

A European Approach to Micro-credentials



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1 July 2021

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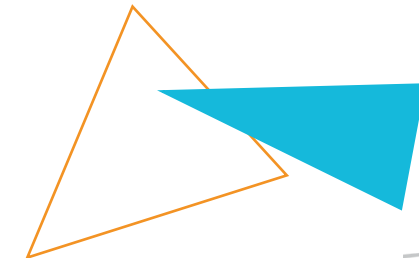
An initiative of
European Commissioners
Mariya Gabriel and Nicolas
Schmit



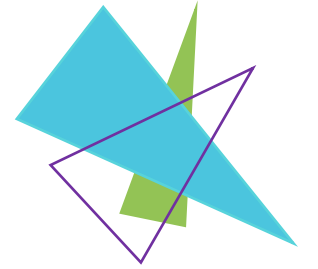
European Skills Agenda

Achieving a European
Education Area by 2025

Digital Education
Action Plan



Importance of acting now



- Policy challenges:

1. Growing number of people need to update their knowledge, skills and competences (green and digital transitions, COVID-19 recovery)

2. Growing need for education and training to be more learner-centred and accessible for all

3. Rising number of micro-credentials globally and in Europe, but:
 - value and understanding of micro-credentials not always clear
 - wide range of providers (education and training, private sector)
 - questions on quality, recognition, transparency and portability of micro-credentials between and within countries, between sectors, from one job to another



Micro-credentials: action at European level

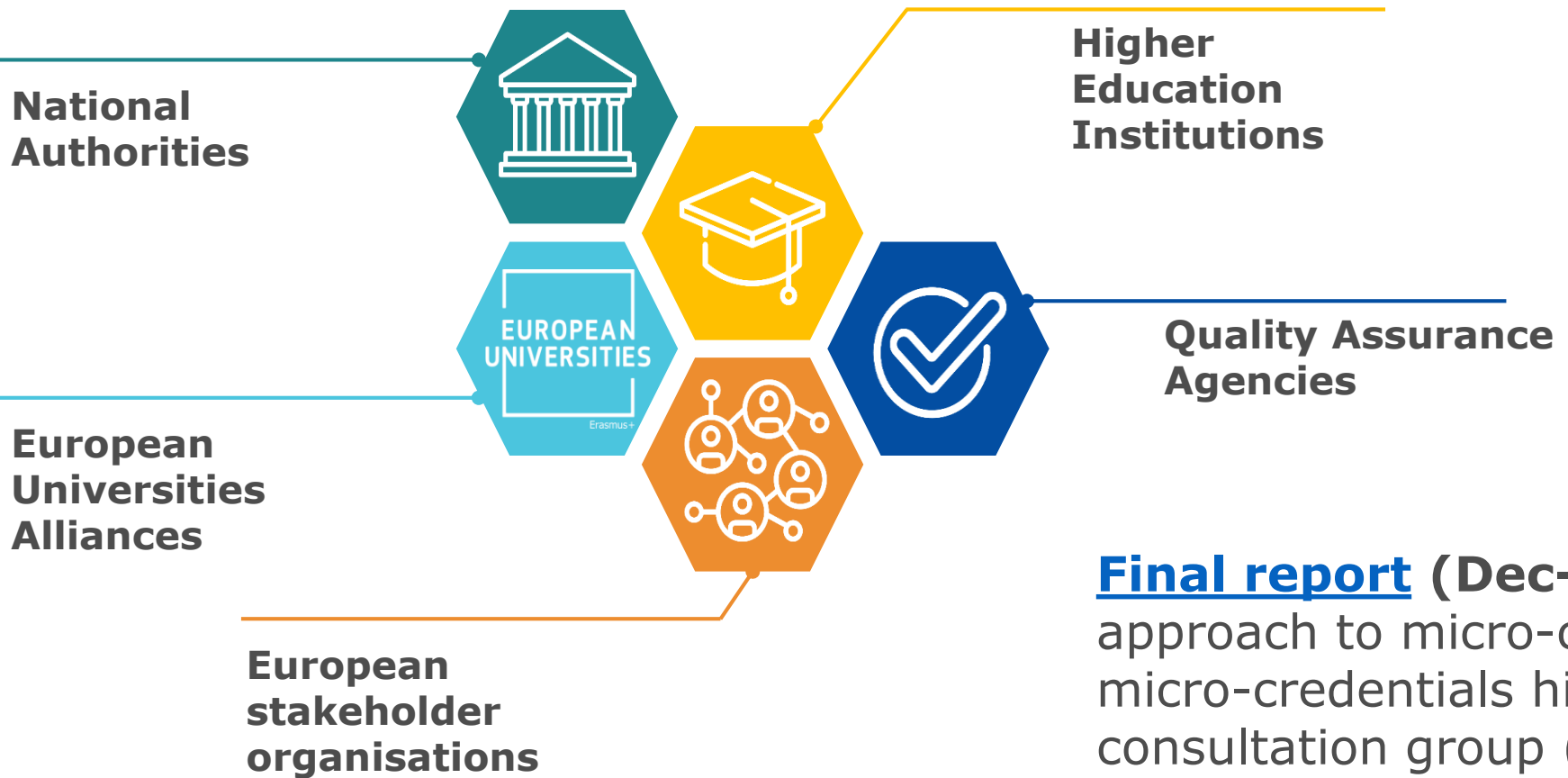
EU SKILLS AGENDA

- ✓ Develop **European standards for quality and transparency.**
- ✓ Explore the inclusion of **micro-credentials in qualifications frameworks.**
- ✓ Make it easier for individuals to **store and showcase** acquired micro-credentials through **Europass**

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA

- ✓ Common definition and common approach
- ✓ EU action will support **building trust in micro-credentials across Europe**
- ✓ Have all the necessary steps in place by 2025 for their wider use, **portability** and **recognition**

Higher Education Consultation Group



Final report (Dec-20): A European approach to micro-credentials - output of the micro-credentials higher education consultation group (and [executive summary](#))

Working definition

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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

The essence of an EU Standard

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- Identification of the **learner**
- **Title** of the micro-credential
- **Country/Region of the issuer**
- **Awarding body**
- Date of issuing
- **Learning outcomes**
- **Level** (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (EQF, QF-EHEA)
- **Notional workload** needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in **ECTS**, wherever possible)
- **Type of assessment**
- **Quality assurance of the credential** and, where relevant, of the learning content

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

- Integration / stackability options*
- Supervision and identity verification during assessment *
- Grade achieved*
- Further information*

* Optional information

Building blocks for take-up of micro-credentials

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- A common and **transparent definition**
- EU standard: 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 and Accumulation 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

Diversity of micro-credentials

Micro-credentials can be obtained in a **variety of settings** (e.g. in the class-room, on line, boot camps, in-company training, as a result of validation on non-formal and informal learning) ...

... and are issued by a **variety of providers** (e.g. universities, VET providers, private companies, chambers of commerce, skilled crafts and industry associations, NGOs)

A variety of settings for micro-credentials

Formal education and training institutions:

**Formal learning
Non-formal learning**

In-company training

Validation of skills / recognition of prior learning

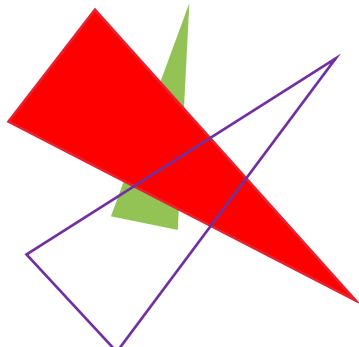
Recognition bodies

Private & sectoral providers, other non-formal training providers (eg NGOs):

Short courses leading to MC, at all levels

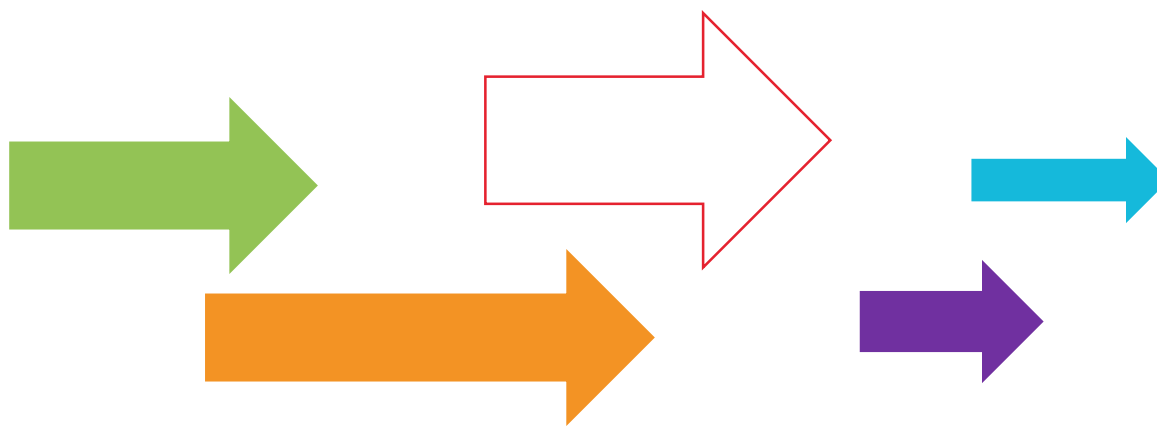
Platforms:

learning offers, credentialling



Way forward

Ongoing:
Consultations
covering
education and
training and
labour market
stakeholders



Commission
proposal for a
Council
Recommendation
in December 2021



Consultations

Open Public Consultation

Empirical evidence:
NESET, OECD,
Cedefop,
Erasmus+
projects



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Thank you!