2024 European Degree Package

Communication on a blueprint for a European Degree

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System in higher education

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education

Antwerp, 16 -17 May 2024

European degree: Policy context

1 **European strategy for universities**

2 **Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation**

3 **Erasmus+ European policy experimentation projects**

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European degree: Policy objectives

01
Increased employability
&
skills relevance

02
Cutting red tape for increased adaptability
&
visibility of higher education systems

03
A driver of
strategic cooperation & global competitiveness

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European degree: added value

For students

Strong sense of European belonging - around common European values

More opportunities to study in several European countries - innovative & transdisciplinary approaches

Skills & competences that lead to **higher employability**

For employers

Certified highly-skilled graduates: globally-minded, multilingual & multicultural skills, adaptable, etc.

Europe as a destination for talented students to acquire labour market-relevant skills

Increased possibilities to work with universities at European scale

European degree: added value

For universities

Pool resources to offer opportunities **together**

Cut red tape to setting up **more joint degree programmes**

Wider offer to students & staff

Support **internationalisation strategies**

For EU and Member States

Strengthen **global competitiveness & reputation** of European higher education systems

Attract talent from non-EU countries

Foster **balanced student & talent mobility** within the EU

Foster **European spirit of cooperation**

Build your own joint programme !

You are a university looking for international partner(s) to create a new and innovative joint programme.

Your country's legislation impose that you comply with a certain set of rules on how the programme must be delivered.

Find partners with whom you can work with!

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The situation today:

Differences in use of ECTS

Requirements for diploma templates
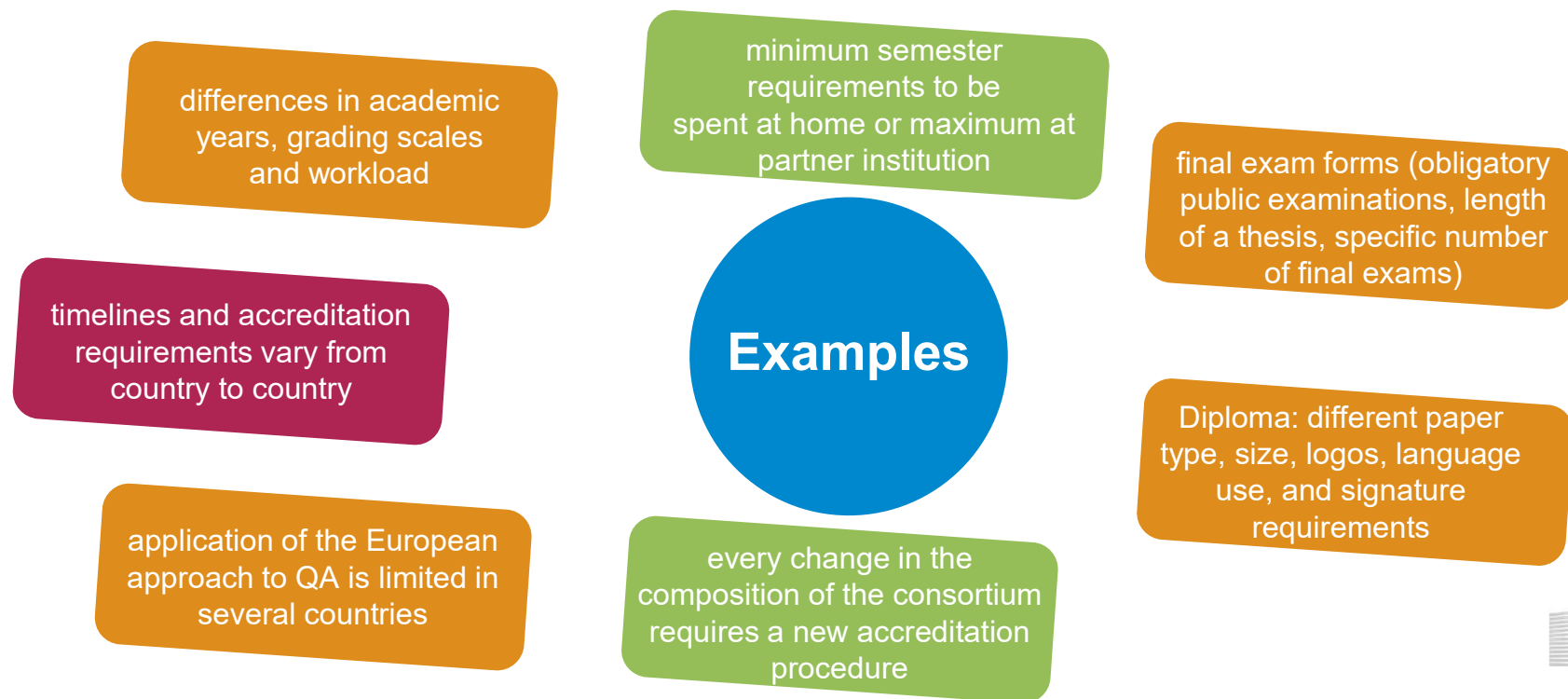
Admission policies, mobility rules

Accreditation requirements, restrictions on language use

Possibility to have traineeships embedded in curricula

The road for creating a joint programme is unpredictable as every partner must fulfill different and sometimes incompatible requirements

Annex 3 – Staff Working Document: list of obstacles to overcome

+50 legal and administrative obstacles

Examples

differences in academic years, grading scales and workload

minimum semester requirements to be spent at home or maximum at partner institution

final exam forms (obligatory public examinations, length of a thesis, specific number of final exams)

timelines and accreditation requirements vary from country to country

application of the European approach to QA is limited in several countries

every change in the composition of the consortium requires a new accreditation procedure

Diploma: different paper type, size, logos, language use, and signature requirements

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The situation tomorrow with a European degree:

The road for creating a joint programme is clear and predictable as partners can create European degree programmes

European degree: horizontal principles

MS / Region / Institution deliver =>
Subsidiarity √
Institutional autonomy √
Academic freedom √

Universities award jointly
- **on a voluntary basis**

Linked to existing **EU / Bologna process tools**

Cutting red tape to establish joint degrees
=> **less administrative burden**

Based on **common European criteria** tested & agreed with **Member States, stakeholders and HEIs**.

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European degree: main principles

NOT awarded by a European body

NOT replacing national degrees

voluntarily offered by universities

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Examples of proposed European criteria
(full list in Annex to the CR on a European QA and recognition system)

Transnational programme, organisation and management:
- At least 2 participating HEIs from 2 EU Member States
- Comply with Bologna and EU tools and standards
- Joint programme leads to a joint degree

EUROPEAN DEGREE

Learning experience:
- Embedded student mobility
- Student-centred
- Include interdisciplinary components
- Labour market relevance
- Digital skills

European Values, inclusiveness & multilingualism
- Joint programmes should promote democratic values, multilingualism, inclusiveness and the green transition

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A wealth of evidence

+2500 students surveyed

140 universities
17 ministries
20 Quality Assurance agencies

+80 interviews and focus groups

+1000 joint programmes used for the testing

+100 stakeholders views gathered ☆

2 years consultation with stakeholders ☆

☆ This includes Member States authorities, accreditation and quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, labour market representatives and students in all Member States.

EDLab EUROPEAN DEGREE LABEL Institutional Laboratory

ED-AFFICHE

ΕΤΙΚΕΤΑ FilmEULabel

FOCI

JEDI Joint European Degree Label in Engineering

SMARTT

European Commission

Erasmus+ pilots pave the way: presentation of their results on 29 April

Aurore Delsoir Photography

Transnational challenges call urgently for transnational joint programmes and for solutions to address remaining obstacles

HOW TO GET THERE:
STEPS TOWARDS A EUROPEAN DEGREE

1 27 March 2024 The Commission proposes **European criteria** co-developed with the higher education sector **as a basis for the European degree, for adoption by the Council of the EU**

2 Development of **implementation guidelines** towards a European degree by a **European degree Policy Lab**

3 **Member States to choose their entry level into the pathway towards a European degree** and work towards integrating the European degree in their national or regional legislation as a new type of qualification

A preparatory European label certificate is given to students of joint degree programmes meeting the European criteria, together with their national or regional degree

The **European degree** is awarded to students as a qualification following a transnational education experience either jointly by a group of universities across Europe or by a possible European legal entity established by several universities from different countries

HOW MEMBER STATES AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR WILL BE SUPPORTED:

- A **European degree Policy Lab** to develop detailed guidelines and action plans to guide the implementation of a European degree with experts from Member States, higher education institutions, quality assurance/accreditation agencies, students, and economic and social partners.

- A **new annual European degree Forum** to monitor progress and provide guidance, gathering high level representatives from Member States, key organisations in quality assurance and recognition, education social partners and representatives from economic and social partners

- **New Erasmus+ support:** for **European degree Pathway Projects** enabling Member States, together with their accreditation and quality assurance agencies, universities, students, economic and social partners, to navigate the pathway towards a European degree; and for **European degree Design Measures** to enable higher education institutions to adapt existing joint programmes or to create new ones leading to a European degree

Council recommendation on European quality assurance & recognition system in higher education

Issues at stake

Current implementation of quality assurance => complexity for transnational cooperation

Long time to get accreditation for new programmes => **slower response** to Europe's skills needs

Processes too lengthy & bureaucratic => challenge for creation of joint degrees

Bologna tools not implemented everywhere or with additional national criteria => **need to do more at EU level**.

Recognition not yet automatic => limit to degree mobility within the EU

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Issues at stake

2 years

Accreditation of a joint programme could take this long

Lack of trust

hampers automatic recognition:

What institutions check if automatic recognition is not applied

Quality assurance of the issuing institution	33%
Content of previous studies	51%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

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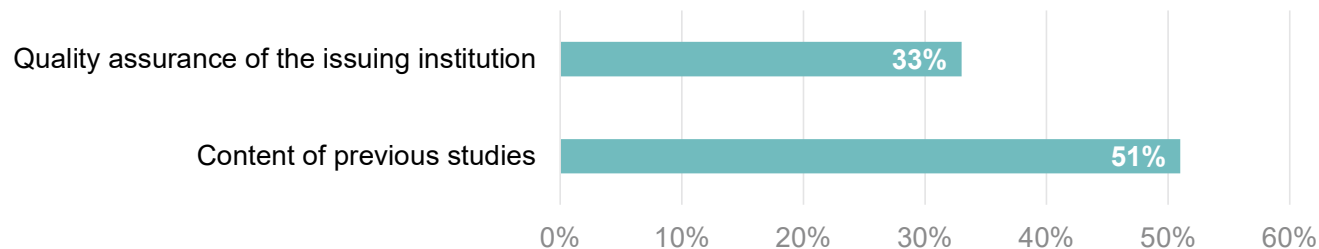
European quality assurance & recognition system in higher education

Why?

- **Foundation for mutual trust** between universities

- Crucial for **European strategy for universities** & **European Education Area**
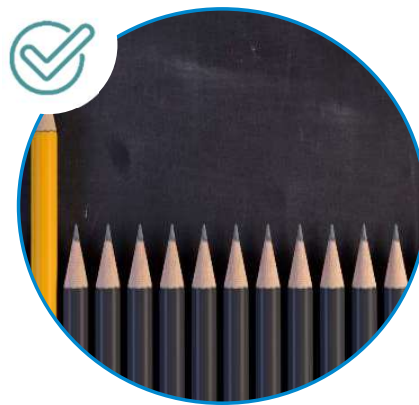
What?

- Facilitate **transnational cooperation** & **mobility**
- Move towards **institution-level quality assurance**
- Set up a **new European framework for an external multi-institutional-based approach** to quality assurance
- Strengthen links between **quality assurance** & **automatic recognition**

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Recommendations: 4 pillars

Transversal recommendations for all quality assurance systems

System-specific recommendations for more agile transnational cooperation

Laying the foundations towards a European degree

Implementing automatic recognition

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Recommendations: 1st pillar

Transversal recommendations for all quality assurance systems

Improving all quality assurance systems

Develop the enhancement dimension to foster continuous improvement and transnational trust

Promote the organisation of mutual learning activities

Respond to key societal and economic developments

Ensure that institutional internal quality assurance systems **cover the whole range of educational provision (programmes, micro-credentials, etc)**

Reduce the workload, bureaucracy, and cost for higher education institutions

Transparent and objective decisions on accreditation

Encourage publication of quality assurance reviews

Recommendations: 2nd pillar

System-specific recommendations for more agile transnational cooperation

Developing a cross-institutional quality assurance approach for alliances of higher education institutions <u>for their joint activities</u>
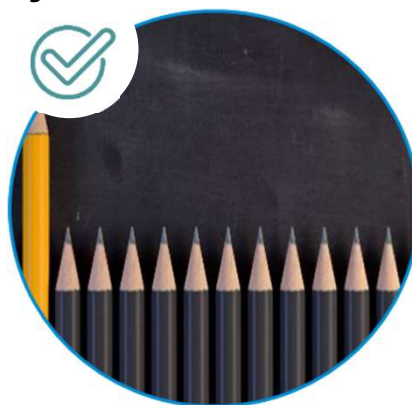
Once only principle

Make programme/combined approaches to external quality assurance more agile by:

Encouraging a **robust internal quality assurance process**

Moving towards institutional approach for quality assurance

Strengthening an **evidence-based approach** to quality assurance

Supporting peer learning

Allow and encourage the use of the European Approach by:

Removing any unjustified barrier to its use

Creating an **enabling** environment

Ensuring **no financial disadvantage** to its use in comparison to procedures carried out at national level

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Recommendations: 3rd pillar

Laying the foundations towards a European degree

Adopt the European criteria of the European degree (label) Annex II Reflect results of the E+ pilots

Allow
- **QA agencies registered in EQAR**
- **HEIs**
- **alliances of HEIs**
the ability to award the European label, **in full respect** of existing **national quality assurance procedures**

<u>NO</u> additional procedure.

Work with EQAR to **include the criteria in regular reviews of agencies'** evaluation of joint programmes and **create a repository of programmes that have met the European criteria**

<u>NO</u> additional reviews

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Recommendations: 4th pillar

Implementing automatic recognition

Encourage and support the **evaluation of the implementation of automatic recognition**

Support close cooperation between staff working in recognition and quality assurance

Provide **clear guidance to HEIs on how to distinguish between automatic recognition and** HEIs' right to make decisions on **admission**

Encourage and **support the capacity building and networking of staff** in ENIC-NARIC centres and HEIs

Support HEIs in **taking a learning outcomes approach** with regard to admission procedures

Work with HEIs and national recognition bodies to **monitor recognition decisions**, enhancing **data collection** and evidence-based approaches

Support HEIs in issuing all degrees and micro-credentials in a **format compatible with the European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC) standards**

Council recommendation on attractive & sustainable careers in higher education

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Target group

Staff teaching or researching in institutions offering programmes at EQF levels 5 to 8

Staff working at higher education institutions who do both teaching and research

Staff who do teaching only or mostly

Professional services staff

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Issues at stake

Further **incentives needed for academics to take part & commit to transnational cooperation** & **develop innovative pedagogical programmes**.

Need to better promote, recognise, & value diverse academic roles & tasks - including innovative & effective teaching (lack of parity of esteem between research / non-research activities).

Non-traditional academic career paths (temporary career breaks - e.g. childcare or taking up duties elsewhere - e.g. in industry - rarely valued & **can negatively affect career progression**).

Academics frequently work exceptionally long hours and undertake multiple additional duties which often results in **unsatisfactory working conditions**.

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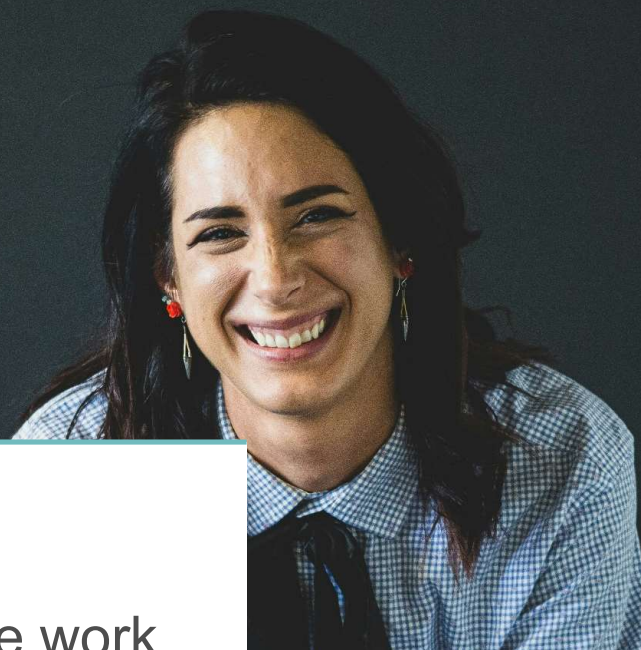
Objectives

- To better promote, recognise and valorise the work of academics for **building deep transnational cooperation**
- To better promote, recognise and valorise **innovative and attractive teaching**
- To work on **more attractive working conditions** for academics in higher education
- To promote **academic freedom, diversity, and gender equality**

Recommendations: 3 pillars
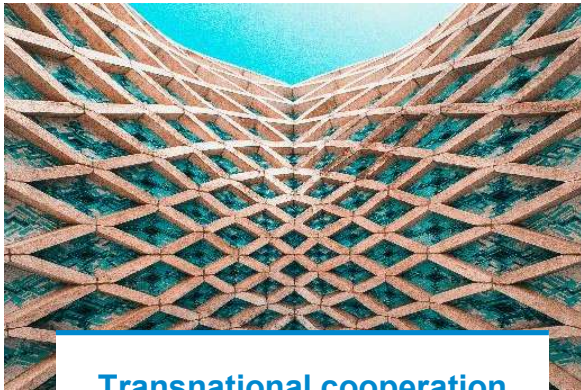
Transnational cooperation

Promote, recognise & value mobility & deep transnational cooperation

Teaching & learning

Promote, recognise & value diverse academic roles
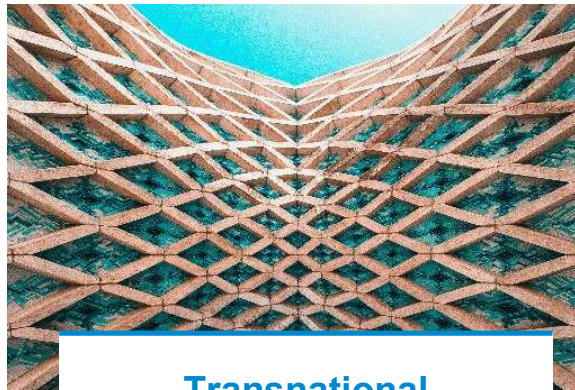

Equality, diversity & wellbeing

Promote attractive working conditions, academic freedom, diversity & gender equality

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Recommendations: 1st pillar

Promote, recognise & value mobility & deep transnational cooperation

Encourage and support academic and professional services staff taking part in deeper transnational cooperation activities

Encourage the possibility for academic and professional services staff to **practice lifelong learning** for the purposes of improving skills necessary for transnational educational activities

Transnational cooperation

Support development of **long-term career perspectives** and **talent management measures** targeting academic and professional services staff essential to the **alliances of HEIs**

Encourage new opportunities for European and international mobility for academic and professional services staff

Support HEIs in their dedication of adequate human resources capacity to transnational cooperation

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Recommendations: 2nd pillar

Promote, recognise & value diverse academic roles

Engage, in dialogue with the higher education sector to:

Ensure that HR policies **recognise and reward diverse roles of academic staff**

Promote approaches that **value, acknowledge and reward diverse academic career paths**

Develop practices to **value teaching enhancement** and staff development, and promote **parity of esteem** for **teaching as compared to research**

Encourage institutional leadership to **increase and maintain the focus** on learning and teaching

Teaching & learning

Develop practices to invest in continuous skills development by:

Providing appropriate **training and support**

Supporting **teaching enhancement**

Providing support for **continuous professional development**

Considering integration of **indicators** that assess the **degree of innovation and quality** in teaching and learning into quality assurance processes

Recommendations: 3rd pillar

Promote attractive working conditions, academic freedom, diversity & gender equality

It is recommended that Member States encourage **respect of collective agreements, effective social dialogue, and the autonomy of social partners**, and take support action so that employers provide **attractive, inclusive and competitive working conditions, where academic staff are valued, encouraged and supported** by:

Improving recruitment practices and **working conditions** of academic and professional services staff

Providing equal pay and flexible working conditions for academic and professional services staff

Providing access to adequate social protection irrespective of the form of employment

Equality, diversity & wellbeing

Providing access to **information on social protection rights and obligations** and ensuring that entitlements are preserved, accumulated and/or transferable

Ensuring the **effectiveness of measures** aiming at creating an inclusive working environment

Ensuring **gender equality, gender balance, equal opportunities and inclusiveness** for academic staff from all backgrounds

Ensuring that academic staff can **engage in teaching and learning,** at **all stages** of their careers regardless of their type of employment

Thank you

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