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REKTORU PADOME



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RECOGNITION
AND EQUIVALENCE OF DIPLOMAS



POLISH NATIONAL AGENCY
FOR ACADEMIC EXCHANGE



ArmEnic

National Information Center for
Academic Recognition and Mobility



BA SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS AND FINANCE



Dearbhú Cáilíochta
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and
Qualifications Ireland

Supporting transparency of higher education: **Online course catalogues reflecting information on micro-credentials**

Introduction to OCTRA 2 project

ENIC/NARIC project “Online course catalogues and databases for transparency and recognition 2” 2023 – 2024

Aim

To further explore [online course catalogues with a special focus on the micro-credentials](#) for providing support to HEIs in providing reliable information on HE qualifications including micro-credentials

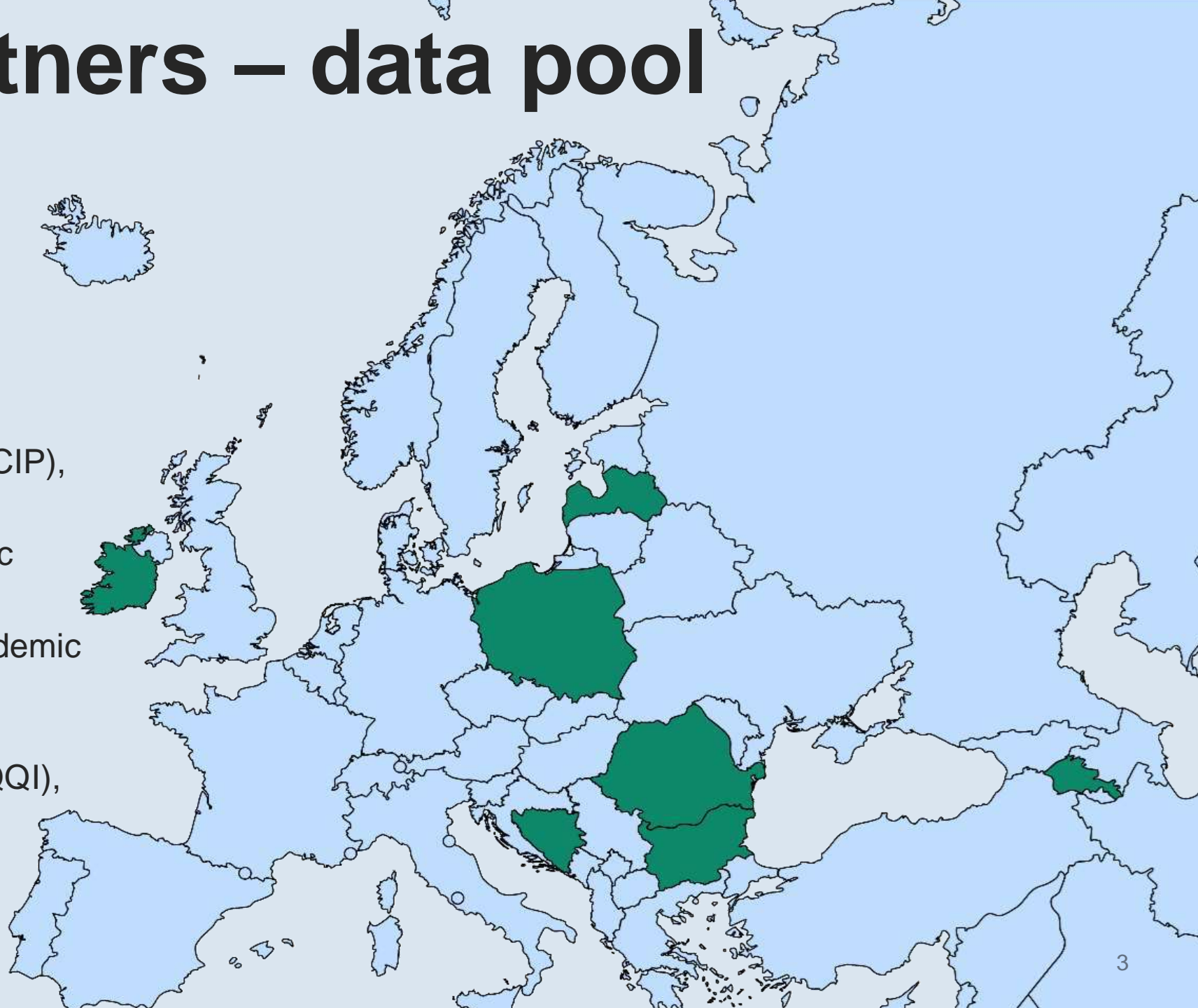
Main tasks

- desk research to explore [national practices, recommendations or approaches to micro-credentials and online course catalogues](#)
- improve and adapt the [guidelines on online course catalogues](#) (study programmes, courses, micro-credentials)
- strengthen the [dialogue between HEIs and ENICS, NARICs, credential evaluators](#) and other stakeholders involved in recognition



OCTRA 2 partners – data pool

- Academic Information Centre (AIC, coordinator), [Latvia](#)
- National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID), [Bulgaria](#)
- National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED), [Romania](#)
- Qualifications in Higher Education (CIP), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)
- Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA), [Poland](#)
- National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility (ArmEnic), [Armenia](#)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), [Ireland](#)
- BA School of Business and Finance (BASBF), Latvia
- Council of Rectors of Latvia (LRC), Latvia



OCTRA 2 project – outcomes

01.01.2023 – 31.12.2024

Main outcomes:

- Explored national practices, recommendations or approaches to micro-credentials and online course catalogues → country reports and **comparative study report**
- **Guidelines** on the information provision on study programmes, study courses and micro-credentials for the use of credential evaluation
- **Strengthened the dialogue** between HEIs and ENIC/NARIC offices:
 - [Peer learning activity](#) (20.03.2024) in Warsaw, Poland
 - Six national workshops in the partner countries (05-06.2024)
 - [International conference](#) (17.10.2024) in Riga and online

Project website:

<https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/octra-2>



Comparative Report

Main objective of study – identify national approaches to HE level micro-credentials, based on Country Reports

Using the concept and framework of the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials:

Micro-credential means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning.. Micro-credentials may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance measures following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity

Comparative Report: methodology of exploration of national approaches to micro-credentials

The Country Reports covered:

1. Overall situation in the country regarding the **regulatory framework and existing guidelines** (national/regional level documents) on course catalogues and micro-credentials
2. **Analysis of data** collected in the **surveys of HEIs**
3. **In-depth case studies** on course catalogues and micro-credentials (interviews)
4. Description of NQD and other online information sources
5. Conclusions and proposed national level recommendations for improvements of course catalogues, NQD (if applicable) and information provision on micro-credentials

Information sources (Country Reports)

Country Reports of OCTRA 2 :

- Academic Information Centre ([Latvia](#))
- Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#))
- Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange ([Poland](#))
- National Centre for Information and Documentation ([Bulgaria](#))
- National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility ([Armenia](#))
- National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas ([Romania](#))

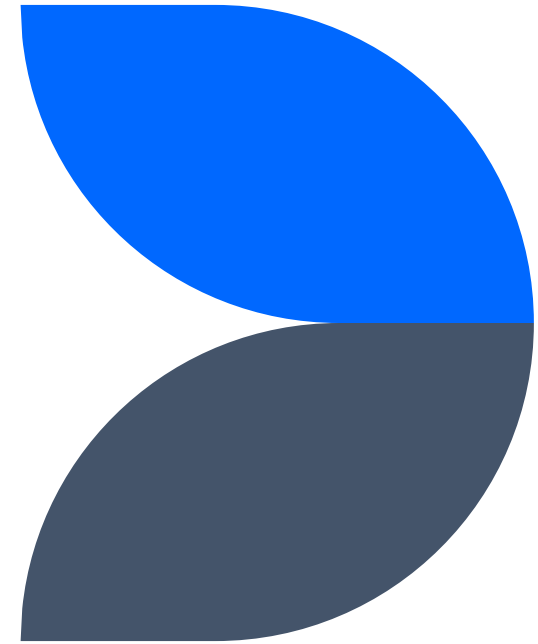
On information provision on learning leading to micro-credentials:

On information provision on learning leading to micro-credentials:

- National legislation (definition, information provision, recognition and validation practices)
- Survey of HEIs (146 responses)
- Interviews with HEIs (28 interviews)

Findings

on micro-credentials



National legislation and recommendations

Country	Definition of micro-credentials	National level guidelines / recommendations	Publicly accessible information
Armenia	✗	✗	✗
Bosnia and Herzegovina	✗	In development ✗	✗
Bulgaria	✗	✗	✗
Latvia	✗	✗	✗
Poland	✗	✗	✓
Romania	✓	In development ✗	✓

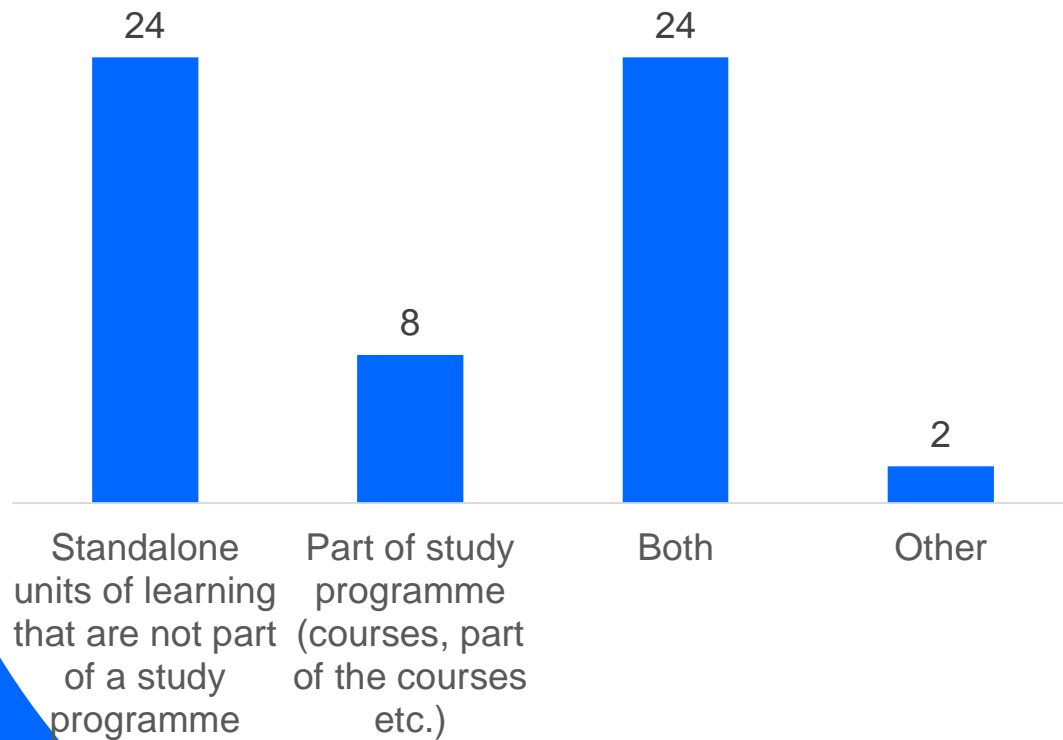
Survey (of HEIs) data

Country	Number of disseminated questionnaires	Number of completed questionnaires
Armenia	17	9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	39	19
Bulgaria	52	13
Latvia	52	23
Poland	350	60
Romania	17	17
Ireland	5	5
Total	532	146

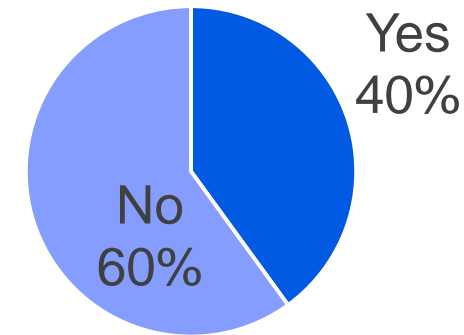


Provision and type

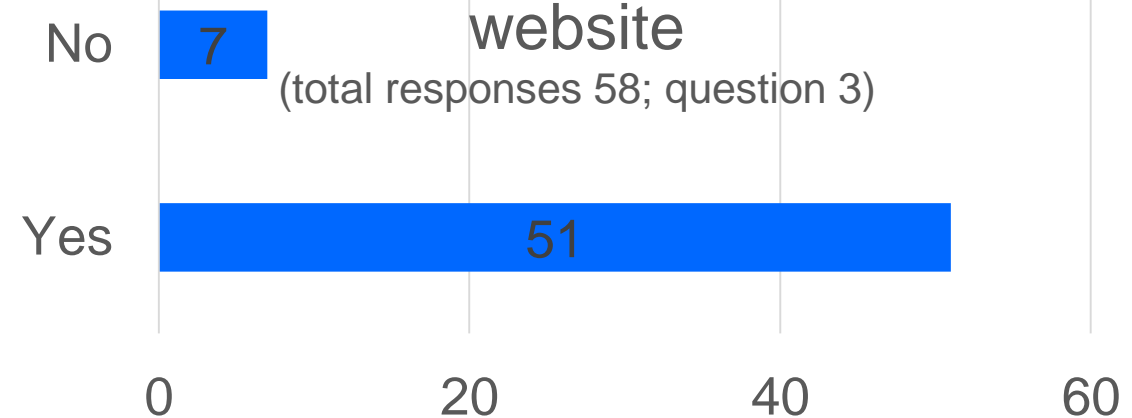
Type of micro-credential/smaller learning unit
(total responses 58; question 2)



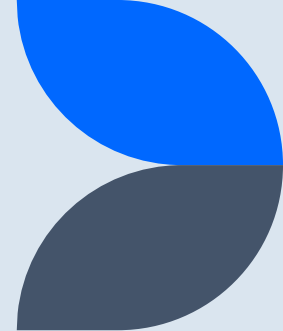
Provision of micro-credentials/smaller learning units
(total responses 146; question 1)



Information provision on HEI's website
(total responses 58; question 3)

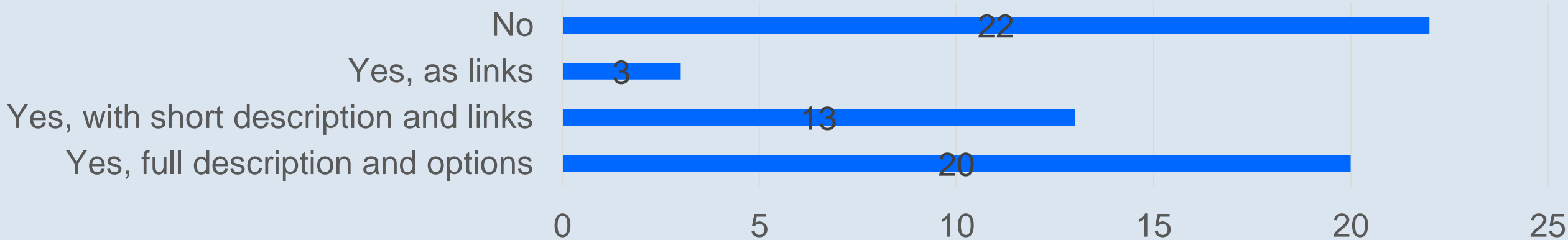


Information provision on micro-credentials



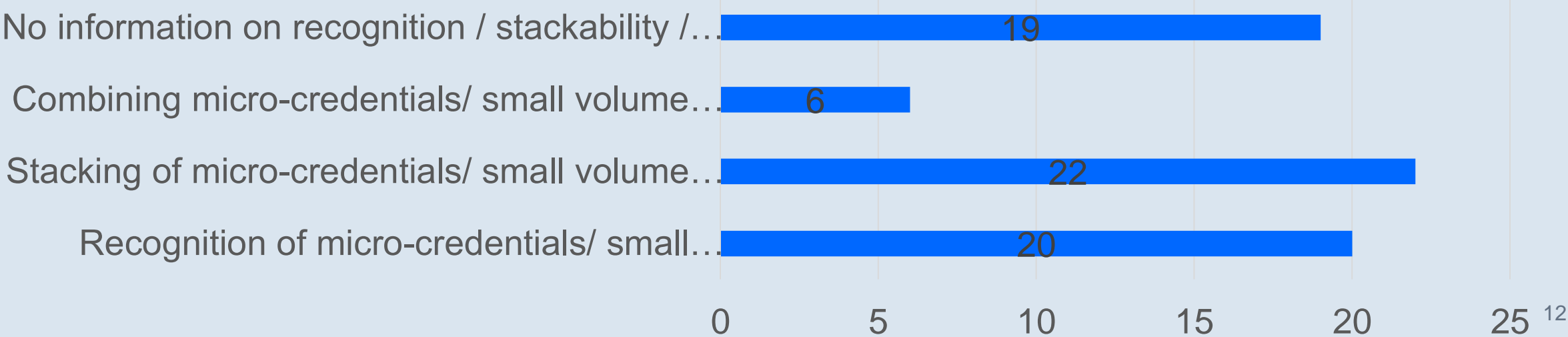
Linking information on micro-credentials/smaller learning units

(total responses 58; question 4)



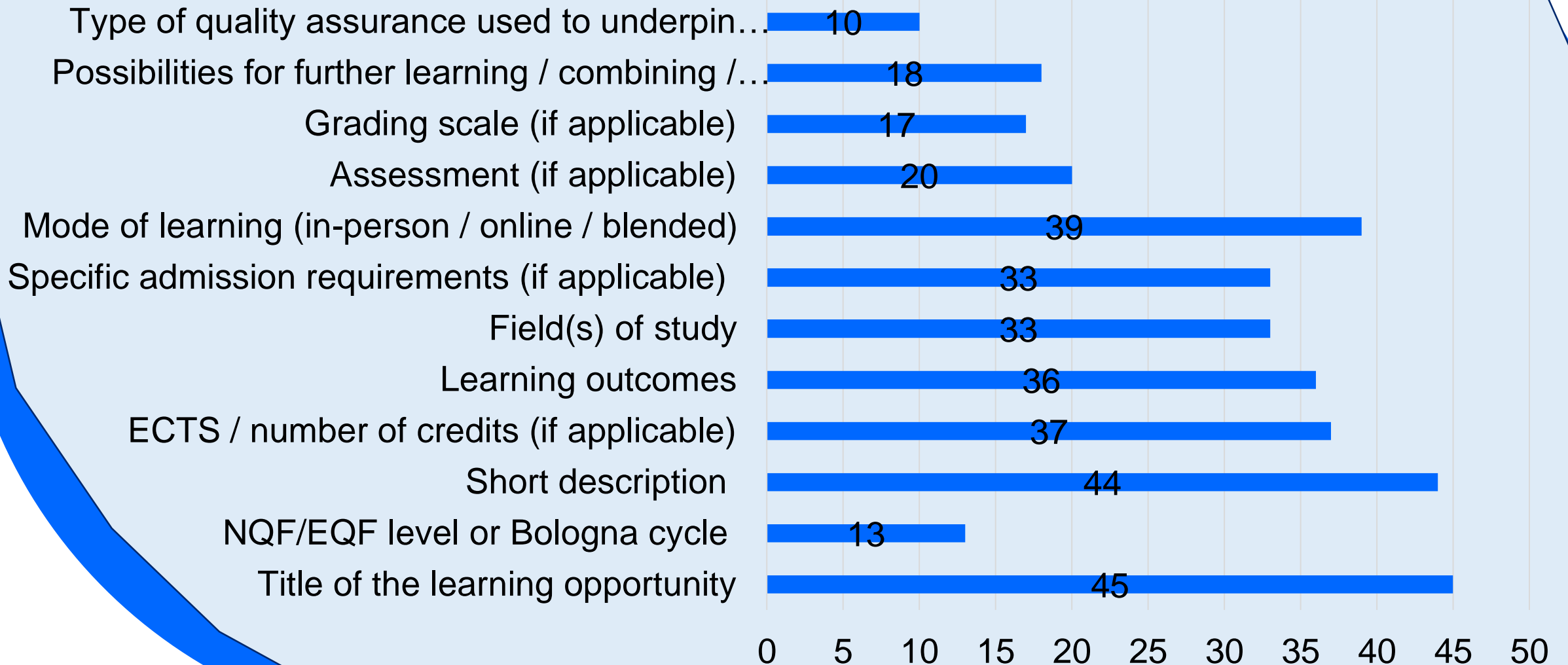
Providing information on integration possibilities of micro-credentials/SLUs

(N= 56; question 6)



Content of the information

(N=58; question 9)



Structured interviews with HEIs

Aim of the interviews – to gain a insight into [purpose and availability of micro-credentials](#) in HE, as well as [way how information](#) on these learning opportunities [is presented and](#) raise the awareness of representatives of the HEIs about micro-credentials and improve their understanding of the Recommendation (2022)

Country	Number of interviews
Armenia	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5
Bulgaria	10
Latvia	3
Poland	3
Romania	3
Total	28

Area of inquiry:

- 1) Type / field of leaning opportunities provided by HEIs, *that can be considered a micro-credential*
- 2) Reasoning for providing this type / field of learning opportunities
- 3) Information provision practices
- 4) Content of the information

Main findings of interviews

Education offer

- Study courses and modules
- Professional development programmes
- Education programmes implemented according to external regulation for certification
- Leisure education programmes

Information provided

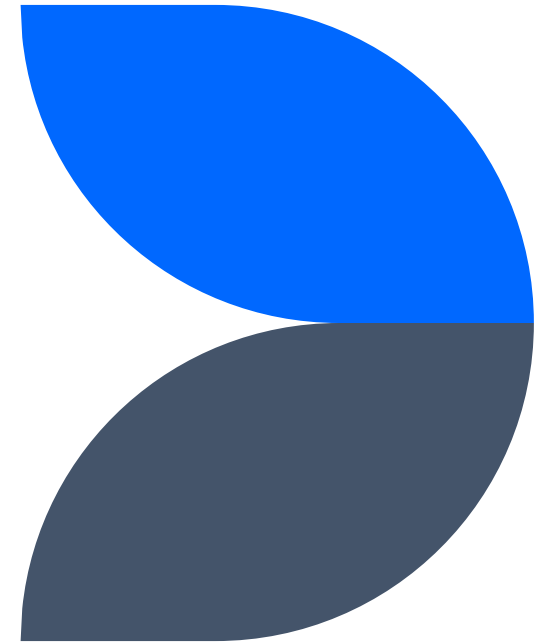
Information on smaller learning units is provided by all HEIs, **but**

- little consistency in information provided (depends on type of learning)
- information often available only during implementation of specific learning experience
- poor information on possible further learning pathways



Conclusions

on micro-credentials



Based on the survey data

There is still a lack of understanding on a national level on the **concept of a micro-credential** and what type of learning can be considered to be a micro-credential

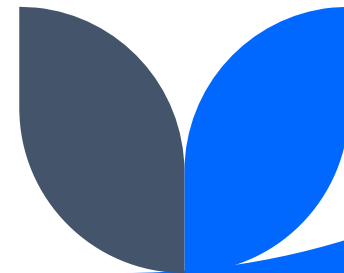
Many HEIs provide **learning opportunities outside formal study programmes**, these learning units not always are part of existing study programmes

Information on learning opportunities outside formal study programmes can be found either on **HEIs' websites or other information platforms**

Information provided by HEIs on micro-credentials / smaller learning units offered by HEIs in many, but not in all cases, covers information highlighted by **Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability**

Based on the in-depth case studies

- HEIs provide **various smaller learning units**
- HEIs representatives primarily see that smaller learning units were chosen by learners because they give a chance to **improve person's professional qualification in a shorter time**
- HEIs implement this type of learning as it is an **additional revenue** for many HEIs and **there is a demand**



Information on qualifications valued by credential evaluators

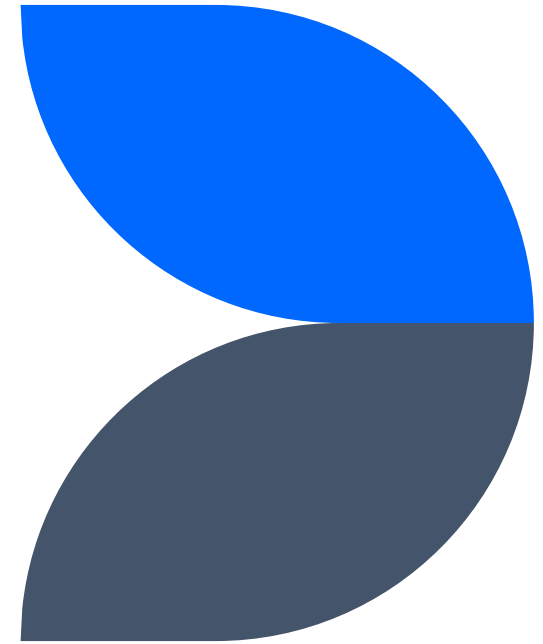
Identified **12** information elements on micro-credentials **needed for their recognition**

Based on:

- Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and European Area for Recognition Manual (2023)
- Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability

Recommendations

on micro-credentials



In line with:

Recommendations and Guidelines on Micro-Credentials

Prepared in the terms of EHEA TPG A Working Group on Micro-Credentials (2023)

Importance of the transparency of the micro-credentials:

HEIs should include programmes leading to micro-credentials in course catalogues, clearly explaining all the opportunities, conditions, rules and procedures in relation to micro-credentials. Description of micro-credentials should be easily available online for all users

HEIs as well as alternative providers should keep the all the records and store all the data as regards micro-credentials in the same manner as they keep data on students and graduates of degree programmes. This is important for reliability of credentials awarded, verification of credentials whenever required and for improving transparency and trust between the stakeholders

Following **elements of information** regarding smaller learning units leading to micro-credentials should be provided by HEIs (for their recognition):

1. Title of the learning opportunity (including title of the issued credential)
2. NQF/EQF level or Bologna cycle
3. Short description
4. Type of quality assurance used to underpin the micro-credential/smaller unit of learning
5. Workload expressed in measurable manner (if possible, in ECTS/number of credits)
6. Learning outcomes
7. Field(-s) of study
8. Specific admission requirements (if applicable)
9. Mode of learning (in-person/online/blended)
10. Assessment (if applicable)
11. Grading scale (if applicable)
12. Possibilities for further learning/combining/stacking

HEIs should be encouraged to provide a general description on succeeding aspects:

- 1) National practices of recognition of non-formal and in-formal education (if applicable)
- 2) The HEI's procedures for implementing validation of non-formal and in-formal education (if applicable)
- 3) Credit transfer system and procedures of implementing these practices in HEI
- 4) Possibilities of stacking or combining smaller learning units for education opportunities in other study programmes offered by HEI
- 5) Further application(-s) of micro-credential in other education institutions and/or labour market (if applicable)
- 6) Information on recognition of smaller learning units (stacked micro-credentials)
- 7) Information about student support and information systems to encourage enquiry and engagement at local level



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Thank You!

OCTA 2 webpage:

<https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/octra-2>