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The *European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament Bulletin* is published monthly by the European Affairs Department. The Bulletin provides an overview of the Parliament's work related to European affairs and arising from the membership of the Republic of Croatia in the European Union.

The Croatian Parliament, as the national parliament of an EU member state, participates in the decision-making process at the European level by overseeing the activities of the Government in the European Union institutions and by exercising the powers conferred on national parliaments by the Lisbon Treaty.

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***EU documents forwarded directly to the Croatian Parliament***

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Pursuant to the Protocol (no. 1) on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union, all draft legislative acts and communications are forwarded directly to national parliaments.

The Croatian Parliament publishes daily the received EU documents, along with information on the reference code assigned to each document, the applicable adoption procedure, its submission date and the timeframe for carrying out the subsidiarity check.

**In April 2024, the EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament 41 documents: 22 draft legislative acts, 19 communications and other non-binding documents.**

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***Information on European degree initiatives***

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On 27 March 2024 the Commission presented three initiatives to advance transnational cooperation between higher education institutions, with the ultimate goal of creating a **European degree**. These initiatives emerged from the Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 when the Commission in September 2020 identified the need to facilitate the delivery of joint degree programmes of higher education alliances. A voluntary European degree would benefit students and the higher education community by boosting learning mobility within the EU and by enhancing students' transversal skills. It would help meet labour market demand and make graduates more attractive for future employers while, at the same time, attracting students from around the world and boosting European competitiveness.

The three initiatives tackle the legal and administrative barriers to partner universities setting up competitive joint degree programmes at Bachelor, Master or Doctoral levels. The proposals build on universities' institutional autonomy and academic freedom. They fully respect the competences of Member States and regional governments in the area of higher education.

This document package comprises a Communication to European Parliament, Council, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and Committee of the Regions on a blueprint for a European degree and two proposals for Council recommendations to support the higher education sector.

The blueprint for a European degree paves the way for a new type of joint programme, delivered on a voluntary basis at national, regional, or institutional level, and based on a common set of criteria agreed at European level. Such a European degree would cut red tape and allow higher education institutions from different countries to cooperate seamlessly across borders and set up joint programmes.

**Communication to European Parliament, Council, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and Committee of the Regions on a blueprint for a European degree** [COM\(2024\) 144](#) proposes a **concrete cooperation path** between EU Member States and the higher education sector towards the creation of a European degree recognised automatically across the EU. In view of the diversity of the European higher education systems across Europe, the Commission proposes a gradual approach for Member States towards a European degree, with two possible entry points:

- **A preparatory European label:** a label would provide a strong European branding. It would be given to joint degree programmes which meet the proposed European criteria: students receive a European degree label certificate together with their joint degree.
- **A European degree:** this new type of qualification would be based on the common criteria and be anchored in national legislation. It would be awarded either jointly by several universities from different countries or possibly by a European legal entity established by such universities: students receive a 'European degree' that is automatically recognised.

The Commission will facilitate and support Member States in the work towards the European degree through a number of concrete actions, including a **European degree policy lab** supported by [Erasmus+ programme](#), to be set up in 2025. The Commission plans to launch 'European degree pathway projects' within Erasmus+ programme to provide financial incentives for Member States, together with their accreditation and quality assurance agencies, universities, students, economic and social partners, to engage in the pathway towards a European degree. The blueprint for a European degree builds on six Erasmus+ pilot projects involving more than 140 higher education institutions from across the EU.

**The Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education** [COM\(2024\) 147](#) invites Member States and higher education institutions to simplify and improve their quality assurance processes and practices. These are necessary conditions for accountability and trust and to improve universities' performances. Member States are invited to take measures to allow higher education institutions to adapt the programmes offered more quickly to societal needs. This Recommendation would endorse innovative pedagogical offers and ensure that higher education institutions can create transnational programmes that are quality assured and automatically recognised across the EU. The European degree will depend on strong quality assurance and automatic recognition.

**The proposed Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education** [COM\(2024\) 145](#) aims to give staff involved in cross-border work in education and innovative teaching methods the recognition and reward they deserve. It makes recommendations to ensure that national higher education systems address the uneven recognition of the diverse roles staff take on in addition to research, such as teaching and investing in mainstreaming sustainable development. It also encourages Member States to promote transnational education activities.

#### *Next Steps*

The package will be discussed with the Council of the EU and key stakeholders in higher education in the coming months. To make the European degree a reality it is necessary that the Council, Member States, universities, students, and economic and social partners work jointly

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