



# EEA Strategic Framework Working Group on Higher Education

17 June 2024





# European degree package



# Communication on a blueprint for a European Degree

# 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: 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



# The situation today:

Differences in  
use of ECTS

Requirements  
for diploma  
templates

Admission  
policies,  
mobility rules

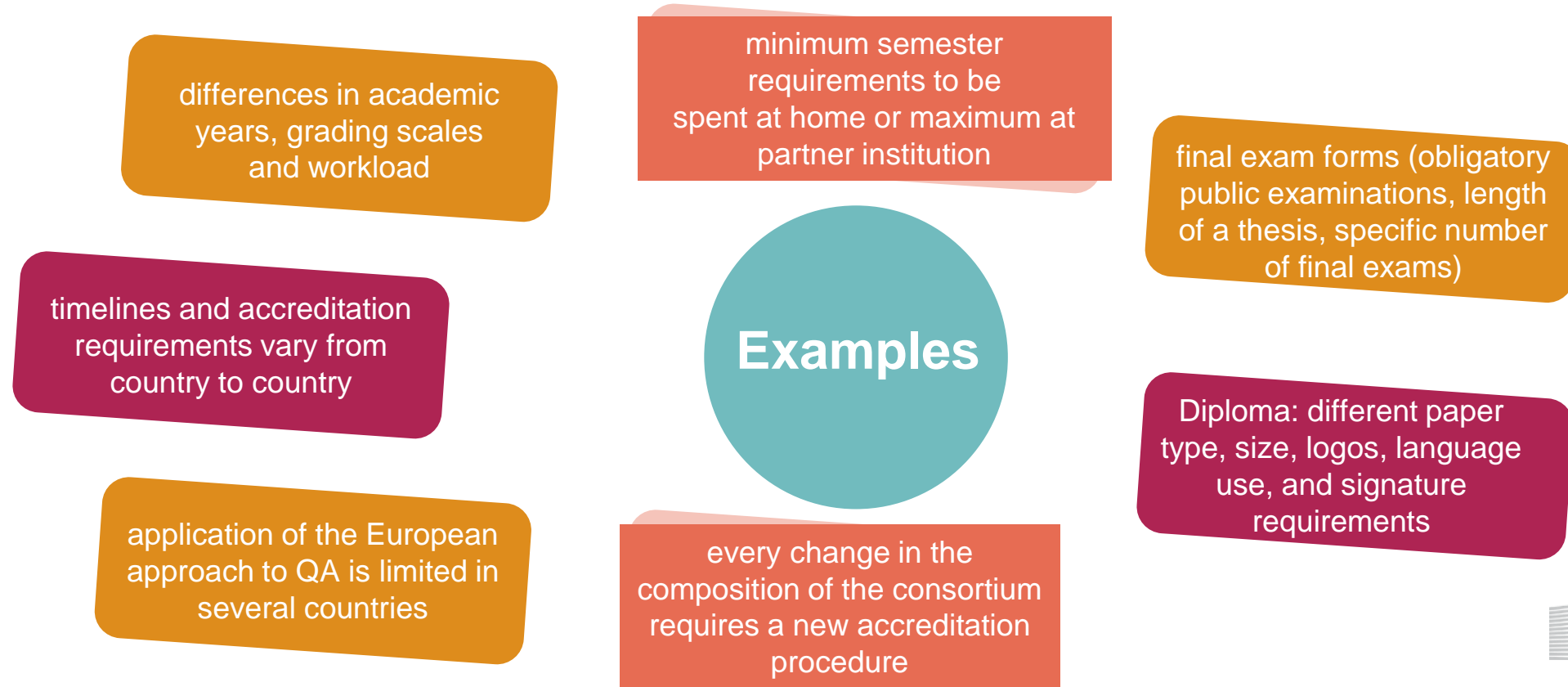
Accreditation  
requirements,  
restrictions on  
language use

Possibility to have  
traineeships  
embedded in  
curricula

**The road for creating a joint degree programme is extremely complex as every partner must fulfill different and often incompatible national requirements**

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

+50 legal and administrative obstacles





# Outcomes of Erasmus+ pilot projects: obstacles that Bologna tools do not address

Incompatible minimum requirements in terms of physical presence

CY, CZ, DK, ES, IT, PT, SE

Restrictions on proficiency or number of teaching languages

BE-FL, CY, CZ, DK, FI, FR, IT, LT, NL, PL

Challenges in setting up interdisciplinary degrees

BE-FL, CZ, FR, HU, IT, LT, PL, RO, SE

Compulsory final exams forms

AT, CZ, FI, EL, HU, IT, LT, PL, RO



# Outcomes of Erasmus+ pilot projects: obstacles that Bologna tools do not address

Restrictive legislation on student selection	BE-FL, CY, DK, FI, FR, EL, HU, LT, IT, SE
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Restrictions on student enrolment	CZ, FI, FR, HU, NL
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Incompatible regulations on the diploma parchment and graduation rules	AT, BE-FL, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, PL, PT, SE
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Many more examples in Chapter 3 and Annex III of  
the [Staff Working Document](#)

**The situation tomorrow with  
a European degree:**



**A European degree is embedded in national legislation as a new qualification, alongside other national degrees at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level. It is based on European criteria. No national criteria on top.**

# 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.**

# European degree: main principles

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

***NOT replacing  
national  
degrees***

***voluntarily  
offered by  
universities***

# 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



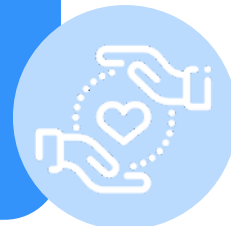
### Learning experience:

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



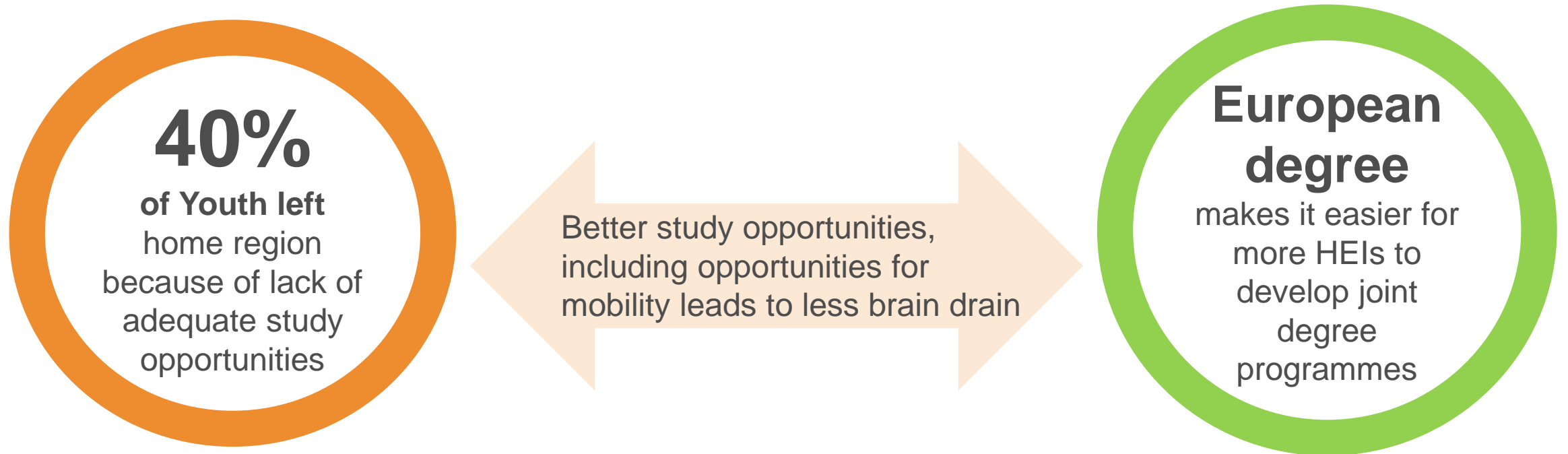
### European Values, inclusiveness & multilingualism

Joint programmes should promote democratic values, multilingualism, inclusiveness and the green transition





# Equal chances and brain circulation



**Source:** European Commission  
[\*Youth for reviving stagnating EU territories\*](#)

# A wealth of evidence



ED-AFFICHE

ΕΤΙΚΕΤΑ

FilmEULabel



FOCI

JEDI  
Joint European Degree Label in Engineering



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



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



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

# 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.



# European degree: added value



## For universities

**Pool resources together** to provide comprehensive **knowledge not available at any single institution alone**

**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**



# 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

# 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

# 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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# 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



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

## Blueprint for a European degree March 2024

### Autumn 2024

- Erasmus+ pilot projects final report published
- Discussion in EP CULT Committee
- Discussions at national level

### By 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2025

- Council discussions in EDUC Committee
- Adoption of the European degree criteria<sup>(1)</sup>
- Setting up the European degree policy lab<sup>(2)</sup>

### 2025-2027

- Member States can implement the European label<sup>(4)</sup>
- And review their national systems

### End of 2025 and end of 2026

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>  
European Degree  
Forum

### Mid-2025

Launch of Erasmus+ call to support European degree  
pathway projects and European degree exploratory action<sup>(3)</sup>

### End of 2027

Commission tables a proposal  
for a Council Recommendation  
on a European degree

### Mid-2028

Adoption of Council  
Recommendation on a  
European degree

### 2028 - 2030

Mainstreaming of the  
European degree across all  
Member States

European degree  
mainstreamed all  
over Europe



# Thank you



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