

TOWARD THE IAȘI-CHIȘINĂU MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUÉ

An Interconnected EHEA

From connecting our systems to each other — to connecting the EHEA to the world

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FRAMING

The connective tissue — and what actually holds it together

**What it is**

Shared tools that let 49 systems speak one language

- Three-cycle system · ECTS · Diploma Supplement
- Qualifications frameworks · ESG · DEQAR
- Lisbon Recognition Convention

**What holds it together**

Mutual trust

Recognition, joint degrees and alliances all rest on confidence in partners' quality, integrity and values.

So interconnectedness and the fundamental-values agenda are one agenda — not two.

Tools → Trust → Values: the chain that makes a degree earned in one system credible in another.



STATE OF PLAY

The orphan pillar — the only one without a roadmap



Inclusive

Post-Rome instrument

Social-Dimension Principles & Guidelines, with indicators & descriptors



Innovative

Post-Rome instrument

Recommendations on Learning & Teaching



Interconnected

The 2012 Mobility Strategy lapsed in 2020

Rests on the three key commitments — QF, recognition, QA — but its 2012 Mobility Strategy lapsed at its 2020 horizon, unrenewed

The gap: the other two pillars received fresh post-Rome instruments; interconnected's 2012 Mobility Strategy reached its 2020 horizon and was never renewed or expanded according to recent challenges & developments. The first ask is to renew and consolidate — not to start over.



STATE OF PLAY

The evidence: recognition uneven, mobility short, synergy stalled



Recognition

Tirana renewed the pledge on automatic recognition (revised EAR Manual, DEQAR) — but implementation across all 49 systems stays uneven.



Mobility

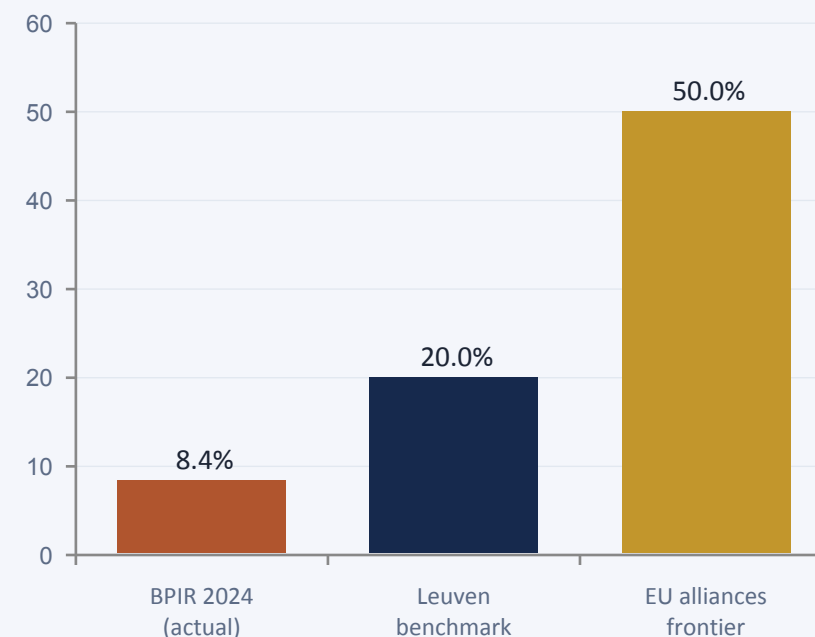
The 20% benchmark is persistently missed (~8.4%, BPIR 2024) and skewed to Western Europe — while the EU's university alliances push participants toward 50%.



EHEA-ERA synergy

Despite Paris and Rome commitments, the 2021 EHEA-EEA-ERA Task Force never gained traction.

A widening gap



EHEA-wide reality vs the EU frontier — EU push for redefinition...



STATE OF PLAY

A new fault line: the European Degree — built on Bologna, anchored in the EU

2025–26

2026–28

2029

Prepare & roll out the Joint European Degree label

Implement, monitor & run a feasibility study

Decision on a possible full European Degree



The two-speed risk

It is built on Bologna foundations and meant to support automatic mutual recognition — but it is an EU-27 instrument. Left unmanaged, it splits the Area in two.

EU-27 build it. The other 22 must not be left behind.

The Bologna framework is the layer that can keep the Degree readable across all 49 — see point C.



FORWARD AGENDA — AT A GLANCE

Seven moves, each with a Communiqué ask

A	Consolidate the pillar into one roadmap	→ Build the key commitments into a 2030 roadmap with indicators
B	Renew the 2012 Mobility Strategy	→ Adopt the 2027 I&M Action Plan — renewed definitions, link with intl. + equity
C	Keep the European Degree an EHEA-wide bridge	→ Affirm Bologna tools as the common reference for TNE
D	Widen the aperture — VET and ERA	→ Standing EHEA–VET and EHEA–ERA coordination, with milestones
E	Digital interoperability as infrastructure	→ EHEA-wide interoperable digital credentials, with equity safeguards
F	AI as enabler and trust-risk	→ Shared principles for responsible AI in recognition & QA
G	Openness with safeguards	→ Reaffirm openness with proportionate, autonomy-respecting safeguards



Give the pillar its own instrument — by consolidating what exists



The pillar already rests on the EHEA's most operational machinery — the three key commitments: qualifications frameworks, recognition, and quality assurance.

What it lacks is a unifying roadmap to 2030 — at parity with the inclusive and innovative pillars — that pulls those commitments (with mobility, alliances and digital) under shared commitments and measurable indicators.



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Mandate the BFUG to consolidate the key commitments into a coherent interconnectedness roadmap to 2030, with measurable indicators.



B

FORWARD AGENDA · B

Renew the 2012 Mobility Strategy for today's realities



Build on the 2012 EHEA Mobility Strategy ('Mobility for Better Learning') and the 2027 WG I&M Action Plan now in preparation — broadening it from a flows-and-targets paper to comprehensive internationalisation.

Renew it for today: confront intra-EHEA mobility imbalances and the social dimension of who actually goes abroad, and recognise blended and virtual mobility as complementary, credit-bearing routes — the floor, not a replacement.

**COMMUNIQUÉ ASK**

Adopt the WG I&M Action Plan on Internationalisation & Mobility — renewing the 2012 Strategy with internationalization measures, updated mobility definitions and equity of access.



B

The floor and the ceiling — widen access without lowering ambition



The inclusive floor

Virtual & blended mobility · micro-credentials

- Reaches the growing non-traditional learners — working, part-time, place-bound — for whom a semester abroad is impossible, not just unaffordable.
- Micro-credentials make it count: a stackable, quality-assured, portable slice of international competence — widening the base, not stratifying it.



The transformative ceiling

Physical mobility

- Social immersion, language in situ, the productive disorientation that reshapes how a person thinks — and the networks that outlast the stay.
- The transformative core — and European identity. No virtual format fully replicates it.

Hold both: the floor lifts everyone; the ceiling is the ambition we refuse to dilute.



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Recognise virtual mobility and micro-credentials as the inclusive floor — keep physical mobility the measured ambition, and report the formats separately so access does not quietly redefine the target.



C

FORWARD AGENDA · C

Keep the European Degree an EHEA-wide bridge, not an EU enclave



Position the intergovernmental Bologna framework as the layer that keeps the European Degree open, readable and recognised across all 49 systems.

Use the revisions already in train — the ESG (due 2026, for adoption 2027), the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes, and the ECTS Users' Guide — to absorb its QA and recognition demands without splitting the Area.



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Affirm Bologna tools as the common reference for transnational provision EHEA-wide.



D

FORWARD AGENDA · D

Widen the aperture — VET and ERA



VET

Permeability between vocational and academic pathways — bridging the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes, aligning EQAVET with the ESG and credit systems. The practical face of lifelong learning.



ERA

Concrete, time-bound synergy goals — research-based learning, doctoral education, researcher careers and mobility, academic and scientific freedom — and name the bodies linking the BFUG to ERA. Learn from why this link practically stalled (not just in EHEA, but in EU as well — see EUIs as an example).



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Establish standing EHEA–VET and EHEA–ERA coordination, with defined milestones.



FORWARD AGENDA · E

Digital interoperability as the connective infrastructure



Make interoperable, quality-assured digital credentials and micro-credentials — DEQAR, the European Student Card, digital diplomas, credential wallets — the operational backbone of automatic recognition.

The EHEA's distinctive asset: QA + framework anchoring + portability + stackability — matched by no other region at system level.

Treat connectivity, devices and skills as a precondition, not an assumption — or digital interconnection widens equity gaps. (The bridge to the inclusive pillar.)



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Commit to EHEA-wide interoperability of digital credentials, with equity safeguards.



AI as enabler and trust-risk



Enabler

Verification, recognition tooling, AI-supported QA — building on ENQA's 2025 guidance, which keeps human judgment central.



Trust-risk

It can erode the mutual trust recognition depends on — academic integrity, and how to recognise AI-affected qualifications. The EHEA still has no AI position to match its key commitments.



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Shared principles for responsible AI in recognition & QA — pairing a rights-based base (EU AI Act; CoE Framework Convention - CETS 225, UNESCO Ethics in AI 2021 Recc.) with the voluntary Bologna method.



G

FORWARD AGENDA · G

Openness with safeguards



Interconnectedness now operates amid steep migration restrictions, research security and de-risking pressures.

Affirm openness and academic freedom as the default — with proportionate, values-based risk management that avoids retreating into fragmentation.



COMMUNIQUÉ ASK

Reaffirm openness as a European value, while supporting proportionate, autonomy-respecting safeguards.

THE CHOICE FOR THE COMMITTEE

The world is converging on the EHEA's own model — voluntary, multi-stakeholder, autonomy-respecting convergence, not prescription.

The Bologna method is our most exportable asset — and the natural through-line for the Iasi/Chisinau Global Policy Forum.

A maintenance agenda

Keep the tools running. Affirm the pillar. Stay inward-looking.

The outward-facing agenda for 2030

**Connect Europe's knowledge ecosystem internally —
HE–VET–ERA — and project it globally.**

Thank you.