

European policy experimentation in higher education:  
piloting a joint European degree label  
ERASMUS-EDU-2022-POL-EXP-EUdegree

# European Degree Label

## main challenges and opportunities



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# Introduction & Agenda

# Our speakers



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Vice-Rector  
Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

# Agenda

- 'Pilot a Joint European Degree Label': call concept and specific objectives
- The EDLab project
- Group work

# Pilot a joint European degree label

Call concept and specific objectives

Ref: ERASMUS-EDU-2022-POL-EXP-EUdegree

# EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR UNIVERSITIES

SUPPORTING AND ENABLING  
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS  
ACROSS EUROPE



Strengthen the European dimension in higher  
education and research



Consolidate universities as lighthouses of our  
European way of life



Empower universities as key actors of change in  
the twin green and digital transitions



Reinforce universities as drivers of Europe's  
global role and leadership

**Council Conclusions adopted by  
EYCS Council 5 April 2022**

# Strong call from higher education sector to act

Evolving context - intensification of transnational cooperation



**UNIVERSITIES FACE OBSTACLES FOR ENGAGING MORE EFFECTIVELY IN TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**92%**

of universities identified the **elimination of legal and administrative obstacles** as a **key issue**



- ❑ **Legal and administrative obstacles** to setup joint programmes and activities, including the award of joint degree, are **multiplied by the number of partners in an alliance** of HEIs in view of diverse national legislations
- ❑ **Uneven implementation of Bologna tools at national level** – quality assurance, ECTS
- ❑ **Difficulties to mutualise strengths and share joint resources** - financial, human, digital and physical resources, and services.

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION



**FACILITATING  
TRANSNATIONAL  
EDUCATIONAL  
ACTIVITIES**



**FIRST STEP  
TOWARDS:**

- Institutionalised cooperation instruments (e.g. legal status for alliances)
- Common criteria for a European label for joint programmes, followed possibly by voluntary joint degrees based on these European criteria



**SUSTAINABLE  
EUROPEAN  
UNIVERSITIES  
ALLIANCES**



**WIDENING THE  
IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE EUROPEAN  
STUDENT CARD  
INITIATIVE**

Reinforce **European transnational cooperation**  
by building bridges

Support **all higher education institutions**  
and enhance the **coherence** of European higher  
education systems

**Full implementation of existing instruments  
and exploring avenues for new ones**

Recommendation for **national reforms**  
and **European support**

**Council Recommendation adopted  
by EYCS Council 5 April**

# Two flagship initiatives



Explore common criteria leading to a potential **European label for joint programmes**, to be piloted as of 2022 under Erasmus+. Later on, the possible design and delivery, on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or institutional level, of joint degrees at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria, could be envisaged



**Erasmus + pilot call topic 1:**  
Pilot a joint European degree label



Examining the need for and feasibility of institutionalised cooperation instruments, such as a possible **legal status for alliances of higher education institutions**: pilot as of 2022 under Erasmus+ the implementation of existing European instruments



**Erasmus + pilot call topic 2:**  
Pilot institutionalised EU cooperation instruments to explore the feasibility for a possible European legal status for alliances of higher education institutions

# Key features of a possible joint degree

## Full respect of Member States competence

- would NOT be awarded by a European body
- would NOT replace national degrees or joint degrees
- criteria developed with Member States and HEIs

## Full respect of Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom

- criteria only covering general framework conditions for a specific type of joint degrees

# A step by step approach



## 2023: Test the co-developed criteria in selected pilots

The pilots will test the proposed criteria and make proposals for their optimisation and further steps.

## 2024 and beyond: follow up action at EU level

Analyse the results of the pilots to inform future possible developments towards a possible joint degree based on co- created European criteria.

# Specific objectives



Exploring and testing the relevance of the draft criteria

Exploring and recommending possible optimisation of the set of criteria

**Elaborating proposals** aiming to facilitate the development and implementation of joint degrees in Europe. This would **include proposing an approach for the delivery of joint degrees based on co-created European criteria.**

## Co-created set of criteria (Call Annex)

- Higher education institutions involved

- Transnational joint degree delivery

- Transparency of the learning outcomes

- Quality assurance arrangements

- Joint policies for the joint programme

- Transnational campus— access to services

## Co-created set of criteria (Call Annex)



- Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements

- Multilingualism

- Innovative learning approaches

- Graduate outcomes

- Inclusiveness and sustainability

# Call results

- **6 pilot-projects** selected by the European Commission
- First projects started in **March 2023**
- **High interest** of European Commission & European Parliament in project results



# The EDLab project

Objectives, partners and activities

# Main objective

The project aims to further the implementation of European and international joint degree programmes and the European Degree Label with special, but not exclusive, emphasis on four target countries facing obstacles of diverse nature:

**France, Italy, Portugal and Spain**





## Key information



# European policy experimentation in higher education: piloting a joint European degree label

- **Duration:** 12 months
- **Budget:** 200.000 EUR (EU contribution)
- **4 Alliances represented:** Arqus, ENLIGHT, EUTOPIA, SEA-EU
- **13 Full partners** from 5 countries
- **Diverse associate partners:** national ministries and quality assurance agencies, European and global university networks, student and alumni associations, along with other partner universities from our four alliances.





Full  
partners



- **UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA, Spain** (Coordinator) – **Arqus Alliance**
- **UNIVERSIDAD DE CADIZ, Spain** – **SEA-EU Alliance**
- **UNIVERSIDAD POMPEU FABRA, Spain**– **EUTOPIA Alliance**
- **UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE, Portugal** - **SEA-EU Alliance**
- **UNIVERSIDADE DO MINHO, Portugal**– **Arqus Alliance**
- **UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA, Portugal**– **EUTOPIA Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITA CA' FOSCARI VENEZIA, Italy**– **EUTOPIA Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI PARTHENOPE, Italy** - **SEA-EU Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA, Italy** – **Arqus Alliance**
- **CY CERGY PARIS UNIVERSITE, France** – **EUTOPIA Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITE DE BRETAGNE OCCIDENTALE, France** - **SEA-EU Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITE LYON 1 CLAUDE BERNARD, France** – **Arqus Alliance**
- **UNIVERSITEIT GENT, Belgium** – **ENLIGHT Alliance**



Associated  
partners



**National authorities:** Ministries responsible for higher education in Flanders (Belgium), France, Italy, Portugal and Spain

**Quality Assurance Agencies:** NVAO (BE), HCERES (FR), ANVUR (IT), A3ES (PT), Aneca, AQU and DEVA/ACCUU (ES), ECA

**Student associations:** European Student Union (ESU), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), local student associations (Minho, Padua....)

**Alumni associations:** Erasmus Mundus Alumni (EMA), Padua Alumni Association

**European Networks:** Coimbra Group, the Guild, Academic Cooperation Association

**Global University Networks:** Unimed, Montevideo Group (AUGM), CASA

**ENIC-NARIC:** CIMEA (IT)

**Universities from the participating alliances:** **Arqus:** Graz, Leipzig, Vilnius, Wroclaw; **ENLIGHT:** Bordeaux; Basque Country; **EUTOPIA:** Cluj, Ljubljana, Gothenburg, VU Brussels, Dresden, Warwick; **SEA-EU:** Split, Kiel, Gdansk, Nord, Malta.



EUROPEAN DEGREE LABEL  
Institutional Laboratory

Specific objectives  
& activities



## Mapping and Screening of existing joint programmes

- Analysing the **suitability of the criteria** proposed by the EC for the award of the ED Label in the call and screening existing joint programmes against them
- Analysing the **barriers** of all kinds existing for their fulfilment, with particular but not exclusive reference to **France, Italy, Portugal and Spain**

## Global attractiveness

- Analysing how an ED Label and joint programmes in general enhance the **global attractiveness** of the European Higher Education System

## Design and testing of the European Degree label

- Analysing the **procedure for the issue of an ED Label and its format**, along with potential barriers to be addressed
- Producing detailed and **robust recommendations** on the basis of findings



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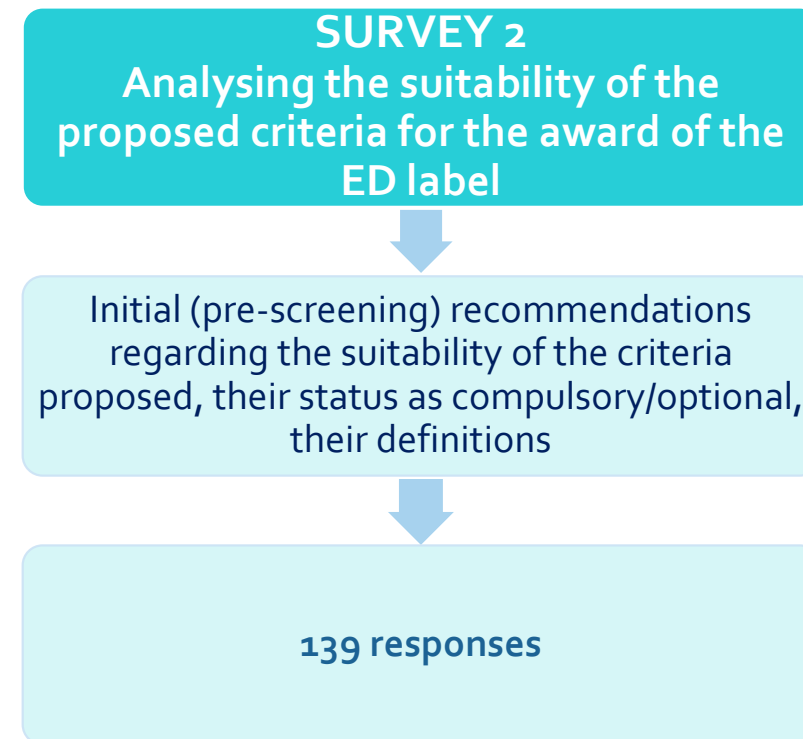
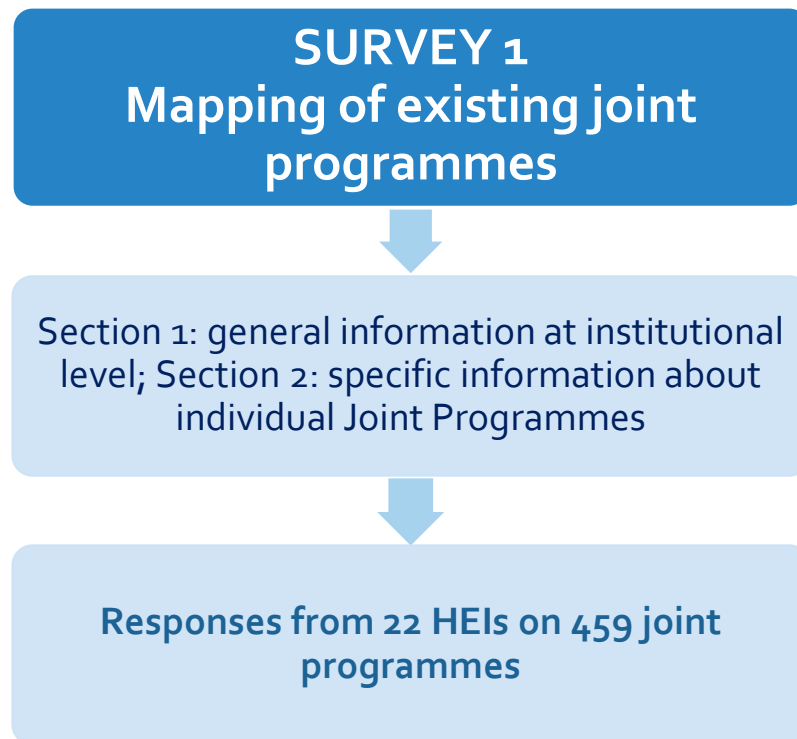
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Mapping and screening of existing JPs - State of affairs



## Mapping and screening of existing JPs - State of affairs



Screening and assessment of the fulfilment of the  
proposed criteria and existing barriers



### **SURVEY 3**

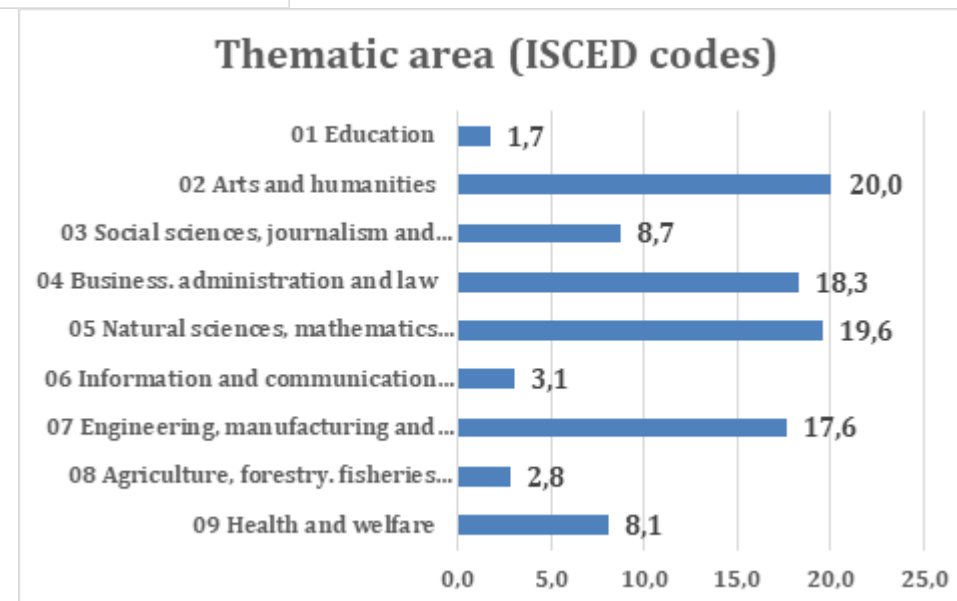
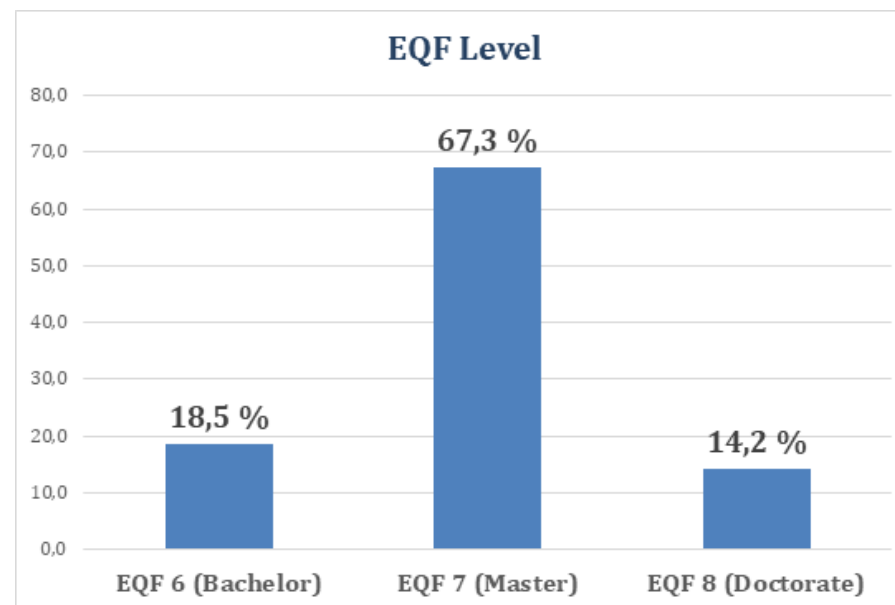
Comparison of each existing programme with the compulsory and optional criteria listed in the call. Including a grid analysis of the fulfilment of the criteria filled out by 155 JP programme coordinators



### **In-depth interviews or focus groups**

with coordinators, students, senior management within the consortium and beyond (QAAs, national authorities, partner universities) to analyse results of screening and identify barriers existing to further fulfilment of the criteria, by university, national context, cycle, discipline...

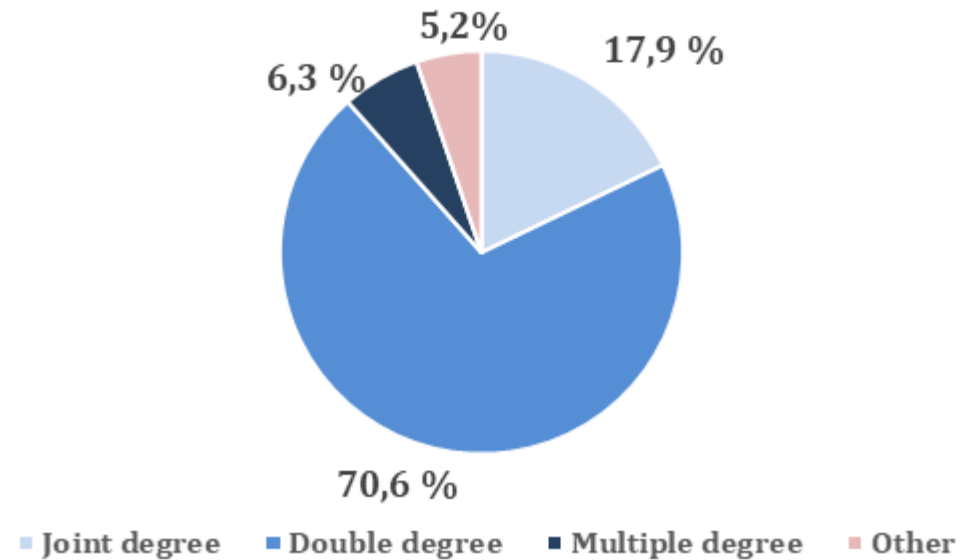
## Survey 1: some results



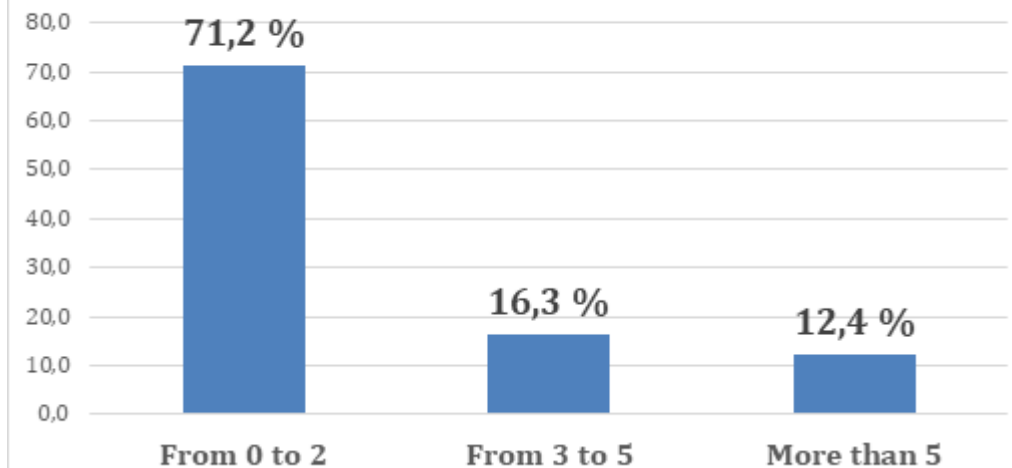
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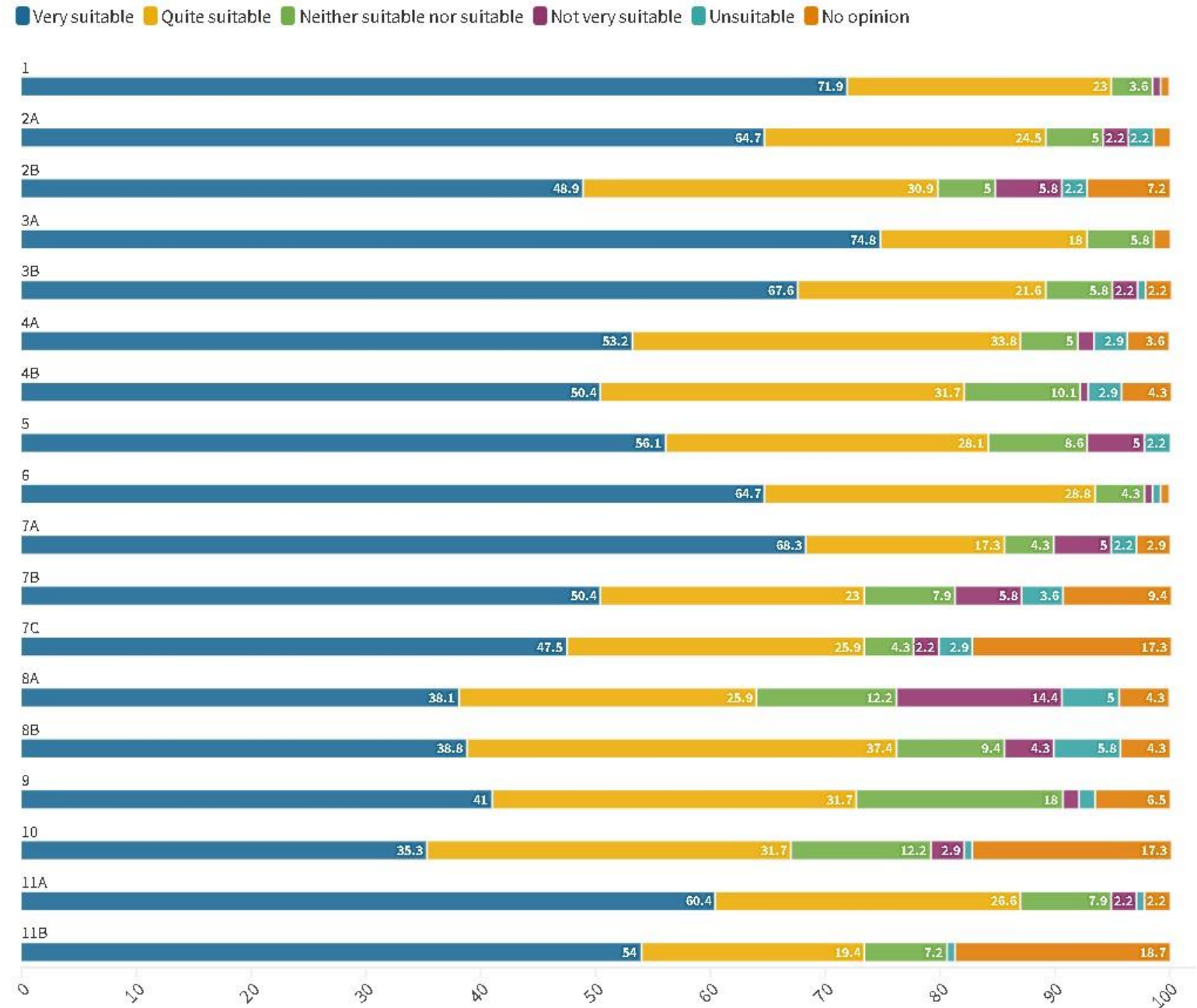
Type of degree awarded



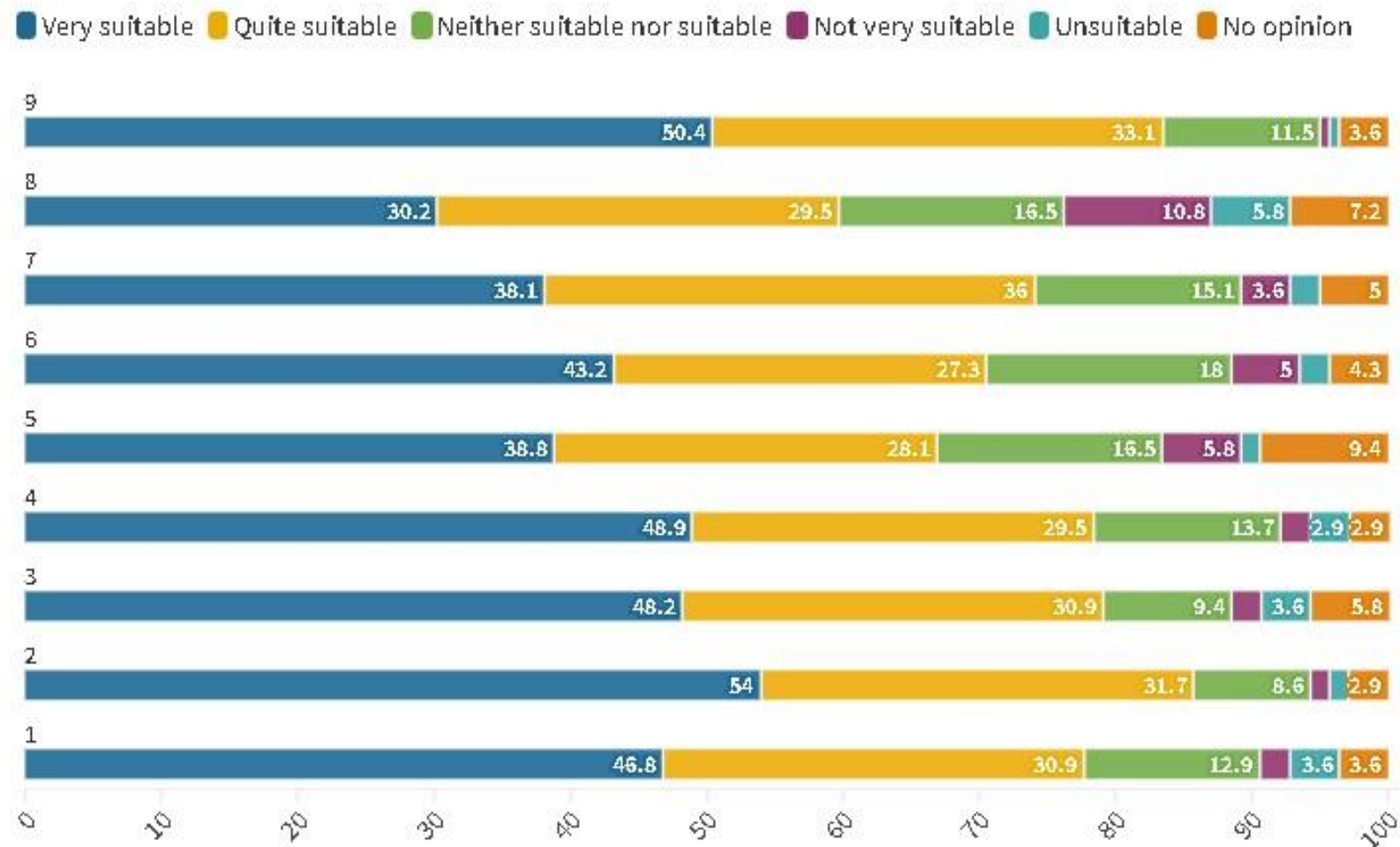
Total number of HEIs involved



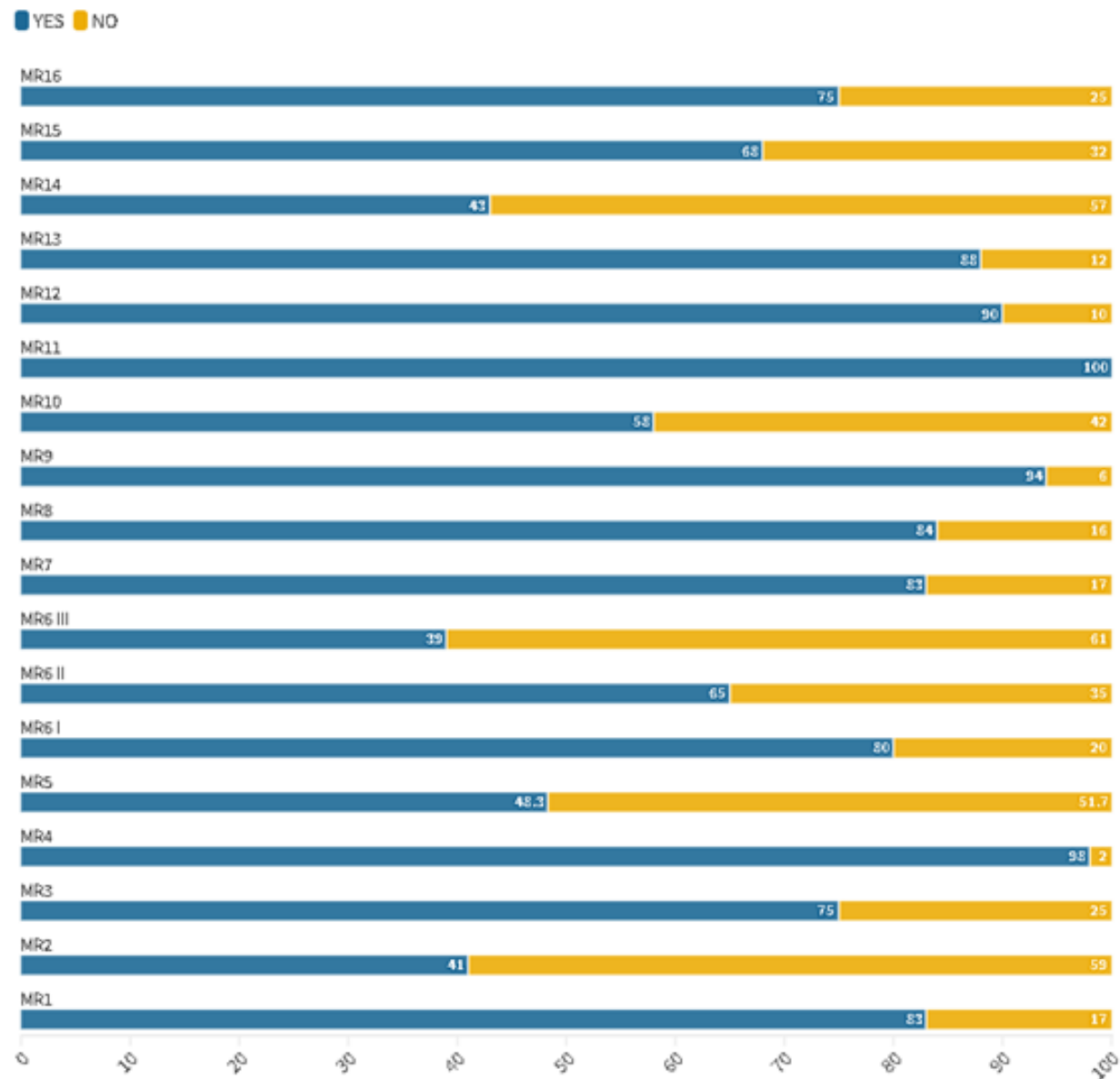
## Survey 2: some results



## Survey 2: some results



## Survey 3: some results



Fulfillment of minimum requirements - overview of results

## MR 6 (i)

Internal and external Quality Assurance is conducted in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

### EQF 6 & 7

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	115	80,4
No	28	19,6
Total	143	100,0

### EQF 8

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	75,0
No	3	25,0
Total	12	100,0



Survey 3: some results



## Survey 3: some results



### MR 6 (ii)

The programme, the study field or the institutions are accredited/evaluated by an EQAR registered agency.

#### EQF 6 & 7

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	91	63,6
No	52	36,4
Total	143	100,0

#### EQF 8

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	10	83,3
No	2	16,7
Total	12	100,0

## MR 6 (iii)

If external quality assurance is required at programme level in the countries involved, the transnational programme is accredited/evaluated using the European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes.\*

(\*It should be pointed out that this criterion was framed without the term “preferably” which appears in the original proposed criterion.)

### EQF 6 & 7

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	53	37,1
No	90	62,9
Total	143	100,0

### EQF 8

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	8	66,7
No	4	33,3
Total	12	100,0



Survey 3: some results





Mapping and  
screening of existing  
JPs – Final output



Report on barriers in applying the criteria  
in current joint programmes

*Qualitative analysis of the screening,  
sustainability of the criteria and identification of  
barriers and recommendations for ensuring the  
Label possible implementation in the future.*



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Mapping students &  
alumni perceptions -  
State of affair



Mapping the perceptions of  
international students & alumni  
JP, Double Degree, Multiple Degree & Cotutelle



**EDLab SURVEY**  
International attractiveness of Joint Degree Programmes



**Ongoing**  
**Survey**  
Non-european international students & alumni  
**Focus group**  
International employers



## EDLab Survey Methodology

### Online Data collection

- **Sample:** Convenience Sample (EMA database)
- **Application:** Online Survey
- **Answers:** Total: 140 -> Validated: 80
- **Respondents:** Non-european students & alumni of JP, DD, MD or Cotutelle Programmes
- **Survey structure:**
  - Section 1: Socio-demographic
  - Section 2: Academic background
  - Section 3: Global attractiveness
    - Motivations to choose JP, DD, MD or Cotutelle
    - Motivations to choose the HE consortium

**Likert Scale (>40): 1 - Totally Disagree to 6 - Totally Agree**

**Open questions (3)**

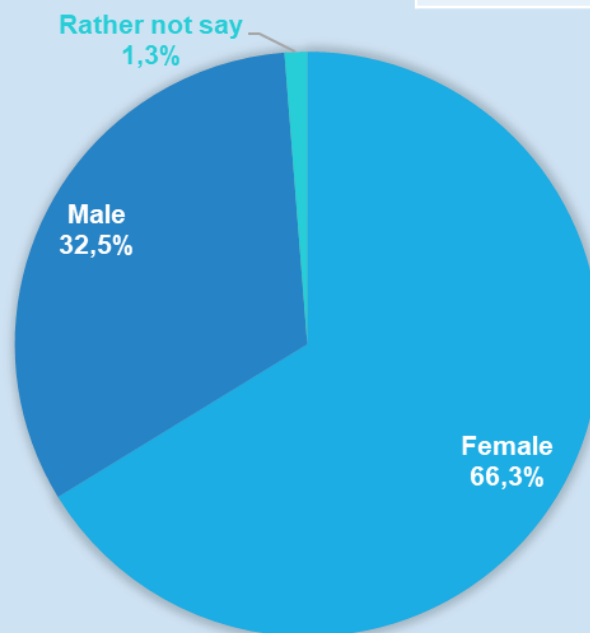
## Mapping students & alumni perceptions - Survey sample



## Sample Characterization

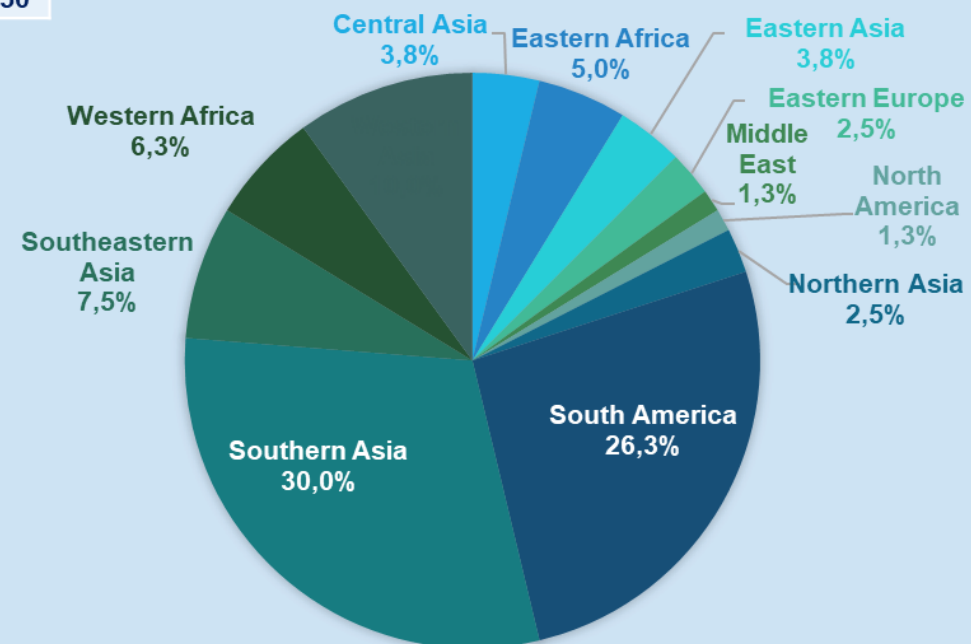
### Socio-Demographic

#### Gender



Age range	%
18 - 24	23,75
25 - 34	63,75
35 - 44	12,50

#### Region



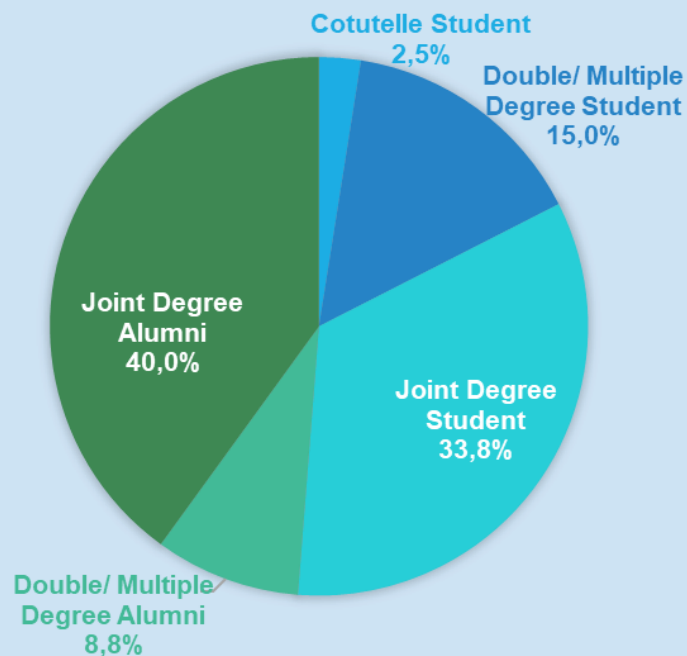
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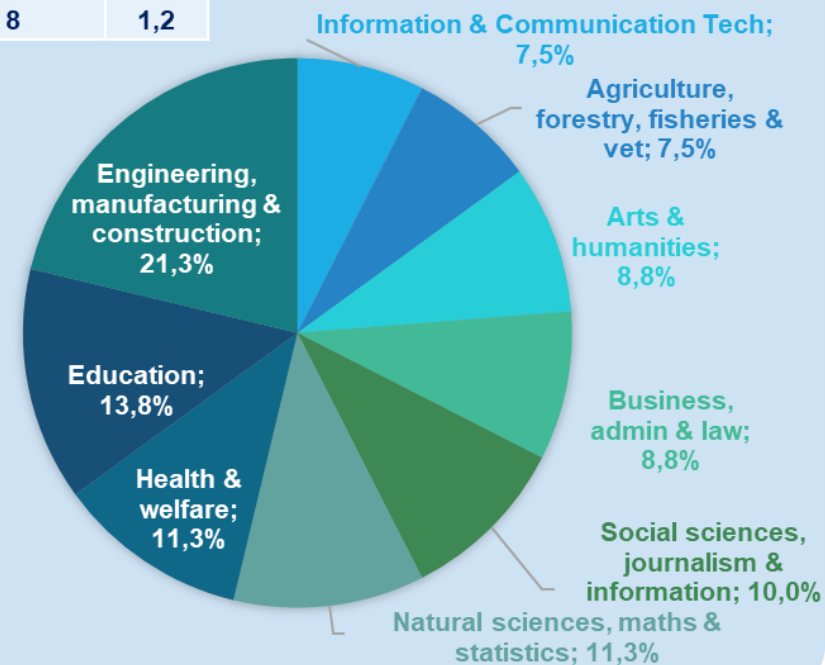
### Academic Background

#### Type of degree



EQF Level	%
6	13,8
7	85,0
8	1,2

#### Field of studies





## Results - Global Attractiveness

### Reasons to enroll in a JP, DD, MD or Cotutelle Programme

#### TOP 3 +

Higher rated reasons	Average
Study in different EU countries	5,23
Interacting with new cultures	5,15
Different academic environment	5,15

#### TOP 3 -

Lower rated reasons	Average
Complementing curriculum	4,23
Admission grades	4,10
Sense of European citizenship	3,93

### Qualitative Analysis (Open question)

#### Other reasons mentioned by respondents (%)

International Experience	55	Academic Environment	14
Scholarship	27	Job prospects	4

## Mapping students & alumni perceptions

### Survey results



## Results - Global Attractiveness

### Reasons to choose a certain Consortium

#### TOP 3 +

Higher rated reasons	Average
Job prospects	4,65
Research infrastructure	4,65
Quality of teaching	4,61

#### TOP 3 -

Lower rated reasons	Average
Distance from home	3,08
Family opinion	2,64
Same choice as friends	2,28

### Qualitative Analysis (Open question)

#### Other reasons mentioned by respondents (%)

Academic Environment	65	Job Prospects	12
Internacional Experience	17	Multilingualism	6

Mapping students &  
alumni perceptions  
Survey results



## Global Attractiveness

### Joint Programme, Double Degree, Multiple Degree or Cotutelle

#### Drivers (%)

International Experience	40
Job Prospects	40
Academic Environment	20

#### Barriers/Difficulties (%)

Accommodation	25
Bureaucracy	23
High turnover	18
Academic mismatch	16
Diploma issuing & recognition	11
Financial	2
Multilingualism	2



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Specific objectives  
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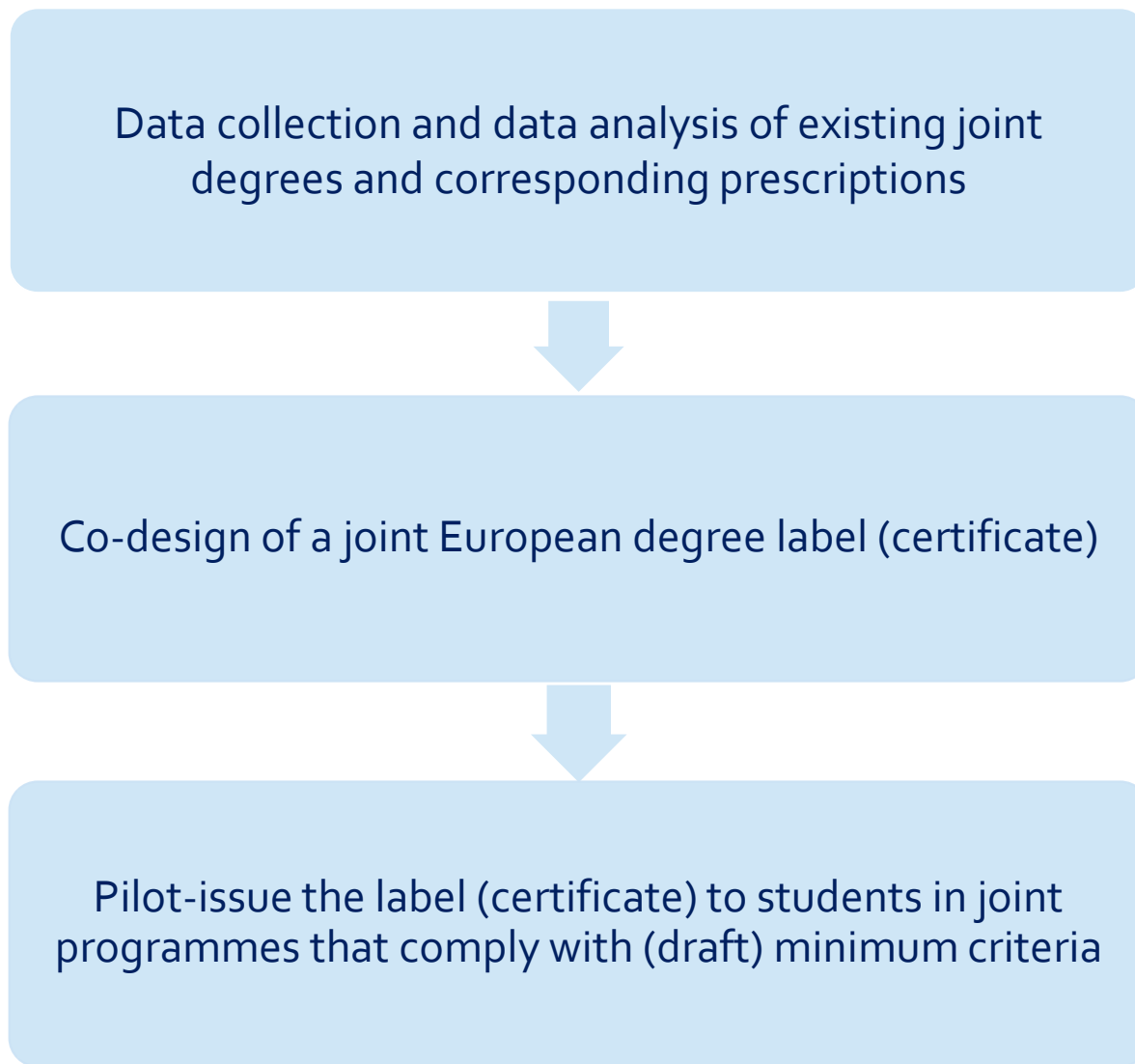


## Introduction to WP4



- **Two key objectives**
  - To develop the model for a joint European degree label (certificate)
  - To analyse the procedures for the issuance of a joint European degree label (certificate) and its format, along with potential barriers to be addressed
- *Caveat: due to the policy context and timeline, we take up this exercise in abstraction of the fact that the whole concept for a joint European degree label is in itself still an object of discussion*

step-by-step  
approach



data collection and  
data analysis



Collect (anonymized) samples of joint diplomas and joint diploma supplements as currently used in practice by beneficiary universities in an online repository

Creation of an inventory of prescriptions for the model of joint degrees and corresponding diploma supplements

Additional data collection on the topic via survey

**What works for EDLab HEI partners?**

Results feed into **format and design** of the joint European degree label

**Conclusion**

- 1/ Complementary paper-based certificate
- 2/ Design that resembles a joint degree as much as possible
  - in terms of components
  - in terms of lay-out



co-design  
label certificate and  
visual identifier template



## Awarding a label certificate

- To students having followed a joint programme that complies with the co-created European criteria, currently as a standalone document in pilot context
  - Easily recognizable to students and future employers

## Awarding a label

- To joint programmes that comply with the (minimum) criteria
- To tie both elements together: joint European degree label **logo**
  - Used by the labelled programmes
- To reflect
  - Jointness
  - Values underpinning the E(H)EA



pilot-awarding the  
label certificate



- **Pilot**-issue and deliver (**pilot**) joint European degree label certificate
  - Why?
    - To **test** process of awarding label certificates
  - To whom?
    - To students of joint programmes that proof to have complied with the (minimum) criteria
  - How?
    - In close cooperation with WP2 'mapping and screening of existing JPs'
      - Results from WP2 survey for screening JPs against criteria feed into process of pilot-awarding the label certificate (self-assessment)
      - Scrutiny: Gathering evidence for verification
  - When?
    - Pilot-awarding is foreseen by end of 2023



# Group Work



SCAN ME

**3 groups** discussing a selection of proposed criteria

**15 minutes** of discussion for each topic

**Every 15 minutes the facilitator will change and the group will discuss different criteria**

**1 rapporteur per group** will be appointed

**15 minutes** for plenary restitution (5 min. per group)

# Thank you



# EDLab

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