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Digitalisation of the (Europass) Diploma Supplement

The European Digital Credentials for Learners (EDC) can also be used to issue the DS; there will also be a template available (see Ildiko's and Sophie's slides) for the purpose. The University of Split for example uses the EDC to issue a Diploma Supplement alongside with the other credentials.

Digitalisation of the DS is a priority in itself, too; an on-going European project ADDSUP, for example, studies the status and potential of digitalization of the DS. The project's work is closely linked to the EDC, but it also has a wider approach on the issuing of the DS. You can read more about it e.g. here:

<https://www.oph.fi/en/news/2021/higher-education-institutions-ready-digitalise-diploma-supplement>

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(Europass) Certificate Supplements

The Europass Certificate Supplements are also on the agenda; developing them to serve the various needs of citizens, education institutions and employers.

Q: How about other Europass documents in Finland for VET-providers; will the Certificate Supplement be the first to be electronically sealed or will there be more documents, too?

A: A good question: the Certificate Supplement is by nature a different document from the Diploma Supplement; they are not personal nor issued, but they are qualification-specific. That said, discussions are on-going on a European level on developing the CS and the possibilities of the EDC there will also be looked upon; one interesting aspect would be ability compare the CS-documents. The EDC is also something we will be looking in more detail in Finland soon, in the context of the CS, as we have a CS available digitally to all qualifications.

The Europass Mobility, widely used in the VET sector, will also be modernized (see next slide).

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Europass Mobility Passport

This document/service is much in need of modernization and the work is on it has already commenced on the European level. On national level feedback will be collected on the needs of users. In Finland a workshop on Europass Mobility will be organized 10.11.2021. More information: <https://www.oph.fi/fi/uutiset/2021/tyopaja-europassin-liikkuvuustodistuksesta-1011>

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Recognition of qualifications and prior learning – and the EDC

Q's: What role does recognition (foreign qualifications, prior learning) play in the interest of organisations to start using the EDC?

A: There are a number of EU initiatives and projects, including [ECIU](#), [SEA-EU](#), [DigiNet](#) and [ECCOE](#) that are interested in the recognition aspect, but most of the time this is more exploration and/or development of proofs of concept than functional implementation of credential recognition. These may seem baby steps but every journey starts by 1 first step and we're in motion.

In the example of the University of Split, for example, recognition of qualifications and quality assurance are further dimensions and inseparable parts of the EDC implementation. EDC is also used to aid automatic recognition. (Also see Mile's and Colin's slides.)

On a more general note: recognition and support to mobility of citizens is one of the underlying motivations for developing the EDC.

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Learner-centered approach

Europass and EDC put the learner at the centre; the learner is given tools to manage his/her own data, to use and re-use it. The EDC provides new opportunities for this.

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Quality assurance and EDC

You could say, that any system of digital credentials rely on the digital information on quality assurance; quality assurance tackles joint problems (fraud, diploma mills) – cooperation and standards in Europe makes this work stronger.

In Finland all the quality assurance information is found in one place already (for formal education); the link between EDC and EQAR can be activated country by country. (See more on this topic from Colin's presentation.)



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If an organization is interested, when and how to start the work?

Q's: How should an organization begin the work; what support is available?

A: The work can be started with small steps; what would you like to achieve? The EDC expert team is there to assist, and there will also be possibilities for peer learning and discussions with other organisations with similar interests. An organization does not need to have complete plans, or even a binding decision to implement the EDC in order to make contact to the EDC expert team or the Finnish National Agency for Education; encouraging to test and talk about your ideas and interest even if they are not yet concrete.

EDC can be used by very different organisations and for different needs; the more complex the qualification (e.g. a full diploma vs a first-aid course), the more work is required to implement the EDC. Also see the next point.

(Also see Ildiko's and Sophie's slides for more information.)

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*Prof. Mile Dželalića,
University of Split*

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“The work has been worth it:
this is the future.”

There is a lot of work that needs to be put in
to implement the EDC and to make it work: is
that a good investment?

”

Compatibility and interoperability, but also common data models the key

The EDC is not meant as a “lone-standing” tool: it looks to connecting and cooperating with other tools and initiatives, such as EMREX which is used e.g. in Finland, as well as various other familiar tools. This also means organisations can pick&choose different solutions that fit their needs best: there is no need to wait for the “perfect fit-for-all” solution, nor is there a worry that something they choose today would prevent them from cooperating with Europass in the future.

One of the strengths of Europass is the Europass data model that has strong potential.

(See more e.g. from Henri’s and Mile’s presentations, as well as Ildiko’s and Sophie’s)



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KOSKI, EDC – and a Finnish approach

The implementation of the EDC would be a choice of the organisations, but the possible interoperability between KOSKI and the EDC is also something to be discussed; if an integration is reached, that could be a solution for individual education providers.

However, good to remember that a more "coordinated" and the more "impulsive" way to build such ecosystems are not mutually exclusive and different individuals development paths can be valuable. At some point a more coordinated effort is necessary. (For context, please see Juho's slides)

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Tackling the hurdles

On one hand there are the technical hurdles (such as illustrated in the question posted by Jukka Kohtanen from CSC to the audience: are those responsible for the IT solutions part of the discussions? What IT hurdles do you see for implementing the EDC?) – and on the other hand we also need to overcome legal challenges, and also for example semantic challenges (we need to speak a common language). There is an international, national and potentially also a local level where these hurdles need to be tackled.