



European Commission initiatives in higher education

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European Strategy for Universities

1

Strengthen the European dimension in higher education and research

Bringing transnational cooperation to a higher level contributes to a culture of excellence and inclusion, a true European identity, and global competitiveness and attractiveness

2

Consolidate universities as lighthouses of our European way of life

Strengthen quality and relevance for future-proof skills

In a fast changing environment, universities need to strengthen their capacities to equip young people, lifelong learners and researchers with the right competences and skills

Foster diversity, inclusiveness and gender equality

More institutional changes are needed for universities to become places of truly equal opportunities

Promote and protect European democratic values

Universities need to be places of freedom: for speech, thought, learning, research

3

Empower universities as key actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions

Develop skills, competences and technological innovation for the green and digital transition

Universities are key actors for the green transition and for a more sustainable world. We need to make 'connected universities' a reality

4

Reinforce universities as drivers of Europe's global role and leadership

Universities are instrumental in building Europe's connections with the world



Four flagship initiatives



Expand to **60 European Universities with more than 500 universities by mid-2024**, with an Erasmus+ indicative budget totalling EUR 1.1 billion for 2021-2027.



Work towards a **legal statute for alliances** of higher education institutions: pilot as of 2022 under Erasmus+ the implementation of existing European instruments



Examine options and necessary steps towards a **joint European degree**: pilot as of 2022 under Erasmus+ the first steps towards a joint European degree, in particular the development of European criteria for the award of a European Degree label



Scale up the **European Student Card initiative by starting deploying a unique European Student Identifier** to all mobile students in 2022 and to all students in universities in Europe by mid-2024

Building Bridges for Higher Education Cooperation

**FACILITATING
TRANSNATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**

**FIRST STEP
TOWARDS:**

- Institutionalised cooperation instruments (e.g. legal status for alliances)
- Common criteria for a European label for joint programmes, followed possibly by voluntary joint degrees based on these European criteria

**SUSTAINABLE
EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITIES
ALLIANCES**

**WIDENING THE
IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN
STUDENT CARD
INITIATIVE**

Support embedded mobility in joint transnational educational programmes

Support transnational education activities at all levels

Support high quality virtual collaborative learning

Involve learners, academics, researchers and staff in transnational cooperation

Council Recommendation adopted by EYCS Council, 5 April

European Universities: state of play

European Universities
strategic transnational alliances across higher education institutions in Europe



60
European Universities alliances
BY 2024

⇓

500
higher education institutions

€1,1bn
(2021-2027)





Joint European degree label and institutionalised cooperation instruments



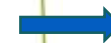
Explore common criteria leading to a potential **European label for joint programmes**, to be piloted as of 2022 under Erasmus+. Later on, the possible design and delivery, on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or institutional level, of joint degrees at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria, could be envisaged



Erasmus + pilot call topic 1:
Pilot a joint European degree label



Examining the need for and feasibility of institutionalised cooperation instruments, such as a possible **legal status for alliances of higher education institutions**: pilot as of 2022 under Erasmus+ the implementation of existing European instruments



Erasmus + pilot call topic 2:
Pilot institutionalised EU cooperation instruments to explore the feasibility for a possible European legal status for alliances of higher education institutions

Policy experimentation: a step by step approach



2023: running of the selected pilots

Test co-developed criteria for the degree label
Test the use of existing institutionalised cooperation instruments at European level

2024 and beyond: follow up action at EU level

Analyse the results of the pilots to inform future possible developments towards possible joint degrees based on co-created European criteria.



European Student Card Initiative

Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)

Connect all universities via a digital network: EWP Network

Software for institutions without mobility information systems: EWP Dashboard

Erasmus+ App

App for students to find out information about destinations and exchange tips

European Student Card project

QR code for HEIs to add to student cards to make them valid in other universities

Achievements so far

- **Erasmus Without Paper Network:** now the default option, rather than paper
- **Erasmus+ App:** about 200,000 downloads in 2022.
- **European Student card:** about 1,5 million issued

Quality Assurance and Recognition System



European Strategy for Universities

Review Recommendation on further European cooperation in Quality Assurance in higher education in **2023** to develop a **European Quality Assurance and Recognition System**

Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation

Recommendation 7

Strengthen mutual trust through external quality assurance and accreditation of joint educational programmes and other forms of joint educational offers developed by institutional transnational cooperation models, **including ‘European Universities’** in accordance with the **European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)**.

- a) Move further towards the use of **institutional-based external quality assurance**. This could support the development of a genuine institutional quality culture that leads to a greater accountability and compatibility of systems across Europe, building on tools and frameworks already in place in the context of the European Education Area, the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area.
- b) Consider the possibility of allowing for **self-accreditation of programmes**, where relevant, **based on institutional quality assurance**, to underpin the self-responsibility of higher education institutions.
- c) **In countries relying on programme-based external quality assurance**, consider the possibility of:
 - i) enabling the **full implementation of the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**;
 - ii) ensuring that the **external evaluation of joint transnational programmes can be carried out by one single agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)** and that the outcomes are automatically accepted in all other higher education systems concerned, without adding further national requirements; and
 - iii) ensuring that the **re-accreditation of joint transnational programmes follows the rules of the ESG and the European Approach**.

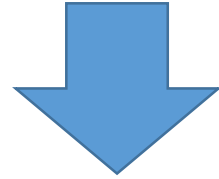
Why?

Quality assurance is	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the foundation for mutual trust between higher education institutions• crucial to the achievement of many actions in European Strategy for Universities and European Education Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• facilitate deeper transnational cooperation between higher education institutions• Strengthen links between quality assurance and automatic recognition• move further towards institution-level quality assurance

Plans and Timing

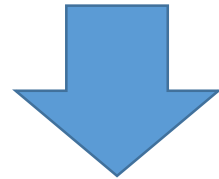
Study on:

1. Implementation of the **Council Recommendation on automatic recognition**



Report to Council on automatic **recognition** in early **2023**

2. Feasibility of a **European recognition and quality assurance system**

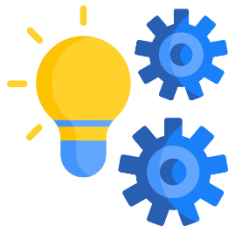


Targeted consultations of stakeholders and Member States over coming months

Adoption of proposal in late 2023/early 2024



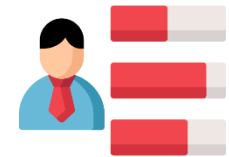
Preliminary results on the implementation of automatic recognition for higher education (1)



Progress towards implementation of the Council Recommendation can be observed



Automatic recognition features more prominently in **policy** discussions than before the Council Recommendation



Digitalisation of recognition processes at national level improved

Preliminary results on the implementation of automatic recognition for higher education (2)

- Comprehension of **concept**: one of the major challenges, together with differentiation between access and admission to higher education
- Educational institutions often responsible for recognition procedures, resulting in diverse processes that are complex and not in line with automatic recognition + **one third of the institutions surveyed check the quality assurance processes of the other institution when deciding about recognition of qualifications**
- **Uneven** application of the Bologna tools
- **Lack of monitoring** and evaluation of recognition decisions makes it difficult to assess the implementation of automatic recognition

 **Limited national resources** dedicated to support implementati

Thank you!

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