



European
Commission



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO MICRO-CREDENTIALS

OUTPUT OF THE MICRO-CREDENTIALS
HIGHER EDUCATION CONSULTATION GROUP

December 2020

Education and
Training



This executive summary was finalised in December 2020 and prepared by Hanne Shapiro Futures, Tine Andersen and Kristine Nedergaard Larsen under contract No 1000245 (awarded under Framework Contract EAC 02-2019), led by the Danish Technological Institute.

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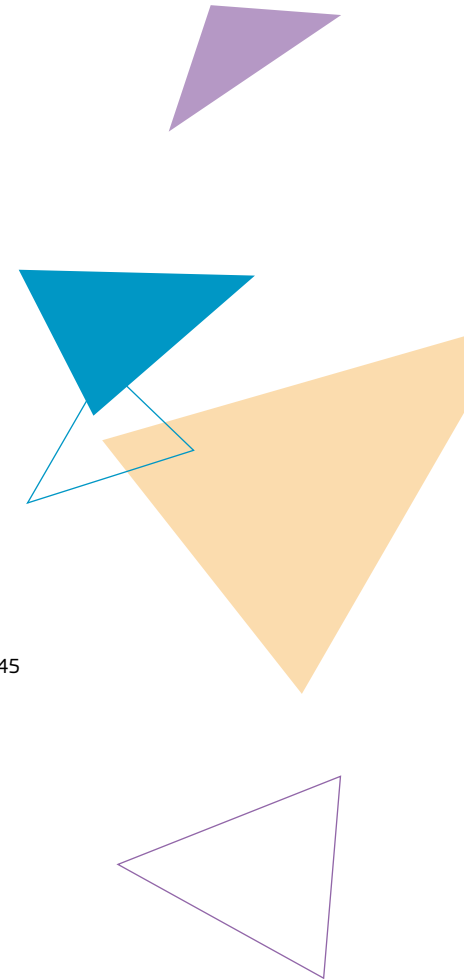
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Executive summary

Rapid transformations in European labour markets, accelerated by the pandemic and the twin digital and environmental transitions, trigger the need for more flexible opportunities to broaden and update competences, knowledge and skills throughout life for a wider range of learners, at all stages of their career. Estimates indicate that half of the current workforce, regardless of their initial qualifications, will need to update their skills within the next 5 years¹. As the economy recovers from the COVID-19 crisis, demands for short learning options and their recognition and validation are likely to further increase². To accommodate for these pressing needs, learning pathways at vocational education, higher education and training institutions should become more flexible and modular.

While it requires a change in mind-sets, culture and structures, it also opens up new opportunities for the higher education sector. Micro-credentials can be useful, not only for professionals but also for higher education staff, and can also complement the curriculum for students at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. High-quality, innovative and learner-centred education and training provision offered by universities and other education and training organisations can be enhanced through the flexibility that micro-credentials can offer to individuals. Micro-credentials can also facilitate inclusion in lifelong learning by reaching new learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, like migrants and refugees.

While a growing number of higher education institutions, including those involved in the Erasmus+ European Universities initiative, are already working on the development of these micro-credentials, a common definition and a common approach on their validation and recognition is lacking. In this context, the European Commission aims at filling this gap by presenting a proposal

for a Council Recommendation in 2021 to build trust in micro-credentials across Europe, with the objective of having all the necessary steps in place by 2025 for their wider use, portability and recognition.

Developing a European approach to micro-credentials is a joint agenda from Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, responsible for innovation, research, culture, education and youth, and Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, responsible for jobs and social rights.

This joint initiative was announced in the [European Skills Agenda](#), published on 1 July 2020, as one of its 12 flagship actions to support the quality, transparency and uptake of micro-credentials across the EU. It has been further elaborated in the [Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025](#), published on 30 September 2020, to emphasise the key role of higher education in supporting lifelong learning and reaching out to a more diverse group of learners.

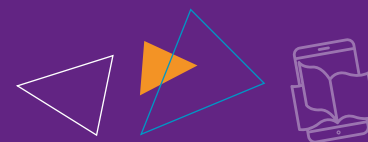
In this context, the European Commission has established an ad-hoc consultation group with experts in higher education from various European countries. This consultation group had as its main objective to explore how this EU approach to micro-credentials could be elaborated within the higher education sector in Europe. The group was composed of practitioners working at national authorities, in quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders from higher education.

The consultation group had the mandate to jointly develop proposals for:

- > **a shared definition** of micro-credentials;
- > **common characteristics** of a European approach to micro-credentials;
- > **a roadmap of actions** to be taken at EU level, in full respect of subsidiarity, by national authorities, by higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure the uptake, validation and recognition of micro-credentials.

This report consolidates the outcomes of these rich discussions, and proposes recommendations on the way forward, with a particular focus on higher education.

However, the European approach to micro-credentials will have a wider scope than higher education, addressing micro-credentials in all fields of education and training, as well as in the labour market. The outcomes of the consultation group presented in this report will be a starting point for a wider consultation process with stakeholders from all fields and across all Member States in the coming year. The outcomes will feed into a Council Recommendation on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability to be presented at the end of 2021.





Building blocks of a European approach to micro-credentials

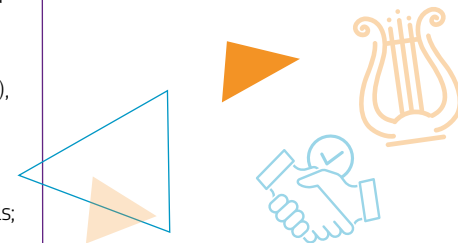
Micro-credentials are just one element in a broader system of qualifications and credentials for lifelong learning. A number of tools and standards have already emerged from the collaboration within the EU and the Bologna Process. In addition, further outcomes are emerging from Erasmus+ projects that are relevant to different dimensions of uptake.

It is key to analyse how the existing European tools can be deployed and potentially be adapted to support quality, transparency, portability and comparability of micro-credentials in the EU, and to support Member States' initiatives in the field of micro-credentials.

Based on these available tools, the consultation group proposes the following key building blocks as common characteristics for a European approach to micro-credentials:


- > A common and transparent definition;
- > A defined list of critical information elements to describe micro-credentials;
- > Alignment to National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF): defined levels, standards for describing learning outcomes;
- > Quality assurance standards;
- > Defined credits: European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), defined learning outcomes and notional workload;
- > Recognition: for further studies and/or employment purposes;
- > Portability: issuing, storage and sharing of micro-credentials;
- > Platform solutions for the provision and promotion of courses leading to micro-credentials;
- > Incentives to stimulate the uptake of micro-credentials.

These should contribute to improving the transparency and portability of micro-credentials, easing recognition processes and enhancing uptake.



1. Proposed shared definition of micro-credentials

A shared and transparent definition of micro-credentials is key to further the development, trust, recognition, portability and uptake of micro-credentials. The consultation group proposed a **shared definition that is valid across the different sectors of education and the world of work**, while mirroring the societal responsibility of higher education institutions. It builds on the proposals developed by experts in the context of various Erasmus+ projects.



A micro-credential is a proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a short learning experience. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent standards.

The proof is contained in a certified document that lists the name of the holder, the achieved learning outcomes, the assessment method, the awarding body and, where applicable, the qualifications framework level and the credits gained. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared, are portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards.



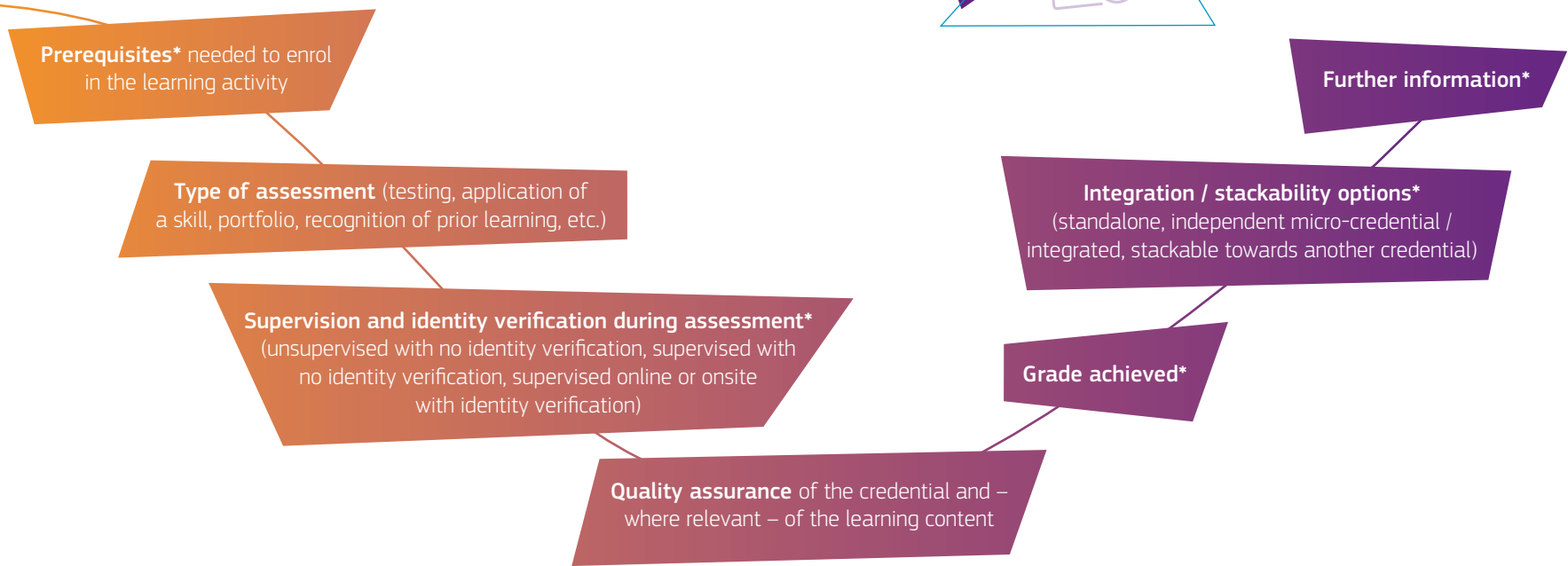
2. Proposed EU standard for constitutive elements of micro-credentials

The basis for trust in micro-credentials, similar to qualifications leading to a degree, is transparency in terms of what they represent. Micro-credentials and the certificates delivered upon completion should be clearly identified as such, and unquestionably differentiated from a full degree such as bachelor, master or doctoral degrees.

While the Diploma Supplement provides the most crucial information about full higher education degrees for international recognition purposes, there is currently no standardised way of describing micro-credentials.

A key recommendation of experts was to agree on a list of critical information elements³ that any micro-credential should provide. The following list of critical information elements would constitute a **EU standard on micro-credentials**.





This information should offer **verifiable, free and secure access to data**, which is **available over time**, in order to support transparency and recognition.

(* Optional information)

3. Alignment to the national and European Qualifications Frameworks

The uptake and accumulation of micro-credentials into larger credentials hinge on **learning outcomes being understood and comparable in a transparent way, which can be enabled by qualifications frameworks**. The European Qualifications Framework is a reference framework for qualifications based on level descriptors for learning outcomes, applicable to all levels of qualifications. National qualifications frameworks are prepared in line with their general requirements. One trend among several Member States is that they are opening up national qualifications frameworks to other forms of provision than full qualifications offered by formal education and training establishments. **Qualifications frameworks can be used to describe learning outcomes of micro-credentials**, but these may need to be put into context by referencing to the credential's thematic area.



Member States could consider adapting national qualifications frameworks to enable inclusion of micro-credentials

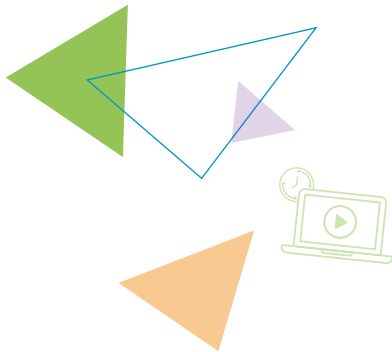
In the case of those national qualifications frameworks that do not permit inclusion of non-formal qualifications, the consultation group suggested differentiating between two types of micro-credentials

Type 1:

Micro-credentials that are issued by **formal education institutions** and can be aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (through national qualifications frameworks) and ECTS (or other credit systems).

Type 2:

Micro-credentials that are issued by **non-formal education providers**. Further discussion is needed, across education sectors, to identify standards for these micro-credentials.



4. Quality assurance standards

To build trust, it is important to have full transparency over **two main characteristics** of micro-credentials: the **quality of the credential itself** (the envelope, i.e. authenticity, the technology behind it) and the **learning experience** (the content)⁴. A third element where full transparency is necessary is the provider: **trust in the provider** of the credential is a crucial element for trust in the credential itself.

In the higher education sector, quality assurance processes usually ensure transparency and trust. In line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), all courses offered by accredited – or, where accreditation does not exist, externally quality assured – higher education institutions must undergo internal quality assurance by the institution in question. In systems where separate external quality assurance takes place at programme level, external quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms for non-degree programmes like Massive Open Online Courses, short programmes and continuous learning programmes, or different ways of delivery (blended learning, online leaning, etc.) are, generally, not yet adopted by quality assurance agencies. Very few quality assurance agencies provide specific accreditation or certification processes for non-degree programmes.

Where micro-credentials are not issued by higher education institutions, other tools may be needed to build the necessary trust. The group has not touched upon the quality assurance of micro-credentials provided in the secondary education, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and adult learning sectors; however, existing quality assurance systems in these sectors could also provide the necessary basis for trust. As regards providers outside the formal education and training system, quality assurance is also essential. These providers may also be evaluated by a quality assurance agency registered at the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), based on the

ESG. The consultation group suggested considering the **establishment of a register of trusted issuers at European level**, which have a documented process in place for external quality assurance.

Higher education institutions that are externally quality assured in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) should be regarded as trusted providers of micro-credentials.

- > The Erasmus+ DEQAR CONNECT project aims to ensure that these are listed in the Database for Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) and to promote the digital exchange of information on quality assurance.
- > In cases where there is programme accreditation, the database will contain reports of accredited programmes.

When delivered by higher education institutions, the same quality assurance principles should be applied to micro-credentials as to higher education degrees.

- > The Erasmus+ MICROBOL project is set to examine if and how the **Bologna tools** can support the uptake of micro-credentials and whether there is a need for adjustment.
- > For **micro-credentials delivered online**, the comprehensive reference tool for quality assurance and benchmarking of online learning developed by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) in the context of the E-Excellence Project (EADTU, 2016) could serve as a reference document.

- > Similar to the European Network for Quality Assurance's (ENQA) 'considerations for internal and external quality assurance in an online and blended learning environment', further explanation might be needed on how the ESG could be operationalised in the context of micro-credentials.

When micro-credentials are issued by a non higher education provider, including providers outside the formal education and training system, quality assurance is also essential. The ESG could, in principle, be used in this area as there is nothing in the standards that is 'exclusive' to higher education.

- > This is an area where further discussion and cooperation is needed, with non higher education providers and stakeholders. A list of trusted non higher education institution providers should be progressively developed.
- > Furthermore, some members of the consultation group pointed to the need for ensuring a level playing field for quality assurance for all providers.

Further discussion and cooperation is needed on quality assurance of micro-credentials in the secondary education, VET and adult learning sector, with relevant stakeholders. Quality assurance in these sectors is different, but still trusted.

- > Annex IV of the European Qualifications Framework recommendation lists quality principles for all sectors, which should be respected for the VET sector as well.

5. ECTS, defined learning outcomes and notional workload

The **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System** (ECTS) is used by 49 countries within the European Higher Education Area. From the perspective of higher education, ECTS is a recognised mechanism to make the **learning outcomes** and the **estimated workload** of a course visible (Commission, n.d.).

ECTS is suitable for micro-credentials as it is based on learning outcomes and makes learning measurable. It could be used in the transcripts or certificates for micro-credentials, and could thereby contribute to their transparency. Using ECTS credits as a measurement system would be a **basic element that could allow micro-credentials to become stackable, in a transparent way**, based on learning outcomes and workload. This could also facilitate the national and international recognition of short courses as independent modules or potentially as part of a full qualification. Where micro-credentials use another credit system, it is important that users understand how to translate their credits to ECTS⁵.

The European Approach to **micro-credentials should be linked with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) as far as possible. Wherever possible, micro-credentials should use ECTS.**

The group discussed the **notional volume of learning leading to micro-credentials** or whether there is a need to set a fixed level of volume, e.g. in terms of a range of ECTS credits. The main reason for not setting a range is to allow for flexibility for issuers, while the advantage of a defined credit range would be to make it easier to compare micro-credentials.

- > Experts preferred maximum flexibility. This could imply a minimum of 1 ECTS credit with an upper limit of 'less than a full degree'.

- > Many suggested a typical range could potentially be between 1 and 6 ECTS credits for a single micro-credential, which can be combined and extended further to meet different national, institutional and sectoral practices and contexts.
- > The consultation group justified this flexibility with the necessity to allow for innovations and experimentations in Europe.

The group acknowledged that further discussion is necessary on the possibility of **combining micro-credentials into a macro-credential** (an internally coherent composition of a number of micro-credentials relating to a specific topic or field).

The group recommends stating that micro-credentials **should not replace full degrees**, but be complementary to them.

- > ECTS is a suitable tool for supporting the stackability of micro-credentials.
- > It is, however, important to note that a full degree is not only a collection of credits. The internal coherence of the courses has to be ensured.
- > A further suggestion was that micro-credentials could be stacked to full degrees, but only upon validation by an institution accredited/entitled to provide the respective level of qualification (i.e. a university could validate that a set of micro-credentials is equivalent to their BA/MA/PhD programmes). To stimulate uptake, institutions could signal this stackability ex ante ('if you take this set of courses, we will validate it').



6. Recognition for further studies or employment purposes

As the offer and uptake of micro-credentials increases, the current time and resource-intensive procedures for their current recognition would not be able to meet the increased demand. The expert group proposed the following approach to address the issue:

Standard recognition procedures that are used for the recognition of foreign qualifications and learning periods abroad can be used as a starting point **when dealing with micro-credentials issued by formal education providers.**

Transparency and trust are also the basis for recognition in the case of micro-credentials.

- > The criteria used by the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC)/National Academic Recognition Centres (NARIC) for the recognition process, as well as the above described EU standard for constitutive elements could be used for micro-credentials.

Micro-credentials issued by non-formal education providers (e.g. private providers of labour market-relevant training) are recognised by their **prior learning and experience.**

- > Recognition of micro-credentials could be easier or even automatic within 'trusted partnerships', where higher education institutions have worked together already.
- > There is a need to move from bilateral and case-by-case recognition of prior learning to scalable processes, underpinned by IT tools.

The European approach to micro-credentials and its building blocks should **support quick and more scalable recognition processes**, especially when underpinned by digital solutions.

Processes for **digitalisation of student data and other elements necessary for the recognition process** could improve data quality and should be seen as part of a wider digital infrastructure.

- > The Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI) and the European Student Card Initiative can support this, as well as a number of ongoing projects in this domain.
- > Standardised metadata and interoperability of the different tools are indispensable.



7. Portability: issuing, storage and sharing of micro-credentials

Micro-credentials may currently be issued in various formats (on paper or in a digital form, stored locally or using a cloud solution). Looking ahead, a digital format for micro-credentials is essential to allow for easy storage, sharing and their portability. This would be beneficial for the learners, but also for educational institutions and the world of work, and would facilitate recognition. However, this does not imply that the provision of courses leading to micro-credentials will have to be based on digital delivery.

The **Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)** may provide a **suitable infrastructure that can be applied to micro-credentials**. Currently, only qualifications in national qualifications frameworks can have a Europass Digitally Signed Credential, so further work is needed in order to **use this infrastructure for micro-credentials, which could be promoted through cross-country pilots**.

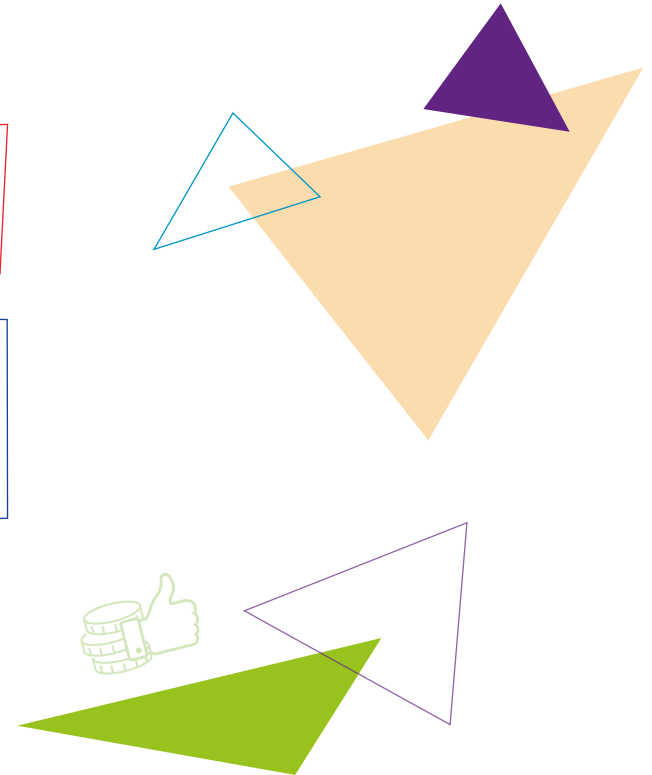
The group saw some potential benefits in **blockchain infrastructure**, while some participants expressed concern about a perceived lack of maturity in using it for educational purposes.

European efforts concerning infrastructures in support of portability, exchange and sharing of data and recognition of micro-credentials **should be further discussed by policy-makers in Member States and higher education institutions**, focusing on the strategic aspects and considering both investment needs and legislative implications.

Learners should own their own credential data, rather than the issuing institution. In line with the data protection regulations, it is up to the learner to decide with whom they wish to share their data.

The infrastructure for storing data should be based on **open standards and data models to allow for interoperability and the seamless exchange of data**.

Metadata should be available in an **open, portable format**. European standards for sharing metadata should include only the basics, to allow for flexibility at national and institutional level.



8. Platform solutions for offering micro-credentials, and their promotion

Globally, the role of digital platforms has gained traction in the provision of courses, leading to micro-credentials developed by higher education institutions. These global platforms also tend to include other forms of credentials, for example those provided by the big IT companies such as IBM and Microsoft. The *platformisation* of higher education is driven by a complex interplay between technical architectures, pressures on existing business models and revenue streams, and opportunities to create mass user activity with the ability to scale without the same level of costs as face-to-face education would require. The drivers in Europe differ to some extent, as European higher education institutions are predominately public, and the study costs for individuals are not as high as, for example, in the USA. Nevertheless, European solutions for micro-credentials can only have a real impact if they respond to the developments of global university-based platforms such as Coursera and edX. It was therefore suggested by members of the group that data governance and standard setting from a technical perspective are critical to sustainability and could be supported by forming a European Standards Committee with the relevant stakeholders.

Platform-based infrastructure is an important driver for the online provision of micro-credentials. Different scenarios were discussed and proposed with regard to platform-based infrastructures.

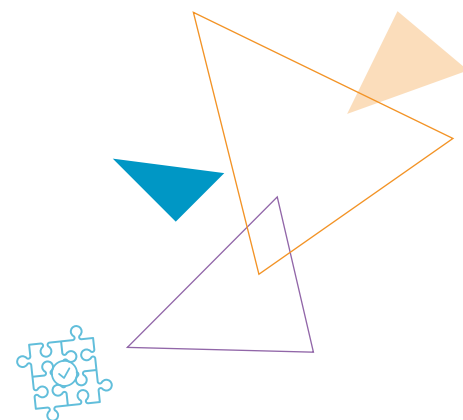
- > Some participants would support the development of a European meta-platform. Member States, individual higher education institutions, European University Alliances or other actors could further build on applications and infrastructures.
- > Others argued for a decentralised model, where universities build their own solutions, while ensuring interoperability.

The scenarios proposed also have **implications in funding models**, which span from funding through public-private partnerships to a proposal for a fully publicly funded solution.

- > Whichever model and approach may be followed, further discussions are needed to clarify financial sustainability or the question of ownership in the case of a joint development of micro-credentials.

The discussions strongly highlighted the need for support services so that micro-credentials can be **an inclusive solution** for skills development, underpinning lifelong learning as a public good, based on European values.

Technical solutions could be discussed at **European level** to ensure interoperability and infrastructure development.



9. Incentives to stimulate the uptake of micro-credentials

The two main aspects to consider concerning the uptake of micro-credentials are the supply and the demand side. The consultation group discussed financial and non-financial incentives for both aspects. A common theme emerging from discussions and interviews conducted with higher education institutions is that the sustainability of funding is critical to ensure a lasting approach to the development and provision of micro-credentials. Another key conclusion among the members of the consultation group is that funding is one side of the equation to a sustainable European approach to micro-credentials; another side of the equation concerns institutional strategies. Member States have different policies on lifelong learning and further education, which may have an impact on institutional priorities. Another issue discussed was how to ensure that the demand for upskilling and reskilling is channelled to the most appropriate learning option, and how to ensure equity of learners. Guidance services would enable learners to fully benefit from more personalised lifelong learning pathways and make informed decisions about their educational journey.

Additional funding will be needed to expand the development and provision of micro-credentials at the institutional level. **Different funding models could be foreseen**, mirroring to some extent the funding of higher education.

Different solutions are proposed to ensure equity in access and opportunity, such as embedding **mentoring** and **guidance**. It is also strongly recommended that the design and implementation process involves relevant organisations that represent groups with particular needs.

The relative prominence of lifelong learning in national policies will likely impact institutional priorities, as regards their commitment to further education through micro-credentials. **Micro-credentials need to be underpinned by a comprehensive institutional strategy with clear targets, operational plans and allocated resources**, which must be clearly communicated throughout an institution and shared with external stakeholders to instigate a cultural change.

External partnerships with private organisations are seen as key to the development of micro-credentials. They can reduce investment requirements and risks for individual institutions and ensure there are dialogues around needs and priorities. External partners can contribute with expertise, and can be seen as a way forward to the uptake and promotion of micro-credentials.

The motivation and support of staff to engage in the development and provision of micro-credentials is perceived to be a key aspect. Clear and transparent career pathways and building on teaching excellence in terms of staff promotion can serve as the main incentives.

Equity for the end users is key for the successful uptake. Lessons emerging from existing platforms such as FUN or KIRON show that learner motivation to register for a course leading to a micro-credential will not always be with a view to completion. User needs are much more complex.



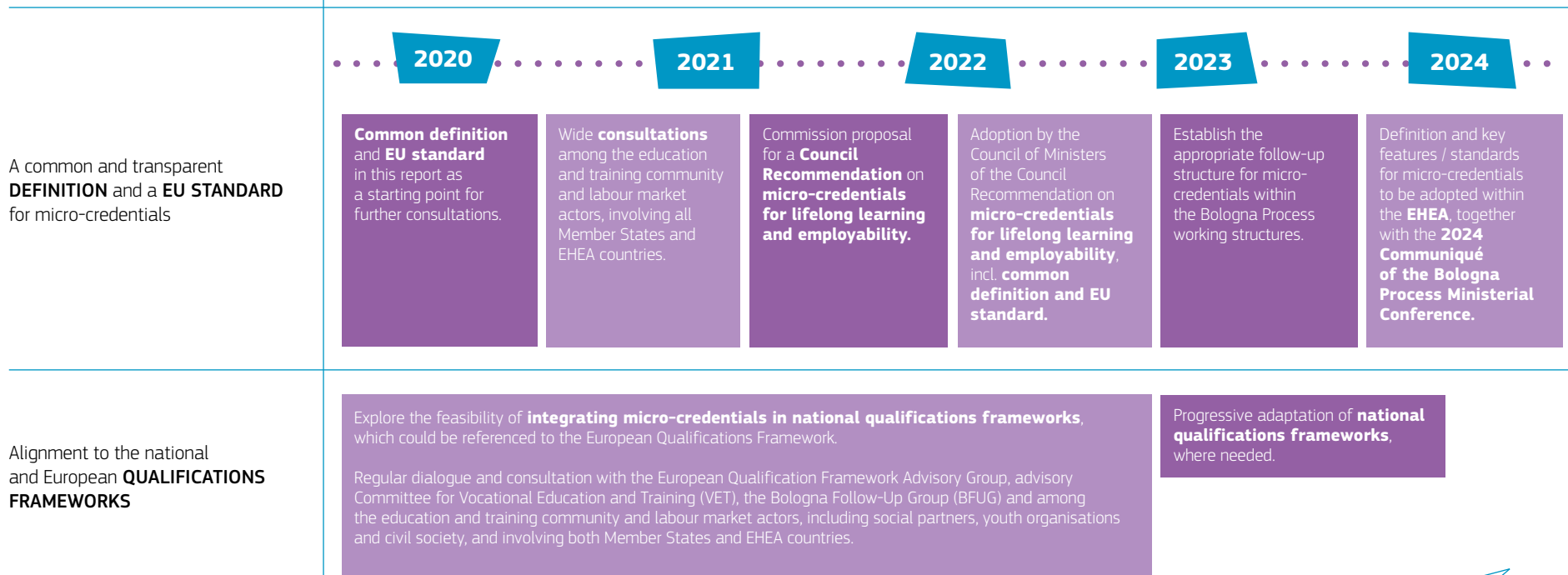
10. Roadmap of actions



This Roadmap puts forward suggestions for actions and timing needed on a European and national level to develop and implement a European Approach to micro-credentials. It reflects the views of the members of the consultation group and is intended to feed into the work of the Commission on the European approach to micro-credentials as announced in the European Skills Agenda, the European Education Area and the Digital Education Action Plan communications. The suggested actions focus mainly on the higher education field, as per mandate of the group, but do also address elements of a broader scope of a European approach to micro-credentials.

BUILDING BLOCKS

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES



BUILDING BLOCKS

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES

QUALITY ASSURANCE standards for short learning courses

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

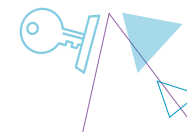
In the context of the Erasmus+ MICROBOL project (2020-2022),

- > Explore the possible adaptation of the Bologna instruments to address the internal and external quality assurance of short learning courses leading to micro-credentials in higher education.
- > **Release of guidelines on how to apply the current Bologna instruments to the internal and external quality assurance of micro-credentials** for the EHEA.

Explore how the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), ISO standards and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model could support the **quality assurance of micro-credentials for sectors beyond higher education**.

Ensure that micro-credentials are included in internal and external quality assurance processes at higher education institutions and at national level.

Progressive development of a **list of trusted non higher education institution providers of micro-credentials**, building for instance on the Erasmus+ DEQAR-CONNECT project.



European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

In the context of the Erasmus+ MICROBOL project (2020-2022), explore the possible adaptation of the ECTS Users' Guide to emphasise **how ECTS can be used in the context of micro-credentials**.

Potential **adaptation of the ECTS Users' Guide** to integrate micro-credentials.

Explore how other credit systems could be adapted to education sectors beyond higher education (for instance in VET).

RECOGNITION

In the context of the Erasmus+ projects (e.g. MICROBOL and 'Stacking credits and the future of the qualification – STACQ'), explore the possible adaptation of the recognition instruments to **address the need for a standardised approach to the recognition of micro-credentials and of prior learning**.


Release of guidelines on how to ensure a **quicker process for the recognition of micro-credentials** and how to address their **stackability**.

Adaptation of existing instruments or adoption of new ones to facilitate the **validation and recognition** of micro-credentials.

Consultation with ENIC-NARICs to discuss how they could further support the recognition of micro-credentials.

BUILDING BLOCKS

TIMELINES and DELIVERABLES

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
STORAGE and PORTABILITY	<p>Further development of EUROPASS, in particular the Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure, for the issuing, sharing and storage of micro-credentials.</p> <p>Foster the availability of metadata in open formats and the interoperability between various infrastructures, including between the European Student Card initiative and Europass.</p>				
LIFELONG LEARNING	<p>Ensuring better permeability between education and training sectors through the application of micro-credentials.</p> <p>Fostering the availability of recognition of prior learning and validation of informal and non-formal learning options, which are scalable to higher numbers of applicants.</p> <p>Enhance comprehensive guidance services, including online access, which are underpinned by real-time labour market data to ensure informed learner choice.</p>				
NATIONAL LEVEL ACTIONS	<p>Consultations at national level about the above-mentioned aspects of micro-credentials, involving all relevant national stakeholders.</p> <p>Preparing or adjusting the national regulatory framework.</p> <p>Piloting of actions based on national/regional needs. Exploring and ensuring the availability of adequate funding, including by EU funding schemes.</p>				
UPTAKE by higher education institutions, VET and other education and training institutions	 <p>EU support through the Erasmus+ programme and Structural Funds for higher education, VET and other education and training institutions and training providers for the uptake of micro-credentials, with a special focus on academia-business cooperation in their development.</p> <p>Support the development of sustainable business models for the provision of quality assured micro-credentials by regular consultation with Public Employment Services, social partners, private partners and industry representatives.</p> <p>Peer learning activities at European and national levels, within education and training sectors, across sectors and with the world of work.</p>				



Footnotes

- 1 World Economic Forum 2020.
- 2 <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/coronavirus-boosts-interest-online-learning>
- 3 Other initiatives and programmes address these information items as metadata, criteria for recognition and content indicators for the 'micro-credentials envelope'.
- 4 OEPASS project
- 5 Micro-credentials awarded in the VET area or by private bodies are not always subject to a credit system. ECTS have been used primarily within higher education, whilst the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was proposed in 2009 to be used in the field of VET. The recent proposal for a Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience from July 2020, however, does state that, in practice, ECTS is also used for post-secondary and tertiary VET. The proposed recommendation also states that the credit points introduced by the 2009 ECVET Recommendation will be discontinued, due to the very low uptake and no evidence of added value (European Commission, 2020). Some adaptations may be needed in order for ECTS to work in the field of VET.

A European approach to micro-credentials – Output of the micro-credentials higher education consultation group – Executive summary

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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