A European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability

Why a European approach for micro-credentials?

- **Policy challenge:**
  Growing number of people need to update their knowledge, skills and competences

- Rising number of micro-credentials globally and in Europe, but:

  ➢ **value** and **understanding** of micro-credentials not always clear

  ➢ questions on **quality, transparency** and **uptake** of micro-credentials between and within countries, between sectors, from one job to another

THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS ACTION PLAN

at least **78%** of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030

at least **60%** of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030

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Objectives

Enable individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and competences they need to **thrive in a changing labour market and society** so they can benefit fully from both a socially fair recovery and just transitions to the green and digital economy (…)

Support the preparedness of providers of micro-credentials to enhance the quality, transparency and flexibility of the learning offer in order to empower people to forge personalised learning and career pathways

Foster inclusiveness and equal opportunities, contributing to the achievement of resilience, social fairness and prosperity for all (…)
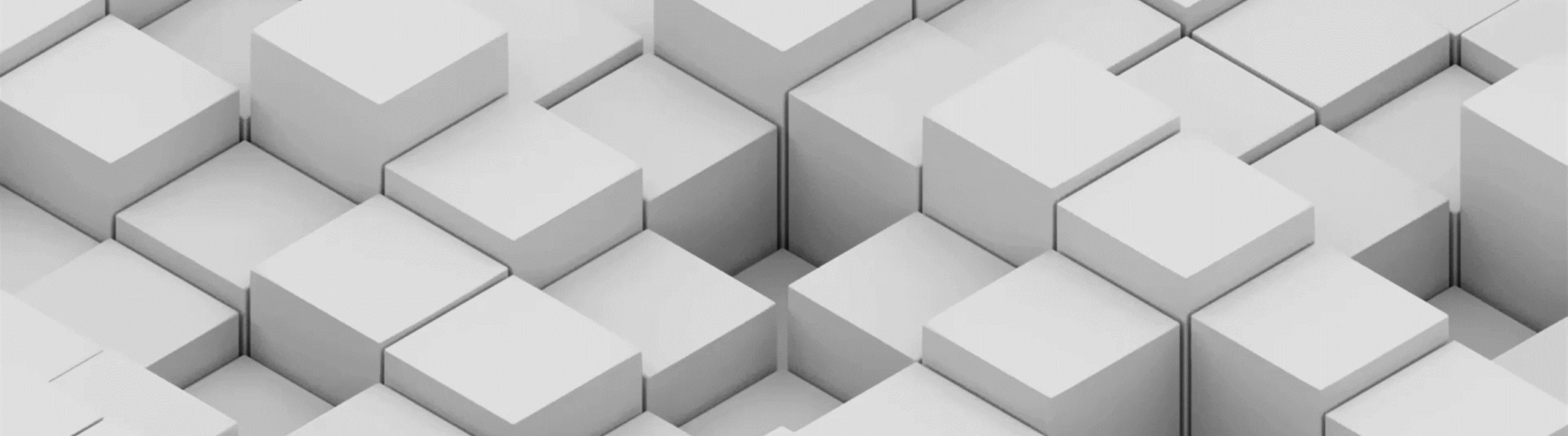

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Scope

The Recommendation establishes a common **European approach** to the ongoing and emerging provision of micro-credentials.

The Recommendation sets out a definition and guidance for the design, issuance and description of micro-credentials to facilitate their **quality, transparency and uptake**.

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The initiative establishes 'building blocks' to develop an EU approach to micro-credentials:

- A common **definition** of micro-credentials

- Union **standard elements** to describe a micro-credential

- Union **principles for design and issuance** of micro-credentials

Common **definition** of micro-credentials

Micro-credential means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria.

Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be standalone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity.

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EU Standard elements to describe a micro-credential

- Identification of the **learner**
- **Title** of the micro-credential
- **Country(ies)/Region(s) of the issuer**
- **Awarding body(ies)**
- Date of issuing
- **Learning outcomes**
- **Notional workload** needed to achieve the learning outcomes (in **ECTS**, wherever possible)
- **Level** (and cycle, if applicable) of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential (EQF, QF-EHEA), if applicable
- **Type of assessment**
- Form of participation in the learning activity
- Type of **quality assurance** used to underpin the micro-credential

Optional Information
- Prerequisites needed to enrol in the learning activity
- Supervision and identity verification during assessment
- Grade achieved
- Integration / stackability options
- Further information

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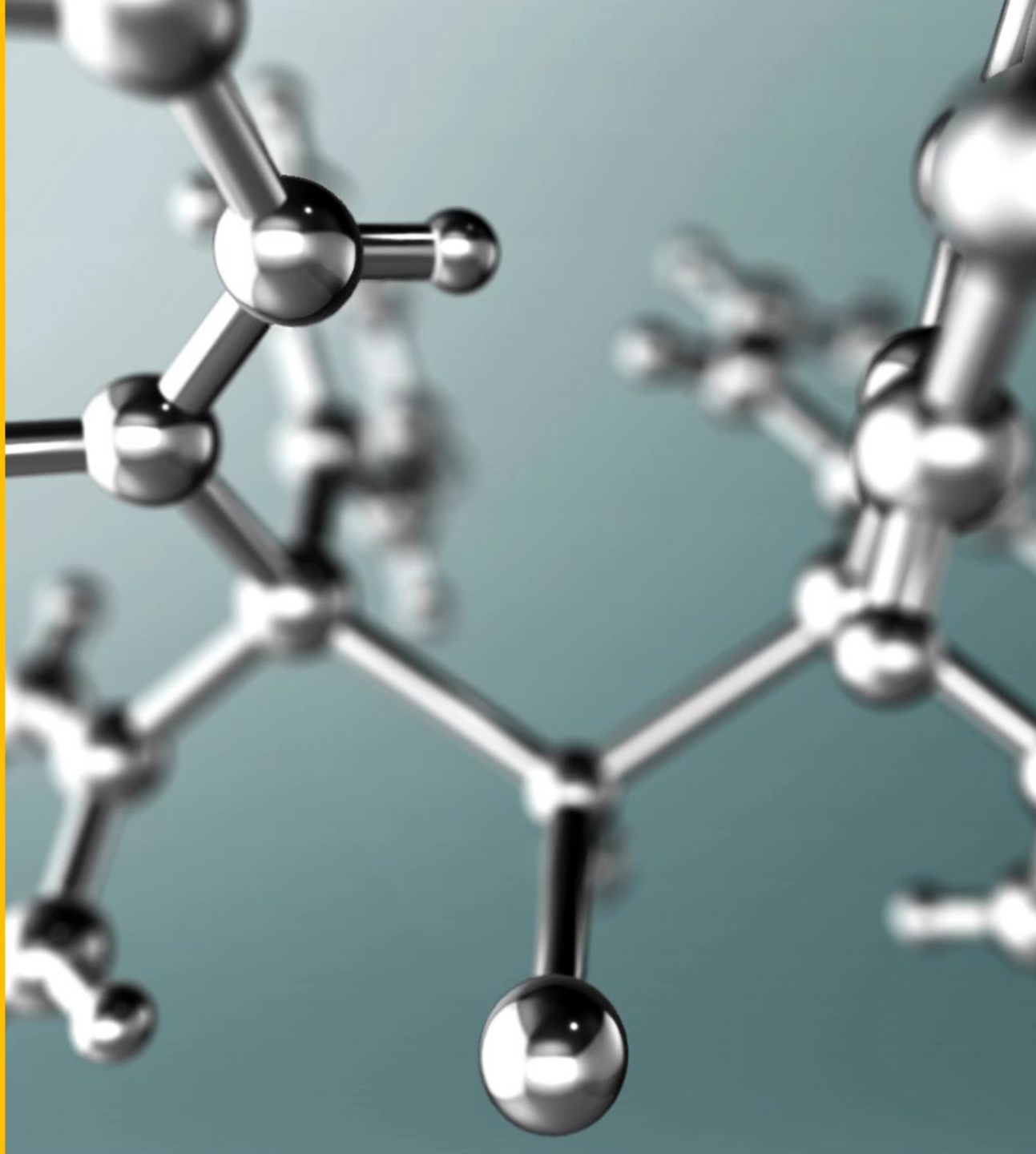
Union principles for design and issuance of micro-credentials

1. Quality

2. Transparency

3. Relevance

4. Valid assessment

5. Learning Pathways

6. Recognition

7. Portable

8. Learner Centred

9. Authentic

10. Information and Guidance

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A few words on stackability and ECTS

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Recommendations to Member States

Adopt the definition

Adopt standard elements

Adopt principles for design and issuance

Development of ecosystem for micro-credentials

Delivering on potential of micro-credentials

Implementation

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Development of an ecosystem for micro-credentials

- Apply, adapt and develop **quality assurance mechanisms** for micro-credentials issued by different types of providers

- Supporting the use of **'skills-intelligence' systems** to analyse of labour market needs and demographic changes so they can identify any needs to develop or update micro-credentials

- Encouraging providers to **publish catalogues of MCs** they offer, including, where relevant, their policy on the recognition of micro-credentials issued by other providers

- **Integrate micro-credentials in national qualifications frameworks and systems**

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Education, training and skills policies
Delivering on the potential of micro-credentials

- Encourage inclusion of MCs in **national catalogues** of education and training courses

- Use MCs to **improve access to education and training for all learners**, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

- Use MCs to **support the transition from upper secondary or VET to tertiary education** and the completion of degree programmes

- Use MCs to improve basic and advanced **digital skills**

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Commission support

Develop and adapt existing EU tools
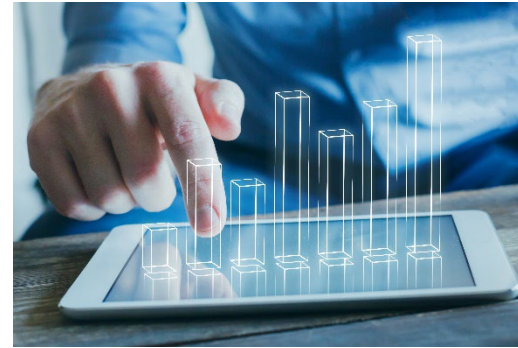
Technical implementation through Europass

Support co-operation between Member States and stakeholders

Research and Data Collection

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European Universities Initiative projects – Examples

Micro-credentials

U!REKA SHIFT plans to develop at least three micro-credentials on sustainability and digital transitions.

INVEST plans to develop a micro-credential and lifelong learning platform.

UNITA developed a framework of micro-credentials.

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Plans

Erasmus+ policy experimentation call and other priorities – 2024 Erasmus+ Work Programme

Collection of data on micro-credentials

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Thank you