

2021 European Quality Assurance Forum

Building trust and enhancement: from information to evidence

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18-19 November 2021

Call for contributions: Paper submission form

Deadline 26 July 2021

Please note that all fields are obligatory. For a detailed description of the submission requirements and Frequently Asked Questions please consult the Call for Contributions.

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If there are several authors, please copy and fill in the fields for each author and indicate who is the corresponding author and who will be responsible for presenting the paper at the Forum.

IMPORTANT: If you are submitting a proposal, please do not register for the event online until the results of the selection process have been announced. Papers selected for EQAF 2021 will benefit from one reduced fee per contribution, which will be applied through a special registration process.

During the Forum, the full text of all papers presented at the Forum will be published on the Forum website. If you do not wish your paper to be published, please indicate so here. This has no consequences on the selection of the papers.

Proposal

Title: Joint programmes – from international policy to national practice. Intertwining of typology and accreditation of international study programmes in (not only) Czech Republic

Abstract (150 words max): This purpose of this paper is threefold: First, it describes the international milieu of policymaking relevant to joint programmes and its development in recent years. It focuses predominantly on the ambivalence of terminology commonly used to describe these programmes, while also comparing the practices, which the terms generally label. Second, it describes the very recent initiative of statewide ministry funded project, which gathered most of public HEIs from Czech Republic to discuss the most pressing issues regarding QA of these programmes. Third, based on the ground provided by the probe into the policy making area and experiences gathered from the statewide project, it raises policy making questions which transcend the scope of Czech Republic, and proposes an innovative approach pertaining to accreditation of one common model of international cooperation, which is largely criticized yet also widely spread throughout the European area.

Has this paper previously been published/presented elsewhere? If yes, give details. It was not published or presented elsewhere.

Indicate whether your contribution is based on practice, policy or research: It is based on an effort to conciliate international policy with national practice. The core focus of the paper is targeted towards policy.

Text of paper (3000 words max):

Introduction

There has been already more than a decade long discussion about the definitions and nature of study programmes realized jointly by two or more institutions from different countries.¹ The terms “joint programme”, “joint degree”, and “double degree” are now widely spread and it would be hard finding somebody professionally connected to higher education not familiar with them. However, when we try to locate their exact definitions and compare them to present day common practice, things gets complicated very fast.

Policy background and evolution

Back in 1997, Czech Republic, among others countries, validated *Lisbon Recognition Convention*. In 2004, it was expanded by *Recommendation on the recognition on the joint degrees*, which describes joint degree as higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more HEIs on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly. Such qualification can be awarded as either a joint diploma (in addition to one or more national diplomas), a joint diploma (without being accompanied by any national diploma), or lastly as one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.² What remains the same for each of these cases is that the graduate receives one qualification for one successfully completed study programme. Even though he/she might receive multiple diplomas/certificates, they together attest the qualification in question, which arises from the completion of the said study programme as a whole.

Slightly younger *European Area of Recognition Project*, which builds upon the grounds provided by the LRB and is composed by several members of ENIC-NARIC (including Czech republic), produced a *European Area of Recognition Manual* in 2012, which offered more specific definitions. It treats joint programme as leading to an award of a joint degree (one document), double or multiple qualification (sic), or singular national qualification (sic).³ Apart from stressing the difference between the study programme (the structure provided by the partner HEIs) and the degree (as the “piece of paper” he ceremoniously receives after successful graduation), the document uses interchangeably the term *degree* and *document* with the term *qualification*. This might have subsequently helped give rise to many fundamental misunderstandings in this area of higher education, in spite of the best possible

efforts of the authors to do the exact opposite. This use of terminology enables possible stakeholders to confuse the nature of the joint study programme (the character of the structure offered jointly by the partner HEIs) with the nature of the diploma, which the graduate receives after he completes his studies (the “piece of paper” and the form of its distribution).

Ambivalent terminology

In correlation with this ambivalence in terminology, the practice too indicates discrepancies of varying depth.⁴ When there is no governing body⁵ and the multi-national platforms which address this issue offer definitions that can spark multiple interpretations (as seen above), each HEI invested in this type of endeavor can and very likely will create its own set of rules and definitions. This might eventually make the same word describe very different practice for each actor. How does this situation translate into quality assurance? As one could expect, different national and regional agencies started to develop its own sets of categories, trying to stabilize the terminology and the practice it describes in respective national (or other) domains.^{6,7} Naturally, plenty of definitions were adopted at different levels by various institutional bodies, but the problem changed scale rather than disappeared. The issue is fittingly described by the following (and already ten years old) quote:

“A review of the literature, university web pages, survey reports and research articles shows a plethora of terms used to describe international collaborative programs, such as double and joint degrees. These terms include: double, multiple, tri-national, joint, integrated, collaborative, international, consecutive, concurrent, co-tutelle, overlapping, conjoint, parallel, simultaneous, and common degrees. They mean different things to different people within and across countries, thereby, causing mass confusion about the real meaning and use of these terms.”⁸

When it comes to joint programmes, having unified definitions on national level does not suffice we take into account that these programmes operate by definition on multi-national level. European Higher Education Area platform addressed this issue in 2015 during a ministerial meeting in Yerevan, Armenia.⁹ One of the documents approved by the ministers of education therein was *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*.¹⁰ It established the following definitions:

“Joint programmes’ are understood as an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from EHEA countries, and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree.

Double/multiple degree - Separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme. (If two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a ‘double degree’).

Joint degree - A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognized award of the joint programme.”¹¹

Differing policies and practices

However, the institutional awareness of this document differs greatly country to country along with the measure in which it is implemented.¹² The most striking point of possible divergences in practice seems to be the centered mainly around the term *double degree*. The definitions above speak of joint programme as a necessary basis for issuing both “joint degree” (i.e. one diploma) or “double/multiple degree” (two or more diplomas). These terms (double and joint degree) pertain only to the nature of the document given to the successful graduates of the said programme without implying any sort of differentiation¹³ among joint programmes themselves (other than the form of the certificate).

It is however quite common to encounter a framework,¹⁴ in which this term describes rather different practice – that during the course of which two completely independent and standardly accredited (or otherwise institutionally enabled) HEIs (or rather their study programmes) from two different countries enter into a cooperation, which predominantly entails the exchange of students.¹⁵ This practice can naturally be conducted in many ways with regards to quality assurance and legal affairs (both admirable and questionable). One of these forms takes up the form of a scenario, during which the student spends time at both HEIs, his/her completed duties are recognized in mirror-like manner and he/she finally receives two fully independent certificates/diplomas and corresponding qualifications.

Should the same student study a joint programme instead, he could also receive two diplomas (ideally cross-referenced¹⁶) after the same exact amount of time spent at both institutions, but because of the institutional intertwining of jointly offered curriculum, he would only be able to make a claim for one qualification (a title – e.g. MA, Ph.D. etc.). This vast difference in regularly conducted practice has of course attracted the attention of numerous policy makers:

“For many academics and policy makers, double and joint degree programmes are welcomed as a natural extension of exchange and mobility programmes. For others, they are perceived as a troublesome development leading to double counting of academic work and the thin edge of academic fraud. Yes - a broad range of reactions exist because of the diversity of programme models being developed, the involvement of different types of traditional and new providers, the uncertainty related to quality assurance and qualifications recognition [...]”¹⁷

Numerous stake holders made effort to distinguish between two practices by further fixing the terminology as double degree (two papers) and dual degree (two programmes),^{18,19,20,21} but the situation remained confusing in spite of these efforts, one policy maker even ventured so far to address the second type of described cooperation as “discount degrees”.²²

State of the art in the Czech Republic

It is a known fact, that the study programmes implemented and operated in collaboration by two or more HEIs from different countries are lately becoming more and more popular, regardless of the ambivalence of terminology discussed above. These programmes satisfy the demand for strategic partnerships, internationalization, foreign cooperation, and mobility of the students as well as of the academic staff and the administrative work force.²³ This demand has lately been noticeably amplified by the European Universities initiative,²⁴ and it is very reasonable to expect that this trend will not be slowing down any time soon, even despite the ongoing pandemic and complications it brings to this area of international cooperation.²⁵ Charles University is also taking part in one of the newly formed alliances, which prompts even more focus on the area of international study programmes, as they represent the pinnacle of collaboration and integration of HEIs from various countries.

However, Czech legislative milieu offers little and very general guidance when it comes to joint programmes – its Higher Education Act (Section 47a)²⁶ lists three articles dedicated to this topic. These state, simply put, that (1) there can be a study programme realized with the partner HEI(s) from abroad, (2) the need to conduct a written agreement specifying various aspect of the programme between cooperating HEIs (without any mandatory features listed), and (3) that there can be multiple forms of the diploma given to successful graduates. This openness of the legislation makes space for a plethora of possible interpretations and practices that occur on the ground that the legislation ought to regulate.

National effort for standardization

To address the situation,²⁷ Charles University led a collective of 19 public HEIs (from country's 26 public HEIs in total) which applied to Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for a *Centralized Development Program* (nation-wide policy research and development project). The project²⁸ was awarded funding for the calendar year 2020. Its main aim was to share all aspects of practice regarding joint study programmes and to create effective tools for their design, implementation and operation. This included setting common quality criteria in most related aspects²⁹ and at various levels (national, university, faculty, etc.).

Soon after starting the project, which consisted mostly of detailed bilateral meetings designed to survey the policy and practice of all participants, we started to encounter a rather serious issue that slowly took over the project's trajectory. For Charles University (who served as the coordinator of the project), the experience with joint programmes began in 2004 with the programme “The Erasmus Mundus MA/Mgr in Special Education Needs (EM SEN)”.³⁰ Based on this experience, we viewed all joint programmes of CU through the lens established by the Erasmus Mundus experience. All such programmes had to be accredited as joint by nature from the very start (even if it consisted of only two HEIs). The evaluation of their accreditation proposal was always done with regard to this fact and to its mandatorily joint curriculum. Should one or more HEIs ever resign from any such project without adequate replacement, the study programme would cease to exist.

During the project, we discovered that only those Czech HEIs, that like CU had previous experience with Erasmus Mundus, ever treated joint programmes in this manner. This represented half (9/18) of the HEIs involved in the project. However, 7 of these 9 HEIs that had experience with joint programme

were at the same time also engaged in “double/dual degree” cooperation, which had no basis in accreditation and therefore meant that their completely standard study programmes entered into a cooperation only by way of signing an agreement, which enabled the students to receive two completely independent diplomas in record time.³¹ The remaining 9 HEIs from the project had only this form (double/dual degree without basis in accreditation) of experience with “joint programmes” or no experience at all.

Quality culture of double/dual programmes

What we also discovered was the fact that all of these types of cooperation were operating on the basis of a written agreement, much like those who were accredited as joint from the very start. During these discussions, we were specifically concerned with the question of accreditation, as each study programme that is to be offered in Czech Republic by a HEI has to be accredited individually. Even those HEIs, who received institutional accreditation for the respective fields of study, have to construct a very detailed proposition, which has to undergo an evaluation process by an Internal Evaluation Board – an internal body whose establishment and functioning is required by respective national legislation.³² Drawing from the just mentioned conditions one might raise a rather serious concern. If a study programme is accredited to be taught exclusively in its home state by specific personnel and in specific conditions (equipment, facilities, student grades etc.), structurally outsourcing substantial part of its curriculum *a posteriori* (after being approved) might violate the standards it is required to uphold by national legislation for accreditation. Joint programmes intrinsically include this aspect (precisely because they are joint by definition – one institution alone could not operate such programme). Most common arguments for selecting the “double degree without joint accreditation” option which we encountered, and which can therefore shed some light on the motivation for their preference, were the following:

- Some of the programmes were established long before the international cooperation began and will very likely continue to function after it ceases.
- Should the HEIs involved not target Erasmus Mundus, Horizon 2020, or similar source of external funding that presupposes certain form of standardization, all the efforts required to form the joint programme bring no additional benefit to them (additional bureaucracy for little added value).
- It keeps the cooperation in the hands of Czech HEIs as those, who have not received institutional accreditation in respective field of study, have to submit all accreditation proposals to National Accreditation Bureau.
- It is attractive for students to receive two diplomas/certificates and saves the HEIs the tedious work connected to negotiating about the form of the joint diploma, cross references of their standard diplomas or similar features.

It might seem very tempting to reject these arguments based on the policy described in the first part of this paper, but it would also be a serious mistake to assume that all of these programmes were lacking in quality culture. They contained a number of programmes offering a very demanding, well structured curricula monitored by various sorts of quality management tools and who were anything but dubious. In sheer numbers, these programmes were also significantly exceeding the amount of joint programmes accredited as joint. It became apparent that it is hardly conceivable to reject this form of cooperation completely. Even more so, if this rejection should be executed on the grounds of policy, whose enforcement is legally very difficult, if at all. Our aim in the second half of the project’s run therefore shifted towards finding a proposition, which would not antagonize any group of invested stakeholders, while proposing a way of standardization of the wide range of operating types of international collaboration.

Two forms of accreditation

Respecting the setting provided by our national accreditation legislation, CU proposed two general approaches to an institutionalization of joint programmes:

I. Accreditation of a new study programme

As every study programme has to receive accreditation according to national regulations, the seemingly easiest way of proceeding is to transform the proposed cooperation along with all its features specified by an agreement³³ into a brand new study programme and submit a wholesome proposal for accreditation. Domestic HEI accredits only the part of the programme it is responsible for and provides evidence that all other partner HEIs submitted their corresponding parts for accreditation according to their respective national legislations.

II. Implementation of international cooperation into an already existing accreditation relating to a specific domestic study programme

This form way of proceeding is meaningful when the international cooperation pertains to already existing and long time running study programmes at both institutions. In these cases the core of the cooperation entails the integration and or exchange of personnel, equipment, and forms of teaching designed to enrich the environment at both HEIs. Therefore, from the accreditation stand point of view, everything should be done within the scope of already evaluated and approved study programme realized according to its accreditation. This process should fulfill the two following criteria

- a) There should be a specialization-like feature,³⁴ which is identifiable and trackable and which should clearly identify, that the programme is engaged in specific form of international cooperation under predefined set of conditions – also specified in an agreement and made an amendment to the original accreditation.
- b) The international cooperation should in no way “overrule” defining features of the study programme in question (e.g. when it comes to the profile of graduates it produces). These principles can have various degree of specificity and will have to be connected to the national accreditation framework.

The project (set for one year) has ended several months ago last December, with the 19 HEIs reaching consensus about the approach proposed above, the only exception that yet remains to be discussed and specified is II.a. The next in the development of joint programmes agenda on the national level seems to be subsequent communication with responsible Ministry, other HEIs that did not take part in the project and National Accreditation Bureau. The fact that 19 HEIs managed to find consensus during a year largely influenced by worldwide pandemic may be a small reason for optimism.

Conclusion and further questions

As the beginning of this paper shows, the issues accompanying the highly sought after practice of operating joint programmes is nothing new to higher education. Currently ongoing debates about the future of Erasmus Mundus, European Universities, and most recently about the European degree brand³⁵ all represent other iterations of an attempt to standardize these matters across EHEA. It is apparent that if any of these initiatives or any of their future successors is to succeed, it will require enormous amount of work not only on the international scale, but on the national level as well, because that is where the policy has to be implemented to be able to connect to the end user. This paper would like contribute to this process and invite discussion centered around the issues of:

- a. policy versus practice regarding the typology of joint programmes,
- b. approaches to their accreditation,
- c. good practice regarding institutionalization of new policies,
- d. outlooks for the future development in EHEA.

References:

Please submit your proposal by sending this form, in Word format, by 26 July 2021 to eqaf@eua.eu. The file should be named using the last names of the authors, e.g. *Smith_Jones.doc*. Please do not send a hard copy or a PDF file.

¹ *Explanatory memorandum to the recommendation on the recognition of joint degrees* (Adopted by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region on 9 June 2004) states that: “This part of the Recommendation seeks to define joint degree as a generic term and to explore the main types of joint degrees. It is worth noting that the EUA study on joint degrees found that there is no common definition in use today, whether explicitly or implicitly [...]”

² The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region: *Recommendation on the recognition on the joint degrees*. Adopted on 9 June 2004 <https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/recommendation-joint-degrees-2004.en.pdf>.

³ “A joint degree is a qualification awarded by higher education institutions who are involved in the joint programme, attesting the successful completion of the joint programme. It is a single document signed by the competent authorities (rectors, vice-chancellors) of the institutions involved in the joint programme and it replaces the separate (institutional/national) qualifications. A joint programme is a programme offered jointly by several higher education institutions. A joint programme does not necessarily lead to a joint degree. It is only one of the possible awards. After the completion of a joint programme the graduate may be awarded: a single national qualification, a double/multiple qualification and/or a joint qualification.” *European Area of Recognition Manual*. January 2012.

http://ecahe.eu/w/images/c/c7/European_Area_of_Recognition_Manual.pdf. P. 66.

⁴ KNIGHT, J.: *Doubts and Dilemmas with Double Degree Programs*. In: “Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education” [online monograph]. *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC)*. Vol. 8, No 2, pp. 297-312. UOC. 2011. ISSN 1698-580X.

http://www.ecahe.eu/w/images/e/e6/Doubts_and_Dilemmas_with_Double_Degree_Programs.pdf.

⁵ Such as hypothetical federal government.

⁶ One example among other cases is Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, which in 2014 produced a handbook, stating that: “A joint degree is a qualification awarded by at least two cooperating institutions on the basis of a study programme developed and offered jointly by the institutions. A joint degree should be documented with a joint diploma to the extent this is legally possible.” SUNDNES, J. R.; KVERNMO, T. M.: *Handbook on Joint Degrees*. Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions. Oslo, February 2014. P. 5.

⁷ Another example can be found in a guide providing guidelines for the Erasmus Mundus programmes: “An EMJMD is a high-level integrated international study programme of 60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits, delivered by an international consortium of HEIs from different countries and, where relevant, other educational and/or non-educational partners with specific expertise and interest in the study areas/professional domains covered by the joint programme. Their specificity lies in the high degree of jointness/integration and the excellent academic content and methodology they offer. There is no limitation in terms of discipline.

The successful completion of the joint EMJMD Master programme must lead to the award of either a joint degree (i.e. one single diploma issued on behalf of at least two HEIs from different Programme Countries) or multiple degrees (i.e. at least two diplomas issued by two higher education institutions from different Programme Countries). If national legislation allows, joint degrees are encouraged, as they represent a full integration of the learning and teaching process.” *Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2020*. https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/introduction/how-to-read-programme-guide_en. P. 89.

⁸ KNIGHT, J.: *Doubts and Dilemmas with Double Degree Programs*. In: “Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education” [online monograph]. *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC)*. Vol. 8, No 2, pp. 297-312. UOC. 2011. ISSN 1698-580X.

http://www.ecahe.eu/w/images/e/e6/Doubts_and_Dilemmas_with_Double_Degree_Programs.pdf.

⁹ <http://www.ehea.info/page-ministerial-conference-yerevan-2015>.

¹⁰

http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/73/1/European_Approach_QA_of_Joint_Programmes_613731.pdf.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

¹² For more see <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/national-implementation/>. The Czech Republic is a Governmental Member of EQAR since January 2013

¹³ Such as the level of integration or form of accreditation.

¹⁴ For instance here: KLING, J.: *The case for evolving from dual to joint degrees*. University World News. 25. 5. 2018. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180522110200691>.

¹⁵ Cf. the *Consortium of International Double Degrees* here: <https://www.cidid.org/>.

¹⁶ “In the case of double or multiple degrees, issuing only more national diplomas with their traditional format - as it occurs for students who attend a national and not a joint course - is not enough nor appropriate. Because as we saw, if within a national degree it is not mentioned that this qualification was achieved attending a single joint programme, we could have some problems concerning the usability of the degree and its evaluation.” LANTERNO, L. (ed.): *Joint programmes and recognition of joint degrees*. Bridge Handbook. October 2012. <http://erasmusmundus.it/files/fileusers/BRIDGE%20HANDBOOK%20WEB.pdf>. P. 61.

¹⁷ KNIGHT, J.: *Joint and Double Degree Programmes: Vexing Questions and Issues*. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. September 2008. http://ecahe.eu/w/images/c/cc/Joint_and_double_degree_programmes_-_vexing_questions_and_issues_-_september_2008.pdf. http://ecahe.eu/w/images/c/cc/Joint_and_double_degree_programmes_-_vexing_questions_and_issues_-_september_2008.pdf. P. 5.

¹⁸ AERDEN, A., RECZULSKA, H.: *Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees*. 2012. ECA Occasional Paper. European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education, The Hague, ISBN/EAN: 978-94-90815-02-2. (<http://ecahe.eu/home/services/publications/guidelines-for-good-practice-for-awarding-joint-degrees/>). P. 38.

¹⁹ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (Directorate-General for Education and Culture): *Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. The story so far*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016. ISBN 978-92-79-58160-1. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6f52e9bb-31f2-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1>. P. 37

²⁰ SUNDNES, J. R.; KVERNMO, T. M.: *Handbook on Joint Degrees*. Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions. Oslo, February 2014. https://www.uhr.no/en/_f/p3/i099a9f4e-cb2a-4cf9-b97a-6919944fa15c/fellesgradshandbok_endelig_engelsk.pdf P. 19.

²¹ *Multiple Degree Program Definitions*. University in Louisville. 29. 7. 2016. <https://louisville.edu/graduate/faculty-staff/directors-of-graduate-studies/fall-2015/Multiple%20Degree%20Definitions%20final%209.2.2015.pdf>.

²² KNIGHT, J.: *Are double or multiple degrees leading to ‘discount degrees’?*. In: INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION. Number 81: Summer 2015. ISSN 1084-0613. <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/view/8729/7854>.

²³ LIGAMI, Ch.: *HE graduates five times more likely to migrate abroad – Report*. University World News. 19. 4. 2019. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190416123235499>.

²⁴ MYKLEBUST, J. P.: *54 networks bid to join European Universities pilot*. University World News. 7. 3. 2019. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190307070330629>.

²⁵ KELLY, D., “The impact of Covid-19 on internationalisation and student mobility: an opportunity for innovation and inclusion?”. In *HIGHER EDUCATION’S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC* S. Bergan, T. Gallagher, I. Harkavy, R. Munck and H. van’t Land (eds). Council of Europe Higher Education Series No. 25. 225-231. Council of Europe Publishing (Strasbourg, 2021). ISBN 978-92-871-8697-3. <https://rm.coe.int/prems-006821-eng-2508-higher-education-series-no-25/1680a19fe2>.

²⁶ Act no. 111/1998 Sb. on Institutions of Higher Education and amendments to other acts. <https://www.msmt.cz/vyzkum-a-vyvoj-2/zakon-c-111-1998-sb-o-vysokych-skolach>.

²⁷ Meaning the issues of perhaps a bit outdated legislation and fragmented practice across the country.

²⁸ Entitled *Development and Quality Assurance of Joint Degree Study Programmes Implemented in Cooperation with Universities from Abroad*.

²⁹ Legislative framework, accreditation process, quality assurance, organization of studies, etc.

³⁰ The programme was realized in cooperation with Roehampton University (London, UK) and Fontys University (Tilburg, the Netherlands).

³¹ If both the HEIs agree to recognize the “other year” which the student spends at the other HEI, it can take only two years to possess two institutionally completely unrelated diplomas.

³² Act no. 111/1998 Sb. on Institutions of Higher Education and amendments to other acts. <https://www.msmt.cz/vyzkum-a-vyvoj-2/zakon-c-111-1998-sb-o-vysokych-skolach>.

³³ The agreement should specify issues such as joint curriculum, study outcomes, organizational and financial matters, profile of graduates, form of diploma/certificate, grade conversion etc.

³⁴ In the Czech Republic we operate with “study plans”. For another explanation of this model see AERDEN, D., LOKHOFF, J.: *Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees*, ECA OCCASIONAL PAPER, 2013, Hague. ISBN/EAN: 978-94-90815-05-9.

http://ecahe.eu/assets/uploads/2014/01/Framework_for_Fair_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees.pdf. P. 22.

³⁵ KELO, M., LOUKKOLA, T.: Possible scenarios on the path towards a European degree. EUA website. 09 July 2020. <https://eua.eu/resources/expert-voices/186:possible-scenarios-on-the-path-towards-a-european-degree.html>.