



Towards a European degree



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European Commission: Political Guidelines 2024-2029

“ Tackling the skills
and labour gaps

We need to make sure that we benefit from all high-quality skills irrespective of where and how they were acquired. This is why we will continue to work towards a **European Degree** and will put forward a Skills Portability Initiative to ensure a skill acquired in one country is recognised in another.



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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

Joint degree vs European degree

Joint degree

A single diploma awarded by the higher education institutions offering the joint degree programme.

It needs to meet **all the different national rules** of each participating country to award a national degree.

Less than one third of EU joint programmes manage to deliver a joint degree, usually between max two or three of the participating higher education institutions. Beyond this, the incompatibilities between the national rules make it impossible or very burdensome to deliver a joint degree. That is why **joint degrees are limited in numbers, and in number of universities participating**.

European degree

A **new type of joint degree embedded in national legislation**: a single diploma awarded by the higher education institutions offering the joint degree programme **matching the European criteria**.

It needs to meet the agreed European criteria only. **Member States would not add national constraints on top**.

A **huge simplification** for any higher education institution wishing to develop a joint degree programme with as many partners as they wish within the EU, based on a **common denominator for all Member States**.

Lead to more joint degree programmes and making it a lot easier for alliances such as European Universities wishing to deliver joint degree programmes between 9 countries on average.

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

+50 legal and administrative obstacles

differences in academic years, grading scales and workload

Lack of recognition of blended/online learning

Impossibility to have traineeships or BIPs embedded in curricula

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)

Examples

Different mandatory teaching languages

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

A wealth of evidence



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



Examples of proposed European criteria

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

Boosting the implementation of the Bologna instruments

European quality assurance
standards and guidelines

European approach to quality
assurance of joint programmes

ECTS User Guide

Diploma Supplement

+ going beyond the Bologna tools & boosting high quality higher education

Transnational programme, organisation and management:

- At least 2 participating HEIs from 2 EU Member States (non-EU countries possible beyond that)
- Comply with Bologna and EU tools and standards
- Joint programme leads to a joint degree



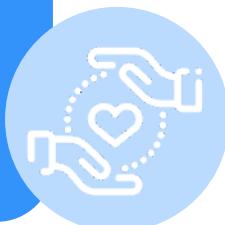
Learning experience:

- 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



European degree: horizontal principles



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



Universities award jointly -
on a voluntary basis
Open to:
all types of HEIs
all disciplines
Bachelor, Master, PhD



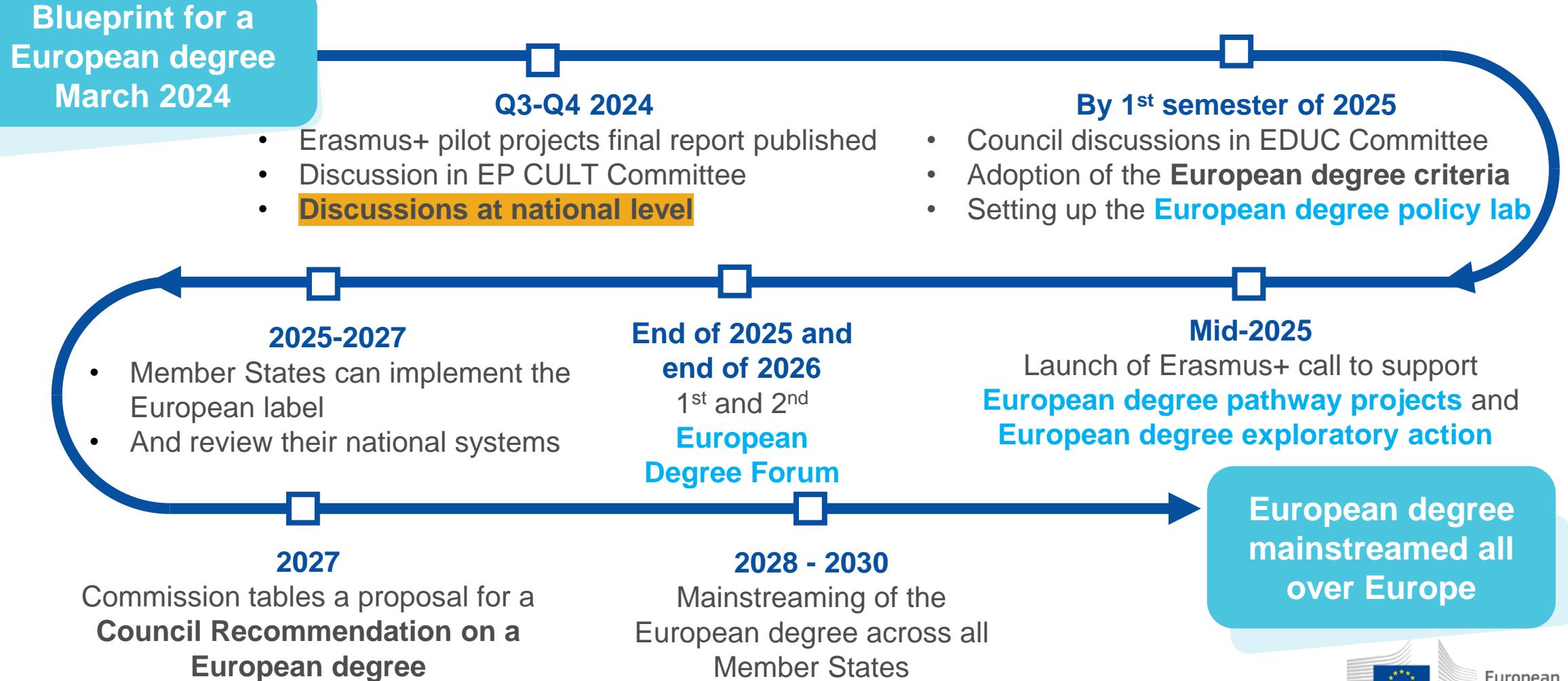
Built on existing EU
/ **Bologna process tools**



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

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

The road towards a possible European degree: illustration of possible next steps



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 Exploratory actions** to enable higher education institutions to adapt existing joint programmes or to create new ones leading to a European degree



European label vs European degree

European label

A **certificate**, certifying the compliance of a joint degree programme with the **European criteria**.

Such certificate accompanies the diploma of students graduating from such a joint programme. However, it would have no legal value on its own, **not a national qualification**.

It could help, with a **strong brand**, promoting the delivery of joint degree programmes meeting the excellent higher education approaches as described in the common criteria.

But **it would not make it simpler** for higher education institutions to set up and deliver one. It **would not solve the incompatibilities** between national rules.

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Thank you



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