Proposal for a Council Recommendation on

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

A European Approach to Micro-Credentials

An initiative of
European Commissioners
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European Skills
Agenda

European
Education Area

Digital Education
Action Plan

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Problems to be tackled

- Policy challenge:
growing number of people need to update their knowledge, skills and competences (green and digital transitions, COVID-19 recovery)

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

  - ➤ value and understanding of micro-credentials not always clear

  - ➤ wide range of providers (education and training, private sector)

  - ➤ questions on quality, 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 **60%** of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030

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

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Evidence gathering and analysis

Open Public Consultation
(April to July 2020)

> 500 replies
> 90 position papers

Empirical evidence NESET, OECD, Cedefop, Erasmus+ projects such MICROBOL

Wide, targeted consultation with education, training, lifelong learning, labour market stakeholders

Social Partners Hearing

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Objectives

- Enable people 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 from COVID-19 and just transitions to the green and digital economy

- **Support the preparedness of providers** of micro-credentials to enhance the 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, in a context of demographic change and throughout all phases of economic cycles

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Scope

- Proposal covers micro-credentials & policies that can support their effective **design** and **use**

- Micro-credentials can be used to complement & enhance education, training, lifelong learning and employability ecosystems

- The proposal does not seek to replace or disrupt existing systems or qualifications

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

- The proposals 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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Outline of the proposal

'Building Blocks'

Common definition of micro-credentials

Standard elements

Principles for the design and Issuance of micro-credentials
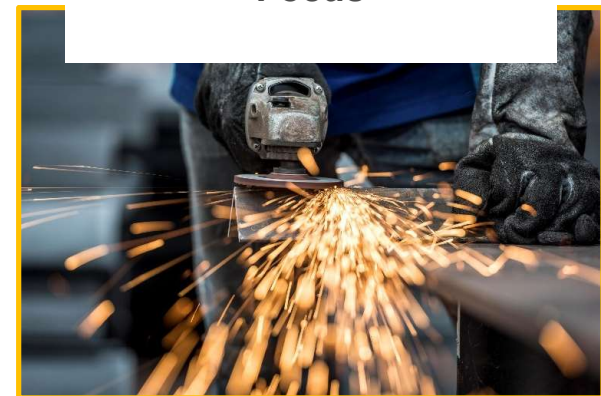
Recommendations

Development of ecosystems for micro-credentials

Deliver on the potential of micro-credentials

Commission Support

Focus

Education, training and skills policies

Active Labour Market Policies

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Common **definition** for 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 standards.

Courses 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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Union **Standard elements** to describe a micro-credential

- Identification of the **learner**
- **Title** of the micro-credential
- **Country/Region of the issuer**
- **Awarding body**
- 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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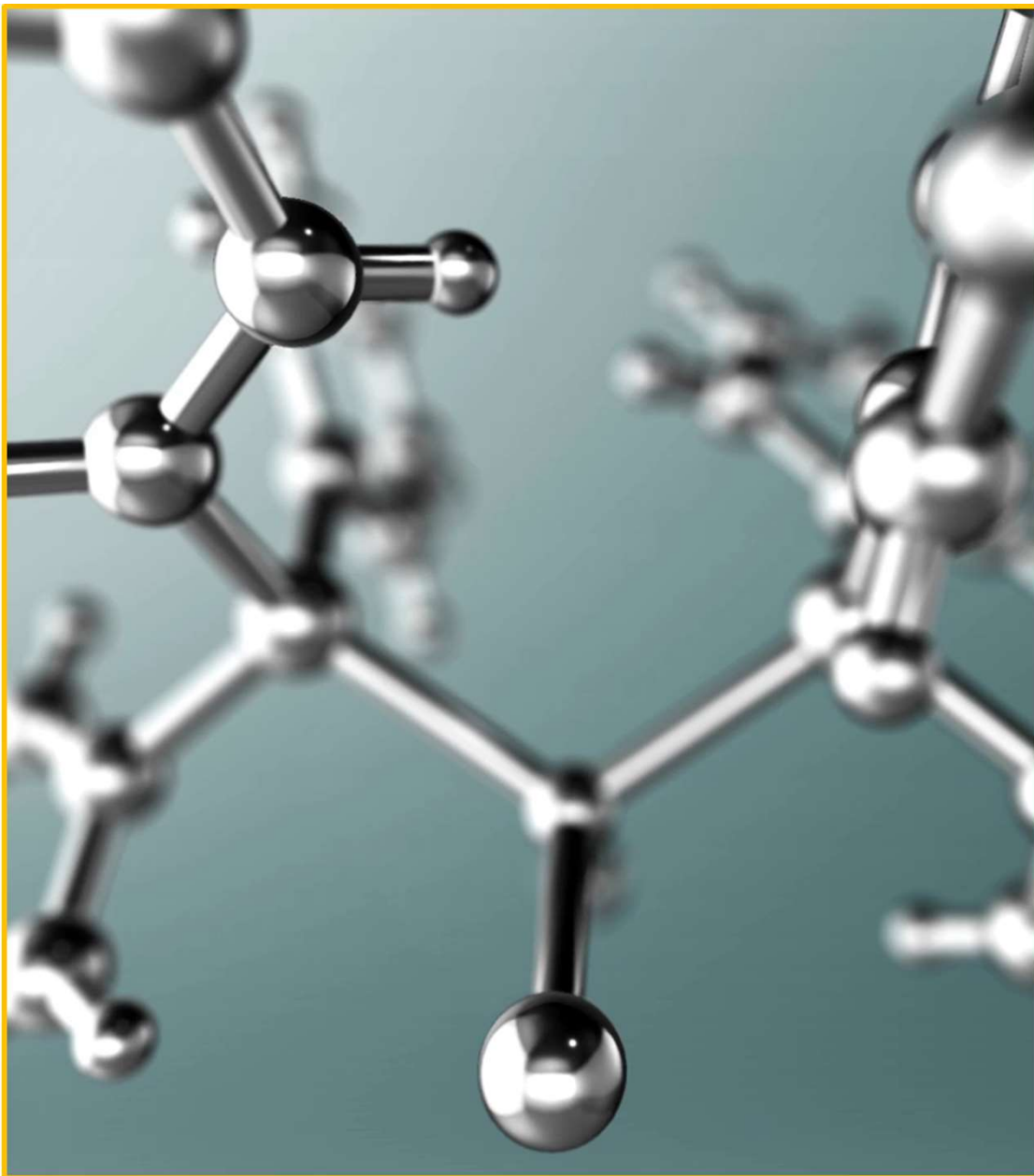
Union **principles for design and issuance** of micro-credentials

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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Development of ecosystem for MCs
Systems

Formal learning

- **Support exploration of MCs by HEIs (**European Universities Alliances)

- **Support exploration of MCs by VET Providers** (COVEs)

Non-formal + informal learning

- **Non-formal providers** incl. employers, social partners, civil society organisations, local authorities & private providers

- Promoting the development of MCs designed & approved by employers' and workers' representatives **through social dialogue**

- **Adaptation of validation/RPL processes**

Quality and Transparency

- apply, adapt and develop **quality assurance mechanisms for MCs**

- supporting the use of **'skills-intelligence' systems** to identify needs to develop or update MCs

- ensuring that providers **publish catalogues of MCs**

- **integrate MCs in NQFs**, where relevant.

Deliver on the potential of micro-credentials

**Active Labour Market Policies**

- address **skills challenges (bottlenecks, skills shortages)**
- **upskill and reskill workers** (links with ILAs)
- **support target groups** (self-employed, vulnerable groups, youth)
- national implementation of **EASE Recommendation**
- to meet **regulatory requirements** for jobs/work (e.g. licences, mandatory training and permits)

Education, training and skills policies

- publish MCs in **national catalogues** of courses
- improve **access and transitions** in education and training for all learners, incl. disadvantaged + vulnerable
- improve **digital skills + green skills**
- for professional continuous development of **teachers and scholars**
- for the prompt transfer of the latest research findings into learning opportunities
- to **challenge gender and other discriminatory stereotypes**

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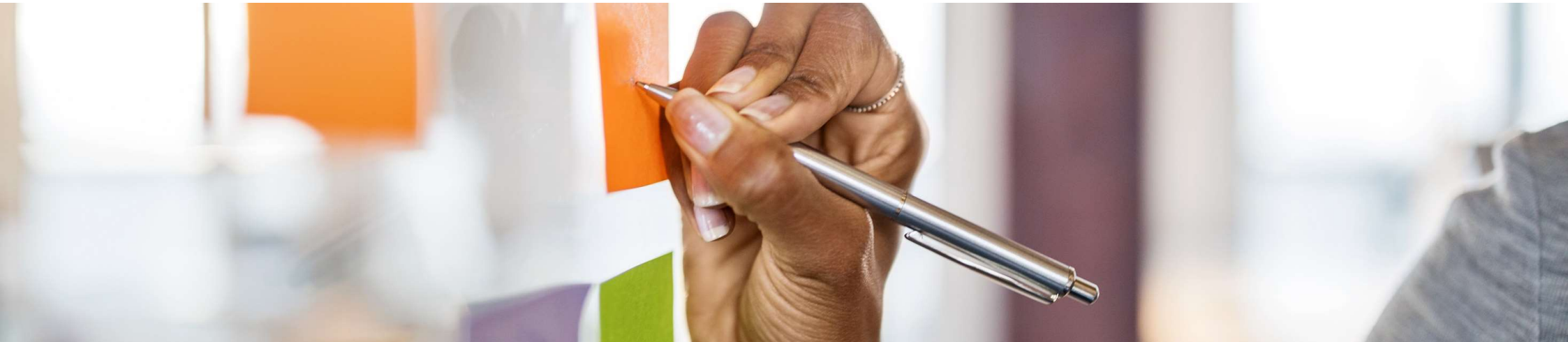
Member State Implementation

- define measures by **building on relevant national arrangements and financial frameworks** to implement this Recommendation

  - national resource allocations as appropriate

  - links with individual learning accounts

- **make best use of Union funds and instruments**

  - support the necessary reforms, enabling framework, development and use of micro-credentials.

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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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Thank you