



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

Julie Anderson
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European degree: Policy objectives

1

**Increased
employability
& skills relevance**

2

**Cutting red tape
for increased
adaptability of
higher education
systems**

3

**A driver of
strategic
cooperation &
global
competitiveness**

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

European degree: horizontal principles



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



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



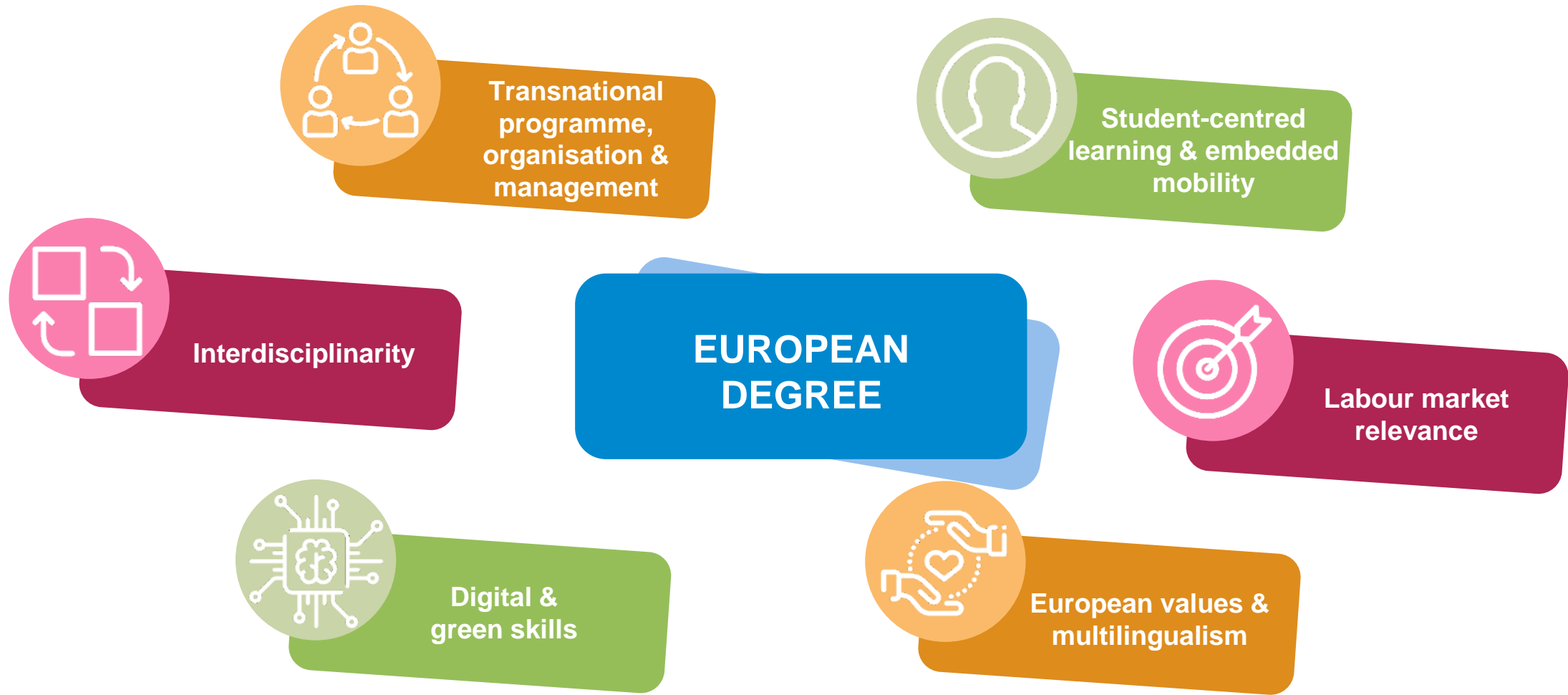
Linked to existing **EU /**
Bologna process tools



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

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

Co-developed European criteria: MS & stakeholders



European degree: main principles

***NOT awarded
by a European
body***

***NOT replacing
national
degrees***

***voluntarily
offered by
universities***

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**

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.

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,



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

Context

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**

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 => **need to do more at EU level.**

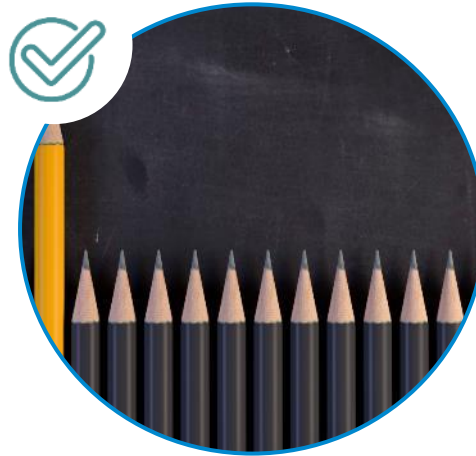


Recognition not yet automatic – limit to degree mobility within the EU

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

Recommendations: 1st pillar

Transversal recommendations for all quality assurance systems

Develop the enhancement dimension of quality assurance, to foster continuous improvement and keep a high level of transnational trust and accountability within higher education institutions

Ensure that quality assurance systems are fit-for-purpose to **respond to key societal and economic developments** affecting higher education in alignment with the ESG

Reduce, for higher education institutions, the workload, bureaucracy, and cost implications linked to external quality assurance processes

Improving all quality assurance systems



Ensure that decisions on accreditation and registration of higher education institutions and programmes are **made in a transparent and objective way**, in accordance with the ESG

Support and encourage quality assurance agencies to **organise mutual learning activities**

Ensure that institutional internal quality assurance systems **cover the whole range of educational provision** of a higher education institution, including micro-credentials

Encourage the publication, in a widely spoken language, 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 to undergo a joint external evaluation of their joint internal quality assurance arrangements

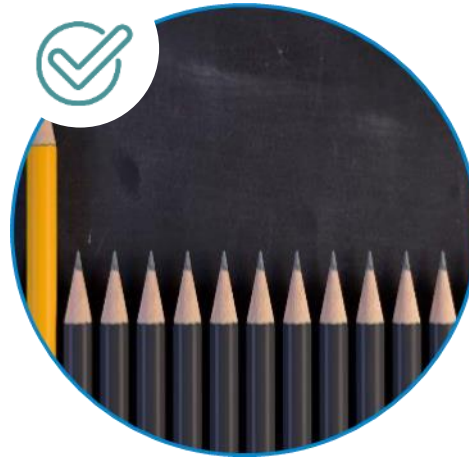
Making programme or combined approaches to external quality assurance more agile by:

Supporting higher education institutions to put in place or enhance a **robust internal quality assurance process**

Moving towards **institutional approach** for quality assurance

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

Supporting **peer learning** and capacity building of higher education institutions



Allow and encourage the use of the European Approach by:

Removing any **unjustified barrier** for its use

Creating an **enabling** environment

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

Recommendations: 3rd pillar

Laying the foundations towards a European degree

Adopt the European criteria of the European degree (label)



Allow quality assurance agencies registered in EQAR to award the European label and to grant HEIs and alliances of HEIs the ability to award the European label based on internal quality assurance

Work with EQAR to identify ways to complement the regular ESG review of the work of national quality assurance agencies in ensuring that joint programmes match the European criteria and create a repository of programmes that have met the European criteria

Recommendations: 4th pillar

Implementing automatic recognition

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

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

Support HEIs in **taking a learning outcomes approach** with regard to admission procedures, focusing on competences related to the level of the qualification, rather than specific curriculum content



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

Support close cooperation between staff working in recognition and quality assurance, in cooperation with the ENIC-NARIC network and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

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

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

Thank you



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