

# **Micro-credentials and Bologna Key Commitments**

**State of play in the European Higher Education  
Area**



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MICROBOL Recognition Working Group - 21/01/2021



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# Context of the study and data collection

- **Aim of the survey:** gain a picture on the state-of-play on micro-credentials in different member states of the European Higher Education Area and encouraging national discussion
- **Target:** members of the BFUG as well as the nominated representatives in the MICROBOL working groups
- **Period:** 15 October 2020 to 25 November 2020
- **Respondents:** 34 countries participated in the survey

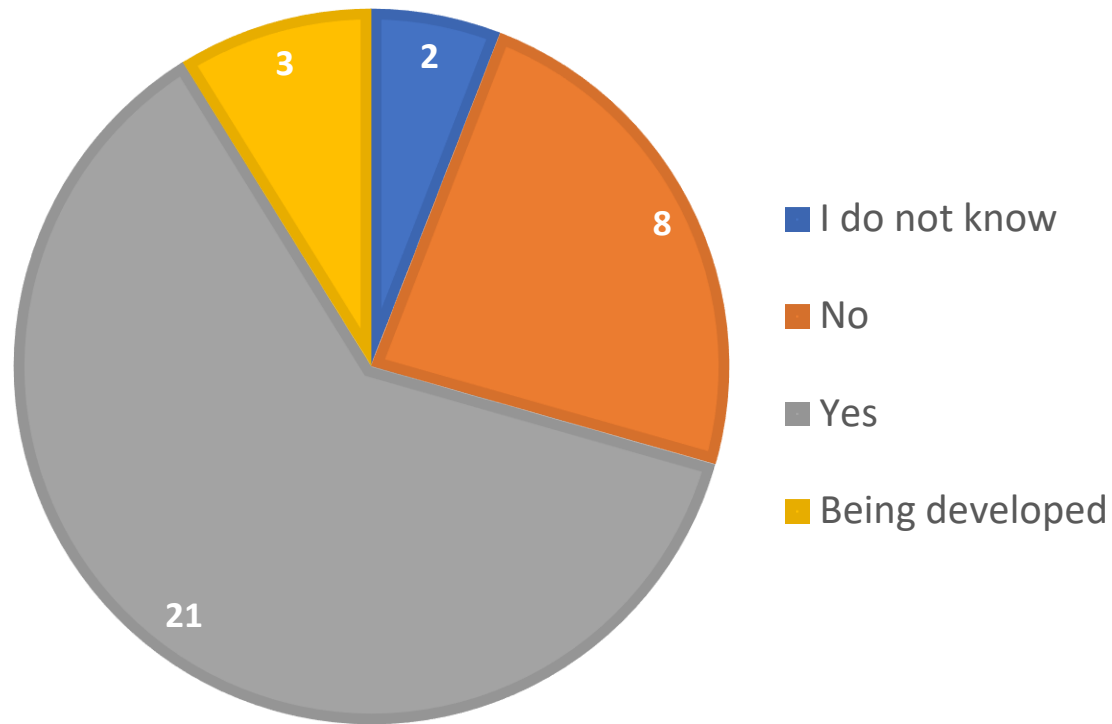


# Section 1

## Investigating the use of micro-credentials

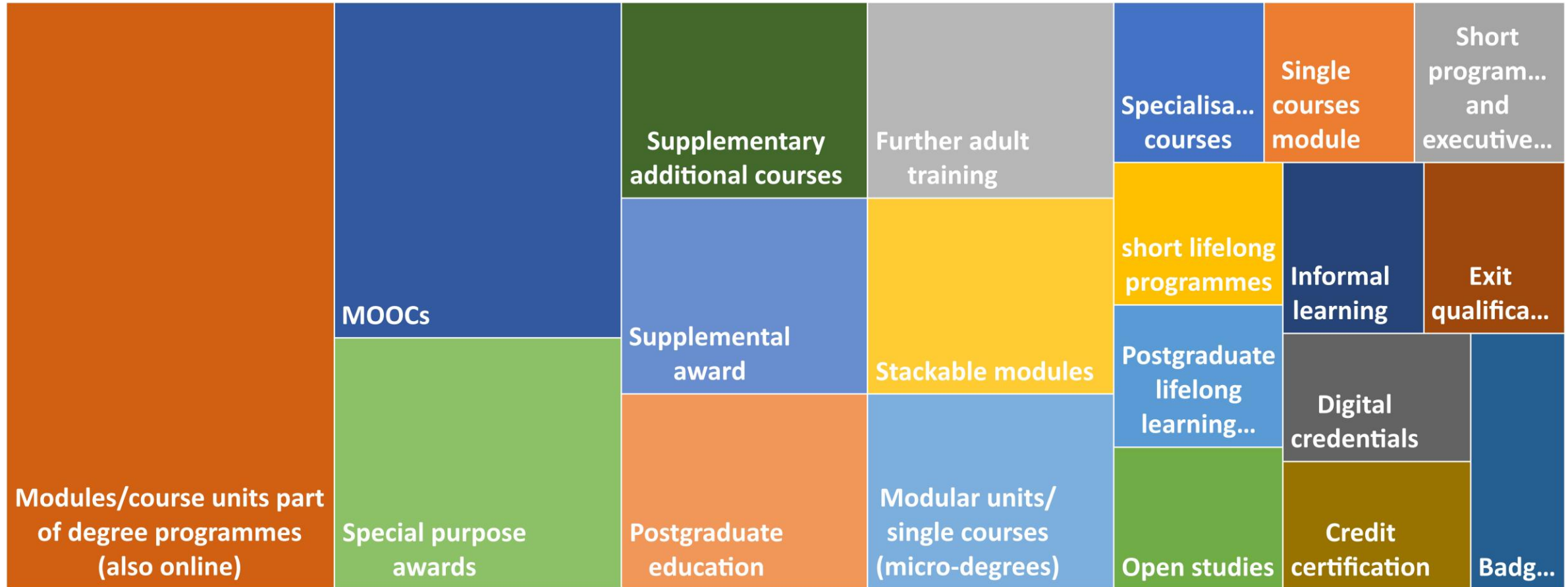
- Overview of micro-credentials offered or being developed
- Regulation of micro-credentials at national level

# Countries that offer or are developing micro-credentials

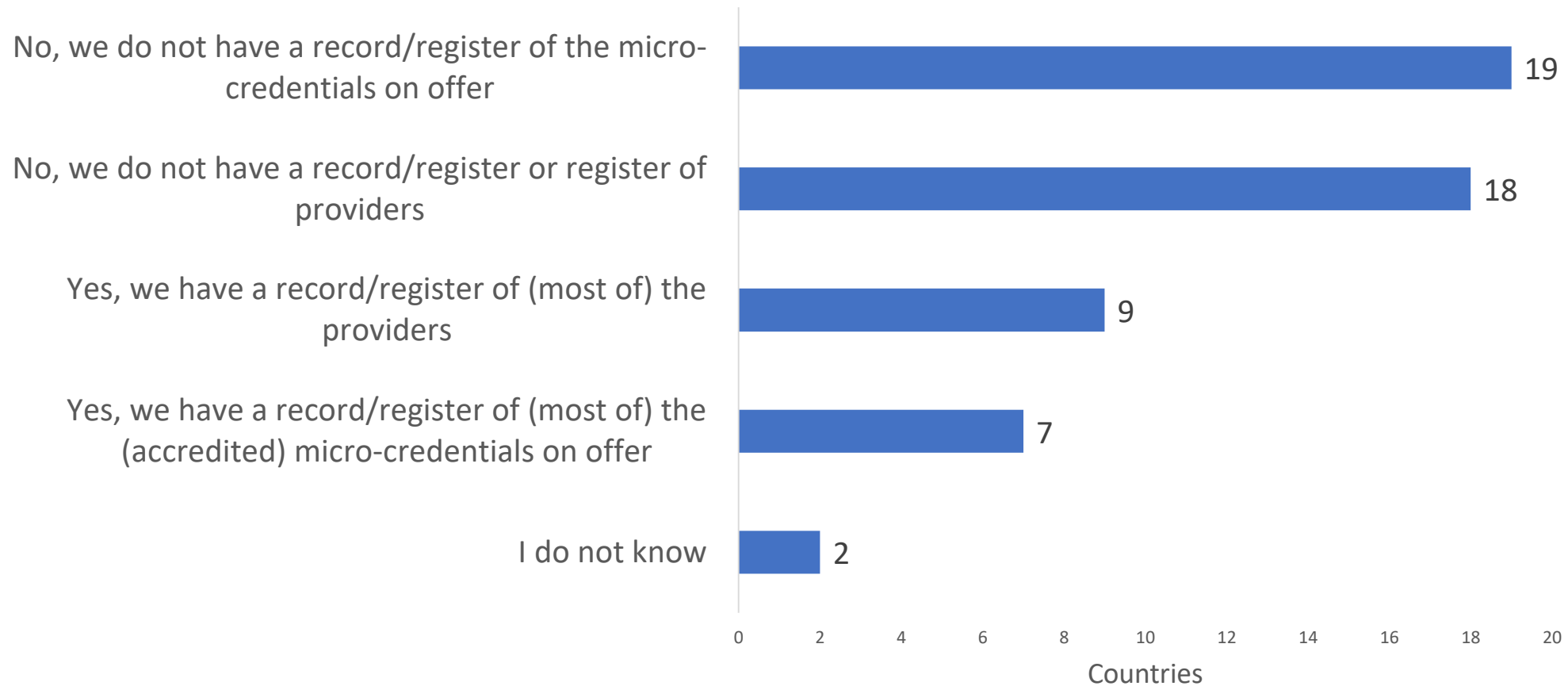


- Offered: 21 countries
- Being developed: 3 countries
- Not offered/being developed: 8 countries

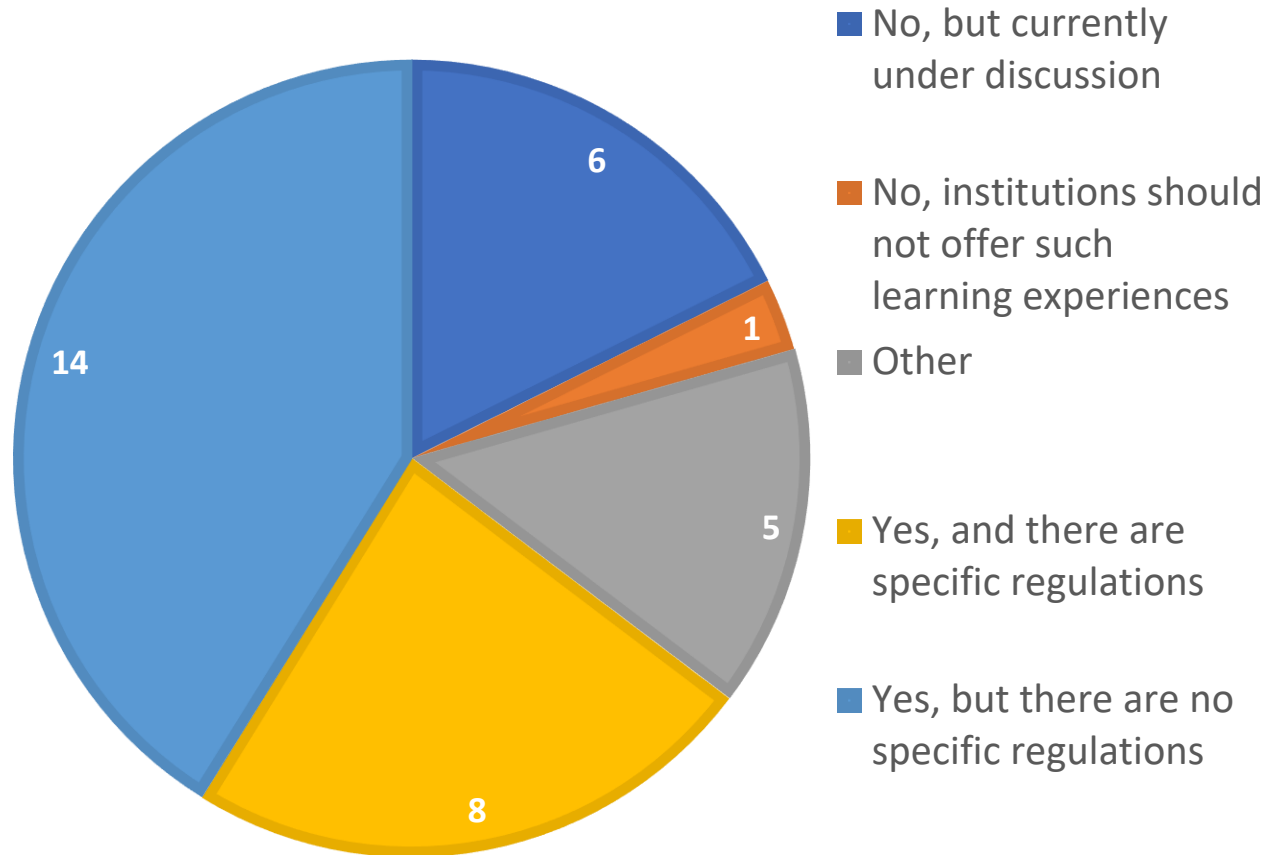
# Examples of micro-credentials offered/recognised by HEIs



# Official record or register of micro-credentials and providers



# Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (I)



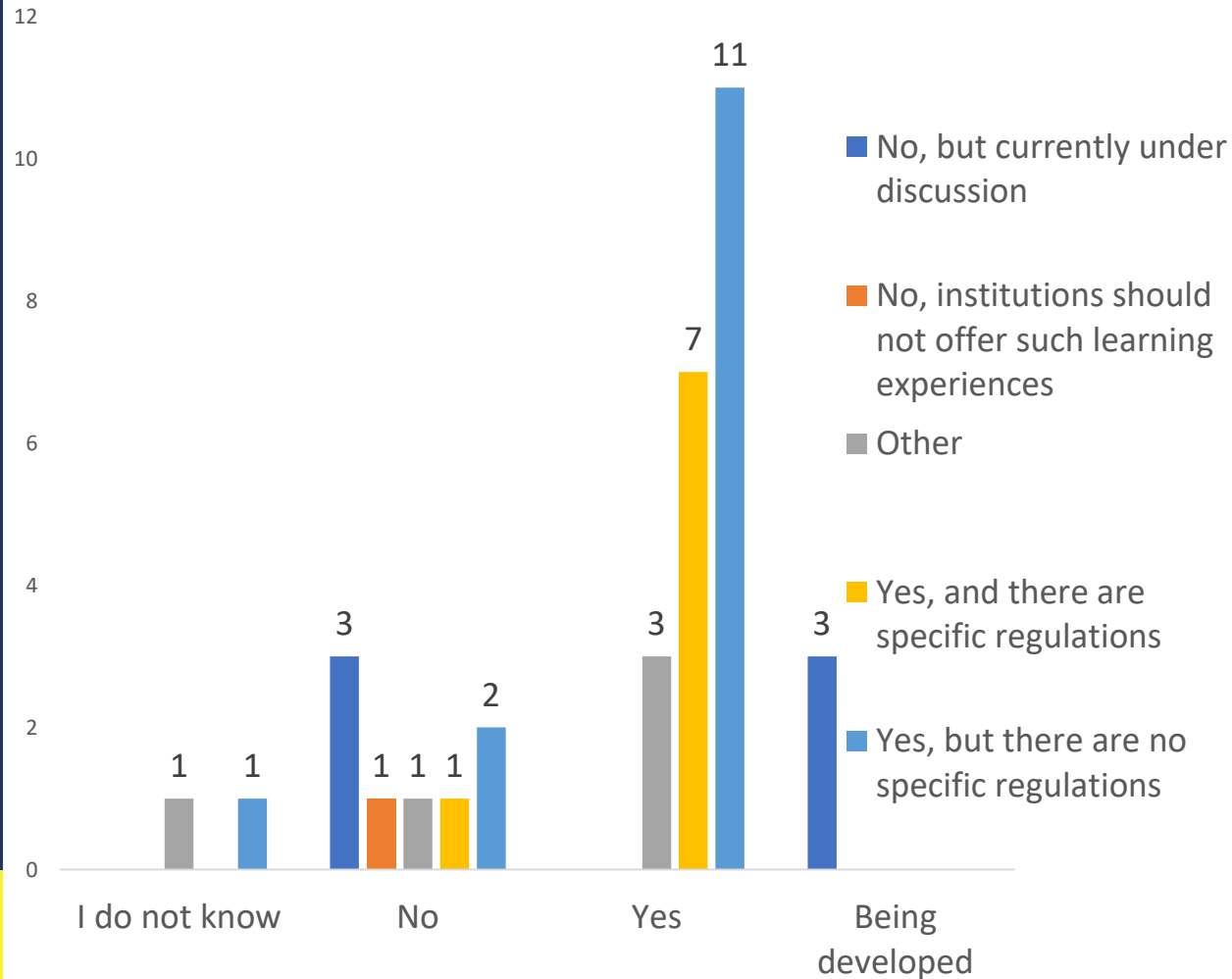
- Regulated/allowed at national level: 22 countries
  - Specific regulations: 8
  - No specific regulations: 14
- Under discussion: 6 countries
- Institutions should not offer MCs: 1 country



# Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (II)

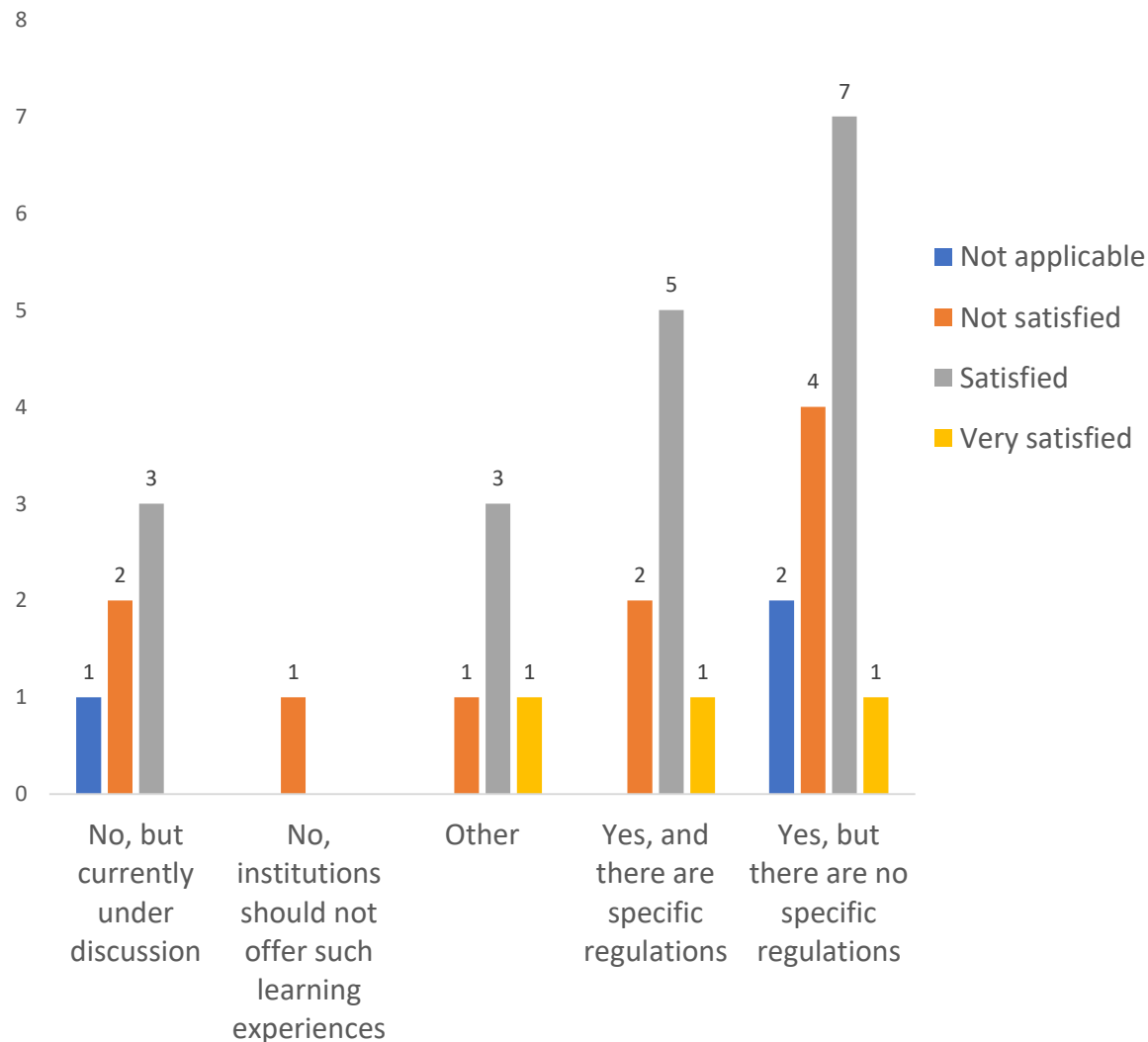
Answer	Details
<b>No specific regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modular units/single courses within a study programme</li><li>• Lifelong learning, further and adult education, general postgraduate education, continuing education, specialisation programmes</li><li>• Recognition of prior learning (of non-formal learning)</li><li>• Recognition of credits obtained in the framework of any credentials</li></ul>
<b>Specific regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinction between degree and award</li><li>• Regulations on adult education and lifelong learning</li><li>• Elements that can correspond to MC<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A course unit within the framework of adult higher education</li><li>• A course unit followed in single modules delivered by higher education institutions</li><li>• “Continuing Education” programmes</li></ul></li><li>• Regulations on recognition of extra-curricular prior learning</li></ul>
<b>Countries should not provide MC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MC should be incorporated into legislation on lifelong learning and integrated into regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education</li></ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No provisions in the field</li><li>• Lifelong learning provision</li></ul>

# Cross analysis: micro-credentials offered/being developed and national legislation



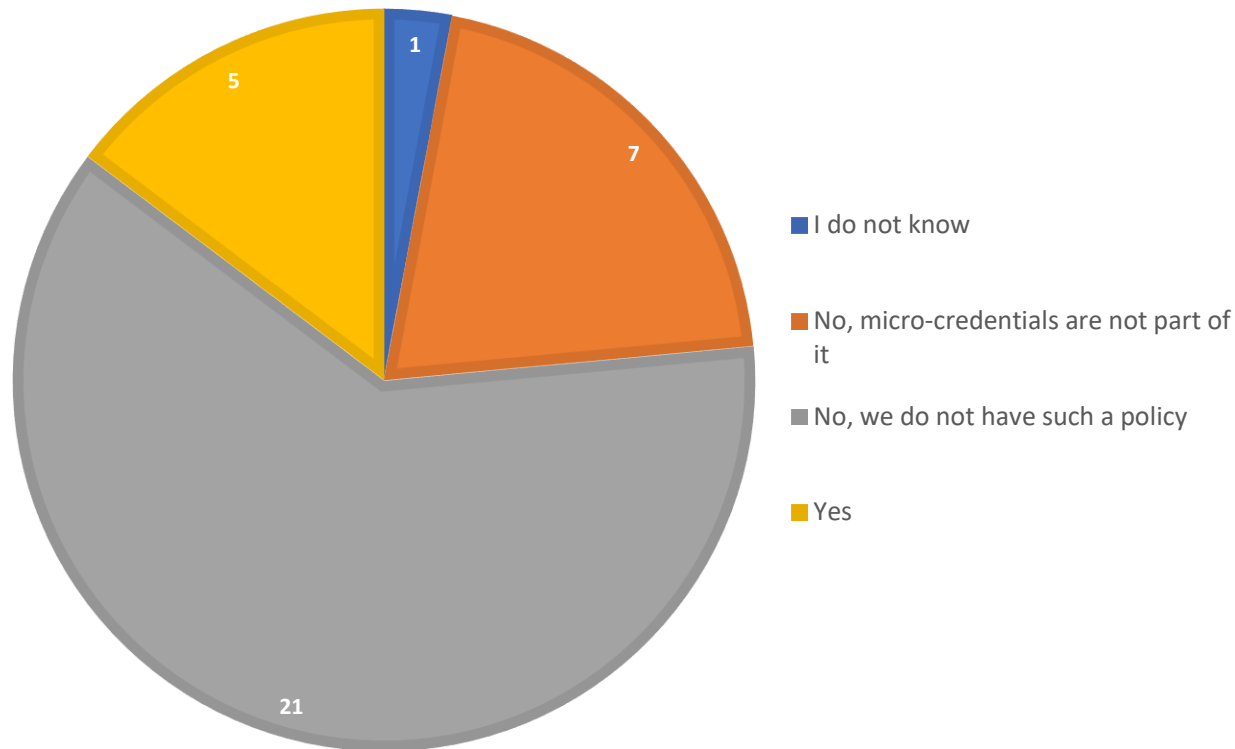
- 21 countries offering MC
  - 11 Regulated at national level
  - 7 Specific regulations
  - 3 Under discussion
- 8 countries NOT offering MC
  - 3 Under discussion
  - 2 Regulated at national level
  - 1 Specific regulations
  - 1 Institutions should not offer MC
  - 1 Other

# Cross analysis: regulation of micro-credentials and satisfaction with the current uptake



- Countries having regulations:
  - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action
  - 2 very satisfied
  - 4 little interest
  - 2 not a national priority
- Countries in which regulation is under discussion
  - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action

# Micro-credentials and digitalisation policies



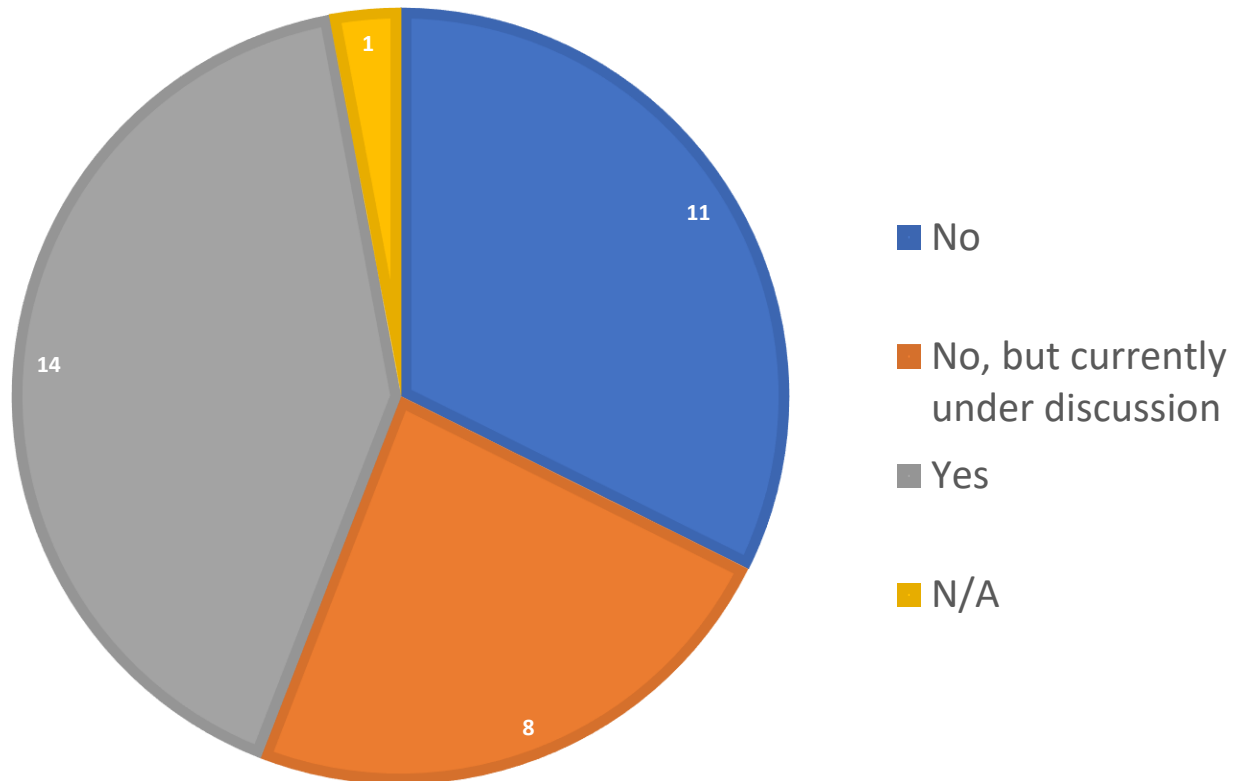
- NO policy on digitalisation:
  - 21 countries
- Yes policy but MCs are not part of it
  - 7 countries
- Yes MCs are part of this policy
  - 5 countries

## Section 2

# Applying Bologna tools to micro-credentials

- Recognition

# Countries implementing policies related to the recognition of micro-credentials



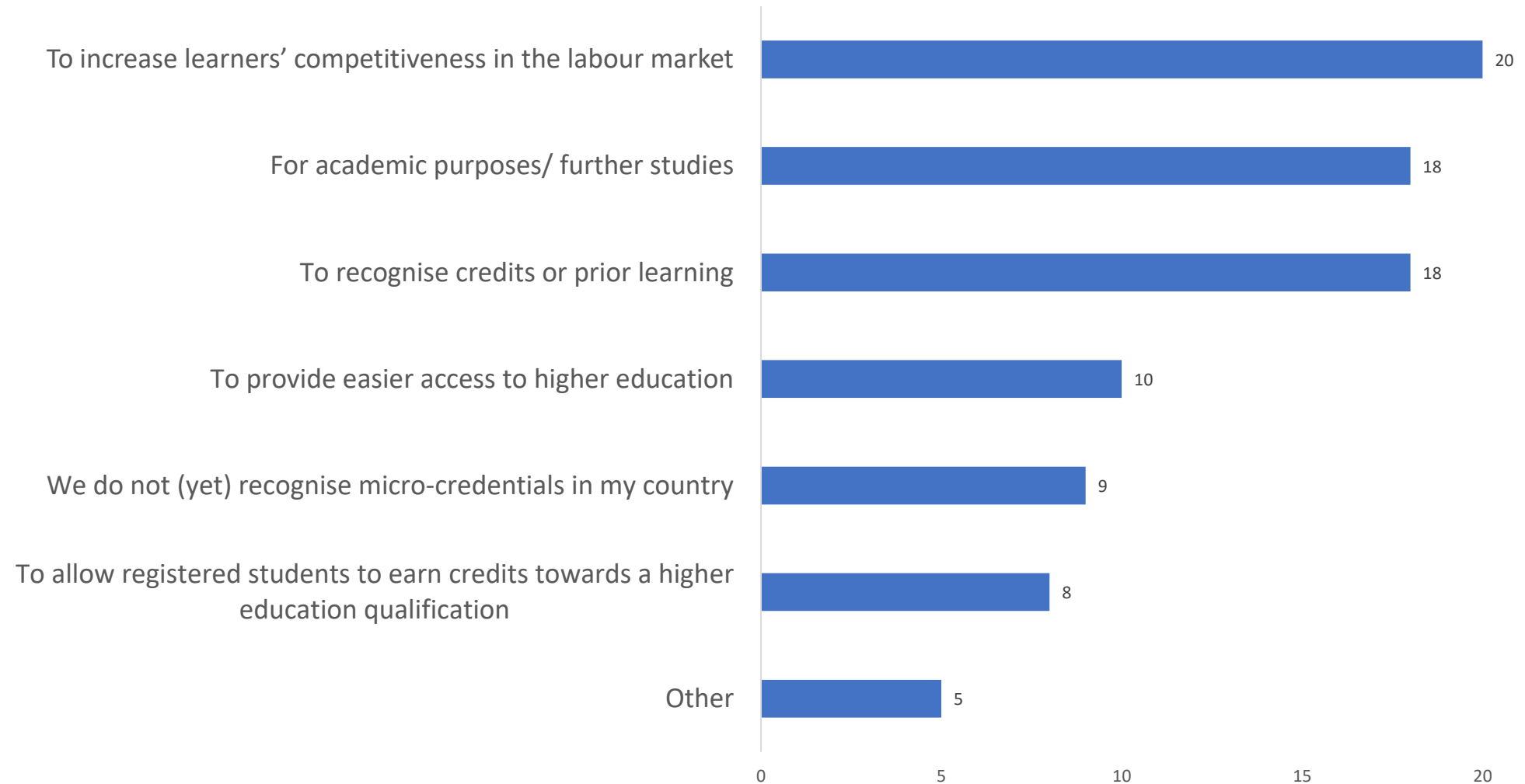
- **Implemented:** 14 countries
  - Recognition/Validation of Prior Learning
  - Part of a full study programme
  - Adoption of the European approach to MCs
  - Use of criteria from E-Valuate project
  - Recognition of learning programme of min. 200 hours
- **NOT implemented:** 11 countries
- **Under discussion:** 8 countries

# Elements considered relevant in the recognition process

14 out of 34 countries stated that the following elements are relevant:

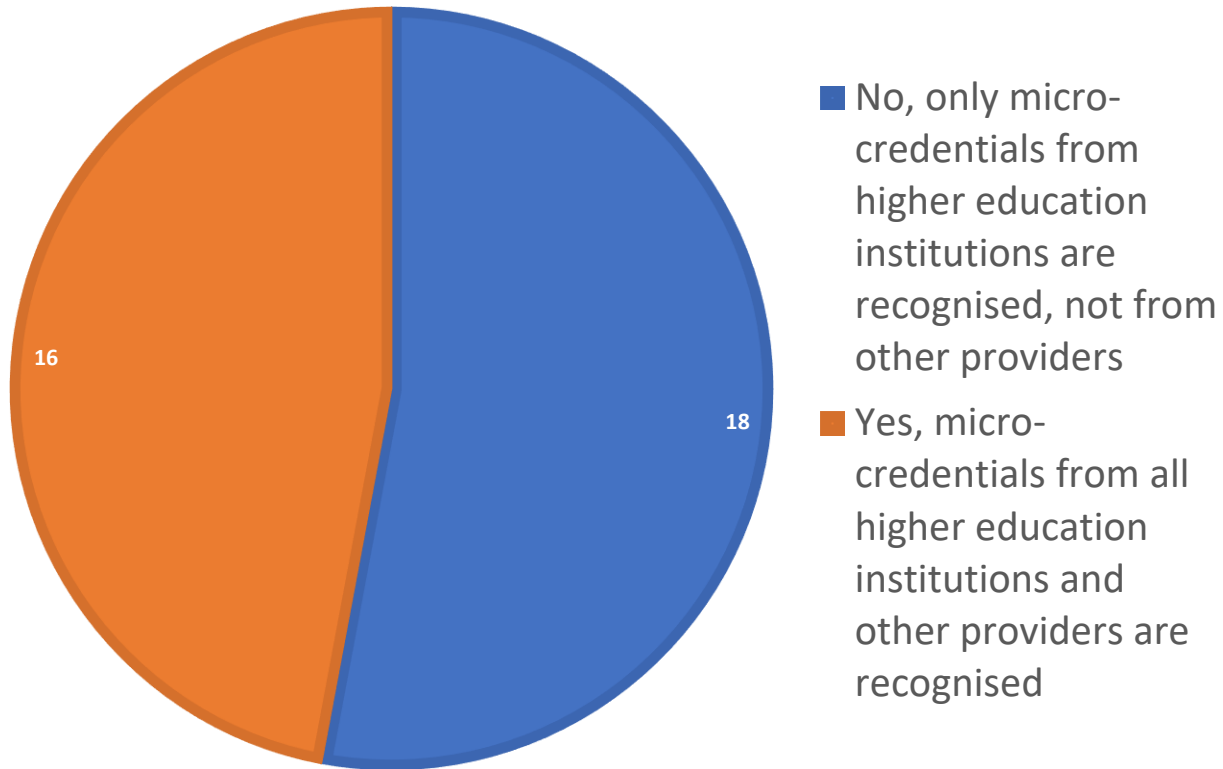
- Quality of the study programme
- Verification of the certificate
- Level of the study programme
- Learning outcomes
- Workload
- Assessment procedures

# Purpose to recognise micro-credentials



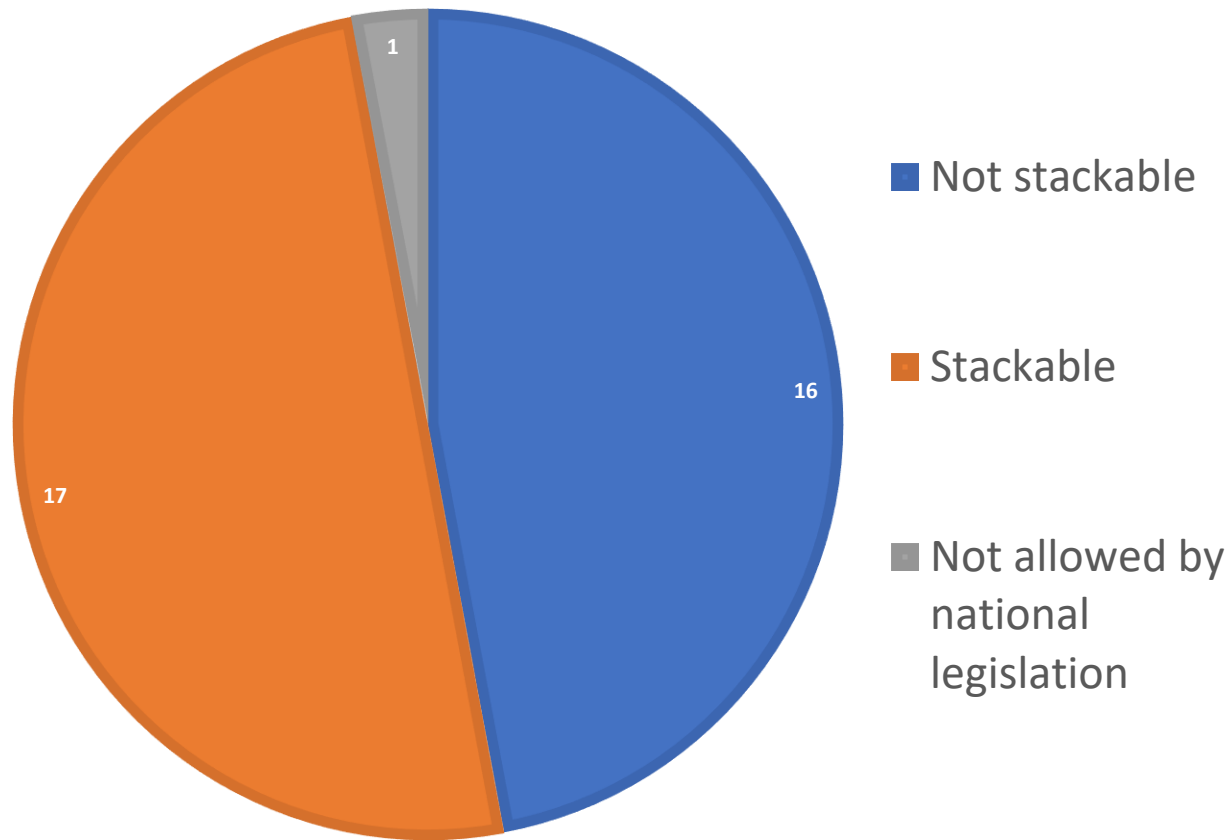


# Recognition of micro-credentials offered by non HE providers



- Only from HEIs: 18 countries
- From HEIs and other providers: 16 countries

# Stackability of micro-credentials

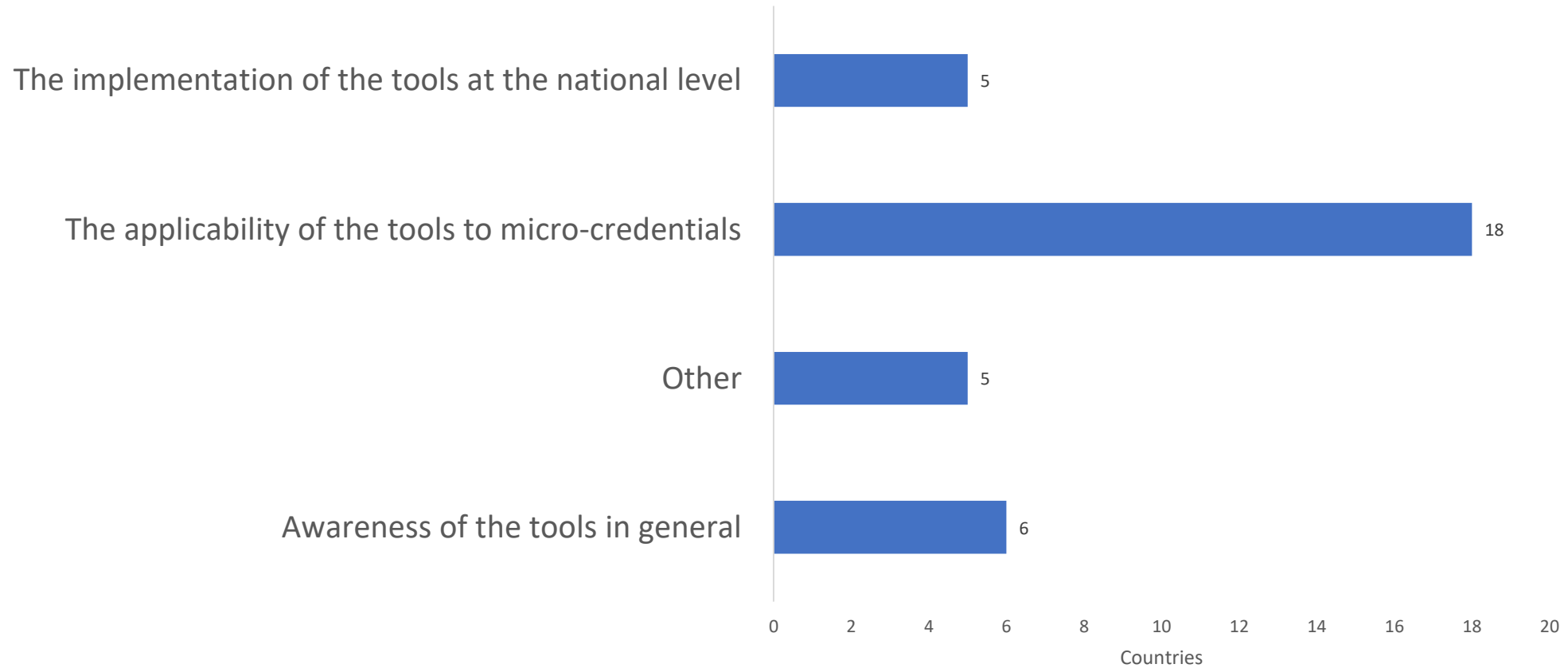


- **Learners can accumulate MCs:** 17 countries
  - Most countries (8) recognise MCs in a full degree programme;
- **Learners cannot accumulate MCs:** 16 countries
- **Not allowed by national legislation:** 1 country

# **Section 3**

## **Challenges regarding the application of Bologna tools to micro-credentials**

# Biggest challenges to apply Bologna Key Commitments to micro-credentials



# Points raised

- Need for common understanding and terminology;
- Tools should apply first and foremost to the full degrees, and then may be applied to micro-credentials;
- Key challenge: the adoption of the Common Framework;
- MCs already offered by a broad range of non formal providers without the use of Bologna tools (ECTS, NFQ, QA, etc.) and employers/individuals appear to accept these. Challenge in moving from this situation to a more “regulated” environment;
- Challenge not lie in the tools but rather in the cooperation to be developed between the different providers of education, vocational training and enterprises;
- Need to adapt the evaluation process to flexible learning paths and particularly micro-credentials. However, they need to meet essential criteria related to quality assurance, recognition of the credential by the national authorities, the position in the NQF and clear learning outcomes.



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**Thanks for your attention!**



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