

30th March 2024

PRESS RELEASE

The SMARTT Project welcomes the European Commission's decision to adopt a package of ambitious proposals for Europe's higher education sector, with the aim of working towards a European degree.

The European Commission, on March 27th, in an official announcement, stated that we are one step closer to creating a European degree, presenting three initiatives to advance transnational cooperation between higher education institutions, with the ultimate goal of creating a European degree. The SMARTT project of CIVIS - Europe's Civic University Alliance, as one of the six projects to pilot a joint European degree label, actively engaged in analyzing, testing, and piloting the updated criteria for the European Degree label, expresses its support for the European Commission's decision to embrace a comprehensive set of bold initiatives aimed at advancing Europe's higher education sector and striving towards the realization of a European degree.

The European Commission's blueprint underscores the transformative potential of a voluntary European degree for students and the broader higher education community. By fostering learning mobility across the EU, enhancing students' cross-disciplinary skills, and aligning with labor market needs, this initiative promises to elevate graduates' employability and attractiveness to employers. Furthermore, this approach establishes Europe as an attractive hub for worldwide talent, thereby improving its competitive advantage. In this vein, micro-credentials are acknowledged as a crucial component in delivering flexible, specific education tailored to the requirements of a changing job market. They mark a pivotal move towards enhancing ongoing professional development and landing pathways for lifelong learning.



Co-funded by
the European Union



The blueprint outlines a dual approach: first, by improving quality assurance and the automatic recognition of qualifications in higher education to ensure high standards and seamless transitions between institutions; and second, by making academic careers more appealing and sustainable, thereby strengthening the sector's foundation. This initiative represents a strategic move towards a more integrated, dynamic, and globally oriented European higher education landscape.

These areas of focus resonate with SMARTT's objectives and suggest that the project plays a vital role in advancing the European Commission's vision for a more integrated, dynamic, and globally oriented European higher education landscape.

As also seen in the [preliminary set of key recommendations](#), the SMARTT project notably contributed to the blueprint for a European degree by specifically focusing on clustering the criteria, establishing implementation scenarios, and highlighting the role of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). By organizing the criteria into coherent clusters, SMARTT facilitated a structured approach to defining the essential qualities and standards required for joint educational programs. The project's work on delineating scenarios of implementation provided practical pathways for realizing the European degree, offering clear, actionable steps for stakeholders involved in higher education. Moreover, SMARTT's emphasis on the significance of EQAR underscored the importance of quality assurance in ensuring the credibility and recognition of the European degree across member states, thereby promoting trust and consistency in the European Higher Education Area. Moreover, SMARTT's efforts in promoting collaborative efforts, interdisciplinary approaches, and international perspectives are crucial in shaping a skilled, adaptable, and globally competitive European workforce.

As member universities of the CIVIS Alliance, we will continue to work persistently with competent stakeholders to contribute to the creation of the European Degree, aiming to contribute to the advancement of the European Higher Education Area and to open up new perspectives for students and the academic community.

It should be highlighted that a detailed presentation of the project's recommendations, including the final recommendations of the SMARTT Project, is scheduled for April 29, 2024. This event will be hosted in Brussels, specifically at the Université libre de Bruxelles, one of the higher education institutions partnering with CIVIS and co-organizing this final event alongside SMARTT and the European Commission. The event will feature the active involvement and presence of stakeholders and individual projects that have made significant contributions to the development of the European joint degree, underscoring the collective endeavor that underpins the blueprint.



Co-funded by
the European Union



- For more information regarding EC announcement, please visit the following link [Commission rolls out plans for a European degree - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip180001).
- To read more about SMARTT, please visit the website of [The SMARTT project – CIVIS - A European Civic University](https://www.smartt-project.eu/).

Notes for editors

SMARTT is an innovative project aiming at analysing, testing, and piloting the new European Degree label criteria, improving the quality, and increasing the transferability of future developments of European Degrees across Europe and beyond.

SMARTT is formed by the [CIVIS - Europe's Civic University Alliance](https://www.civis-alliance.eu/) in cooperation with the European Universities Alliances [EUTOPIA](https://www.eutofia.eu/), [NEUROTECHEU](https://www.neurotecheu.eu/), and [UNITA](https://www.unita.eu/), alongside higher education institutions, national and regional stakeholders and relevant actors. Based on significant experience in designing and delivering joint and multiple degree programmes at transnational level, the higher education institutions involved in the SMARTT project propose to expand this experience and draw, based on clear methodologies and thorough analyses, recommendations and proposals both for the European Commission and the member states, to support the development of a European Approach for designing and implementing Joint European Degrees in the future. The consortium partners possess an extensive history of successful international collaboration and have consistently played a leading role in the co-development of the European Degree policy initiative since its inception.

[Click here to see all SMARTT outputs and deliverables.](#)



Co-funded by
the European Union

