Practical Guidelines

Clustering Joint Programmes and Attractiveness Projects: Lot 3 – Thematic Cluster on Recognition of Degrees and Joint Degrees

June 2012
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADDE-SALEM</td>
<td>Double Degree in Europe, South American Leadership and Employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIIN</td>
<td>German Accreditation Agency for Degree Programmes in Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMO</td>
<td>(Finnish) Centre for International Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG EAC</td>
<td>Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EACEA</td>
<td>Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAIE</td>
<td>European Association for International Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECTS</td>
<td>European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDEEM</td>
<td>European Doctorate in Economics Erasmus Mundus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHEA</td>
<td>European Higher Education Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM-A</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Student and Alumni Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAP</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMBN</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Master Course Brand Names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMCL</td>
<td>European Masters Programme in Computational Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMJD</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMJP</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMMC</td>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Master Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENAEE</td>
<td>European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENIC</td>
<td>European Network of Information Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENQA</td>
<td>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUA</td>
<td>European Universities Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURASIA</td>
<td>European Academic Mobility Network with Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAQ</td>
<td>Frequently Asked Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNBE</td>
<td>Finnish National Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOQAR</td>
<td>Joint programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of Degrees Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARIC</td>
<td>National Academic Recognition Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOHA</td>
<td>Network on Humanitarian Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>National Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMC</td>
<td>Open Method of Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Unique Selling Point(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Uniform Resource Locator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

Since 2003 the Erasmus Mundus Programme has been significant instrument for the European Commission in using Master (and since 2009 Doctoral) programmes to stimulate innovation and reform across what is now known as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). During this decade national higher education (HE) activities have focused strongly on the internationalisation of their higher education institutions (HEIs) in response to the challenges of globalisation. A major component of that activity has been to ‘market’ their national HE products (programmes, graduates and their degrees) globally so that potential consumers (employers in particular) of the products will recognise that the degrees are of value and relevance to them.

The process of achieving degree recognition becomes more complex as the process moves from national to international levels. Even at the national levels a degree may first need formal accreditation where the qualification may be linked to ‘closed professions’ such as medicine, and the European Commission has been active in promoting European-wide recognition of qualifications to facilitate better recognition at the European level so that the single market operates more effectively. Once a graduate is awarded a degree they are then faced with a complex challenge of recognition:

- First and foremost, is the degree legitimate? There are increasing concerns about faked degrees, and the NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) has been active in assisting HEIs to check whether degrees claimed by applicants to European HEIs are legitimate;
- Second, does the degree have equivalence? For example, understanding that the pedagogy and the teaching programme are what would be expected in another country;
- Third, does the degree have relevance and value? For example, are learning outcomes suitable for particular employment needs? Consistent and coherent communication of achievements and learning outcomes can involve the use of European standard Diploma Supplements and Europass CVs.

While at the national level, governments and HE actors have been active in achieving bilateral recognition protocols it is at the European level where action regarding the recognition of Erasmus Mundus Action 1 (and some Action 2) degrees has been critical. Erasmus Mundus is a particularly European innovation. An Erasmus Mundus Joint Programme requires at least three partner institutions in three countries to construct a multi-national interdisciplinary Programme that is delivered through student mobility across partner sites. Consequently, the ‘reform’ agenda of the EHEA and the Bologna Process is at the core of Erasmus Mundus, but its innovative nature means that the recognition of degrees is challenged first by the fact that they are different from national and mono-disciplinary degrees, and second by the extent to which Erasmus Mundus worldwide is a recognisable European brand.

As a consequence there is not something that can be called an Erasmus Mundus degree, and we need to consider the wide variety of degrees that are issued by Erasmus Mundus Programmes. For example, they can be Joint, Double, or Multiple. They can be accompanied by a single certificate signed by all partner HEIs, or individual certificates from each partner HEI, where the certificates for each
graduates will be determined by their mobility path through the Programme, by their prior qualifications (students come from across the world) and to where in the World they are taking their degree.

The challenge of recognition for Erasmus Mundus therefore is complex, and as cohorts of graduates have taken their degrees into the global labour market achieving degree recognition has involved all actors from students to Programme staff, from HEIs to National Structures, and through Action 2 and 3 Erasmus Mundus projects. Because there is not a single Erasmus Mundus degree there is no single strategy to achieve recognition, and these Recommendations are built on the evidence of a wide range of experiences and strategies provided by those actors during this Recognition study.
2 Context

The context for the recognition of degrees within the Erasmus Mundus Programme is provided by the core Programme Objectives (b) and (d) of the 2008 Decision (No 1298/2008/EC) to:

- (a) Contribute to the mutual enrichment of societies by developing the qualifications of men and women so that they possess appropriate skills, particularly as regards the labour market, and are open-minded and internationally experienced, through promoting mobility both for the most talented students and academics from third countries to obtain qualifications and/or experience in the European Union and for the most talented European students and academics towards third countries;

- (b) Improve accessibility and enhance the profile and visibility of European higher education in the world as well as its attractiveness for third-country and European nationals.

The first of the objectives identifies the importance of qualifications (in this case the degrees) in the international labour market, and the need to recruit the highest quality European and third country students to participate in Erasmus Mundus. There is global competition for high quality students, particularly for example from the United States (US) Fulbright Programme\(^1\), where the degrees awarded are all from US HEIs, and where recognition is very much a US to the World challenge. Europe, by contrast is a ‘27 countries to the World’ challenge for the European Union, and ‘49 countries to the World’ challenge for the wider EHEA.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, (EACEA) Terms of Reference for the Recognition Cluster clearly set out the European challenges, “Recognition of joint degrees is a challenge for the responsible authorities as the degrees have to be recognised under different higher education systems each having their own rules on recognition”.

The European Commission operates through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) where relevant actors can be coordinated within activities that promote the EHEA globally. As well as the funding of “Joint Programmes at Masters (Action 1A) and Doctorate (Action 1B) levels and award of individual scholarships/fellowships to participate in these programmes” two further Erasmus Mundus Actions have supported the wider networking of HE actors (Action 2) and the promotion of European HE (Action 3).

**Action 1** creates innovative HE Programmes and delivers high-quality graduates.

**Action 2** allows the institutions themselves (for example not just academic staff but also administrative and support staff) for “Partnerships with Third country higher education institutions and scholarships for mobility”. It is in this context that HEIs can work more effectively together internationally, and to find innovative solutions in the institutional support for international joint programmes.

\(^1\) [http://exchanges.state.gov/academicexchanges/index/fulbright-program.html](http://exchanges.state.gov/academicexchanges/index/fulbright-program.html)
Action 3 addresses the global “promotion of European higher education”, with activity lines concerning Erasmus Mundus National Structures information projects and projects to promote European Higher Education. Action 3 therefore complements the Action 2 activities of HEIs by bringing together National Structures and other national and European-level actors (such as NARIC centres) to work together.

Lastly, at the European level, are the students and graduates of Erasmus Mundus Programmes, who through EM-A (Student and Alumni Association) have addressed degree recognition in contexts such as Latin America. All of these actors, across all three Actions, were consulted in this project.
3 Survey Methodology

The primary objective of the Survey under this project was to gather information on initiatives and experience of Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes, students, National Structures and Action 2 and 3 Projects regarding recognition of degrees and joint degrees, leading to this set of Recommendations to improve further the recognition of degrees issued by Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (EMJP).

A major data collection activity was undertaken through online Survey for the following five target groups:

- Erasmus Mundus Master Course (EMMC) coordinators and partners;
- Erasmus Mundus Master Course Brand Names (EMBN) coordinators and partners;
- Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate (EMJD) coordinators and partners;
- Students and graduates of Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (EMJP) (via the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association EM-A); and
- National Structures.

Survey tool

A single online Survey was developed, with a distinctive set of questions designed for each of the five target groups, ensuring a targeted approach for each group whilst allowing effective cross-referencing across the target groups for common questions. A mixture of open and closed questions was developed and the Survey tool allowed respondents to choose the questions they considered most relevant to them.

Distribution

The Survey was launched on 25th October 2011 and was open for six weeks. The invitation was sent to all 162 EM Joint Programmes (EMMC, EMJD and EMBN) and 1,354 partners and associate members. All 30 National Structures were also invited to take part in the Survey. For the students and graduates, EM-A communication channels were used including the EM-A website, newsletter, Facebook page and Twitter account, assuming 7,000 EM-A members were reached through these channels.

Response rates

In total 1169 individual respondents participated in the Survey. Although the survey tool allowed respondents to skip the questions which they did not consider to be relevant, 933 respondents completed all the questions asked in their respective target group, representing a relatively high 79.8% of the total respondents. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of the response rates according to the target groups.
Table 3.1: Target Groups and Response Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
<th>Responded</th>
<th>% Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master Course (EMMC) coordinators</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Course (EMMC) partners</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Course (EMMC) associate members</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Names (EMBN) coordinators</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Names (EMBN) partners</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Names (EMBN) associate members</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Doctorate (EMJD) coordinators</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Doctorate (EMJD) partners</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Doctorate (EMJD) associate members</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus Mundus Students and Graduates</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Structures (NS)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8546</td>
<td>1169</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clustering Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes Survey (2011) Ecorys (n=8546).

109 coordinators across EMMC, EMBN and EMJD contributed to the Survey and 69 answered all the questions. A significant number of the coordinators of EMMC and EMJD took part, representing 71% and 79% respectively. A strong contrast was made with the EMBN from which only 20% responded.

228 partners and associate members across EMMC, EMBN and EMJD responded to the Survey, of which 143 completed the Survey. Their response rate was significantly lower than that of the coordinators, especially only 7% of the EMBN partners contacted responding to the Survey.

808 students and graduates took part in the Survey and there was a very positive bias of responses from Graduates of EMMCs (526) with 262 current students responding\(^2\). 702 students and graduates completed the Survey, representing 86.9 % of the total respondents.

24 National Structures took part in the Survey, representing 80% of the National Structures.

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\(^2\) Some 262 EM students and 526 EM graduates contributed to the survey. This is lower than the number of students and graduates who entered the survey (808) because some of them already stopped completing the survey when they were asked which target group they represented.
In parallel to the online Survey, targeted open questionnaires were sent to Action 2 and Action 3 projects. Action 2 projects which offer degrees were contacted and Action 3 projects whose subjects appeared relevant to the recognition were contacted. Table 3.2 identifies the response rates from Action 2 and Action 3 projects.

Table 3.2: Action 2 and 3 Projects and Responses Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
<th>Responded</th>
<th>% Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action 2 Projects</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 3 Projects</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clustering Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes Survey (2011), Ecorys. (n=116)

**Analysis of results and identification of themes**

After the closure of the Survey on 6th December 2011, the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data was undertaken, with the aim to identify trends, good practice examples and key challenges. Follow-up phone interviews were also undertaken to further complement the qualitative data in the online Survey.

As a result, the following three cross-cutting sub-themes emerged:

- The first concerns the ways in which **students are supported in gaining recognition** for their qualifications. For example, through information available to them from the application stage onwards, and where they are awarded clearly identified degrees, accompanied by robust and standardised information (European Credit Transfer Systems, Diploma Supplements etc.), and where the students and graduates themselves are building a wider global landscape of recognition as they take their degrees into the global labour market;

- The second sub-theme concerns the particular **strategies that have been built by EMJPs to overcome recognition challenges** both short-term and long-term. For example, short-term innovations have involved ways of overcoming what could be regarded as insurmountable problems, such as one country demanding that certificates can only be in their national language and not in English. Longer-term strategies can include coordinators and partners from EMJPs collaborating across Programmes and with National Structure, to lobby Governments for legislative change;

- The third sub-theme involves all the actors involved in EMJPs helping to build on the efforts of the European Commission by increasing the visibility of Erasmus Mundus beyond Europe in ways that **increase the global recognition of Erasmus Mundus and the degrees awarded by Master and Doctoral Programmes**. That includes building strong alumni networks, promotion and publicity, networking, and linkages to business, research and teaching networks.
These three sub-themes were discussed further at the Workshop, which acted as a forum for exchanging views across the Erasmus Mundus community including active contributors of the online Survey (i.e. Action 1 coordinators and partners, students and graduates as well as National Structures), Action 2 and 3 coordinators with relevant expertise, industry experts and other key organisations such as National Academic Recognition Information Centres and National Qualification Authorities.

This Practical Guideline therefore reflects the Survey results and the discussions and conclusions at the Workshop, with a particular focus on the case studies and recommendations which are aimed at all the key stakeholders in the Erasmus Mundus community.
4 Good Practices

This section highlights good practice examples from Action 1, 2 and 3 projects as well as wider EM stakeholders to facilitate better recognition of degrees and joint degrees developed through Erasmus Mundus Programme, both within Europe and across the world.

The following section aims specifically to help Action 1 projects as well as Action 2, Action 3, National Structures, students/graduates, employers and key recognition agencies such as national authorities and NARIC-ENIC contribute to better recognition by providing them with concrete step-by-step recommendations.

The good practices presented below have been selected mainly through the Survey and Workshop activities mentioned in the previous section. The Practical Guidelines rest upon the most relevant good practice examples presented at the Workshop which were first identified through the survey outcomes. In addition to this, additional desk research have been undertaken to complement these good practice examples. The methodology to select these good practice examples is briefly presented in the table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Methodology for selecting good practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Stage</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selecting good practice examples to be presented at the Workshop</td>
<td>Analyse the survey outcomes: identify the key trends – (challenges, opportunities and good practices) and categorise them into themes and sub-themes for discussion at the Workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select concrete and tangible good practices examples discussing main recognition themes identified in the Survey from the most relevant survey responses. Practices should be easily shared with the delegates at the Workshop and have relevance to all the target groups involved in the project (namely Actions 1, 2, 3, students/graduates and NSs as well as wider key stakeholders such as employers and recognition organisations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct follow-up interviews to gather more information about the good practice examples selected and further assess their relevance to the Workshop and Practical Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct additional research and interviews to identify good practice examples for specific target groups when not enough good practice examples were felt to be identified through the Survey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensure a good balance across Actions 1, 2, 3 projects and also highlight views of students/graduates, NSs, employers and recognition organisations such as NARICs. Where possible, highlight good practice examples from projects that are less known within the EM community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying detailed good practice examples from the Workshop presentations</th>
<th>Select the most relevant recognition good practice examples presented at the Workshop which provide concrete practical recommendations that are clearly understood and can be largely disseminated to the EM community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying further good practice examples from survey participants, and from additional desk research</td>
<td>Additional good practice examples from the Survey responses and desk research (including an Action 1 website information analysis) but not presented at the Workshop to provide complementary information to the most relevance practices selected from the Workshop good practice examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three major areas of good practice regarding the recognition of Erasmus Mundus joint degrees. The first is positioning Erasmus Mundus strategically within the global Higher Education landscape and the global labour market, and ensuring that it has a reputation of delivering graduates whose skills and qualifications are world class. The second area involves the EMJPs delivering those graduates. Then there is a third transversal activity in ensuring that those involved in the activities work together and coordinate their initiatives – all actors across Actions 1-3 (empowered through the European Commission funding of Erasmus Mundus) collaborating with national and international actors such as National Structures, ENIC-NARIC and Higher Education Associations.

### 4.1 Building the global reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus

- **Primary objective:** to ensure that the more Erasmus Mundus is ‘recognised’ globally as a high-quality and innovative European HE product, the more opportunity graduates of EMJPs will have for their qualifications to be recognised by employers.

Erasmus Mundus is not alone in facing recognition challenges. There are few HEIs where a degree has unequivocal ‘recognition’ globally – perhaps institutions such as Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Oxford and Cambridge have a very strong global brand which has been built up over decades, or even centuries of focus on quality and excellence. Erasmus Mundus by contrast is relatively new and involves multiple HEIs and disciplines. The challenge is therefore more complex and spans the disciplinary boundaries and all those HEIs involved. Furthermore, the scale of Erasmus Mundus is comparatively modest in terms of the numbers of programmes and graduates, but the formal Evaluations of the Programme have shown how it has an impact far beyond its size.
Action 1 Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes (EMJPs) offer third country and more recently also European Union (EU) country students the possibility to study in different Universities in Europe and third countries. The high competitive selection process, the scholarship, the multi-disciplinary curricula and the possibility to obtain double or joint degrees from different universities make Erasmus Mundus attractive. EMJPs help students develop language and inter-cultural skills and enhance their employment opportunities. Participation in the joint programmes provides international exposure to the institutions that participate and enable them to further develop their reputation worldwide through their focus on integrated curricula/research and cohorts of graduates.

Action 2 and Action 3 projects’ work directly to provide benefits to Action 1 joint programmes, and are an important element that contributes to the internationalisation of the European Higher Education Area. The added value of Action 2 and 3 projects differ from EMJP Action 1 joint programmes. Action 2 projects focus mainly on exchange mobility which implies that more attention is given to the recognition of study results, academic recognition and credit transfer at the home university. Action 2 projects therefore play an important role to find innovative solutions to recognition issues with third partners. These programmes also help staff to develop ‘global competences’ and networks.

Action 3 projects develop networks, for example to communicate the innovative products of Action 1 more widely international level, to HEI and the labour-market to achieve recognition more effectively. Action 3 also takes a horizontal approach on issues such as recognition with activity lines concerning Erasmus Mundus National Structures information projects and projects to promote European Higher Education, often making an impact at a policy and strategic levels.

The following KEY ACTIVITIES have been identified to help build the reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus in the context of recognition. First, raise the global awareness about the value of Erasmus Mundus graduates. Second, raise institutional capacity and expertise of the actors involved and engaged with Erasmus Mundus so they are better prepared to help achieve degree recognition.

1) Raise the global awareness about Erasmus Mundus

Good practice in raising the global awareness about Erasmus Mundus has been carried out through central initiatives such as the ‘Study in Europe’ portal, through the DG EAC portal, and through the comprehensive amount of information that is available through the EACEA portal. For example the potential role for Erasmus Mundus in democratic and institutional reform has been emphasised by the Commission in the context of the ‘Arab Spring’ and relations with Jordan.

5 http://www.studyineurope.eu/
6 http://ec.europa.eu/education/external_relation-programmes/erasmus_mundus/
GOOD PRACTICE: European Commission (EC) Delegations around the World
URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/web_en.htm

EC Delegations around the world can work with institutions to embed Erasmus Mundus into national higher education landscapes.

Good Practice: “The European Commission’s Delegation in Malaysia organised a pre-departure event for Malaysian recipients of Erasmus Mundus scholarships on 9 July in Kuala Lumpur. This was the first such event in the country, bringing together students and academics who have been awarded scholarships in 2009”. The fact that a student cited this as a good practice demonstrates the effectiveness of intervention made at the national policy and authority levels to support the recognition of Erasmus Mundus as a programme and scholarships.

Recommendable elements:

- Recognise the importance of activities at the national political level in order to build the reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus;
- Undertake proactive campaigns so that national authorities and their HE agencies are sensitised to the value of the Programme and its degrees;
- Organise information events with national authorities in order to celebrate the achievements of Erasmus Mundus Programme such as their high quality students, staff, international multi-disciplinary courses and networks.

The most important carriers of quality in Erasmus Mundus are the graduates. Individual Programmes can establish their own specialised Alumni associations but at the European and Global level the activities of EM-A, the Erasmus Mundus Student and Alumni Association, are of strategic importance not only in promoting Erasmus Mundus, but in working to maximise information sharing between alumni and current students.

GOOD PRACTICE: Engage the Participation of the Erasmus Mundus Student and Alumni Association (EM-A)
URL: www.em-a.eu

Good Practice:

- Undertook survey to better understand the recognition issues faced by students and alumni (e.g. EM-A Latin American Chapter http://www.em-a.eu/en/ema/our-regional-chapters/latin-american-chapter.html);

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7 Source: comment from a student from Clustering Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes Survey (2011) Ecorys
- Undertook **promotional activities to enhance recognition in home countries** targeting employers and other stakeholders;

- Provided information and **advice to students on recognition issues** and on processes to obtain recognition of degrees;

- **Engaged with widest community of stakeholders**: EU Delegations, Ambassadors and Embassies of third countries, Political levels, professional associations; and

- Organised **events with relevant stakeholders to enhance legal recognition**. The EM-A Latin American Chapter for instance organised meetings at political level to improve recognition: for example with European Commissioner for Education, Androulla Vassiliou in April 2011, and with the Association of Brazilians in the UK in October 2011.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendable element:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Engage students and graduates from the Erasmus Mundus Alumni to promote the brand and better understand the recognition issues encountered;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Create further synergies with alumni networks to disseminate clear information and undertaking promotional activities targeted at employers and other stakeholders. Alumni can inform students and alumni on legal issues in their home countries and labour-market recognition. It can provide important information on alumni's career path and employers.</td>
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</table>

2) **Raise institutional capacity and expertise**

Raising institutional capacity and expertise is vital for the development, delivery, and recognition of joint programmes and joint degrees. This is also part of Erasmus Mundus Action 3 through “**Erasmus Mundus National Structures information projects**”. Erasmus Mundus National Structures⁸ are specifically tasked with promoting Erasmus Mundus within their countries and supporting their HEIs in being successful at delivering successful Programmes. Action 3 allows the National Structures to work together and to **work with global partners in building the reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus**.

**GOOD PRACTICE**: Erasmus Mundus Active Participation (EMAP) project, Action 3

**URL**: [http://emap-project.webnode.cz/](http://emap-project.webnode.cz/)

**17 Partners**: from the Czech Republic, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

**The Aim**: To enhance the participation of higher education institutions from countries which so far have been less well represented in the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 through training seminars that raise the institutional capacity of HEIs to deliver excellent joint programmes.

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Good Practice:

- Acknowledged that the global reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus needs to be built on a consistent pan-European basis of HE quality and excellence;

- Undertook training seminars for potential EMMC applicants from less represented European countries in which existing EMCCs are presented as good practice; and

- Developed the activities further through EMAP2, with a focus on continuing capacity building and extended focus on EMJDs as well as EMCCs.

**GOOD PRACTICE: The ASEMUNDUS project, Action 3**


**Nine Partners:** National Structures: Germany (coordinator), Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland.

**The Aim:** To enhance higher education cooperation and especially university mobility between the EU and Asia.

Good Practice:

- Organised structured participation in events (education fairs, conferences etc.) in four different Asian countries where large numbers of HEIs attended, with the aim to establish a network of local Erasmus Mundus promoters;

- Organised targeted thematic contact seminars that engaged all actors from Ministers of Education through to graduates and prospective students within four Asian countries and trained the Erasmus Mundus promoters, with existing EMCCs used as good practice examples.

**Recommendable elements:**

- Recognise the value of Action 3 projects which enhance the global recognition of Erasmus Mundus, increase the HE participation in Erasmus Mundus, and build institutional capacity and quality in the development and delivery of excellent joint programmes;

- Organise a series of awareness raising events as a first step to raise institutional capacity and expertise within regions and countries where EM is less represented;

- Develop a capacity building programme which responds to the exact needs of the HEI staff in the targeted regions and countries.
Institutional capacity also extends to having a realistic understanding of why recognition is being sought. In the Workshop, Andrejs Rauhvargers emphasised that “legal recognition is the positioning of foreign credentials within other countries’ Higher Education or employment systems. It is a process that allows Higher Education and employers to recognise students’ learning outcomes obtained in foreign universities”.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** Presentation by Professor Andrejs Rauhvargers at the Erasmus Mundus Clusters joint Workshop on recognition and sustainability

**URL:**

**Good Practice:** Professor Rauhvargers highlighted a number of key issues related to the recognition of joint degrees including the following:

- There has been a shift in some systems from regarding recognition as a ‘process’ and more as a set of ‘outcomes’, therefore the information provided to students needs to understand what is required in the systems. The ‘old-fashioned’ approach towards recognition of joint degrees focuses on formal rights and conditions of the studies, whereas the contemporary approach focuses more on learning outcomes in the quality of programme;

- The legal issues related to recognition of joint degrees have not changed and there is no specific legislation at international level which means all national conditions concerning the degrees must be met. However, there have been developments at international levels which improve the conditions for joint degrees; and

- He raised the question whether all the HEIs understand and observe Lisbon Recognition Convention, because the Convention can help to facilitate better recognition of degrees at an international level.

**Recommendable elements:**

- Understand how the recognition ‘landscape’ is changing across the world, and gather relevant knowledge which influences the recognition at international and national levels;

- Ensure that Programmes provide the information to students that are suited to the purpose for which recognition is being sought;

- Be clear whether national legislation allows joint degrees and how the study in one consortium partner can be recognised in another;

- At the consortium level, agree on how a joint quality assurance will be organised.

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9 Professor Andrejs Rauhvargers, Secretary General of the Latvian Rectors’ Conference [http://www.eua.be/about/who-we-are/secretariat/Andrejs-Rauhvargers.aspx](http://www.eua.be/about/who-we-are/secretariat/Andrejs-Rauhvargers.aspx)

4.2 Building recognition through excellent Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes

- **Primary objective:** to build recognition through high quality EM Joint Programmes involving the activities and outcomes of the EMJPs and the roles of key drivers for recognition, including students/graduates, employers, agencies responsible for recognitions, as well as coordinator and partner institutions and their staff.

The following **KEY ACTIVITIES** focus on the EMJPs developing and sharing good practice, and working to ensure that their graduates are as empowered as possible when they take their Erasmus Mundus joint degrees into the global labour market:

1) Clearly communicate the strategic value of Erasmus Mundus joint degrees;

2) Develop integrated consortium practice;

3) Ensure employers recognise the value of an Erasmus Mundus joint degree;

4) Provide clear information to students and graduates on the recognition of their joint degree; and

5) Provide Detailed Diploma Supplements and relevant supporting documents rapidly after graduation.

**1) Clearly communicate the strategic value of Erasmus Mundus joint degrees**

Communicating the quality and relevance of Erasmus Mundus joint degrees present recognition challenges. EMJPs need to communicate their recognisable quality and value, particularly to potential employers of their graduates.

EMJPs can communicate their unique selling points (USPs) and can be particularly focused on the real-world developments and needs due to the multi-disciplinary nature of their programmes. For example, programmes address global issues such as climate-change, sustainable natural resources, knowledge management, migration, tourism, and public health. All of these require interdisciplinary approaches.

Also, EMJPs are multi-institutional and multi-country. Although the inter-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-institutional experience is at the core of the Erasmus Mundus USP, communicating the value of those characteristics can be challenging if an organisation, institution, or employer has not heard before of Erasmus Mundus and is faced also with a degree certificate and associated transcripts.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA) Master Programme, Action 1

**URL:** [http://www.nohanet.org/noha-master-programme.html](http://www.nohanet.org/noha-master-programme.html) (Programme)

**Partners:** The extensive NOHA partnership provides the institutional volume to establish its own Association: “*The Statutes of the NOHA International Association (NOHA Statutes) establishes two categories of membership: Full membership and Associate membership*” and that in itself enhances
global recognition. Since its establishment it has delivered over 1500 graduates who are now linked back to the wider NOHA network through the Alumni Association.

**Good practice:** Ensures that the association is dynamic through a participatory web site where participants can:

- Become a member as an ambassador of the project;
- Check out interesting interviews with professionals in the humanitarian sector;
- Get in touch with an alumni by browsing through the list of members or via Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter;
- Post the best shots of the student’s year and browse through the different years in the picture section;
- See the events that are being organised by and for their alumni across the globe; and
- Discuss the latest humanitarian issues and look for jobs or internships in their forums.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** EURO-AQUAE Master Programme, Action 1

**URL:** [http://www.euroaquae.eu/](http://www.euroaquae.eu/)

**Twelve Partners:** in France, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland, Hungary, South Korea, India, Argentina, Singapore and an extensive network of global Associate Partners.

**Good Practice:** Developed a highly integrated joint degree and promotes the strategic value of joint degrees to all relevant stakeholders including policy-makers and partner institutions, including the following elements:

- Erasmus Mundus joint degrees as truly European innovations. Joint degrees require the development of a close collaboration and deep integration with consortium members. Real joint organisation and management is necessary to achieve joint degrees;
- The development of high quality degrees with unique content where each partner is complementary to each other. This joint effort for pedagogic development is based on the added value of each partner;
- Joint degrees which often open the door to additional collaborations on other research activities. They also provide an international visibility to the participating Higher Education institutions in a specific innovative field;
- Institutional support (local and national levels) and international strategy. It is essential to dialogue and seek support from local and national authorities. This could be done by organising meetings with national authorities and accreditation bodies etc.; and
• Strong partnership with the industrial world and answers to EU needs in the labour-market and innovation areas.

**Recommendable elements:**
- Communicate the USP of EMJP through the wider networks that you and your partners are involved with;
- Establish an alumni association and ensure it is effectively animated so that all participants can receive value from being active;
- Enhance the global visibility of your programme formalising your EMJP-related network as
- A membership organisation that delivers value to a wider network of members.

2) Develop integrated consortium practice

While consortium partners might first think it is easy to deliver joint programmes, the reality is more challenging when delivering joint degrees. When cooperating, the consortium often faces various challenges at different levels including administrative, organisational, academic and legislative. It is therefore essential to provide guidance on how consortium can develop integrated practices.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** TropEd – European Master of Science in International Health, Action 1
**URL:** [http://www.troped.org/](http://www.troped.org/)

**Nine Partners:** from 7 European and 2 third country HEIs.

**The Aim:** An international network of institutions for higher education in International Health which would result in the creation of the European Master of Science in International Health.

**Good Practice:** Developed extensive cooperation and quality assurance mechanisms to improve the process of awarding degrees and recognition of joint programmes including:
- A solid and long term cooperation that included third country partners covering mobility of students and staff;
- The consortium partners with a shared interest in participating in the project. Partners were complementary of each other and offered USP to the partnership;
- Transparency both within own institution and between partners in order to secure a smooth process;
- Tools including a handbook for course accreditation for core courses, advanced modules and re-accreditation, guidelines for joint thesis as well as an annual report for the consortium members;
• Cooperation agreement with the coordinating institution’s extensive knowledge about partners’ regulations for awarding joint and double degrees, along with acknowledgement of different meetings of joint and double degrees across the partners;

• Clarification of the institution responsible for awarding degree at the different partner institutions; and

• For each student attending their institutions, partners produced student’s track awards institutional grade reports that are sent to the coordinating institution (2-3 for each student at each track). These reports form the basis for a joint grade report consisting of student number at each institution, and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) grades and credits in addition to local grades and credits.

**Recommendable elements:**

- Transparent cooperation mechanisms and a well written cooperation agreement should be sought between partners in order to improve the process of awarding degrees and recognition;

- Each partner should develop their knowledge about national legislation requirements to award degrees and share expertise amongst the consortium via common tools and consortium meetings;

- Create a system in which student’s tracks are accurately assembled with all the required information at each partner level;

- Produce a joint grade report for each student including the tracks, ECTS grades as well as local grades and credits gained at each partner institution s/he studied;

- Use available resources which support integrated consortium practice, including EACEA.

3) Ensure employers recognise the value of an Erasmus Mundus joint degree

It is important to provide a clear explanation not just of formal academic learning outcomes, but also of relevant transversal competencies to employers.

To enhance recognition in the labour-market, employers recommend that Universities offer not only academic training but also practical experience and ‘soft skills’. Placements and internships are core activities in an EMJP, and the potential to build a network of ‘Associate Partners’ enable vital cooperation between academia and external partners in business, the public sector, and international organisations.

Many Action 1 projects actively engage with employers, involving them from the conception stage of the Programme. They also clearly and widely communicate the added-value of their programme as well as the learning outcomes and transversal competences gained by their students to the labour-market.
It is in this context that recognition and employability (two of the Clusters themes) strongly interact. Employability is more readily achieved with a clearly recognisable degree, and a clearly recognisability of a degree is enhanced through effective employability of the graduates.

GOOD PRACTICE: BMW GROUP Careers

URL:

The BMW group is a major global employer recruiting thousands of graduates each year. Whilst the BMW group has not been involved in the Erasmus Mundus programme, they seek high-calibre students with not only academic and practical knowledge but also inter-cultural and language skills. Joint programmes such as the EMJPs are therefore particularly relevant for them because ‘in an internationally competitive labour market, intercultural skills are a prerequisite for an entire career’. For this reason, a BMW Group human resource representative presented their experience of collaborating with HEIs and the benefits at the Workshop.

Good Practice: The BMW Group considers that the co-operation between academia and business is crucial in order to nurture a successful career of graduates. A long term co-operation with academia is sought based on the mutual benefits and the following understanding:

- Definition of skills required for the student as potential future employee should be defined at the outset;
- Definition of skills to be taught (academic, intercultural, soft and team skills) should be defined at the outset; and
- Transparency on both sides regarding the expectations from the co-operation.

To this end, it is essential to involve potential employers at each step of a joint programme development and delivery.

Recommendable elements:

- Ensure that employability is a criterion in the internal quality assurance process, and involve representatives of the relevant professional field(s) into the quality assurance process;
- To ensure that the programme aims at and corresponds to the qualification demands in the professional field(s), directly involve representatives of the professional field in the development of the programme pedagogy;
- Show potential employers that the graduates have been successfully employed in the employers’ sectors through analysis of employment take-up and career pathways;
- Clearly communicate the learning outcomes and transversal competences gained by students to potential employers.
4) Provide clear information to students and graduates on the recognition of their joint degree

It is essential for Erasmus Mundus Programmes to provide clear information for students, prior to taking the Programme, during it and beyond.

Clear information at the application stage helps to convince the best students that there is value for them in taking the Programme. Effective provision of degree certificates and related information after completing the Programme empowers the graduates.

However, the Survey reported that students have too often been unclear about recognition issues prior to their Programme and only discover potential problems during the Programme, such as:

- Would the degree (whatever it would be – joint, multiple etc.) receive legal recognition in the countries where the partners were located?
- Would the degree be recognised in their home countries?
- Would it be recognised professionally (for example accredited by professional organisations)? and
- Would it be recognised in the wider labour-market covering academia, business and government sectors, and in different countries and parts of the world?

To award a single multiple degree, which is fully recognised by many consortium partners, can be a real challenge but the following projects demonstrate that this is possible through the information provided on their website.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** Sustainable Management of Food Quality Programme (EDAMUS) Master Programme, Action 1
URL: [http://www.master-edamus.eu/](http://www.master-edamus.eu/)

*Six Partners:* In France, Italy, Spain, Algeria, and Greece.

**Good Practice:** Clearly explains on its web home page that “The qualification consists of a multiple Master’s degree. The master’s degree is fully recognised by all the partners”.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** INTERZONES Doctoral Programme (Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones), Action 1
URL: [http://www.mundusphd-interzones.eu/](http://www.mundusphd-interzones.eu/)

*Sixteen Partners:* Core partners including third countries of Brazil, United States of America (USA), Argentina, India, Australia, Russia and Mexico.

**Good Practice:** Clearly states that “successful PhD students will then be awarded a fully-recognized double degree from their two main institutions, in addition to diploma supplements certifying their achievements in their 3rd/4th doctoral school(s)”. The Programme therefore reassures doctoral candidates that they will be awarded a PhD that is fully recognised by the institutions that award it, and
therefore the degree has a clear legitimacy. It also is accompanied by comprehensive detail about their academic achievements in the doctoral schools (partner institutions) where they produce their thesis.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** EDEEM Doctoral Programme (European Doctorate in Economics Erasmus Mundus). Action 1

**Seven Partners:** In France (Coordinator), the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

**Good Practice:** With a complex doctoral consortium the Programme clearly communicates that it will award a “joint doctorate degree, entitled “European Doctorate in Economics - Erasmus Mundus”, officially recognized as a doctorate degree by the partner institutions, with the same rights and duties as their national degrees.”

While some EMJPs have compact consortia (the minimum being three partners in three countries) many are highly complex and therefore communicating the information to students becomes more challenging. Clarity and consistency of information is central to helping students to understand what the recognition process will involve. It may not matter if there are some real problems in providing a single integrated degree, as students will understand the problems if they are clearly communicated from the outset.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** European Masters Programme in Computational Logic (EMCL), Action 1

**Five Partners:** In Germany, Austria, Australia, Italy and Portugal.

**Good Practice:** Clearly communicates to students that their degrees will depend on where they will study, and what steps they need to take as follows:

After successful completing their studies, students will receive a joint Masters degree from the universities where they have physically studied. The degree is officially recognized.

- A joint Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree is awarded to a master student by the partner universities which have hosted the student during his/her studies.

- The degree is equivalent to a Master of Science degree in Germany and Austria, to a Laurea Magistrale in Informatica in Italy and to a Mestre em Lógica Computacional in Portugal.

  Students who successfully finished the EMCL program must present the transcript degree from the second hosting university to the first university and apply for the second diploma. The first hosting institution will automatically issue the diploma.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** European Union Master in Mechatronic and Micro-mechatronic Systems (Eu4M), Action 1
URL: [http://www.eu4m.eu/](http://www.eu4m.eu/)

**Three Partners:** In Germany, Spain and France.
Good Practice: Clearly communicates to students where formal professional accreditation will be obtained: “The Eu4M Master programme has the Erasmus Mundus label by the European Commission, and it is accredited as Second Cycle European-accredited Engineering Programme by the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAEE) and German Accreditation Agency for Degree Programmes in Engineering (ASIIN)”.

**Recommendable elements:**

- Be clear at the outset to students about the degree they will obtain;
- Gather relevant information about recognition and regularly update it, so that the information offered to students is always accurate;
- Be open about any difficulties and challenges that exist in awarding particular joint degrees – for example provide online FAQs;
- Communicate clearly where (countries, accreditation institutions etc.) the degrees will be formally recognised;
- Consult with alumni about their recognition experiences and fine-tune the information that is provided to future graduates. In particular, establishing networks between alumni and students from same countries is beneficial so that they can exchange the experiences and issues which are specific to their home countries.

5) Provide Detailed Diploma Supplements and relevant supporting information for employer’s graduation

Graduates have the greatest interest in having their achievements recognised, and they need to be empowered with rich information in a structured form. Diploma supplements and other standardised documents are essential elements in providing a clear and standardised understanding of what these complex degree programmes entailed, and what the graduates achieved. Diploma Supplements communicate vital information about Programme and module objectives and learning outcomes, and student achievement including marks for modules, dissertation and research work, hard and soft skills gained etc.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** Information Technologies for Business Intelligence (IT4BI) Master Programme, Action 1
URL: [http://it4bi.univ-tours.fr/home/master-programme/](http://it4bi.univ-tours.fr/home/master-programme/)

**Five Partners:** In Belgium, France, Germany and Spain.

Good Practice: Communicates in detail the transcripts and information that will accompany their degrees:
“At the end of the two years, a grade transcript will be drawn up for each student. It will include the official seal of all the partner institutions, thus guaranteeing recognition of the credits obtained. Once 120 ECTS credits have been obtained, the student will receive the multiple national masters diplomas from the universities in which he/she studied, a joint diploma and a joint Europass Diploma Supplement and Europass mobility. The Europass language certificate will be used to record the student's language skills (the coordinator will be responsible for the delivery of these documents), and students will be encouraged to use the Europass CV”.

For Erasmus Mundus this means an overall coherent statement of achievement should be produced to complement the Diploma supplements produced by each country where the student studied. This would meet the needs of graduates to provide them with the maximum amount of consistent and coherent information. Furthermore, how the information can be used is important, and students can be provided with knowledge that empowers them when they are seeking recognition of their achievements.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** European Academic Mobility Network with Asia (EURASIA-EM-External Cooperation Window) Project, Action 2
URL: [http://www.boku.ac.at/zib/eurasia](http://www.boku.ac.at/zib/eurasia)

**Nineteen Partners:** Involving 8 European and 11 Asian HEIs.

**Good Practice:** Used different channels and networks to promote information on legal and labour-market recognition for both Asian and European students prior, through and after their course, and ensured that:

- **Information provided is available prior to the course** through their website and emails and is relayed by their Asian partners. It provides clear information about the different degrees and career opportunities;

- **Students and alumni can also become ambassadors** to support new students wishing to apply;

- Through the course, the project provides **individual counselling** in both EU/Asian partners for career prospects (either at the EU host university or via e-mail contact to the Asian home university);

- At the end of the course, all students received a **degree certificate and a diploma supplement in the EU national language and English**. Students are also invited to be part of the EU host university’s network; and

- Alongside all these activities, the project also collaborated with **EU delegations, EM Action 3 projects, and embassies** to further disseminate the project and improve recognition.

The information about the recognition process needs to be accessible to students ideally through communication channels of relevance to the students – Web, Smart-Phone, Social Networks etc. The information relating to the recognition of student achievements and their degrees needs to be structured in ways that both communicate effectively to employers etc. and also in ways that authenticate the information effectively.
Recommendable elements:

- With the acceptance letter, a welcome letter from the Programme director could be sent to describe the relevance of the program and provide relevant information regarding legal and labour-market recognition including the opportunities that future graduates will have;

- In addition to the generic information on a website provide individualised support to students. For example there may be unique recognition challenges in particular countries for students from your programme;

- At the start of the programme or though any introductory summer schools, the coordinating and partner institutions could organise a presentation about the programme which could include information related to recognition and be made available online;

- Personal contacts (phone calls, recommendation letter) with the companies or organisations for which graduates apply can be effective;

- Providing documents in English, or in the required national languages, is one achievement, but programmes need to help students with the challenges about having the documents translated into their own national languages where employers etc. require it.

- Ensuring that the Diploma Supplement can describe more in details what subjects and modules the student studied at the different partner institutions as well as describe individual activities. The result is a helpful and internationally standardised description about the profile of the student.

4.3 Collaboration of all actors involved in Erasmus Mundus Programme

- **Primary objective:** to benefit from the activities being undertaken by the widest range of actors in the area of HE Reform so that Erasmus Mundus Programmes can be effectively informed and positioned to achieve the best recognition of their degrees.

All the actors involved in coordinating, delivering, implementing and assessing Erasmus Mundus play a role in the recognition of Erasmus Mundus as a brand. The collaboration of the key actors on a multi-lateral level provides Erasmus Mundus with a platform for the future.

**KEY ACTIVITIES:**

- Develop transversal tools that assist EMJPs and their graduates to maximise degree recognition:

- Enable partnerships with third country HEI to raise global awareness about the value of EM degrees:

- Build multi-lateral network between HE, government agencies and policy makers, and strategic intermediaries such as National Structures and HE quality organisations.
1) Develop transversal tools

The Erasmus Mundus Programme has used a range of transversal tools to focus on areas such as quality assurance and recognition to raise national and international awareness of specific qualities of European HE. These activities have been funded through Action 3 - Projects to promote European Higher Education.

GOOD PRACTICE: Joint programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded (JOQAR) project, Action 3
URL: http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/projects/joqar


The Aim: To facilitate easier accreditation and better recognition of EMJP and joint programmes at national and international levels.

Good Practice:

- Developing a multilateral recognition agreement regarding Quality Assurance (QA) and accreditation results and the establishment of a European coordination point for external QA and accreditation of joint programmes;

- Developing the guidelines and recommendations from the perspectives of ENIC-NARICs so that awareness is raised amongst HEIs regarding better recognition of their degrees;

- Establishing a common ground among ENIC-NARICs regarding the recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes; and

- Providing transparent information regarding Erasmus Mundus programmes via Crossroads 11, including all the programmes (incl. learning outcomes where available) and institutional details with a search engine.

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11 Crossroads provides information on quality assured and accredited higher education in Europe. http://www.crossroads.eu/home
2) Enable partnerships with third country Higher Education Institutions

This activity ‘operationalises’ many of the principles and practices being developed in Action 3 projects through Erasmus Mundus Action 2\(^\text{12}\) partnerships with third country higher education institutions and scholarships for mobility. It is here that the multi-lateral and multi-disciplinary characteristics of Erasmus Mundus can be shared. Action 2 projects operate on a ‘many to many’ geographical basis.

**GOOD PRACTICE: The AUSMIP project, Action 2**

**URL:** [http://www.ausmip.org/index.php](http://www.ausmip.org/index.php)

**The Partnership:** 13 partners and 11 associated partners in Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Bulgaria, Japan, Korea, Australia and New-Zealand

**The Aim:** To stimulate innovative research and the transfer of know-how and expertise in the field of Urban Planning and Architecture in a context of global demographic transitions.

**Good Practice:**

- Combines a unique and diverse range of global expertise and disciplines, operated within a multilateral partnership. The project enables master and PhD students, post-docs and faculty to complement their competences and research from a different perspective; and

- Incorporate a wide range of educational, research and pedagogic traditions and expertise, with a particular difference between the Japanese, and similar Korean ‘Kenkyushitsu’ laboratory systems and the systems of the Anglo-Saxon and continental European partners.

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**Recommendable element:**

- Develop a multi-lateral agreement for the project partners on QA, ensuring the external QA relevant to their country is also addressed as well as the QA within their own institutions;

- Be aware of good practices recommended by recognition agencies such as ENIC-NARIC and implement them where possible;

- Engage with the organisations which are responsible for recognition in their country from the outset of the Action 1 projects and inform them of the progress towards developing a degree/joint degree, as well as the final outcomes;

- As Action 3 projects, synthesise the information on EM Programmes which are of most interest to the organisations which are responsible for recognition (such as ENIC-NARICs) in facilitating better recognition and continue to feed them with the up-to-date information.
3) Build multi-lateral networks

To increase the understanding of the recognition processes amongst the relevant stakeholders and therefore facilitate legal and labour-market recognition, Erasmus Mundus stakeholders should develop or take part in multi-lateral networks and processes. These networks and processes would help building trust and connectivity, relay information and provide the conditions where all actors can work together with other structures on relevant recognition projects.

GOOD PRACTICE: A double degree in Europe, South American Leadership and Employability (ADDE-SALEM) project, Action 3 please elaborate further with further recommendations


Twelve Partners: From Italy (coordinator), France, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia

The Aim: To analyze the job markets of engineers in South America in order to establish the needs and competencies required for increasing the employability of students undertaking joint/double degrees between European and South American Universities. To facilitate cross European-South American university collaboration over the design of joint degrees which will lead to increasing applications for Action 1 with South American universities.

Good Practice:

- Establish a benchmark for the European universities interested in setting up joint Master or Doctoral degrees with South American universities which are attractive to the best South American students. Employability in their home countries will have a particular focus;

- Strategic alliances between Europe and South America based on mutual trust and complementary competence. An equal number of universities are represented in Europe and South America, each of them having in-depth experience of trans-Atlantic cooperation over joint degrees;
Engage with key stakeholders including the students of joint/double degrees, the faculties and administrators, the alumni, public structures and employers. All partners have strong links with national and/or multinational companies and governmental institutions. All South American partners also have strong university-industry collaborative research projects, ensuring the needs of the industries are reflected in the project outputs.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** BRIDGES-LAC, PROMHEDEU-LAC project, Action 3
**URL:** [www.obreal.org](http://www.obreal.org)

**Seven Partners:** From Spain (coordinator), Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands, Costa Rica and Uruguay (BRIDGES-LAC), from HE associations in Spain (coordinator), Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru (PROMHEDEU-LAC).

**The Aim:** To build permanent structures between governments and individual universities in Latin American and the Caribbean countries (LAC) to strengthen cooperation between university associations at regional level.

**Good Practice:**
- Recognises the importance of intermediary organisations which can act as a facilitator of dialogue between national authorities/governments and HEIs at regional levels;
- Established the priorities and basis for a permanent EU-LAC regional cooperation of HE associations with the European Universities Association (EUA), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the National Rectors and University Associations in Latin America (LA), and the University Networks; and
- Capitalised on the strong will of the EUA and the LA’s Rectors and Universities associations to discuss EU-LAC HE cooperation policy to obtain the political commitment of the key actors involved in the network as a long-term collaboration.

**GOOD PRACTICE:** Finnish National Board of Education, NARIC Finland, and Centre for International Mobility CIMO, National Structure
**URLs:** [www.oph.fi/recognition](http://www.oph.fi/recognition)  [www.cimo.fi](http://www.cimo.fi)

**Good Practice:** Joint degree programmes form an important part of the international activities of the Finnish higher education institutions. The Finnish National Board of Education (NARIC FINLAND), the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the Ministry of Education and Culture therefore cooperated on recognition of joint and double degrees. Two main recommendations were produced on the development, the design and the implementation of joint and double degrees. Over the past eight years, the following activities have been achieved through the cooperation:
- The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a recommendation on development of international joint and double degrees in 2004;
The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) in co-operation with the Ministry, higher education institutions and CIMO prepared a memo on the design and implementation of joint and double degrees in 2005;

The National memo on design and implementation of joint/double degrees lists all the aspects that Finnish higher education institutions need to take into account when designing joint and double degree programmes in 2011\(^{13}\); and

The memo can be used to inform international partners of the national issues related to joint/double degrees within Finnish HEIs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendable elements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Recognise the important roles which non-HEI can play in improving the recognition and draw on their expertise;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ All the EM stakeholders should participate to multi lateral networks which can take different forms depending on the specific objectives they wish to achieve;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Networks should be transparent and based on trust and connectivity across all the members;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Networks should have clear common goals and priorities, robust methodologies with realistic expected outcomes, reflecting the distinctive roles each member can play and providing the conditions where all actors can work together;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Identify key organisations or personnel for the networks which/who can obtain political commitment to achieve sustainable partnerships;</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Recognise networks take time and commitment to build and make impact.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 General recommendations and conclusions

This Practical Guidelines focused on actions that a range of the main Erasmus Mundus actors have taken, and show how others can consider following their good practice. The overall picture emerging from the good practices is not that recognition is a complex issue that is particularly ‘European’ – it is a global set of challenges. Recognition in this context is a process where one degree outcome is interacting with recognition regulations and practice both within the EHEA and beyond. To overcome the challenges, the following key areas can be identified where each of the key stakeholders are able to make a difference regarding the recognition of degrees within the Erasmus Mundus.

‘Actions’ for Action 1 Programmes to facilitate better recognition

The following set of recommendations build on the activities of the EMJPs (academics, administrators, institutions, professional bodies etc.) to help achieve recognition. The good practices show that programmes clearly understand the complexity of recognition challenges for their programme and their students and know how to address them:

- Understand in detail what recognition challenges exists for the programme;
- Communicate information transparently to students;
- Work with partner HEIs to reduce professional and legislative recognition problems for the programme;
- Provide students with the range of soft skills and professional competences that are relevant for employers;
- Empower graduates with timely, rich, and internationally standardised information about their achievements;
- Work with Erasmus Mundus-wide Alumni networks to ‘harvest’ knowledge about recognition experiences and to maintain a community of graduates ‘recognition ambassadors’ who are active in the labour market.

Action 2 Projects - roles in facilitating better recognition

Action 2 provides important platforms on which can be built widespread recognition of the Erasmus Mundus Programme through the following actions:

- Continue to raise the awareness of the Erasmus Mundus Programme in the targeted regions through their promotion and visibility strategies, involving not only HEIs but also industries, employers, prospective students and recognition organisations and policy makers including EC Delegations;
- Continue with multi-region large partnerships addressing the specific needs of the third county concerned, so that the benefits from the partnerships can be shared with many HEIs in the regions;
 Enable third country institutions (for example not just academic staff but also administrative and support staff) to build partnerships with their counterpart in Europe. It is in this context that HEIs can work more effectively together internationally, and find innovative solutions in the institutional support for international joint programmes which lead to better recognition at a global level;

 As the EM Programme focuses on individual mobility, Action 2 can also offer many good practices to support students which can be shared across the Erasmus Mundus Programme. Action 2 mechanism of student support ‘before’, ‘during’ and ‘after’ the mobility can be highly effective in addressing concerns raised by students, including the question which many third country students raise: ‘Will my degree be recognised in my home country?’.

Action 3 Projects - roles in facilitating better recognition

Action 3 allows projects to have a flexibility of choosing the most relevant mix of organisations according to the project aims, and the ability to conduct wide-ranging activities. Action 3 can build on this flexibility and facilitate better recognition of degrees offered within the Erasmus Mundus Programme both within Europe and towards third countries in the following fashion:

 Strategically target key organisations to improve recognition in third countries and establish most appropriate forms of collaboration with each of them in order to disseminate good practices and provide the crucial information regarding the recognition of degrees, for example:
  o HEIs in third countries may be best suited to engage in a formal partnership;
  o Recognition organisations may be better as steering group members;
  o Wider stakeholders such as students, employers, professional organisations university associations may be involved in events and/or survey participants or mailing list.

 Continue to increase capacity of HEIs through targeted training and better dialogue amongst EMJPs (coordinators, partners and support staff) and agencies supporting EM Programme such as National Structures and ENIC-NARICs.

National Structures - roles in facilitating better recognition

National Structures, through their horizontal actions as Action 3 projects and also as the key support agency for the Erasmus Mundus Programme in each European country, have developed strong European networks involving not only HEIs but also organisations which play pivotal roles to enhance the attractiveness, visibility and accessibility of European HE, such as ENIC-NARICs and national quality assurance organisations.

 National Structures can further inform each other of specific national conditions regarding recognition. In doing so, they can make significant contribution to the better recognition of degrees provided by EMJPs across EHEA.

Roles other key stakeholders (students, recognition agencies and employers) can play to facilitate better recognition
Good practices highlighted that students and graduates, recognition agencies and employers can make distinctive contributions to enable further recognition of degrees offered within the EM Programme as follows:

- EM-A and alumni network clearly have a strong voice in promoting Erasmus Mundus in their home countries as well as their employers once they graduate and can provide tangible experiences on how degrees offered within the EMJPs are recognised in the labour market and in their home countries;

- As there is not a single recognition process for all, students should be informed and aware of the issues related to recognition of their degrees from the start and throughout their EMJP. In particular, students should know before they leave their home country how the degrees they hope to receive in Europe are recognised in their home country;

- Recognition agencies such as ENIC, NARIC and MERIC can further support the recognition process by communicating to HEIs and National Structures how the degrees are recognised. Their improved understanding of EMJPs and their learning outcomes should further improve the recognition;

- Employers can be involved in the Erasmus Mundus Programme at many levels to contribute to better recognition. They can be involved at the design and delivery stages of projects in order to ensure the required skill sets of their future employees are appropriately integrated in the course. They can also be involved in awareness raising and information events either as participants or presenters so that not only they are informed of the achievements of the EM Programme but also they communicate to the promoters and students within the EM Programme the key factors for the labour market recognition of the degrees.

The role of the European Commission in facilitating better recognition

Significant energy has been put in successfully raising the global profile and reputation of Erasmus Mundus, which, in the context of global HE activity, is a modestly sized programme that produces a small cohort of students. In this regards, there was a shared fear among the EM Community that, if the name ‘Erasmus Mundus’ disappear, a re-branding would necessitate a lot of activity to avoid reputational capital being lost. Erasmus Mundus coordinators and partners who responded to the Survey and who in particular contributed to the discussions and debates at the Workshop in March 2012 recommended not to ‘do anything that dilutes the reputational capital of Erasmus Mundus that has been established since 2003’.

It is clear that innovative approaches demonstrated within the Erasmus Mundus requires significant promotion to prospective students and participating institutions not only at the project levels but also at the political level. The following is therefore recommended:

- Activities by the European Commission at the political level and through Delegations etc. should continue to promote the value of Erasmus Mundus as a brand which conveys innovation, multidisciplinarity, highly quality and international HEIs.

Tackling on-going challenge of recognition of degrees – collaborative work of the EM community
As each new cohort of EMJPs has been created (with the 2012 Evaluation of Proposals being the last of this cycle, but with Programmes still being active at the turn of the next decade) the interdisciplinary and country mix has become richer, along with the capacity of all the actors involved in the recognition of degrees.

For many of the global challenges Erasmus Mundus graduates possess the competences that are strongly aligned to the labour market needs. Having those characteristics ‘recognised’ will be an ongoing challenge but the good practices demonstrate the commitment and energies of each stakeholders and importance of a long-term collaboration across all the stakeholders within the EM community.