

## Report on the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

*Date: 19 January 2021*

*Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, this meeting took place virtually.*



## Introduction

from Angela Lambkin, Head of Information Services, QQI

This report is an overview of the proceedings of the Eight Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this meeting was held online, on 19 January 2021. It was attended by approximately 50 delegates drawn from the wider further and higher education sector.

In line with the remit of the group of agencies the meeting's focus was on updates about European policies and initiatives which support and promote mobility. (A copy of the meeting agenda is attached as an annexe). On behalf of QQI, participants were welcomed by Angela Lambkin, Head of Information Services (including Europass and NARIC Ireland). Angela noted that the last meeting of this group was in October 2019. This meeting was originally scheduled to be held in October 2020 but it was deferred due to the pandemic. It was decided to hold the meeting in virtual format now rather than defer further in uncertain times. Angela explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share updates on EU developments in our sector. This annual meeting would identify a range of current initiatives, share emerging findings from new projects and discuss potential developments affecting learner mobility.

The meeting was divided into two sessions:

- session one was the regular feature of Reference Group meeting, providing an update on current developments:
- session two focussed primarily on two topics:
  - an external expert Anthony Camilleri, discussed the topic of Digital Credentials
  - an overview of the work of re-referencing the NQF to the EQF in 2020.

## Session 1

Chaired by Angela Lambkin

Poster

Updates

This session consisted of four short presentations.

Charis Hughes, Léargas

Charis spoke about the new Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes:

- New Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programme will be launched as part of the 2021-27 programme cycle;
- There are no major changes to programme structure in this cycle;
- The guide may be available in late Feb/early March and first deadlines may be in early April, but dates must be confirmed by the DGEAC<sup>1</sup>;
- AE/SE/VET/Y Priorities for the new Erasmus+:
  - Inclusion/Diversity – encouraging participation from those with fewer opportunities and those from harder-to-reach communities;
  - Digital Transformation – encouraging digital technology and stimulating innovation;
  - Participation in Democratic Life – promoting active citizenship including media literacy;
  - Environmental Sustainability - awareness raising and mitigation of environmental impact;
- Key Action 1 relates to mobility and Key Action 2 to partnerships; Key Action 1 mobility is extended for the first time to adult learners as well as staff and Key Action 2 includes cooperation and small-scale partnerships.
- There is a new process of accreditation for organisations that regularly run mobility projects.
- The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme will continue with a volunteering strand but will no longer have a traineeship/jobs strand.
- Next steps will follow the issue of the Programme Guide.

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<sup>1</sup> **DGEAC** (Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture)

## Gerry O'Sullivan, HEA

Gerry spoke about the outlook for the next round of the Erasmus+ programme in the HE context.

### Context

- Continued implementation of the aims of this strategy document *International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020*<sup>2</sup> is deferred to 2021 at least, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The global pandemic has brought unprecedented change in 2020 adding to the uncertainties created by Brexit.
- There is a new programme cycle – 2021-2027 - for both the Erasmus+ and Horizon programmes.

### Erasmus+ Priorities

- The priorities are to promote inclusion, digitisation, multilingualism and eco-friendly policies. The programme should support EU goals of creating a European Education Area by 2025 and should support co-operation with partner countries outside the EU

### Changes in Erasmus+

- In general, the programme is similar to previous cycles but there are some technical changes.
- There are some increases in daily rates; some shorter periods of mobility and more scope for mobility outside the EU.
- Agreements now last 26 months which gives more flexibility.
- **Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP)** are a new type of project combining short periods of physical mobility with a virtual component. They need to be supported by a partnership of institutions.
- In a new development, PhD students can participate in “normal” mobilities or short study visits.
- The government of Ireland will support NI students who wish to participate in Erasmus+. The intention is that these students will temporarily register with southern HEIs for that purpose.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education.ie/en/publications/policy-reports/international-education-strategy-for-ireland-2016-2020.pdf>

## Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE

Jennifer spoke about the role of NCGE in guidance nationally and its involvement in Euroguidance.

### NCGE

- The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is an agency of the DE and DFHERIS providing support and information on guidance policy and practice within the education and training sector.
- NCGE contributes to the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)** and a number of national initiatives have developed through this co-operation.
- One of the key findings of the DE Indecon Career Guidance Review<sup>3</sup> was that there was a need for a national strategy for career guidance which is in line with the ELGPN guidelines on policy.
- Other NCGE developments linked to European cooperation are the **Whole School Guidance Framework** and a proposal for revision and wider development of an **Adult Guidance Management System**.

### CEDEFOP

- CEDEFOP is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. NCGE liaise with CEDEFOP and have participated in the development of the **CareersNet** network.
- During 2020 CEDEFOP has published reports on Guidance in the Pandemic based on a joint international survey.

### Euroguidance

- Euroguidance is a network of centres aiming to promote educational mobility by supporting guidance practitioners throughout Europe. NCGE hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland.
- NCGE continues to engage with Euroguidance on a number of projects;
  - The Mobility Guidance Counselling online course (since 2016);
  - **Euro-Quest**<sup>4</sup> is an online resource for Transition Year students;
  - NCGE is on the EU **Europass** Advisory Group

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/01ce11-indecon-review-of-career-guidance/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://euroguidance.ie/euro-quest/leader>

## Angela Lambkin, QQI

Angela explained the work which is carried out by NARIC Ireland and described developments in Europass.

### **NARIC**

NARIC's main work is to provide advice on foreign and Irish qualifications. This advice is mainly provided through an on-line service and in 2020 there were approximately 75,000 page visits from 149 countries. In 2020 Brazil, UK and Spain were the countries with the most visitors to the site. There were approximately 100 foreign qualifications added to the NARIC database in 2020. These qualifications were spread across a range of levels. The country with the most qualifications added to the database was Bangladesh with 10 qualifications recognised.

The **Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education** was adopted by UNESCO in November 2019. A practical guide to recognition was published by UNESCO to support this initiative.

**Asia-Pacific Network of centres** [www.apnnic.net](http://www.apnnic.net) This is a new site that provides free and authoritative information on the recognition of qualifications in the region to help facilitate physical or virtual mobility of students and academics.

NARIC worked on a number of projects during the year

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>FraudS+:</b> | A project to combat fraud in education (Ireland and partners).              |
| <b>ADDS UP:</b> | Aiding Digitising of the Diploma Supplement project (Ireland and partners). |
| <b>I-AR:</b>    | Automatic Recognition across the EU and EHEA (Nuffic -Netherlands)          |
| <b>StacQ:</b>   | Stacking credits & the future of the qualification (Nuffic - Netherlands)   |

### **New Europass**

A new Europass was launched in July 2020. Europass has always been a career planning tool combining a space for personal profiles and access to information sources. The new version will retain these elements but will be greatly enhanced by the addition of new digital tools that will enable digital credentials to be stored in the personal profile. The profile can be continually updated.

There were a number of software releases in late 2020, all working towards the development of an infrastructure for the establishment of digital credentials. This resulted in the release of a new platform for Europass (v 1.3) in December 2020. (This development is discussed further below).

## Session 2

Chaired by Roisin Doherty, SOLAS

Focus

On

Europe

Anthony F. Camilleri, Senior Partner,  
Knowledge Innovation Centre

Anthony Camilleri is a Senior Partner in the Knowledge Innovation Centre based in Malta. Anthony spoke about micro-credentials and the plans to introduce a European approach to these credentials. He went on to discuss the work in progress of establishing a Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI).

### **Micro-Credentials**

There are a number of building blocks needed to establish a framework of micro-credentials. These commence with definitions and standards and include QA elements, credit systems and solutions for practical issues of storage and portability.

(Note – QQI have given the following definition in a recent document<sup>5</sup> – “*Micro-credentials are units of assessment that are smaller than traditional programmes of learning such as degrees and diplomas.*”).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie//News/Pages/Putting-Microcredentials-on-the-Agenda.aspx>

### **European Approach to Micro-credentials**

An EU consultation group published a report on a European approach to micro-credentials<sup>6</sup> in December 2020.

A road map has been established to adopt a common European approach by 2024.

There are many strands to this plan but a key milestone is set for December 2021 when there will be a Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.

### **Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI).**

The creation of a Europass Digital Credential Infrastructure is seen as being central to the EU's Skills Agenda.

In principle a Europass Digital Credential will contain;

- Information on the credential itself, the issuer, the subject (learner),
- claims relating to activities (hours etc), achievements (outcomes, assessments), entitlements (eg registration), attestations (recognitions) and
- an e-seal (verification of authenticity).

There will be a number of elements making up the infrastructure;

- Standards will build on the Europass learning model,
- software to establish and support the Digital Credential,
- service provision for support and maintenance and
- authentication infrastructure

Many of the elements above are integrated in the new Europass platform<sup>7</sup>.

The development of the authentication infrastructure will be informed by the EU regulation known as eIDAS<sup>8</sup>.

There is currently a pilot programme being undertaken by 18 member states to create an EDCI.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/european-approach-micro-credentials-higher-education-consultation-group-output-final-report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Europass.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> **eIDAS** (electronic IDentification, Authentication and trust Services) is an EU regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the European Single Market (EU Regulation 910/2014).



## Beata Sokolowska, QQI

The main topic of Beata's presentation was the work undertaken to re-reference the NFQ to the EQF during 2020. Beata also gave updates on other areas of work.

### **NFQ Re-referencing to EQF**

- Beata traced the development of the NFQ from 2003. There were milestones achieved in 2006 and 2009 with the self-certification of compatibility with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and the referencing of the Irish NFQ to the European EQF.
- A further milestone was achieved in 2012 (establishment of QQI). The [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#) reaffirms the statutory basis of the NFQ and entrusts maintenance, further development and review of the NFQ to QQI.

The passing of the 2019 Amendment Act following a 2018 policy impact assessment of the NFQ.

- In 2020, Ireland submitted a one single report to re-reference the NFQ to EQF and to re-confirm the compatibility of the NFQ with the EQ-EHEA.
- This exercise was undertaken not only to fulfil commitments to the EU council but also to promote transparency and trust in qualifications gained in Ireland.
- The work commenced in January 2020. The report was presented to the EQF-AG in November 2020, where it was well received and endorsed. The formal response on behalf of the EQF AG stated *"The report was warmly welcomed by the EQF Advisory Group and can serve as a benchmark for policy-learning."*
- The re-referencing report can be accessed [here](#).

### **NQF Fan Diagram**

- The relationship between the NQF and the EQF and EQ-EHEA can be illustrated in a "European" version of the NFQ fan diagram.
- The fan diagram on the website is to be updated to reflect recent developments.

### **Five Countries Group**

- The "Five Countries Group" refers to the UK and Ireland Qualifications Framework Group which meets annually. The group met in Belfast in January 2020 and most recently (virtually) in January 2021.
- The group have previously published a guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland which is updated periodically.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Cross%20Boundaries%202019.pdf>

### **NQF – IRQ**

- QQI is currently populating an [Irish Register of Qualifications](#) (IRQ) launched in 2020.
- This is a register of the qualifications that are recognised within the NFQ and the courses associated with them.

### **TAICEP Conference 2020**

- The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals (TAICEP) is an international professional association supporting and serving the profession of international credential evaluation. The association's conference in 2020 was held virtually.
- The conference provided QQI with an opportunity to present the outputs of international collaborative work that involved using the EQF as a translation device to compare qualifications frameworks and qualifications between Ireland and Hong Kong<sup>10</sup>, and Ireland and New Zealand.<sup>11</sup>

Roisin Doherty thanked all the speakers for their presentations. It was agreed that most questions had been answered during the presentation and Roisin handed over to Angela. Angela invited Barbara Kelly to offer some closing remarks.

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<sup>10</sup>[https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/36563-IRELAND-HONG%20KONG%20Booklet\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/36563-IRELAND-HONG%20KONG%20Booklet_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>11</sup><https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/Comparing-Qualifications-in-Ireland-and-New-Zealand--New-Guide-Released.aspx>

## Q & A/ Panel Discussion

Barbara Kelly, Director of Qualifications, QQI

Barbara Kelly thanked the presenters for their contributions, responded to some of the issues raised and addressed some questions that had been asked earlier.

One of the themes that emerged from the presentations was that of globalisation. The pandemic and all that has arisen from it has reinforced more than ever the benefits of international communication and co-operation. The demands of the pandemic have forced us all to innovate and collaborate at an unprecedented level. The preparation for Brexit in Ireland may have helped to create a mindset better equipped to deal with disruption and change.

Another theme that emerged was the need to devise strategies and to plan our way through disruption. In the coming year QQI will be crafting a new strategic plan to replace the current plan which expires in 2021.

Barbara commented on a number of the projects discussed during the day:

- The Euro-Quest project was a project that literally changed lives of young people in transition year.
- While Europass is a long-established concept the emergence of the digital credential model promises to be a game changer and should accelerate the take up of Europass significantly. QQI will be embracing the move towards digital credentials in all its areas of operation.
- Barbara agreed with Angela who had commented that the re-referencing of the NFQ to the EQF was a significant landmark for QQI. The report had been favourably received in Europe and the input of three external experts had helped to achieve that outcome.
- The work of the Five Countries group is critical to the work of QQI and a meeting of the group is to be held in the near future. The mobility between UK/Ireland is vital to all concerned and the work will continue post Brexit.
- QQI will continue to co-operate with the DE in working with UNESCO on the global recognition of qualifications. Barbara agreed with Angela who had stated that the agreements with Hong Kong and New Zealand were evidence of the global reach of Irish qualifications.
- QQI will be involved in the development of micro credentials. QQI have always, since the establishment of the framework, dealt with “small” qualifications but the digital aspect is a new and welcome development.

Barbara noted that there were two QQI reports published during the year

- A green paper on the Qualification system<sup>12</sup>
- An evaluation of the impact of COVID 19 on the FET and HE sectors<sup>13</sup>

There were significant changes to the HE environment during the year. There were two new universities and more bodies with direct awarding powers.

The work associated with RPL is continues and QQI is working with the RPL Practitioners' Network. [RPL Practitioner Network Ireland – Recognition of Prior Learning \(rpl-ireland.ie\)](https://www.rpl-ireland.ie/)

As noted earlier in the day there was new legislation enacted in 2019. Some of the provisions of the legislation have been enacted while others have not. The International Education Mark has not yet been implemented but is being addressed currently.

The pandemic has brought changes in the way we all work, and it remains to be seen how work practices will change in the future. It seems unlikely we will go back to precisely where we were.

Barbara closed the meeting by thanking all the speakers and participants. She thanked Angela and her team for organising the event under the current difficult circumstances and she looked forward to meeting everybody face-to-face at the next meeting.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/News/Pages/New-Green-Paper-on-Qualifications.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> The Impact of COVID-19 Modifications to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Further Education and Training and Higher Education

## Speakers



**Angela Lambkin, Head of Information Services, Qualifications Directorate, Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI)**

Angela's role in QQI includes the management and provision of information services to learners and stakeholders through Qualifax - the National Learners Database, the ENIC-NARIC Ireland centre for academic recognition of foreign qualifications and the national EUROPASS centre for promotion of mobility within the EU.



**Charis Hughes, Communications Manager (Acting), Léargas Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education, VET and Youth**

Charis is the acting Communications Manager and Impact Research Officer at Léargas, the National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.



**Gerry O'Sullivan, Head of International Education, Higher Education Authority (HEA)**

Gerry O'Sullivan is Head of International Education at the Higher Education Authority in Dublin – the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education and research in *Ireland*. Mr. O'Sullivan has served the Authority in many areas including as Head of Communications for the organisation. The work of the International Section of the HEA embraces the Erasmus+ Programme; the Government of Ireland International Scholarships scheme, the Government of Ireland Academic Staff Mobility Programme and a number of other bilateral activities.



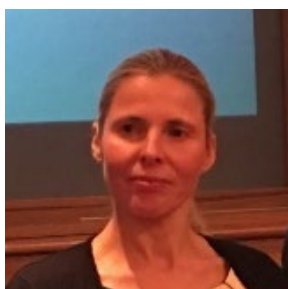
**Jennifer McKenzie, Director at National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)**

Ms. McKenzie is an experienced Director with a demonstrated history of working in the management and development of guidance policy and practice management. She is skilled in Guidance policy development at national and EU level, Career Development, Guidance Counselling, Public Speaking, Facilitation, and Psychology. She is a member of the Cedefop CareersNet Advisory and Steering Group and a member of the Europass Advisory Group to the EU Commission.



**Roisin Doherty, Director Further Education and Active Inclusion, SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna)**

Ms. Doherty is a senior leader within primary, post primary and Further Education and Training systems with a proven track record of FE strategy formulation and FE funding systems. She has 25+years experience of developing integrated learning systems delivered through strategic oversight frameworks with focus on supporting the whole of Government approach to Inclusion.



**Beata Sokolowska, EQF, QQI**

Dr. Beata Sokolowska is a Project Officer at QQI with responsibility for the European Qualifications Framework National Contact Point in Ireland and led the QQI and HKQS project. She also recently was involved in the completion of the NFQ 2020 Re-referencing report including consultation and research. Beata has previously worked as a credential evaluator for NARIC Ireland.



**Anthony Camilleri, Senior Partner, Knowledge Innovation Centre**

Anthony works in areas linked to Quality Assurance, Open Learning and Education Management. He is also secretary of the International Standard Organisation PC288/WG1 which is drafting a standard for Quality Management of Educational Organisations. He was previously engaged with EFQUEL in the position of Quality Services Manager.



**QQI**

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Quality and Qualifications Ireland



**Erasmus+**



**Barbara Kelly, Director of Qualifications at Quality and Qualifications, Ireland (QQI)**

**Barbara is a Director at QQI** with longstanding experience in the education and training sector at senior management level.



**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# *8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science*

## Draft Agenda

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Venue: Online

09:30 Welcome

### Session 1 - Poster Updates

- *Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education, VET and Youth*, Charis Hughes, Léargas
- *Higher Education*, Gerry O'Sullivan, HEA
- *Euroguidance, and Guidance provision for Learning Opportunities*, Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE
- *Europass & NARIC*, Angela Lambkin, QQI

10:45 Comfort Break

11:00 Focus on Europe

Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director Further Education and Training Learner Support, SOLAS

- *Digital Credentials, Europass and qualifications* Anthony Camilleri, Senior Partner, Knowledge Innovation Centre
- *European Qualifications Framework*, Beata Sokolowska, QQI

12:00 Q & A/ Panel Discussion

Barbara Kelly, Director of Qualifications, QQI

Feedback & Close

Secretary: Kevin Devine

Online Registration available [here](#)  
until 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
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Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# Welcome



## 8th Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the DFHERIS

Please mute microphones and camera and use the chat function for  
questions and comments.

Thank you for your cooperation.



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



European  
Qualifications  
Framework



Co-funded by the  
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of the European Union

# Agenda



## Poster updates

*Erasmus+ Adult Education, School Education, VET and Youth, Charis Hughes, Léargas  
Higher Education, Gerry O'Sullivan, HEA*

*Euroguidance, and Guidance provision for Learning Opportunities, Jennifer McKenzie,  
NCGE*

*Europass & NARIC, Angela Lambkin, QQI*

**10:45**     *Comfort break*

## Focus on Europe

**Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director Further Education and Training Learner Support,  
SOLAS**

*Digital Credentials, Europass and qualifications, Anthony Camilleri, Senior Partner,  
Knowledge Innovation Centre*

*European Qualifications Framework, Beata Sokolowska, QQI*

**12.00**     *Q & A/ Panel Discussion*

**Barbara Kelly, Director of Qualifications, QQI**

***Feedback & Close***

# Poster updates

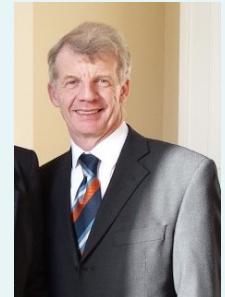


*Erasmus+ Adult Education,  
School Education, VET and  
Youth*

**Charis Hughes, Léargas**



*Higher Education,  
Gerry O'Sullivan, HEA*

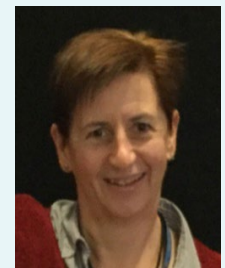


*Euroguidance, and Guidance  
provision for Learning  
Opportunities,*

**Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE**



*Europass & NARIC, Angela  
Lambkin, QQI*





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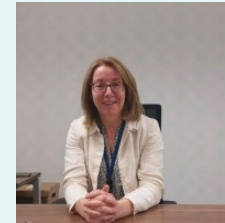
**Thank you for your cooperation.**



# Focus on Europe



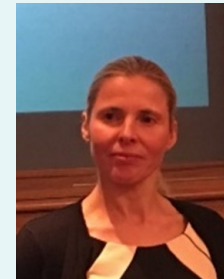
**Chair: Roisin Doherty, Director Further Education and Training Learner Support, SOLAS**



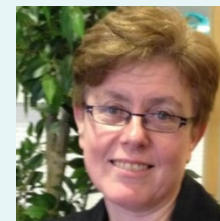
*Digital Credentials, Europass and qualifications,*  
**Anthony Camilleri, Senior Partner,  
Knowledge Innovation Centre**



*European Qualifications Framework,*  
**Beata Sokolowska, QQI**



**Director of Qualifications, QQI,  
Barbara Kelly**





**EU Reference Group, Tuesday 19 January 2020**  
**Charis Hughes, Communications Manager**

# 2021-2027 Programme Cycle

**December 2020:**

Multiannual Financial Framework  
and legal basis agreed

Erasmus+

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_2317](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2317)

European Solidarity Corps

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_2385](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2385)



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# Erasmus+ 2021-2027

Programme name, basic structure  
and sectors retained

- Adult Education
- Higher Education (managed by HEA)
- School Education
- Vocational Training and Education
- Youth

## Expected Programme Timeline

Guide for NAs: February

Programme Guide: Late Feb/early March

First programme deadlines: Early April



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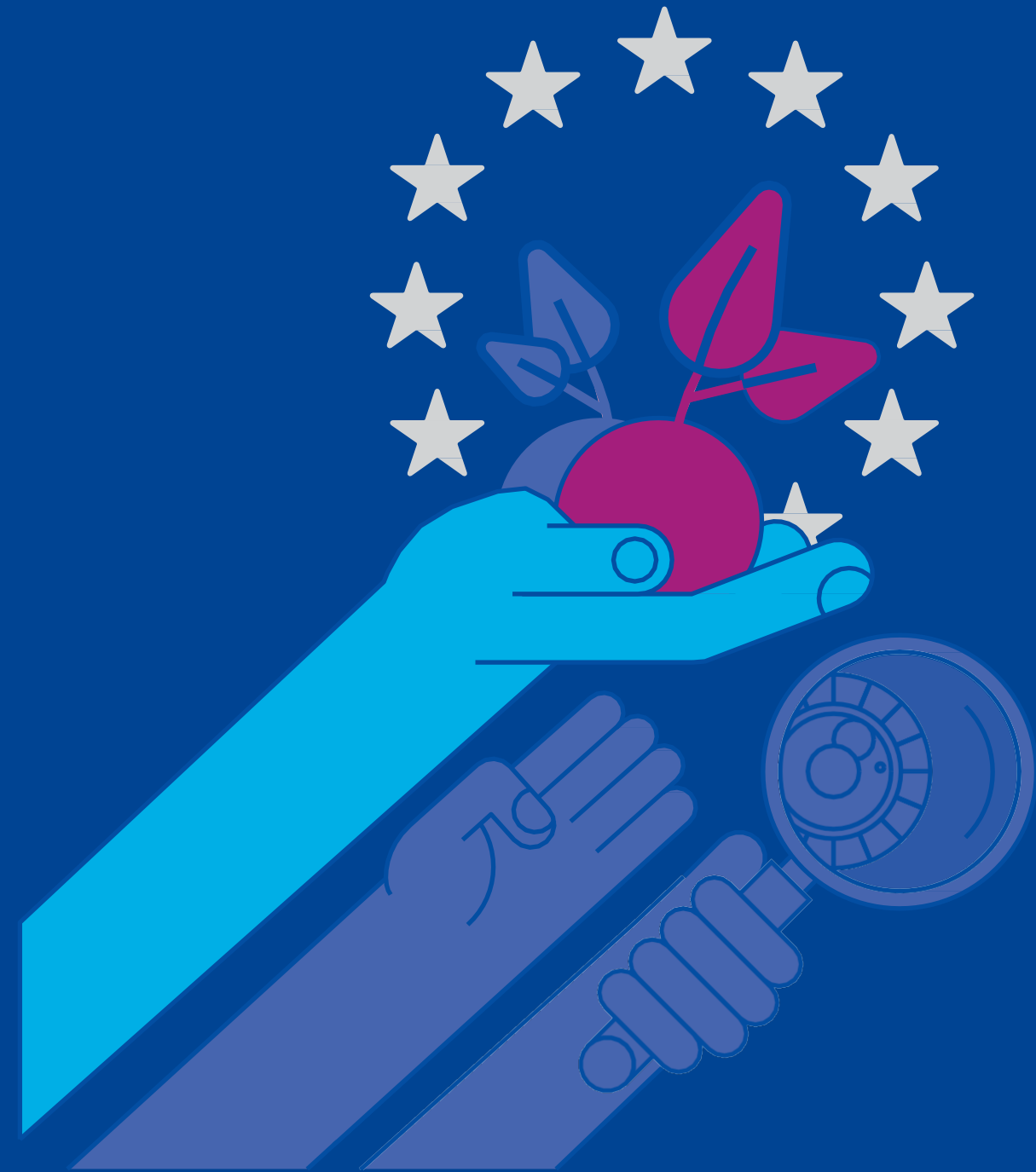


# European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027

## National and International Volunteering

### Changes:

- Includes a new Humanitarian Aid strand, to be managed centrally by EACEA
- Traineeships and Jobs strands discontinued
- ESC will adopt the horizontal priorities of Inclusion, Sustainability, and Digital Readiness
- Possible additional priorities: participation, health
- New tagline: "The Power of Together"



# Erasmus+ Changes

- Adult Education will now include mobility for learners as well as for staff
- Accreditation system

## Horizontal priorities:

- Inclusion
- Environmental Sustainability (Green Erasmus)
- Digital Readiness
- Participation in Democratic life



# Priorities

## Inclusion and diversity



- Equal opportunities and access of underrepresented organisations and participants
- Better outreach of participants with fewer opportunities and disadvantaged
- Dismantling barriers related to e.g.: disabilities, socio-economic status, discrimination, geographical location



## Digital transformations



- Meaningful contribution by stimulating innovation and bridging Europe's knowledge, skills and competences gap
- Take up of digital technologies and of innovative and open pedagogies in education, training, youth and sport



# Priorities

## Participation in democratic life

- Knowledge and awareness about European matters
- Active citizenship and ethics in lifelong learning
- Social and intercultural competences, critical thinking and media literacy



## Environmental sustainability and climate goals

- Awareness-raising about environmental and climate-change challenges
- Competences in various environmental sustainability-relevant sectors
- Development of green sectorial skills strategies and methodologies, as well as future-oriented curricula that better meet the needs of individuals



# Key Action 1 – Mobility

How to  
join?

**Short-term projects**

**Erasmus accreditation**

Individual organisations

Mobility consortium  
coordinators

**Join without an application**

Join a mobility consortium

Host Erasmus participants



# Erasmus Accreditation

- A form of Erasmus+ ‘membership’
- New call every year (first was 2020)

Accredited organisations can:

- Apply for funding each year
- Use a shorter application form and ‘fast-track’ assessment process
- Apply for higher amounts and more participants than non-accredited organisations



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<https://www.leargas.ie/news/erasmus-accreditation/>

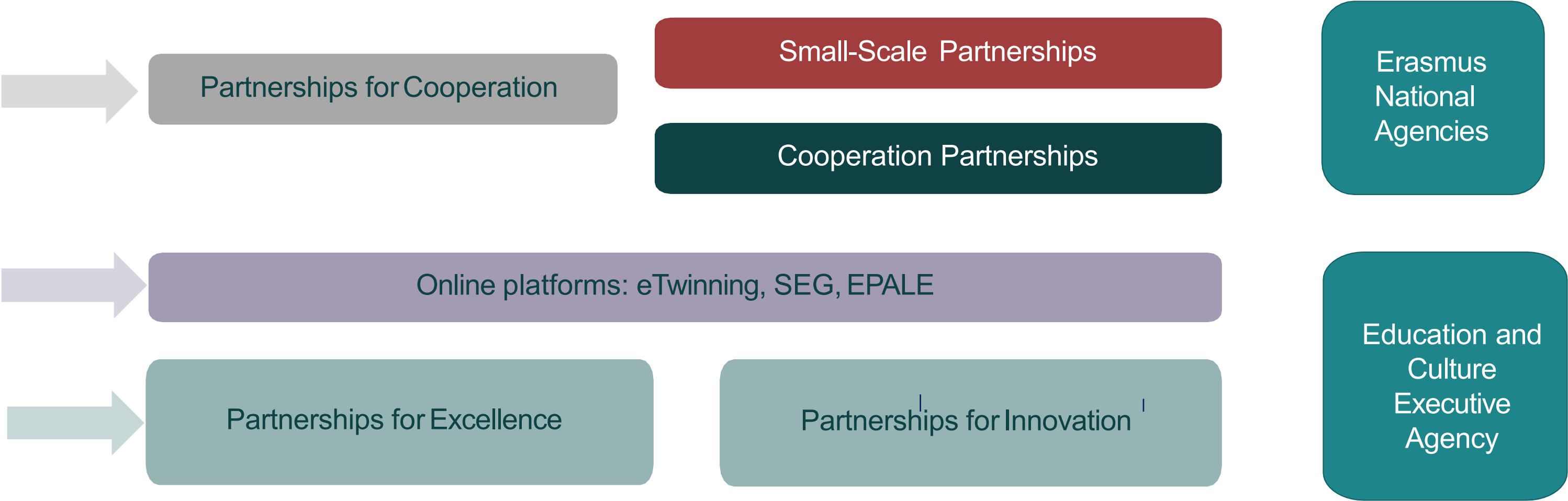
# Short-Term Projects

**Purpose:** Entry point for a first project, or for occasional small-scale participation

- Project duration: 6-18 months
- Smaller scope (e.g. limited number of participants and/or number of projects over multiple years)
- Priority for newcomers to the action
- Not available to accredited organisations
- Possibility for two rounds of applications per year



# Key Action 2 – Partnerships





# Next Steps and More Information

- Leargas.ie and Léargas logo - relaunch
- Erasmusplus.ie
- Programme launch – May?
- Sign up to our newsletter
- Follow us on socials @leargas
- Follow programme accounts  
@EUErasmusPlus, @EuropeanYouthEU



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# GET IN TOUCH



chughes@leargas.ie



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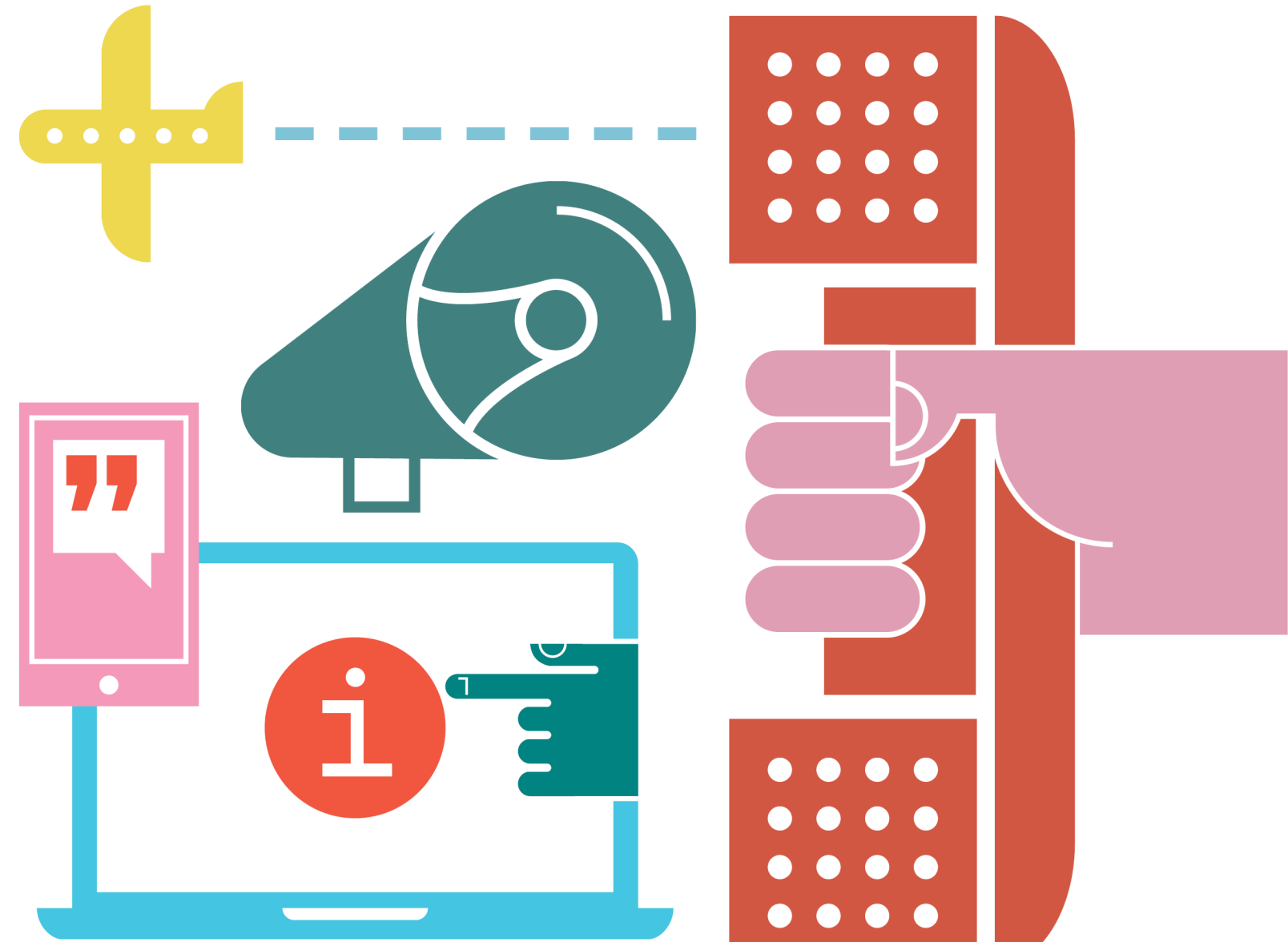
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**Erasmus+ 2021-2027**

**Gerry O'Sullivan  
Erasmus+ National Agency  
Higher Education Authority**

**18 January 2021**

**EU Reference Group**

# Internationalisation Definitions

Knight (2008): “The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education.”

De Wit (2015) “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society”.

# Global Fitness Programme (Internationalisation of Higher Education (2020)

A goal of universities is to foster 'global fitness' (technically, intercultural competence) among staff and students

A move from a focus on compositional or demographic-type elements to a focus on mixing and interaction among people leading to intercultural interaction, personal growth, reflection, service to society, interculturally competent staff and students

# National and European Policy Context

- International Education Strategy (2016-2020), “Irish Educated, Globally Connected”. (Now deferred at the earliest to 2021)
- Erasmus+ Programme (2021-2027 – awaiting official publication of call)
- Horizon 2020 Programme (awaiting official call 2021-27 of Horizon Europe €96bn)
- Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019
- System Performance Framework
- International Education Mark – Code of Practice
- Foreign Language Strategy
- Individual HEI International Education Strategies
- Brexit
- Global Health

# Opportunities Under Erasmus+ 2021-2027 (Subject to confirmation)

## Priority Themes

### 1. European Education Area

Supporting the work towards a European Education Area (EEA) by 2025 – greater collaboration

### 2. Inclusion

More equitable participation in the programme i.e. with increased beneficiaries from under-represented socio-economic groups; learners/staff with disabilities; migrants; participants from remote areas and others with fewer opportunities.

### 3. Digitisation

To support EU investments in digital skills including the up-take of innovative digital learning.

## 4. Green Erasmus

The programme should be eco-friendly and should incorporate green practices in all facets

## 5. Multilingualism

The EU has set the goal that every citizen should have the opportunity to acquire at least two foreign languages from an early age

## 6. International Dimension

This involves EU co-operation with Partner Countries and includes building an EU contribution to human and institutional development in third countries



# New Programme (2021-2027)

- 5,000 ECHE holders – new American College Dublin and Galway Business School
- Monthly student support of €300 to €400 depending on destination plus an additional €180 for SUSI recipients
- SUSI adjacent grant holders move to non-adjacent rates
- Additional support for students/staff with a disability
- Student can undertake a study (2-12 months) or traineeship (2-12 months) experience or both
- Studies/work can be in the host country language or in english
- Staff – outbound and inbound from 2 days to 2 months

## Students/Staff:

- ① Agreements – 26 months starting 1 June (ends on 31 August)
- ② HEI receives €400 per student or staff member as organisational support
- ③ HEI can use up to 20% of their intra-European funds to send students and/or staff to other parts of the world. In addition to a travel grant (up to a maximum of €1,500 for both students and staff, inbound and outbound), students from Ireland going to a Partner Country will receive €700 per month. In justified cases, HEIs will also be able to fund incoming students and staff mobility from Partner Countries, if necessary for the organisation of outgoing mobility. A student coming from a Partner Country to Ireland will receive €850 per month. The per diem for a staff member going in either direction will be €180. Currently the EC plan is to “fund outgoing mobility of students and staff from the HEIs located in Programme Countries to Partner Countries.”.
- ④ From 2022, the KA107 (171) Action - International Credit Mobility will return
- ⑤ “Green” top up of €100 if you can use boat, bus etc.

## Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) – Application to the National Agency at HEA

- Short-term physical mobility abroad (5 up to 30 days) combined with a compulsory virtual component of collaborative learning (no duration specified. This can be decided by the group of HEIs in the collaboration).
- At least three ECHE holders from at least three Programme Countries. At least two HEIs from two other Programme Countries have to be involved in the organisation of the blended intensive programme. In addition, any other HEI or organisation located in a Programme or Partner Country may participate.”
- A BIP must award a minimum of 3 ECTS.
- BIPs can be open to students and staff from higher education institutions outside the partnership including from Partner Countries.
- The activity can take place at the receiving HEI (i.e. the applicant HEI) or in any venue in a Programme or Partner Country.

## Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) – Application to the National Agency at HEA

- The minimum number of participants (excluding those tasked with delivering the IP) is 15.
- A daily rate of €70 for the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of activity will be paid dropping to €50 per day from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> day of activity. One travel day before and after the activity may also be covered by the individual support. Depending on the budget available, the NA may top-up support for students with fewer mobility opportunities by €100 for the period 5-14 days and by €150 for 15-30 days.
- The **co-ordinating HEI** will receive organisational support to cover the costs linked to the organisation of the BIP. This will be at the rate of €500 per participant with a minimum of 15 participants and a maximum grant of €10,000.

## PhD study visits and/or traineeships – Application to NA at HEA

- A PhD student may undertake a study visit from 5 to 30 days. They may also participate in the “normal” duration periods for study visits and traineeships – minimum duration 2 months.
- A daily rate of €70 for the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of activity will be paid dropping to €50 per day from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> day of activity. Depending on the budget available, the NA may top-up support for students with fewer mobility opportunities by €100 for the period 5-14 days and by €150 for 15-30 days.

# Government of Ireland Support for Erasmus+ students in Northern Ireland

- Originally a Government decision in 2019 in the event of a 'no deal' exit of the UK
- Details being worked out but the plan is to temporarily register NI students in Southern HEIs for the purpose of facilitating their Erasmus mobilities
- Budget of €2.1m

Go raibh míle maith agaibh - Thank You

[www.eurireland.ie](http://www.eurireland.ie)

[erasmus@hea.ie](mailto:erasmus@hea.ie)



Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas  
National Centre for Guidance in Education

# NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland

and Guidance provision for Learning Opportunities

Jennifer McKenzie

Director

National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education



# EUROPE: INFORMS GUIDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE IN IRELAND



Lárionad Náisiúnta *um* Threoir *san* Oideachas  
National Centre *for* Guidance *in* Education



# Guidance Provision for Learning Opportunities

Policy informs Guidance Practice and Provision

- \* Introduce NCGE
- \* Our role to support EU Guidance Policy and Practice
- \* Our role nationally
- \* Introduce EUROGUIDANCE Ireland
- \* Current Euroguidance Projects
- \* Supporting





- \* Agency of the Department of Education (DE) and Dept of Further & Higher Education, research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
- \* Representative for Ireland in EU

## ACTIVITIES

- inform and support the development of DE/DFHERIS lifelong guidance policy in the Education and Training Sector
- develop and support quality guidance practice in post primary schools and the FET sector
- promote and support a national and EU focus to guidance policy provision and practice





# EU Policy – ELGPN

## European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

[www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)

- \* **Funded by EU Commission 2007-2015**
- \* **30 Member countries across EU Member States**
- \* **NCGE representative for Ireland**
- \* **NCGE - Lead and co-lead on Quality Assurance working groups**
- \* **NCGE - Active participant in Career Management Skills Group**
- \* **Various publications – Guidelines for Policy & Practice**
- \* **EU wide and National Developments based on outcomes in ELGPN**



Erasmus+



# EU Policy – ELGPN – impact in Ireland



## National Developments based on outcomes in ELGPN

### DE Indecon Career Guidance Review

- \* “The requirement for *a national strategy for career guidance* was a key theme arising from Indecon’s stakeholder forum and from various submissions to the review process. This is aligned with the ELGPN (...) Guidelines for Policies and Systems for Lifelong Guidance which indicated the merits of reviewing and developing national policies in this area
- \* **The proposed code of practice for integrated guidance services in FET** should be aligned with the Guidance for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance from the ..ELGPN. A key objective should be to provide a consistent level of career guidance regardless of location or type of FET programme

### NCGE

- \* NCGE – **Whole School Guidance Framework** = guidance planning and guidance learning outcomes in schools

### DFHERIS / SOLAS / NCGE

- \* Evidence / Data Gathering in Guidance – proposal for revision and wider development of **Adult Guidance Management System** [www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)

# EU Policy – ELGPN – impact in Ireland



[Cedefop CareersNet](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/careersnet)

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/careersnet>

**Note on lifelong guidance and the COVID-19 pandemic: Responses from Cedefop's CareersNet 28/04/2020**

[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2020\\_05\\_27\\_llg\\_and\\_pandemic\\_cnet\\_b.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2020_05_27_llg_and_pandemic_cnet_b.pdf)

**Career guidance policy and practice in the pandemic Results of a joint international survey**

[4193\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

# EU Policy - CEDEFOP

## European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

- \* CEDEFOP supports development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation
- \* The agency assists the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners to develop the right European VET policies.
- \* Cedefop: *'helping develop the right policies to provide the right skills'*
- \* **NCGE Director - member of CareersNet network, set up to advise CEDEFOP guidance policy**
- \* **Career Guidance Policy and Practice in the Pandemic**  
**Results of a joint international survey**





# Euroguidance



 euro | guidance  
European Network to Support  
Guidance and Counselling

- Euroguidance is a network of centres linking together the Careers Guidance systems in Europe – funded by the EU Commission
  - Promotes educational mobility, helping *guidance counsellors and practitioners* to understand and promote the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe
  - There are 64 Euroguidance centres across 35 EU and EEA member countries
- \* NCGE hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland
  - \* Responds to individual queries from general public
  - \* Links to EUROPASS, EURES, EURODESK

# Euroguidance Ireland



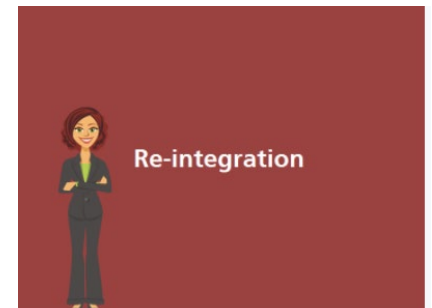
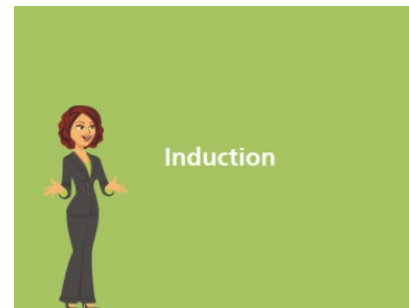
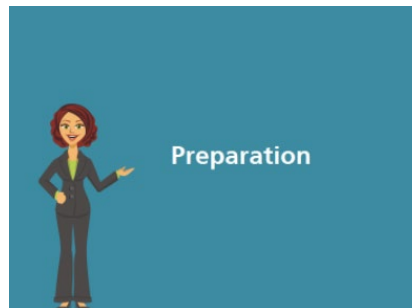
- Collects, processes and disseminates information on studying and training opportunities in the EU and EEA member states
- Disseminates information on European initiatives and programmes in education training and mobility and highlights examples of innovative working methods and good practice in the field of lifelong guidance
- Supports national and international networking of guidance counsellors by organising seminars and study visits
- Supports and develops competences of Guidance Counsellors in *mobility guidance* and *European Dimension in guidance*
- Promotes cooperation among different stakeholders in guidance and education – Euroguidance.eu and EURES colleagues
- Represents Ireland at Euroguidance meetings in Europe
- Coordinates the provision of guidance to European Schools throughout the EU

# Mobility Guidance Counselling



## The Mobility Guidance Counselling online course (since 2016)

- an online professional development course to provide guidance counsellors with skills and competences necessary to support students in their quest to study abroad
- developed in collaboration with Euroguidance Sweden
- participants requested additional resources for students
- Euro-Quest has been developed as a result of this feedback



# Euro-Quest



Euro-Quest is an online resource for Transition Year students:

An inter-curricular collection of websites, activities and assignments

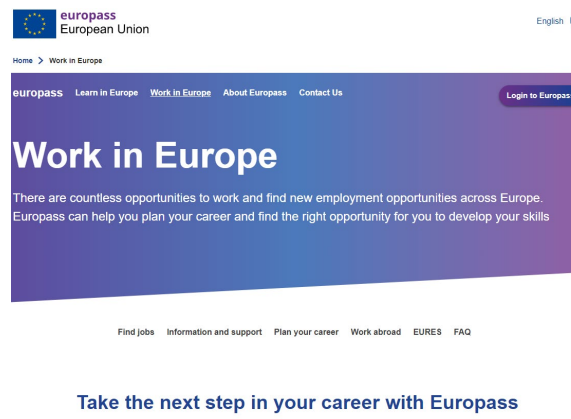
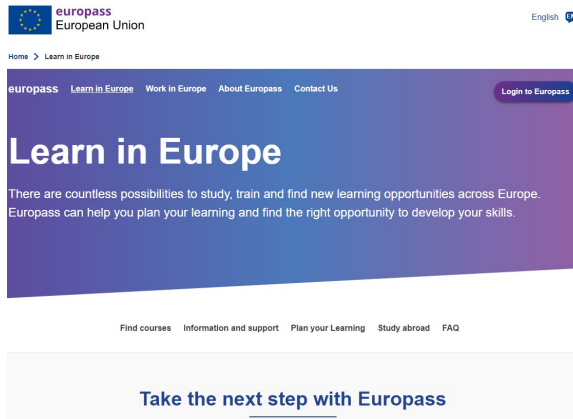
- Reflects the Whole School Guidance approach – Guidance Counsellor and Transition Year Coordinator
- Available to all schools since 2019 following pilot in 15 schools nationally
- Raising students' awareness of mobility in education and employment in Europe
- Providing students with the *motivation and information, tools and skills to research opportunities to study and work abroad*



# Learning & Work Opportunities in Ireland



## EUROPASS – Development of Learning & Work Opportunities Sections



**Working with Euroguidance colleagues across Euroguidance Network to share information on learning / work opportunities**

**NCGE/ Euroguidance Ireland – on the EU Europass Advisory Group**



**If you have any queries about learning  
opportunities across the EU  
Contact us!**

**[euroguidance@ncge.ie](mailto:euroguidance@ncge.ie)**



**[www.ncge.ie/guidance-europe](http://www.ncge.ie/guidance-europe)**

**[www.euroguidance.ie](http://www.euroguidance.ie)**

**[www.euroguidance.eu](http://www.euroguidance.eu)**

**[www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)**

**<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en>**



**An Roinn Oideachais**  
Department of Education

# Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Angela Lambkin  
Information Services



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



# NARIC Ireland 2020



1400+ qualifications listed in the database

74, 907 country page visits (149 countries)

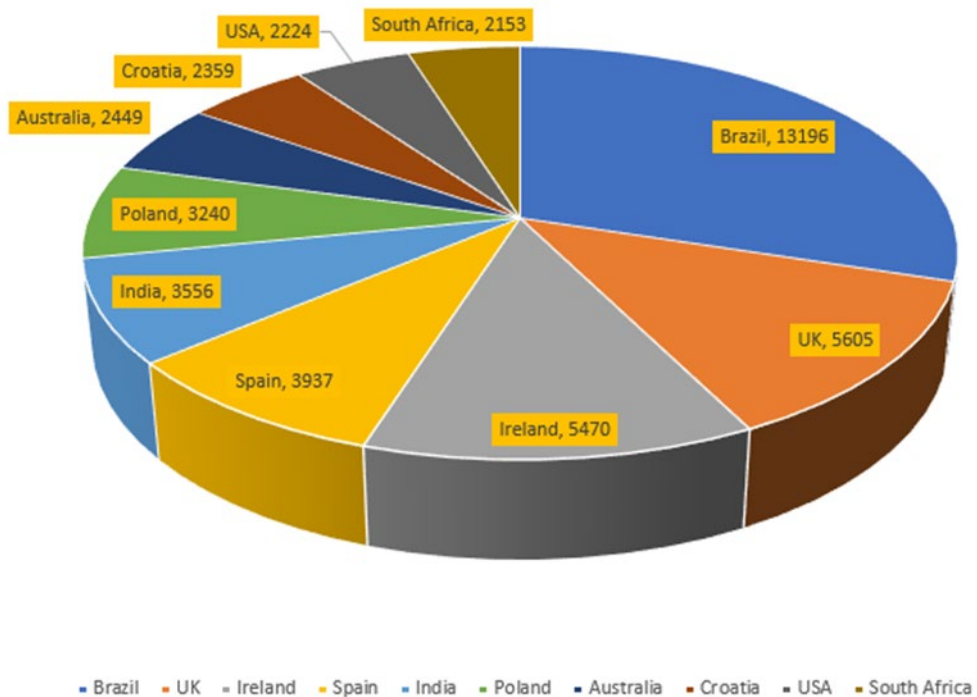
25, 623 Comparability Statements downloaded

Enquiries (QRM 1700+/Emails xxx)



# Some more...

QSearch NARIC  
Top 10 page views by country (2020)



## Comparability Statements

Country	Number of downloads
Brazil	5926
UK	1829
India	1306
Spain	1284
Ireland	1268



**NARIC 2020 Awards**  
**By Country**

**NARIC 2020 Awards**  
**By Type of Education**

**NARIC 2020 Awards**  
**By NFQ Level**

Country	Total	Type of Education	Total	NFQ Level	Total
Bangladesh	10	Further Education	31	10	4
UK	6	Higher Education	57	3	2
Liberia	5	Professional Education	11	4	11
India	5	School Education	12	4/5	5
Poland	4	Grand Total	111	5	21
France	4			6	26
Singapore	3			7	7
Iceland	3			8	19
Uruguay	3			9	16
Mongolia	3			Grand Total	111
Lesotho	3				
Peru	2				
Finland	2				
Brazil	2				
Canada	2				
Germany	2				
Colombia	2				
Romania	2				
El Salvador	2				

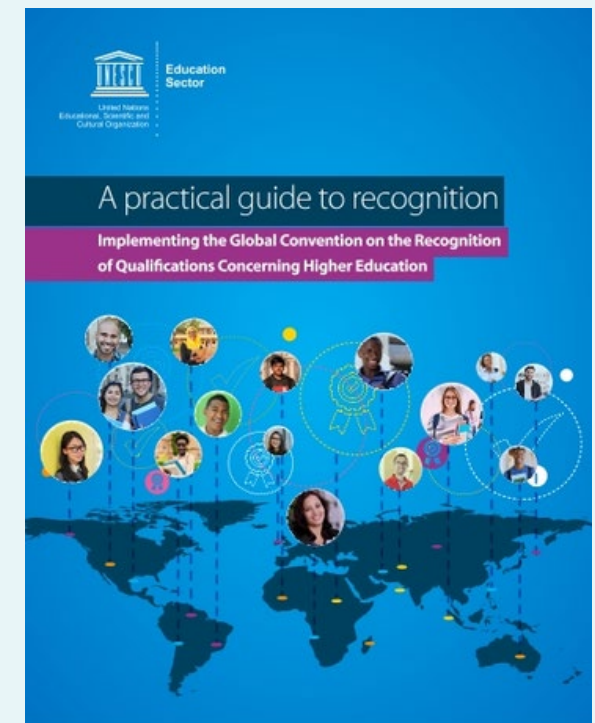
# Global Recognition Convention



The **Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education** was adopted at the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019, as the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope. A **new guide** has been drawn up which provides a step-by step practical approach to recognition of foreign qualifications both for credential evaluation practitioners and for individuals seeking recognition of their foreign qualifications.

An excellent practical resource for admissions and higher education personnel who evaluate international applications.

Norway and Nicaragua signatories 2020.



# ENIC-NARIC & COVID



## Highlights

- [Upper Secondary School Examinations - High School Diplomas in times of COVID-19](#)
- [Reflection Document – Recognition of foreign qualifications in times of COVID-19](#)
- [Employing a refugee with or without documentation of qualifications](#)
- [Recognise qualifications held by refugees - guide for credential evaluators](#)
- [EAR Manual: standards and guidelines on recognition](#)
- [Framework of Qualifications in the Europe and North America Region](#)
- [The ENIC-NARIC Networks: Reference Documents](#)
- [International Organisations](#)
- [27th Joint Meeting of the ENIC-NARIC Networks](#)

## UNESCO Regions



- [Africa](#)
- [Arab States](#)
- [Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [Europe and North America](#)
- [Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
- [Mediterranean Region](#)





# Other updates

## Asia-Pacific Network of centres [www.apnnic.net](http://www.apnnic.net)

New site in place provides free and authoritative information on the recognition of qualifications to help facilitate physical or virtual mobility of students and academics. Nine Parties to the Tokyo Convention are Australia, China, Fiji, Holy See, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Turkey so far. Supported by UNESCO.

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## Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres (APNNIC)

APNNIC is a regional network of National Information Centres (NICs) of the parties to the Tokyo Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the Asia-Pacific region. The APNNIC portal provides free and authoritative information on the recognition of qualifications to help facilitate physical or virtual mobility of students and academics. To date, the nine Parties to the Tokyo Convention are Australia, China, Fiji, Holy See, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, and Turkey. Additional countries are nearing completion of their procedures to become a Party.



# FraudS+: False Records, Altered Diploma and Diploma Mills Qualifications Collection

**FraudS+** an Erasmus+ funded project led by CIMEA (ENIC-NARIC) Italy.

**Aims:**

To establish a database of anonymised, confirmed, falsified qualifications and qualifications issued by diploma mills.

**Project partners:**

ENIC-NARIC centres of Italy, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

**Core activities:**

- identification and scanning of fraudulent certificates to a central database and
- raising students' awareness on the phenomenon of fraud in education.

Seeking support from providers and will be in contact by email in the coming months.



# Other NARIC Projects of interest

## **ADDS UP: Aiding Digitising of the Diploma Supplement project**

Led by UK NARIC, National Europass Centre Finland, National Europass Centre Ireland and NCHFE Malta.

**Aiding Digitising of the Diploma Supplement project** includes identification and stocktake of current practices regarding the Diploma Supplement in each partner country, sharing of best practices, peer review followed by development of an online training module to facilitate digitalisation of the Diploma Supplement process by HEI's. A short questionnaire to HEI's to assist us with the research and identification of practices.

## **I-AR: Automatic Recognition across the EU and EHEA (Nuffic)**

Plans for strengthen link between HEIs and ENIC-NARIC, improve information provision, includes organising national seminars for higher education institutions to promote a common understanding of AR.

## **StacQ: Stacking credits & the future of the qualification (Nuffic)**

Plans for online application to evaluate MOOCs for credential evaluators, revisit what a qualification is in the changing education landscape; mapping developments, analyse types of modular education; and reflect on what modular education & recognition.





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# What's new in winter 2020



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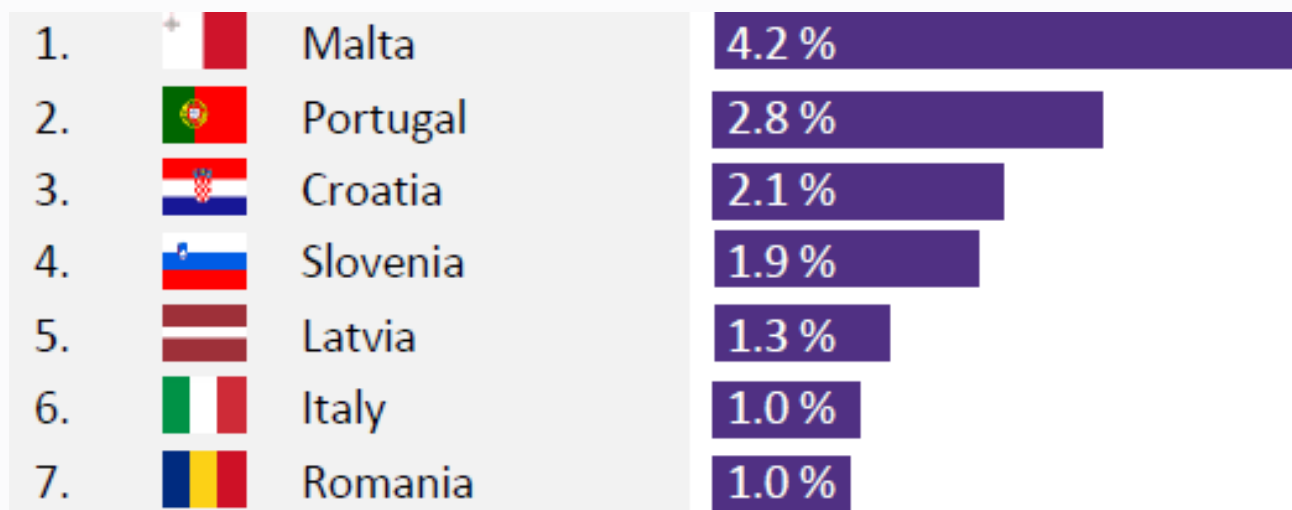
[www.europass.ie](http://www.europass.ie)



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# Top 7 countries with highest Europass usage (24 Nov 2020)

## *Countries with highest % population using Europass<sup>1</sup>*



<sup>1</sup> Europass profiles per active population (i.e. population 15-64 years)



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# Monthly Figures

	October 2020 Total	Comp. to prev. month	November 2020 Total	Comp. to prev. month
Visits	2,485,027	-2%	2,111,247	-15%
Unique visitors	1,523,806	-1%	1,286,349	-16%
Page views	11,687,319	+21%	9,841,982	-16%

**Europass profiles created in languages: in English - 371,603; in Irish - 40**

**Europass profiles created by age: Up to 24 years of age - 39.06%; 25 to 35 – 35%; 35 to 45 – 12.89%; 45 to 55 – 6.57%; 55 to 65 – 1.19%; 65+ - 0.16%**



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- Updated translations for NEC and country pages
- Implemented feedback on translations in German, Maltese, Swedish, Dutch, Latvian, Serbian and Turkish

[www.europa.eu/europass/en](http://www.europa.eu/europass/en)

## Updates of content and translations



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[www.europass.ie](http://www.europass.ie)



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# New Software Releases

## October - QDR

- Supports of QMS2 in RDF format
- Several bugfixes

***‘Europass Digital Credentials system is managed by the European Commission’***

## November – Digital Credentials

- Credentials can now be sent to e-wallets by e-mail
- Improvements to API, custom credential design, specific credentials formats and multilingualism



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- **CV template** - *multiple design improvements; CV reduced in length*
- **CV Wizard** – *registered users can now recover information within 48 hours*
- **Banner-style information board**
- **Search interface** – *improved distinction between countries, regions (additional filters) and cities*
- **Driving license** – *valid from and valid until fields added.*
- **Cover letter alerts** – *mandatory information missing; Uploaded cover letter contains errors*

# December

## Release of the Europass platform (v 1.3)



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[www.europass.ie](http://www.europass.ie)



# europass

## Connect with Europass

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[www.europa.eu/europass/en](http://www.europa.eu/europass/en)



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# Thank You

[www.europass.ie](http://www.europass.ie)



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# A European Approach to Micro-credentials

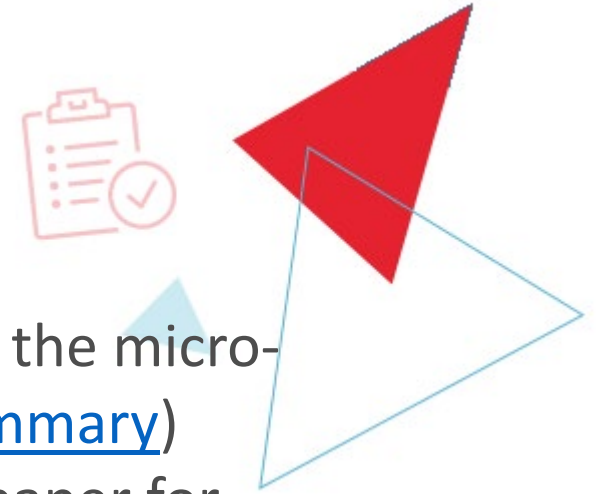


Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies  
of the DFHEIS

19 January 2021

Anthony F. Camilleri

# Reports published in December 2020



- **Final report**: A European approach to micro-credentials - output of the micro-credentials higher education consultation group (and [executive summary](#))
- **Annex 1**: A European approach to micro-credentials - Background paper for the first meeting of the consultation group on micro-credentials
- **Annex 2**: A European approach to micro-credentials - institutional incentives to develop and offer micro-credentials in the EU
- **NESET analytical report**: Towards a European approach to micro-credentials - a study of practices and commonalities in offering micro-credentials in European higher education (and [executive summary](#))



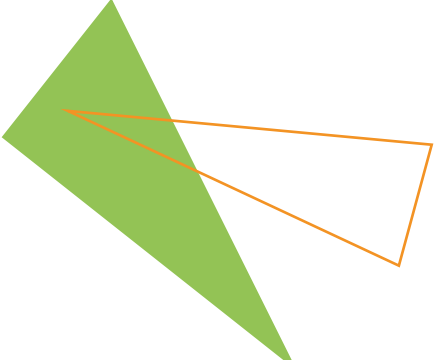
# Definition of Micro-credentials

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

- Identification of the **learner**
- **Title** of the micro-credential
- **Country/Region of the issuer**
- **Awarding body**
- Date of issuing
- **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)
- **Learning outcomes**
- Form of participation in the learning activity
- **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.

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

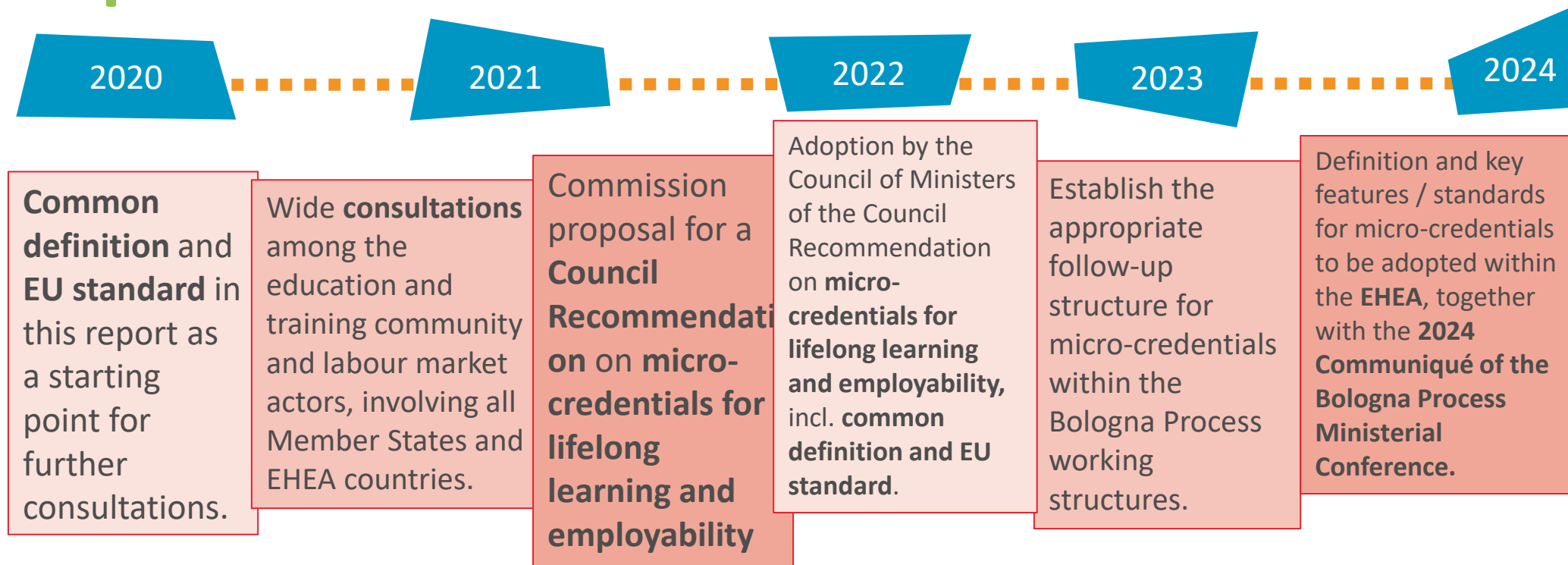
*\* Optional information*

# Building blocks

- 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 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

# Roadmap of actions

A common and transparent **DEFINITION** and an **EU STANDARD** for micro-credentials



Alignment to the national and European **QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS**

Explore the feasibility of **integrating micro-credentials in national qualifications frameworks**, which could be referenced to the European Qualifications Framework.

Regular dialogue and consultation with the European Qualification Framework Advisory Group, advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (VET), the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and among the education and training community and labour market actors, including social partners, youth organisations and civil society, and involving both Member States and EHEA countries.

Progressive adaptation of **national qualifications frameworks**, where needed



# Roadmap of actions



## QUALITY ASSURANCE

standards for short learning courses

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.



# Roadmap of actions

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

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.**

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

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.



# Roadmap of actions



## STORAGE and PORTABILITY

Further development of EUROPASS, in particular the **Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure**, for the issuing, sharing and storage of micro-credentials.

Foster the availability of metadata in open formats and the interoperability between various infrastructures, including between the **European Student Card** initiative and Europass.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

Ensuring better **permeability between education and training sectors** through the application of micro-credentials.

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.

Enhance **comprehensive guidance services**, including online access, which are underpinned by real-time labour market data to ensure informed learner choice.

# Roadmap of actions



## NATIONAL LEVEL ACTIONS

**Consultations at national level** about the above-mentioned aspects of micro-credentials, **involving all relevant national stakeholders.**

Preparing or adjusting the **national regulatory framework.**

**Piloting of actions based on national/regional needs.** Exploring and ensuring the availability of **adequate funding**, including by EU funding schemes.

## UPTAKE by higher education institutions, VET and other education and training institutions

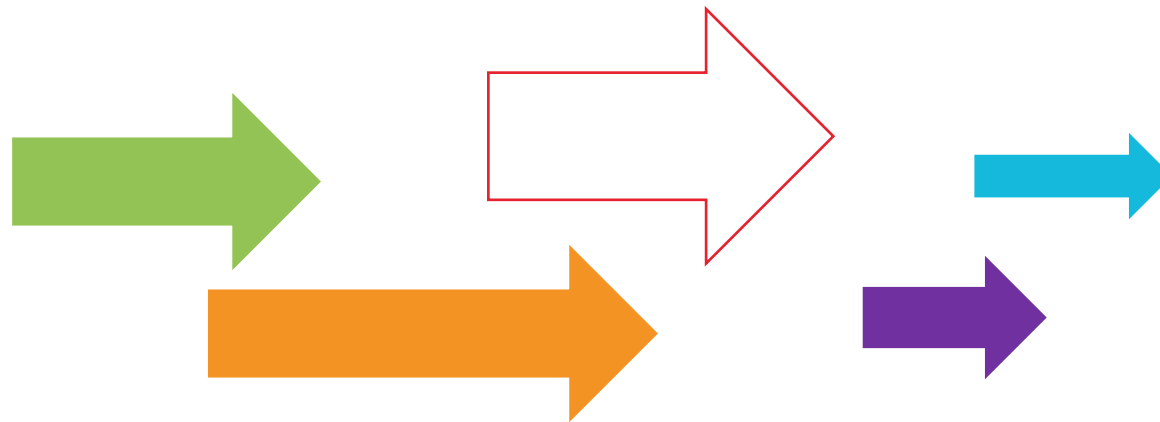
EU support through the **Erasmus+ programme** and **Structural Funds** for higher education, VET and other education and training institutions and training providers for the uptake of micro-credentials, with a special focus on academia-business cooperation in their development.

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.**

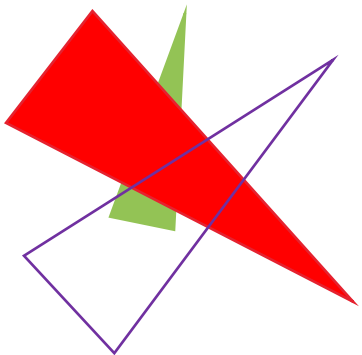
**Peer learning activities** at European and national levels, within education and training sectors, across sectors and with the world of work.

# Way forward

Consultations  
covering all sectors  
of education and  
training throughout  
2021



Commission  
proposal for a  
Council  
Recommendation  
in December 2021





## Interoperability mechanism

Enables the exchange of information on skills and qualifications amongst different actors.



## E-Portfolio

Support individuals to document and describe their skills, qualifications and experience and to manage their career from a lifelong learning perspective.



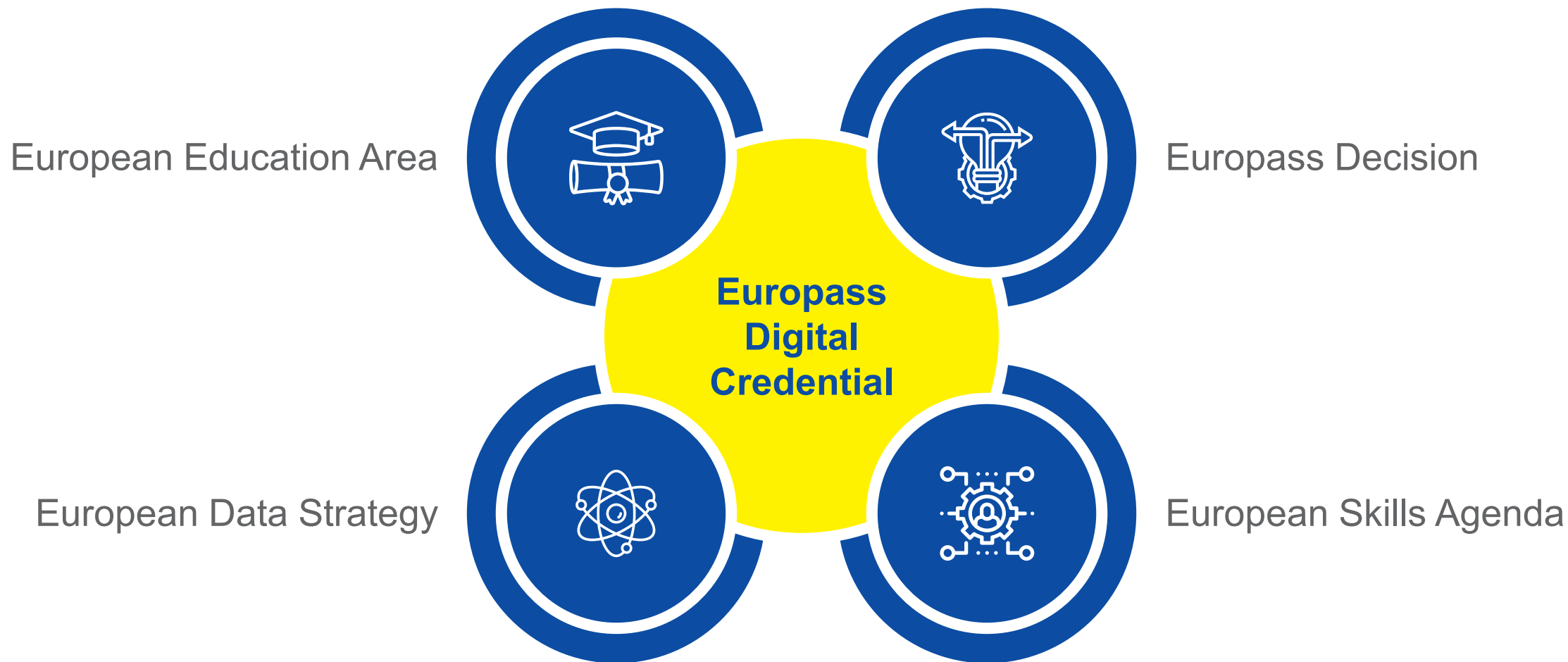
## Information Provision

Provide information or links to available information on skills and qualification that helps users to better manage their lifelong career.



## European Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI)

Encompasses technical specifications to implement the framework. It comprise of core building blocks to help operationalise the framework: e-IDAS, Standards, Services and Software



# A Europass Digital Credential

## A Europass Digital Credential Contains Information About



**Metadata**  
(data about the credential)



**Issuer**



**Subject**  
(claims about person)



**e-Seal**

## Describes Claims Related to



**Activities**



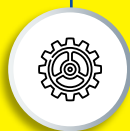
**Achievements**



**Entitlements**



**Attestations**



**Learning  
Outcomes**



**Assessments**

150 hours of coursework  
100 hours of apprenticeship

DE Qualification as a Painter

Entitlement to work  
as a painter

Recognition of  
qualification in FI

LO of skill of painting

Final Examination  
Grade B

# COMPONENTS

## Standards

1. Europass Learning Model  
(Linked to W3C Verifiable Credential)
2. Service Standards
  - a. Issuer
  - b. Wallet
  - c. Viewer / Verifier

## Services

1. Issuer: *Sign and Issue*
2. Wallet: *Store*
3. Viewer: *Render, Verify and Share*
4. Accreditation DB

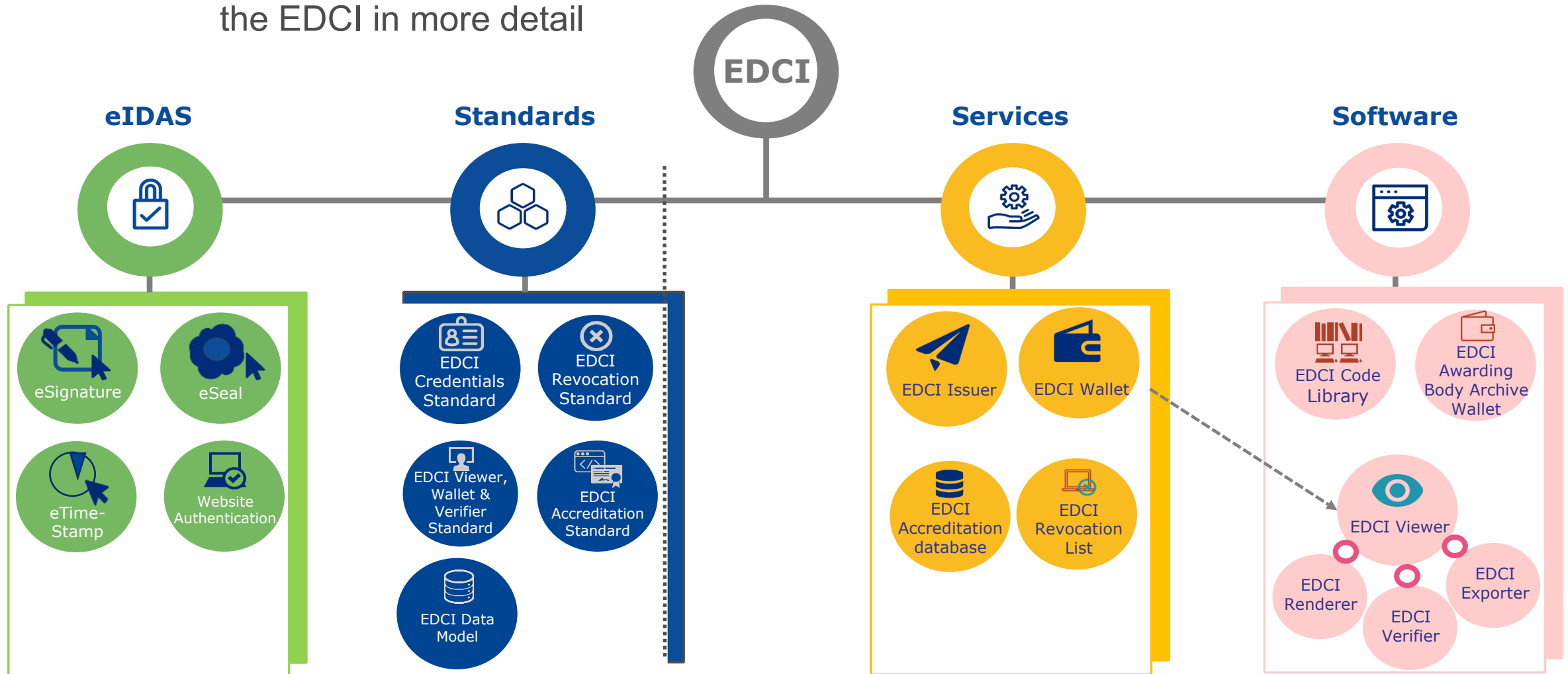
## Software & Support

1. eIDAS & Europass code libraries
2. Playground & API library
3. Helpdesk



# Framework for digitally-signed credentials

the EDCI in more detail





Austria



Germany



Portugal



Croatia



Greece



Romania



Cyprus



Italy



Slovakia



Czech republic



Luxembourg



Slovenia



Estonia



Malta



Spain



France



Norway



Netherlands

## 18 Member States

The EDCI Issuer allows anyone with a **digital seal** to issue credentials to students online.

## Prepare

1

To issue credentials, you need to obtain a qualified electronic seal. Our test tool will ensure everything is set up properly. Then, follow our tutorial to understand how to prepare your data.



Test your e-Seal



How to prepare  
your data

## Build

2

The Online Credential Builder allows you to enter your data entirely via the browser. You may also prepare larger datasets in Excel (for Windows) using the supplied template. Alternatively, you can export a package from your student information system as XML.



Online Credential  
Builder



Download your  
Excel template

## Upload

3

If you have your credential data prepared, upload the file and move on to the next step of reviewing and digitally sealing your credentials.



Upload Excel  
spreadsheet

Maximum file size: 5  
MB  
Accepted file formats:  
XLS, XLSX, XLSM



Upload XML

Maximum file size: 5  
MB  
Accepted file format:  
XML

[View](#) > View Credential

# Diploma in Sociology

Date: 12/05/2019 | Type: Diploma

 Credential Summary

 Export

 Upload another credential

 Share

 Print

English

Issuing organisation

Credential Owner

Achievements

Activities

Entitlements

Sub-credentials

Other Data



## Authenticity and Verification Check

- ✓

**Format**  
This credential is technically valid.
- ✓

**Seal**  
The credential is Sealed. This credential has not been tampered with since it was issued by the University of Gozo on 20/02/2019
- ✓

**Owner**  
This credential was issued to the wallet owner.
- **Revocation**  
Verification step skipped.
- ✓

**Accreditation**  
This credential has been accredited by the National Quality Assurance Agency (Italy).
- ✓

**Validity**  
The credential is still valid.



 Credential Preview

 Export

 Upload another credential

 Share

English ▼

Issuing Organisation

Credential Owner

**Achievements**

Activities

Entitlements

## Master of Science in Civil Engineering

Applied mathematics

Concrete structures I

Dynamics of structures and earthquake engineering

Geotechnical engineering

Stability of structures

Metal structures I

Masonry structures

Prestressed concrete

Concrete structures II

Metal structures II

Structure reliability

## Master of Science in Civil Engineering

**Awarding Date:** 20/09/2019 00:00 GMT +0200

**Awarding Body:** Fakultet Građevinarstva, Arhitekture i Geodezije

### Proven by

Title	Grade
Overall Diploma Assessment	excellent (5)

**Influenced by:** Applied mathematics, Concrete structures I, Dynamics of structures and earthquake engineering, Geotechnical engineering, Stability of structures, Metal structures I, Masonry structures, Prestressed concrete, Concrete structures II, Metal structures II, Structure reliability, Composite structures, Construction of concrete structures, Housing installations, Numerical modelling of concrete structures, Business and investments in civil engineering, Concrete bridges, Metal bridges, Diploma work

**Entitles Owner to:** Postgraduate doctoral study

**Sub-Achievements**



# Questions?





## **8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Irish EU Reference Group of Agencies of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**

**19 January 2020**



# Five Countries Annual Meeting

**UK and Ireland Qualifications Frameworks Group**  
**Belfast Metropolitan College**  
**January 2020**



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government



QAA



scottish credit and  
qualifications framework



Regulation



# TAICEP Conference 2020

EQF as an  
inter-country  
system level  
translation  
device for  
linking  
qualifications  
and  
qualifications  
systems



Going global  
Small  
countries  
thinking Big😊



**QQI**Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

# National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) – Key Milestones

**2003**

After an extensive period of public engagement and consultation, the NFQ was established as the single national entity through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other.

The NFQ was self-certified as compatible with the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF EHEA), the first national Qualification Framework to complete this exercise.

**2006****2009**

The NFQ was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) the first national Qualifications Framework to complete this exercise.

2009 Report of the International Panel on Implementation and Impact of the Irish NFQ.

[VIEW REPORT](#)**2018**

2018 NFQ Impact Assessment  
At a Glance.

**2019**

Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Act.

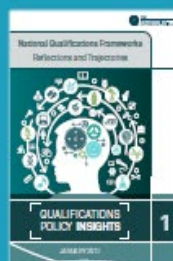
Ireland submits its single updating report re-referencing the NFQ to EQF and re-confirming compatibility of the NFQ with QF-EHEA.

**2020****2012**

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act reaffirms the statutory basis of the NFQ and entrusts maintenance and development of the NFQ to QQI.

**2016**

Reflections and Trajectories - Qualifications Policy Insights as a companion paper to the Policy Impact Assessment of the NFQ.

**2017**

NFQ Policy Impact Assessment.

# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

WHY?

**Fulfil commitments under 2017 EU Council Recommendation on the EQF and QF-EHEA mandate to promote greater transparency, portability and comparability of qualifications in Europe (QF-EHEA Self-Certification 2006 and EQF Referencing 2009 reports out of date)**



**Erasmus+**

# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

## PURPOSE

- Provide a contemporary account of the Irish education, training and qualifications system
- Document the extent to which the design and implementation of the NFQ is consistent with the European norms, standards and expectations
- Promote transparency and trust in qualifications gained in Ireland



Erasmus+

# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

HOW?

- Review original QF-EHEA and EQF reports
- Establish National Steering Group and Awarding Body Focus Group to advise on preparation of report
- Invite International Experts
- Ministry and EQF-NCP coordination



Erasmus+



# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

WHEN?

Activity	Date
<b>Agreement on Referencing Approach</b>	January 2020
<b>Evidence gathering for each referencing criterion</b>	January – March 2020
<b>Technical mapping of level descriptors</b>	January – March 2020
<b>Draft updated referencing report</b>	May 2020
<b>Progress report to the EQF-AG</b>	23-24 June 2020
<b>Final report (endorsed by national authorities)</b>	June – August 2020
<b>Submit final report to the EQF-AG</b>	October 2020
<b>Formal presentation of final updated referencing report to the EQF-AG</b>	24-25 November 2020
<b>Publication of report on relevant national and European portals</b>	Following endorsement by EQF-AG



**Erasmus+**

# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

*“A very rich and interesting discussion of the updated Irish referencing report took place at the EQF Advisory Group of 24-25 November 2020. The report contributes to EU cooperation on knowledge building and transparency of qualifications, and reinforces understanding and trust in Irish qualifications. The report clearly shows the impact of the Irish framework which has brought tangible benefits to both individuals and stakeholders over the last 10 years. The report was warmly welcomed by the EQF Advisory Group and can serve as a benchmark for policy-learning.”*

***Manuela Geleng, Director of the Skills Directorate,  
Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion,  
European Commission.***





# Referencing Irish NFQ to the EQF and Self-Certification of Compatibility with the QF-EHEA

## Updated 2020 Report - Outcomes

EQF Level	QF-EHEA (Bologna)	NFQ Level	NFQ Award-Type	
EQF Level 1		NFQ Level 1	Level 1 Certificate	
		NFQ Level 2	Level 2 Certificate	
EQF Level 2		NFQ Level 3	Level 3 Certificate	
			Junior Cycle/Certificate <sup>12</sup>	
EQF Level 3		NFQ Level 4	Level 4 Certificate	
			Leaving Certificate	
EQF Level 4		NFQ Level 5	Level 5 Certificate	
			Level 5 Professional Award	
EQF Level 5			NFQ Level 6	Advanced Certificate
				Higher Certificate
				Level 6 Professional Award
EQF Level 6	Short Cycle Higher Education	NFQ Level 7	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	
			Level 7 Professional Award	
	First Cycle Higher Education	NFQ Level 8	Honours Bachelor Degree	
			Higher Diploma	
			Level 8 Professional Award	
EQF Level 7	Second Cycle Higher Education	NFQ Level 9	Post-Graduate Diploma*	
			Masters Degree	
			Level 9 Professional Award	
EQF Level 8	Third Cycle Higher Education	NFQ Level 10	Doctoral Degree	
			Higher Doctorate	

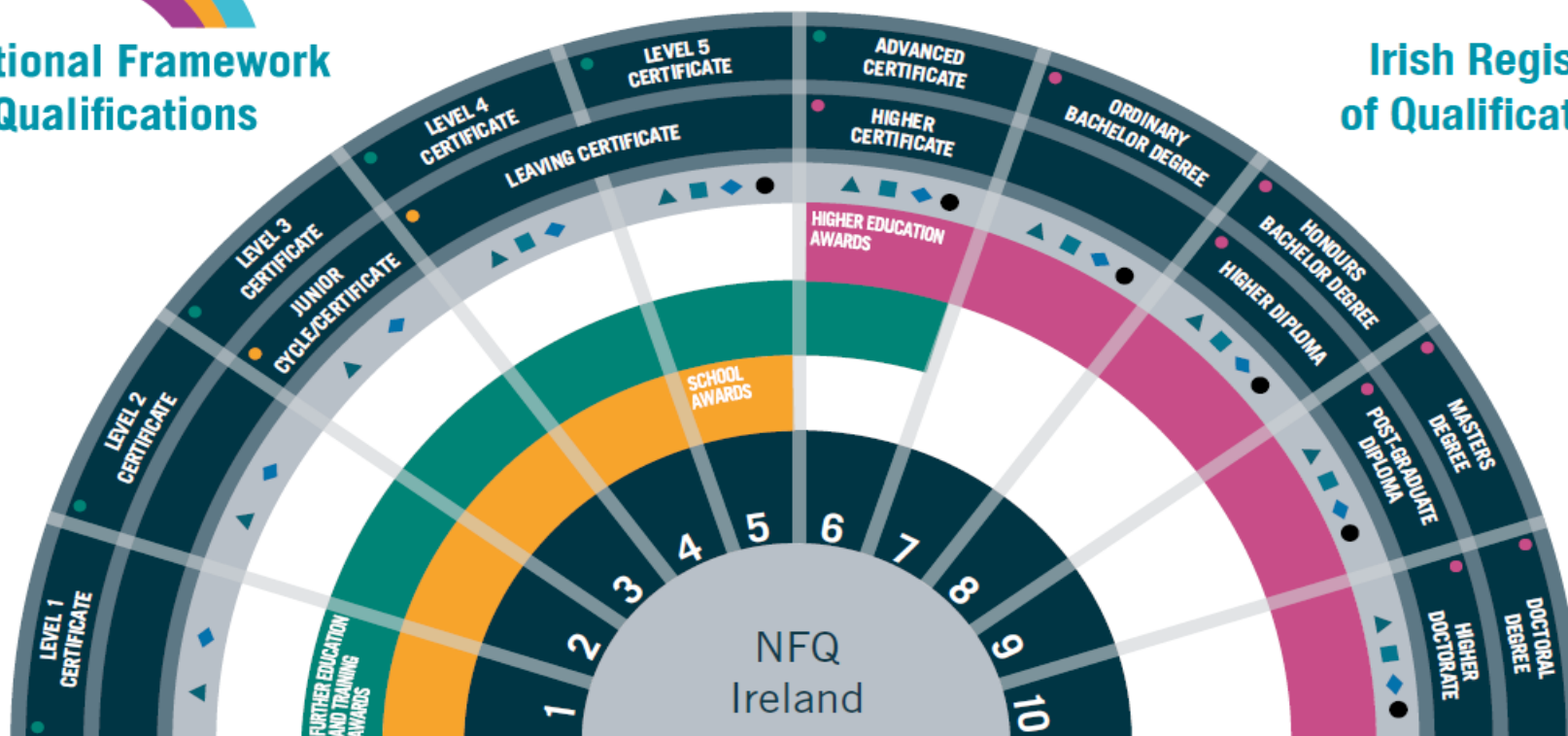
\*The Irish Post-Graduate Diploma is an intermediate qualification within the Bologna Second Cycle

# NFQ Fan Diagram



## National Framework of Qualifications

## Irish Register of Qualifications



### CLASSES OF AWARD

- Major Awards:** named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
- Minor Awards:** are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplemental Awards:** are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- Special Purpose Awards:** are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement
- Professional Awards:** these are for occupation-orientated qualifications including apprenticeships

### IRISH REGISTER OF QUALIFICATIONS

For more information on

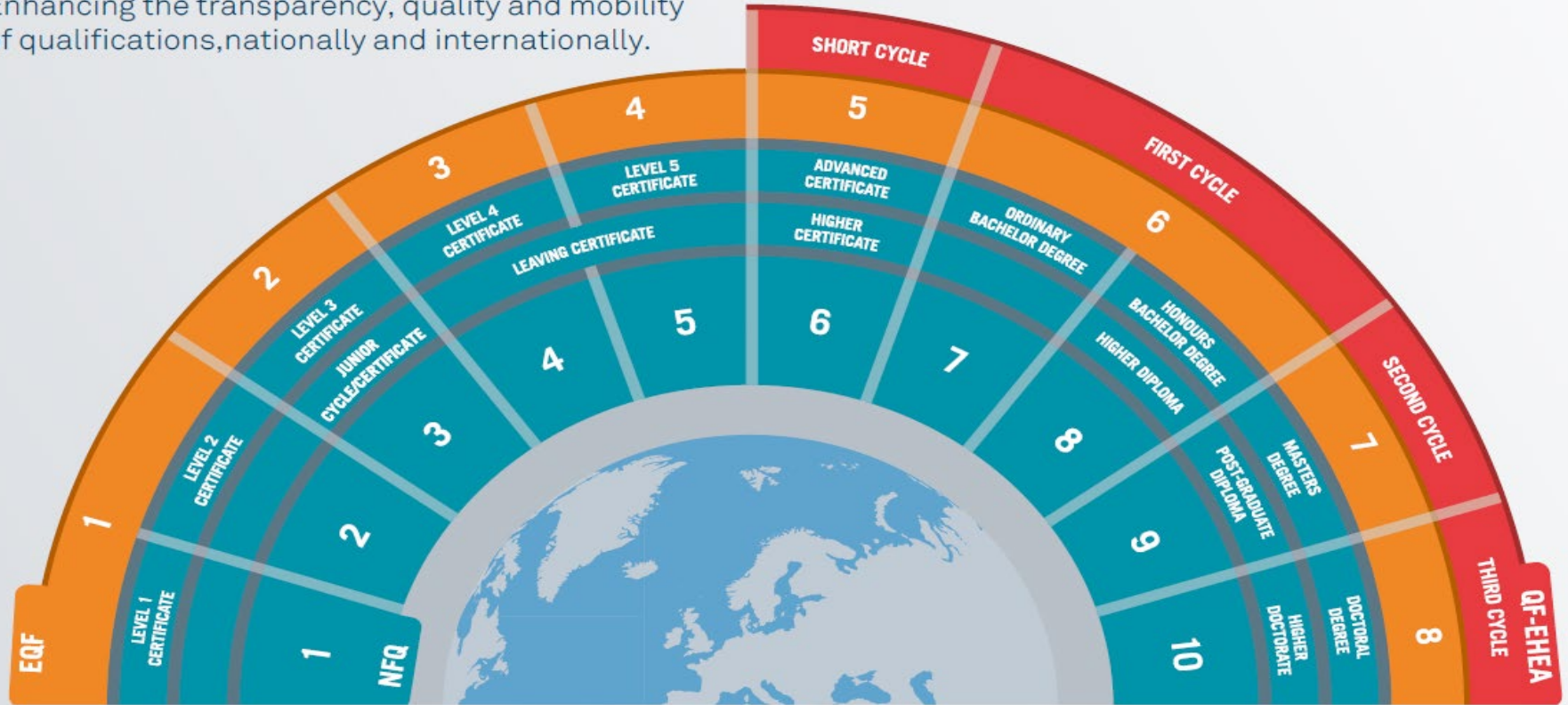
- Qualifications
  - Providers
  - Courses
- visit [www.irq.ie](http://www.irq.ie)

# European dimension of the NFAQ



## Qualifications Frameworks - Going Global

Enhancing the transparency, quality and mobility of qualifications, nationally and internationally.



- NFAQ
- EQF
- QF-EHEA

Irish National Framework of Qualifications

European Qualifications Framework

Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area

# EQF-NCP Ireland



Thank you for your attention

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[bsokolowska@qqi.ie](mailto:bsokolowska@qqi.ie)

