Example of Practice: Implementing Micro-credentials in Higher Education Institutions

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What is FORTHEM Alliance?

forthem.

Fostering Outreach
within European Regions,
Transnational Higher Education
and Mobility

European Universities Alliance:

9 universities: 254 research centres and 23 campuses, 190 000 students (20 % foreign), 32 000 staff, 150 MA programmes, +2000 PhD programmes.

1. University of Latvia (Latvia);
2. Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Germany);
3. University of Valencia (Spain);
4. University of Burgundy (France);
5. University of Palermo (Italy);
6. University of Jyväskylä (Finland);
7. University of Opole (Poland);
8. Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (Romania);
9. University of Agder (Norway).

Experience in FORTHEM Alliance (1)

Picture by J.Nerenberga. FORTHEM workshop in University of Valencia, 30.01.-02.02.2024.
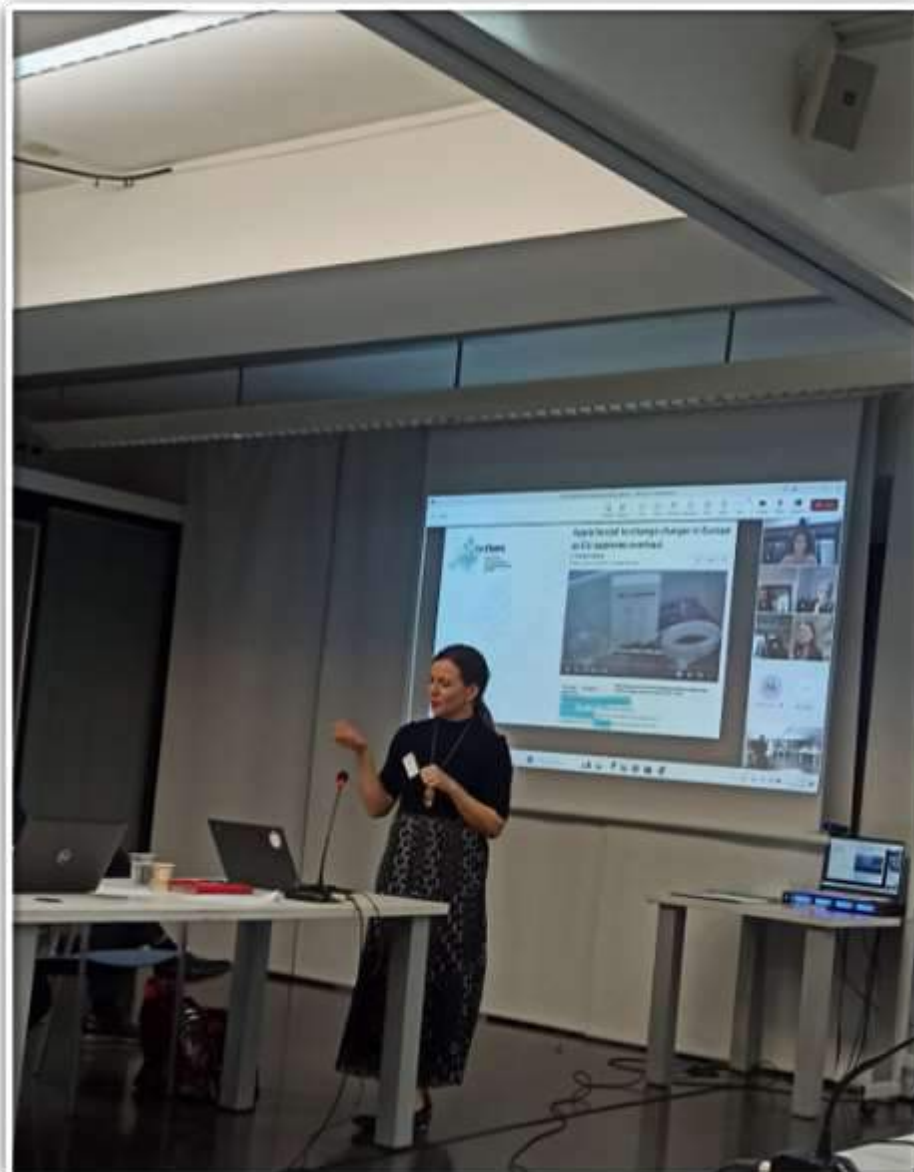
1,5 years of in-depth research:

✓ Situation and conditions for micro-credentials in each partner country.

✓ Different European education policies and different publications on the micro-credentials (OECD, Cedefop, KIC, ENQA, IMINQA etc.).

✓ Experience exchange with ECIU Alliance.

Experience in FORTHEM Alliance (2)

Picture by J.Nerenberga. FORTHEM workshop in University of Valencia, 30.01.-02.02.2024.

✓ Developed a definition of micro-credentials.

✓ Defined every element of micro-credentials.

✓ Developed scenarios for issuing micro-credentials as European Digital Credentials (EDC), to connect them to the Europass.

✓ Identified recognition pathways for micro-credentials within and outside of FORTHEM Alliance.

Principles for the Design and Issuance of Micro-credentials

Quality

Transparency

Relevance

Assessment

Learning pathways

Recognition

Portability

Learner-centredness

Authentic

Provider; Quality standards

ECTS; NQF/ EQF

Targeted learning achievements and learning opportunities

Stackability; Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Identity verification of a learner; Legal identity of issuer; Date and location of issuance
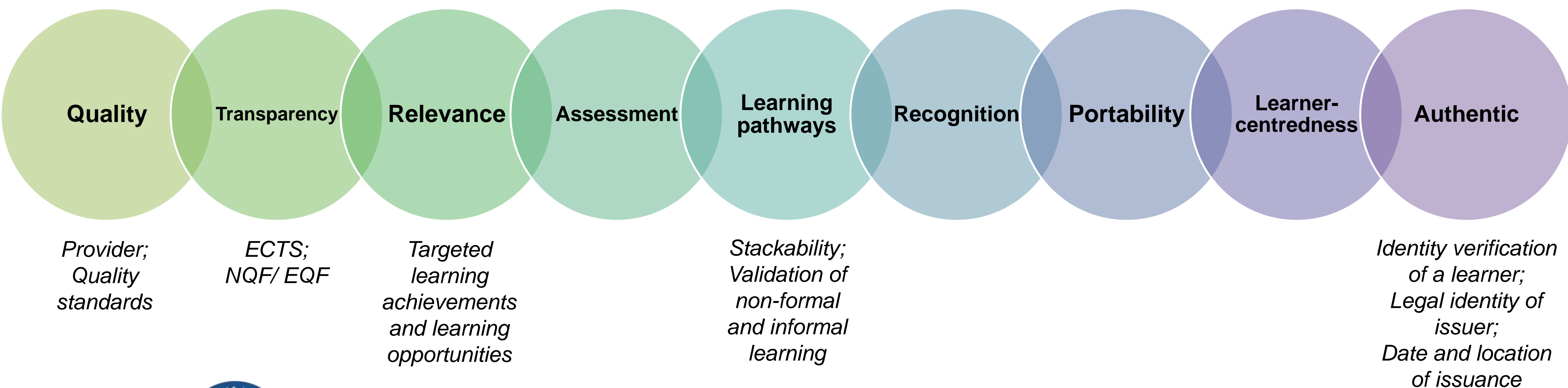
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Council of the European Union. *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability*. Annex 2. 2021. **https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/Micro-Credential%20Guidelines%20Final%20Delivery.pdf**

BENEFITS OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS

University as a place for everyone!

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Benefits for the Learner

- An opportunity to explore different fields and providers before choosing studies at the university.

- A pathway to further studies in higher education.

- Re- and up**skilling**.

- To build digital, portable and stackable skills/ competence profiles supporting employment.

- Flexibility and learner-centredness.

Benefits for the University: *general*

- Attracting a diverse target audience.

- Additional income opportunities.

- Expanded opportunities for cooperation with representatives of different fields, sectors and labour market.

- Attracting and maintaining the connection with the university graduates.

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Benefits for the University:
internal

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- An opportunity for university researchers to test their ideas and topics outside of rigid study programmes.
- A way to receive some feedback to improve and modernise the study process in general.
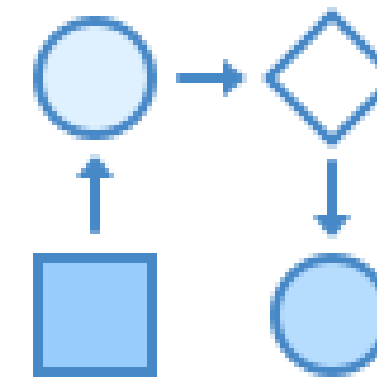- An additional platform to communicate research results.

Implementation of Micro-credentials at the University of Latvia

✓ Developed and presented the concept of micro-credentials.

✓ In the process of:

❑ reviewing internal documents to integrate micro-credentials in the existing quality assurance system;

❑ developing skills and competences catalogue and mapping tool;

❑ exploring digital solutions for developing a micro-credential course catalogue and platform for learners.

Challenges: general

Ongoing uncertainty about the state regulation of micro-credentials:

- We can implement micro-credentials, but we can't call them 'micro-credentials'.

- Many different digital technologies that are currently in different stages of development and would include micro-credentials in the future on a national level.

- Insufficient cooperation between national level projects and decision-makers.
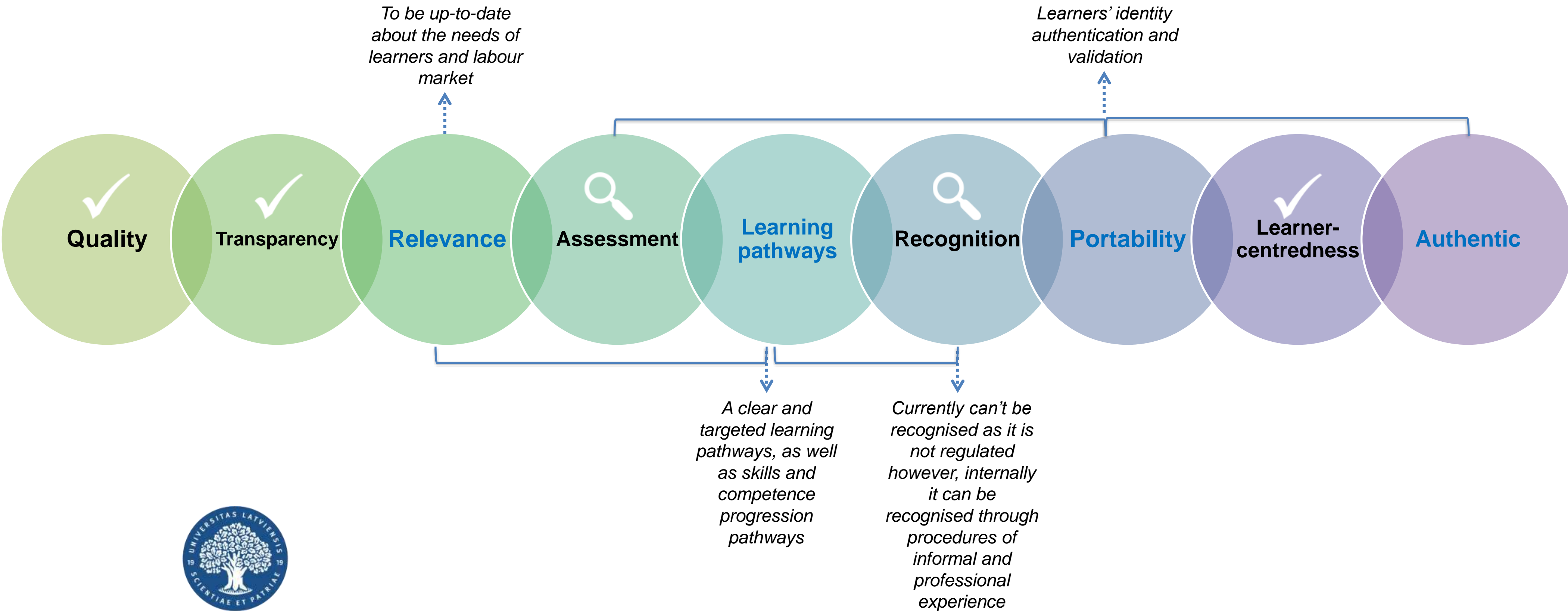
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Challenges: specific

- Developing a targeted, long-term algorithm of micro-credential opportunities for learners (selection and/ or development of micro-credential courses, modules etc.).

- Developing a skills and competences classification and catalogue and mapping tool as a backbone to provide targeted and long-term micro-credential opportunities.

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Principles for the Design and Issuance of Micro-credentials

To be up-to-date about the needs of learners and labour market

Learners' identity authentication and validation

Quality
Transparency
Relevance
Assessment
Learning pathways
Recognition
Portability
Learner-centredness
Authentic

A clear and targeted learning pathways, as well as skills and competence progression pathways

Currently can't be recognised as it is not regulated however, internally it can be recognised through procedures of informal and professional experience

Conclusion

Micro-credentials are an opportunity:

- to provide flexible, learner-centered and ever changing skills and competences for the learner that might be difficult to do with rigid degree studies;

- to open the university up for different opportunities to attract more learner's, and provide a competitive educational opportunities to wider public;

- to cooperate more closely between different institutions.

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Thank you!

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