Workshop 1   "Recognition in STEM"

Where do institutions face challenges in recognition of Erasmus+ students' credit mobility?
How can recognition be improved within the frame of Erasmus+?
Which measures & concrete actions were proposed?

Group 1
Challenges:
- language barriers
- inconsistent institutional rules, especially in STEM fields, where recognition of 30–60 ECTS is problematic, and students often resist large packages.
- reluctance to competence-based approaches, as some faculty insist on identical course
- content rather than learning outcomes equivalence.
- informal refusals by professors go unrecorded

Suggestions for improvement:
- strengthen supportive, institution-level frameworks by closely integrating IROs with academic departments and securing leadership endorsement.
- provide clear, multilingual information for students via multiple channels.
- promote mutual trust through staff mobility networks, long-term partnerships and
- alignment of quality standards.
- central repository of syllabi to automate curriculum matching and suggest appropriate programmes through European course database and AI tools.
- document all past decisions in a local recognition register to automate routine approvals
- reevaluation of course equivalences e.g. every 5 years
- allocate small amounts of ECTS credits for international experience

Group 2
Challenges:
a lack of flexibility (curricula are inflexible, decision-makers are rigid) and professors who think they are the best at their subject; people at HEIs do not understand that courses can also be complementary to a programme (e.g. an engineering student can benefit from taking a course in social sciences); matching semesters between countries are a problem (start/end of the semester but also courses that are only offered in the winter/summer term); different grading scales and lack of information in course catalogues

Suggestions for improvement:
creating curricula with mobility in mind; more resources and better communication; more information on converting grading scales; an international mindset at the institution (this will help with many of the challenges mentioned above!)

Measures:
putting mobility/internationalisation in the mission of HEIs; opening up people's minds that internationalisation is not "top-down" but something they can contribute to and benefit from.

Group 3

One of the main challenges institutions face in the recognition of Erasmus+ students' credit mobility in STEM fields is the lack of detailed and up-to-date information in course catalogues. In addition, not all course information is available in English, which makes it harder for students and staff to plan and compare courses. Some courses do not always match between the sending and host institutions, especially when the curriculum or academic calendar is different. Additionally, several institutions report difficulties in recognizing credits earned through Blended Intensive Programmes. To improve recognition, it is suggested to integrate internationalisation credits into the curriculum, for example using Blended Intensive Programmes. Offering students more flexibility in choosing elective courses can also support better recognition. It is recommended that approximately 60% of credits be obtained at the host institution, while the remaining 40% may be completed online at the home institution. A database of courses that have already been recognised could also be a helpful tool.

Group 4
Challenges:
Recognition barriers abroad come from strict academic rules in regulated fields like medicine and engineering, limited course availability, and mismatches in credit systems. Outdated or missing course information adds complexity. Institutional differences in recognition practices and faculty resistance—especially in engineering—further complicate the process. Students must take greater responsibility, securing Learning Agreements in advance and navigating individual solutions. Today's generation joins mobility programs only when they see clear academic, professional, or personal value, reflecting a more focused and career-driven mindset.
Proposed measures:
Building mutual trust, positive culture, and early communication among students, departments, and IOs is key to easing recognition issues. Flexibility, peer support, and treating Erasmus+ students with leniency—like incoming students—can improve the mobility experience.

Group 5
Challenges:
Uncertainty about host institution offer; Language of teaching; Grading standards; Students by passing „difficult" courses; Difficulties connecting (O)LA and university internal systems; Personell challenges
Improvement:
Everybody should work in the same direction (top-down); AI tools could speed-up the process
Concrete measures: Using IA systems to automatically converte ToR and grades; Trust in your partners; Flexibility in curriculum to allow recognition of non core courses

Group 6
The participants discussed facing challenges due to varying interpretations of automatic recognition, program-specific recognition criteria, and organizational hurdles. For example, Germany struggles with transparency at the organizational level, while Portugal requires specific curricular courses that may not be available abroad. Financial regulations and labor laws in countries like Iceland and Ukraine add to the complexity. Additionally, cultural and mindset barriers, as well as internal conflicts within institutions, hinder recognition.

Improvements can be made by implementing mobility windows, study partnerships, and European degrees. Focusing on student outcomes rather than credits, and recognizing cultural soft skills through micro-credentials, can also enhance recognition. Mandatory preparation and follow-up courses for mobility can be integrated into the curriculum. Short-term mobilities and traineeships may also prove to be beneficial.

Group 7

- More flexibility is needed from course directors, also the national legislation needs to adapt a bit in order to have a good working recognition process.
- Make recognition more flexible, by introduce a "mobility window of opportunity", with elective courses either abroad or at their home university
- Digitalisation of learning agreement!
- Recognition table with one specific partner institution, checked once and several students can use it (problem: courses of other universities change)
- BIPs, other short term mobilites and internships in the summertime are used to encourage students to have a whole semester abroad
- Reasons for BIPs: Take a week from work is easier than a whole semester, they do not want to be away from friends and family and need to pay their apartment rent.
- There is no difference between short or long term mobilities for feeling as a European. Doing the experience alone gives you more of a feeling than travelling in a group of students.

Group 8

Key challenges:
- curricula and academic calender differences
- complicated and intransparent internal procedures delay recognition
- some academic staff recultant to accept external courses due to unclear or missmatched
- learning objectives
- some institutions lack proper implementation of ECHE
- significant variations in curricula and awarded ECTS for some courses prevent recognition of fewer than 30 credits
- some institutions demonstrate low flexibility and limited readiness at different level to take responsibility for adapting curricula and enabling fair recognition

How can recognition be improved?
- Ensure full internalisation and practical application of ECHE principles by HEIs.
- Promote the use of learning agreements with clearly defined outcomes, aligned with the host curriculum.
- Increase awareness and capacity-building for academic staff involved in recognising credits.
- Implement joint efforts at national and institutional levels to streamline recognition procedures and reduce administrative burdens

Proposed measures and concrete actions
- Introduce national or institutional guidelines with model recognition practices and case examples.

- Organise peer-learning activities and staff exchanges to share experience in handling recognition procedures.
- Develop training modules on ECTS compatibility and learning outcomes for faculty and administrative staff.
- Strengthen the monitoring of ECHE implementation and link it to continued Erasmus+ eligibity.

Other issues raised
- Participants highlighted the need for student-centred approaches in academic recognition.
- The group also discussed how the lack of trust between sending and receiving institutions can hinder flexible recognition.
- It was recommended to explore digital solutions (e.g. Erasmus Without Paper) to make recognition more transparent and traceable.
- The role of national authorities and quality assurance agencies in supporting fair recognition practices was emphasized.