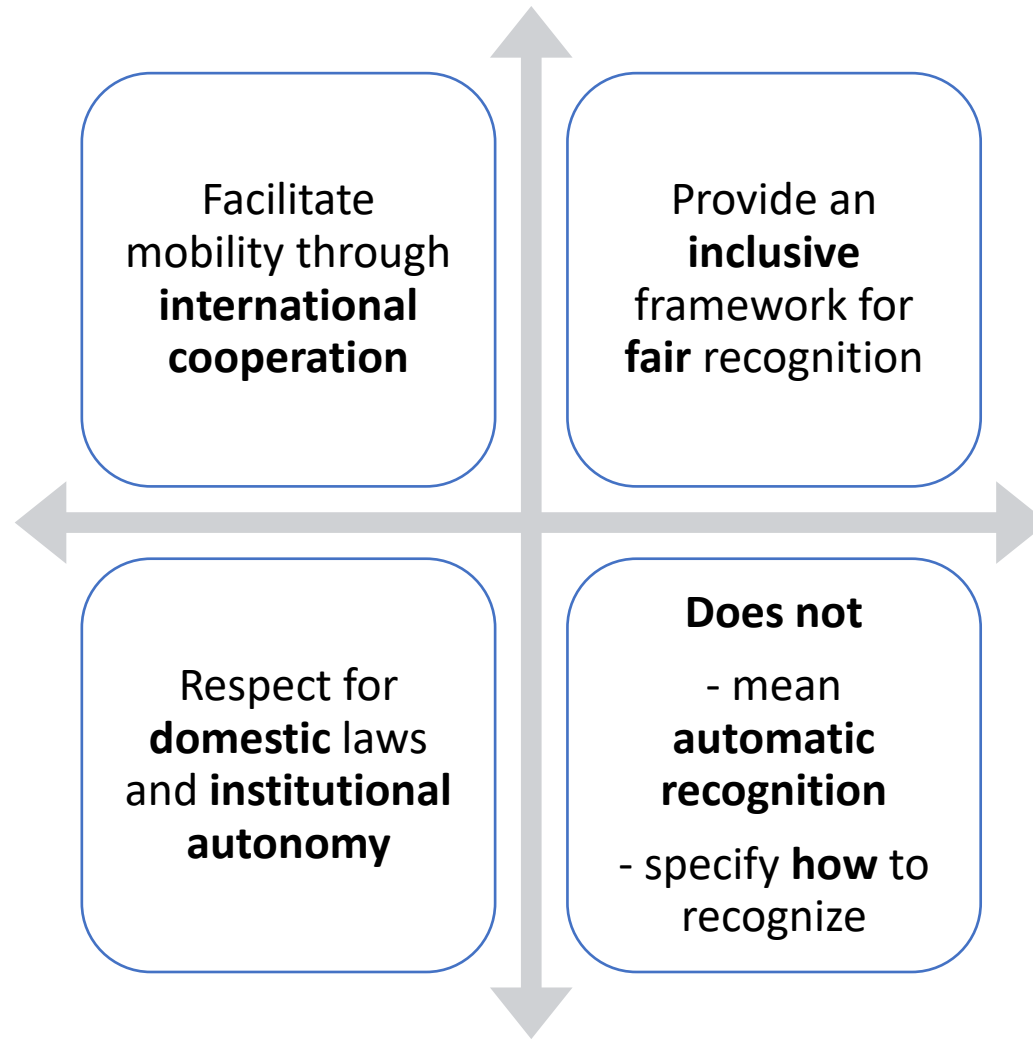
Internationally mobile students are individuals who have physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country of origin. *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics*

Global Convention: Background and rationale



- Adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2019 as the **first global UN treaty on higher education**.
- **Entered into force** in March 2023.
- Open to UNESCO Member States and the Holy See.
- Establishes **universal principles** for the recognition of qualifications.
- Facilitates **mobility and access**, including opportunities for individuals to begin or continue studies in higher education.

Objectives of the Global Convention on Higher Education



Global Convention on Higher Education: 38 States Parties



2 million (29%)

of the world's 6.9 million mobile students are hosted by the States Parties



20+ Member States

Are reported to be well-advanced with ratification procedures, including countries in all UNESCO regions



Regional conventions

35 out of 38 countries that ratified the Global Convention are States Parties to one or more regional conventions

Africa



Cabo Verde



Côte d'Ivoire



Djibouti



Guinea



Senegal



South Africa

Arab States



Palestine



Tunisia



Yemen

Asia and the Pacific



Australia



Japan



Mongolia



New Zealand



Rep. of Korea

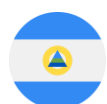
Latin America and the Caribbean



Cuba



Ecuador



Nicaragua



Uruguay

Europe



Andorra



Armenia



Bosnia & Herzegovina



Croatia



Estonia



Holy See



Finland



France



Georgia



Hungary



Iceland



Lithuania



Luxembourg



Norway



Rep. of Moldova



Romania



San Marino



Slovakia



Sweden



UK



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Global Convention – What's next

Second Session of the Intergovernmental Conference of the States Parties took place on 24-25 June 2025 and adopted a new **work programme (2025-2027)**



What to expect:



- New Operational Guidelines disseminated,
- Three new subsidiary texts (guidelines) being developed on:
 - the relationship between the Global Convention and regional conventions,
 - Quality assurance and transnational education,
 - Qualifications recognition for refugees and displaced persons.
- Continued capacity development including webinar series
- New research pieces on emerging issues

Status of ratification of the Global and regional conventions

Global ecosystem of the
global and regional
conventions

*Nearly 100 different countries
have ratified **one or more**
UNESCO recognition
conventions*



Global and regional conventions – working in tandem



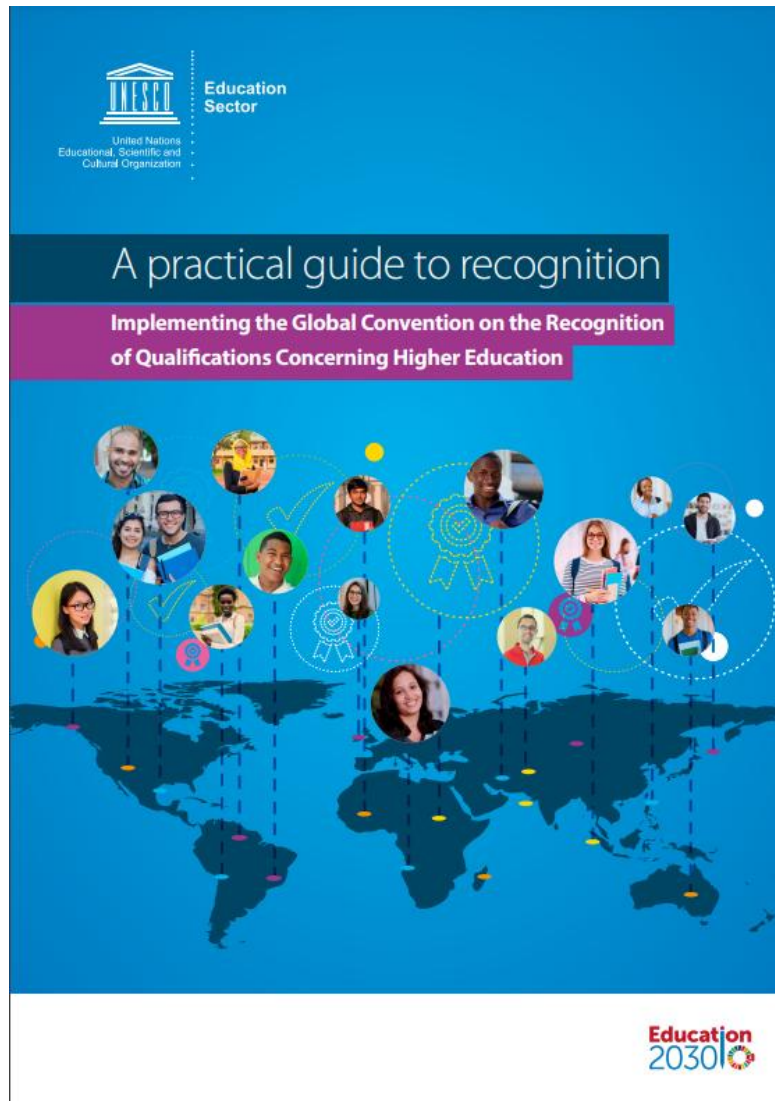
Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

The *Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education*, known as the Tokyo Convention, provides a mechanism for countries in the Asia and the Pacific region to facilitate the recognition of higher education qualifications through basic principles, increased information provision and transparency. Fair and transparent qualifications recognition supports students and graduates to pursue further education and training, which can ultimately lead to improved employment prospects.

Today more than 6.3 million students worldwide are enrolled in higher education institutions outside their home region, placing recognition and mobility at the top of education policy agendas. The Tokyo Convention seeks to ensure that studies, diplomas, and degrees in higher education are recognised as widely as possible, considering the great diversity of educational systems in the Asia-Pacific region and the richness of its cultural, social, political, religious, and economic backgrounds.



Useful resources on recognition



- **What is the Global Convention on Higher Education?** (benefits, how to ratify it, how to implement it)
www.unesco.org/en/education/higher-education/global-convention/about
- **A Practical Guide to Recognition**
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374905>
- **Fact Sheet: Asia-Pacific Regional Convention**
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387653>
- **Regional recognition conventions** www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/conventions
- **Model instrument of ratification** for all UNESCO conventions
www.unesco.org/en/node/66846
- **Higher Education Figures at a glance**
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000394112>

Thank you

Learn more: <https://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/global-convention>

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