



CIVIS Report of quantitative and qualitative analysis

February 2024

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Screening, mapping, analyzing, recommending, transferring and transforming HE international programmes

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About

SMARTT

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** in cooperation with the European Universities Alliances EUTOPIA, NEUROTECHEU, and UNITA, alongside higher education institutions, national and regional stakeholders and relevant actors. Based on significant experience in designing and delivering joint and multiple degree programs 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.

Executive Summary

This report builds on previous Deliverables, providing an overview of the specific component of the SMARTT project dedicated to the in-depth analysis of the 50+ CIVIS and partner alliances' programmes and of the European Degree Label overall. To offer a comprehensive overview, the Report provides a general context, presents details on the process and the methodology, as well as on the quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as the results derived from the analysis. The recommendations and conclusions on the ELD will be included in the Deliverable 7. Set of recommendations CIVIS.



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1. Overview

The European Degree Label (EDL) can be seen as a crucial project, or as a `European policy experimentation in higher education` initiative (European Commission, 2022), in light of the ever-changing and increasingly complex educational landscape. Building on the Bologna Process and the expanding potential of the EHEA, the EDL proposes a seal of quality for joint degree programs, signifying a commitment to excellence in transnational education and enhancing the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education globally.

In this context, SMARTT is an innovative project aiming at analyzing, 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.

1.1. Specific objectives of the SMARTT project

- **Mapping the different regulations** and goals at the national and European levels.
- Establishing a **catalog of indicators for European criteria**.
 - Proposing an **approach that could be commonly agreed** on for the delivery of joint degrees based on co-created European criteria by European countries at all education levels.
 - **Testing** the relevance of these criteria
 - Conducting a **joint reflection** on possible scenarios for the delivery of a joint degree at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria
 - Exploring and recommending possible **optimization** of the proposed set of criteria
 - Sharing **good practices** at all levels
- Organizing a large **dissemination** event and elaborating **materials**

SMARTT is comprised of four Work Packages, two of them dedicated to management, communication and dissemination (WP1 and WP4) and the other two dedicated to testing the EDL criteria by using the EUROSUD Programme as a pilot (WP2) and to replicating the pilot in CIVIS and its partner alliances. As described in the project application:

WP2 is particularly devoted to the testing, validation, and quality assurance of the EUROSUD programme. WP2 includes the following tasks:

1. screening the criteria for the Joint Program;
2. designing the indicators and testing for the criteria with experts from the EMJM and from CIVIS (curricula design and multilingualism, quality assurance, learning strategies, recognition accreditation, innovative pedagogies, inclusiveness and sustainability);
3. co-creating the template with the Commission;
4. collecting data, summarizing and analysing the results; and
5. summarising the set of recommendations in a final report / policy paper.

WP3 is in charge of mapping and selecting the programmes, covering different areas and levels (bachelor, master) in 50 CIVIS international programmes and educational activities developed by CIVIS Alliance member universities by:

1. replicating the screening and testing process on a larger scale;
2. testing and collecting the results from the tools and procedures approved by the Commission;
3. analysing and discussing the results with different stakeholders and experts;
4. comparing the results with the ones of EUROSUD and
5. summarising the main findings in a guideline document.

WP3 will allow the coverage of the recommendations to be extended to broader geographical and educational areas, as UNITA, EUTOPIA, and NeurotechEU partners will focus on specific criteria related to their expertise. Based on the lessons learned from the testing of the European Degree Label criteria, more precise and accurate recommendations will thus be formulated.

1.2. Specific objectives of WP3

WP3 was built on WP2 as it replicated some of the instruments and processes developed in WP2 and piloted on EUROSUD on 50+ programmes in CIVIS and its' partner alliances.

1. Test the European Degree Label criteria on extended list of programmes and educational activities developed by CIVIS Alliance member universities.
2. Replicate the screening and testing process on a larger scale, covering multiple regional and local contexts, fields of studies, types of programmes.
3. Extend coverage of recommendations and proposals for a European approach on European Degrees to wider geographical and educational landscape.

This report builds on Deliverable 4: EUROSUD Report on quantitative and qualitative analysis and Deliverable 5: Set of recommendations EUROSUD, providing an overview of the first stage of the SMARTT project dedicated to the in-depth analysis of The International Master in South European Studies (EUROSUD), which was used as a case-study in order to pre-test the European Degree Label criteria.

2

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Methods and Instruments

2. Methodological Approach

The methodological approach is presented in detail in Deliverable D3.1.D6. Dataset.

Information on the methodology is also included here in order to provide ease of access and a complete background image on the process before presenting the results and the analysis.

The second stage of the SMARTT project (November 2023 – February 2024) entailed expanding the focus from the pilot carried out on EUROSUD to more than 50 programmes part of CIVIS and its partner alliances.

The process included the following steps:

1. **Selection:** We developed a selection questionnaire based on the EDL criteria and indicators, which would help us better map the CIVIS and its' partner university alliances' programmes against the EDL. The aim was to do an initial validation of the EDL against existing programmes, map the programmes based on the EDL criteria and select the most relevant programmes to be further analysed within the project.
2. **Exploration:** To ensure representation in the process of several relevant voices, we included a stage of exploration, which refers to carrying out a number of focus-groups and interviews with relevant stakeholders at the European level, representing either public policymakers, such as Ministries of Education, or National Quality Assurance Agencies, and student representatives among others.
3. **Clarification:** Based on the first two stages, we created and disseminated a survey analysing more in-depth the perspective of CIVIS' and its' partner alliances' programmes with regards to the EDL.

2.2. Methods and instruments

Throughout this process, we employed a range of methods and instruments, which included, among a number of informal discussions and formal meetings and conferences:

1. Workshops with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group
2. A programme selection questionnaire.
3. Interviews and focus-groups with relevant stakeholders.
4. The SMARTT survey

The following section comprises the detailed presentation of the processes and instruments used during this second stage of the SMARTT project.

2.2.1. Workshops with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group

The objectives of engaging the Core Experts and Enlarged Experts working groups were to:

- O1.** Develop a **SMARTT vision** for the European Label **criteria**.
- O2.** Develop a **SMARTT proposal** for the **revised European label criteria**.

03. Propose methods for applying the SMARTT evaluation indicators.

04. Identify, define, and describe the corresponding SMARTT evaluation indicators.

The workshops and working groups' sessions developed during the first stage of the project were also carried out throughout the second stage, continuing the in-person (when possible) and online sessions. The in-person session carried out in September 2023, in Bucharest, represented one main event allowing us to better understand the Core and Enlarged Experts' Groups' perspectives on the EDL, also helping us to better define the SMARTT Survey. Throughout the second stage of the project, there was further development of the shared working area on Google Drive for efficient collaboration and communication among all project participants, as we continued incorporating feedback from the expanded group of experts. Several drafts of the EDL criteria and indicators were created and continuously revised based on feedback and experts' feedback and input. Similarly to the first stage of the project (piloting), experts' contributions were made both on a cluster level (as the criteria was structured into clusters) and on a general level, also addressing potential obstacles in the implementation of the EDL, as well as recommendations for its development and deployment.

2.2.2. Interviews and focus-groups with relevant stakeholders

Interviews and focus-groups with relevant stakeholders were planned and were carried out along with informal formal conversations throughout this second stage of the process. A detailed description of the interviews/focus-groups is presented below.

General description of the interviews:

The interviews and focus-groups with relevant stakeholders entailed individual/small-group conversations, depending on availability, with representatives from National Ministries of Education and Quality Assurance Agencies throughout Europe. The aim of these sessions was to **gather insights and perspectives from the individuals who are/will be involved in processes related to EDL following its implementation**. These interviews provide an opportunity to explore the alignment of the criteria outlined in the European Degree Label with national and European existing frameworks and practices.

The interviews focus on gathering insights regarding the management of the EUROSUD program, coordination among partner institutions, student recruitment and support, curriculum development, quality assurance processes, and any future development plans in the context of the European Degree Label criteria.

The session aimed to explore the European approach to quality assurance, laying the groundwork for constructive dialogue on the development and integration of the EDL to ensure its relevance and benefits for educational agencies and institutions. Participants' insights were sought to shape the EDL framework effectively. The meeting lasting about an hour, was recorded for reference, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, highlighting the value of participants' contributions to the EDL's ongoing development.

Interview/focus-group objectives:

1. To collect insights and expertise from educational agencies and institutions on the concept and potential implementation of the EDL, ensuring it aligns with existing educational structures and quality assurance practices.
2. To understand how stakeholders perceive the EDL as an optional enhancement to the educational landscape, including its potential benefits and challenges.
3. To explore opportunities for integrating the EDL with current national accreditations and educational structures, aiming to enrich and perhaps elevate the quality and recognition of education within the European context.
4. To assess the relevance, feasibility, and practicality of the EDL from the perspectives of various educational agencies and institutions, identifying key considerations for its development and implementation.
5. To facilitate a constructive dialogue among stakeholders, fostering a collaborative environment where ideas and concerns can be shared openly, laying a foundational context for the EDL's conceptualization.
6. To use the insights gathered from these discussions to thoughtfully and pragmatically construct the EDL framework, ensuring it meets the needs and expectations of the broader educational community.
7. To ensure that the development and integration processes of the EDL are carried out effectively, benefiting all stakeholders involved and enhancing the quality assurance mechanisms across Europe.
8. To build consensus among key stakeholders and garner support for the EDL, addressing any reservations and highlighting the potential value addition of the EDL to European higher education.

Structure of the sessions:

To ensure consistency and reliability, a similar set of questions will be used for each interview.

1. Background:

- a. A brief overview of the SMARTT project and its objectives.
- b. The European Degree Label and its purpose in promoting joint degree programs.
- c. The aim of this discussion is to gather interviewees' perspectives on the European Degree Label.

2. Role of interviewee:

- a. Gathering information about the interviewee's background, their role, and their areas of expertise.

3. Program Overview:

- a. Exploring the processes involved in joint degree programmes, including coordination among partner institutions, administrative procedures, and decision-making mechanisms etc.

4. European Degree Label Criteria:

- a. Exploring the interviewee's understanding and interpretation of the European Degree Label criteria.

5. Alignment validation:

- a. Validating the degree to which the European Label Criteria currently aligns with existing joint degree programmes, examining the different clusters and criteria in detail.

6. Strengths and challenges:

- a. Identifying the strengths and areas of alignment between the European Degree Label criteria and existing joint degree programmes, as well as any challenges or gaps that may exist.

7. Enhancing alignment:

- a. Discussing strategies and recommendations to further enhance the alignment of existing joint degree programmes with the European Degree Label criteria.

8. Conclusion:

- a. Thank the interviewee for their valuable input and participation in the interview.
- b. Reiterate the importance of their perspectives in shaping the future of joint degree programmes and their alignment with the European Degree Label.
- c. Provide any additional information regarding the next steps in incorporating the European Degree Label criteria into existing programmes and how the interviewee can stay informed about its progress.

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion/interview.

This focus group session is convened to explore the concept of the European Degree Label (EDL) as an optional and potential enhancement in our educational landscape. As we acknowledge the robust structures and national accreditations currently in place, our intention is not to propose changes to these well-established systems, but rather to consider the EDL as an opportunity that could align with - and perhaps enrich them.

Our discussion today is grounded in the understanding that some agencies are already employing the European approach to quality assurance. While we might not delve into the specific differences and commonalities between this approach and the EDL, we hope to lay a foundational context for a constructive dialogue.

The primary objective of this meeting is to ensure that the development and integration of the EDL work effectively for your agencies/institutions. Your insights and expertise are invaluable in shaping the EDL in a manner that is relevant and beneficial for your agencies and institutions and the broader educational community.

As we proceed, your perspectives will be instrumental in helping us construct the EDL framework thoughtfully and pragmatically. We look forward to a productive discussion.

The discussion will last approximately **1 hour**, and your input will greatly contribute to the ongoing development of the European Degree Label.

With your permission, the session will be recorded for reference, audio transcription, and analysis purposes only. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.

Thank you for your participation and valuable contributions!

Questions

1. Could you please provide your general opinion/perspective on the European Degree Label?

- a. Could you please provide your vision on how (if) the EDL could contribute to the quality and recognition of joint degree programs?
2. Given the general information available on the EDL, which would you say are the most relevant criteria?
 - a. In your opinion, is there any relevant criterion missing/ any criterion you would recommend being added?
3. From your perspective, what would be a **compelling argument in favour** of the European Degree Label? (*What would make the EDL more `appealing` for you/other stakeholders?*)
 - a. Can you pinpoint any distinct **benefits** that the European Degree Label might introduce?
4. What **potential challenges** do you anticipate in the label's implementation?
 - a. How might they be **overcome**?
5. Are there specific **reservations your organization holds** regarding the label's implementation?
 - a. How could the label be positioned to **be more compelling** for stakeholders like yours?
 - b. How can the label be **adapted to resonate more with the expectations** of the wider educational community?
6. Which **legal aspects** (at institutional, national, or European levels) need to be factored in for the label's smooth implementation?
7. Are there any global or European quality assurance **initiatives/examples/best-practices** that could inform the European Degree Label's development?
8. Who do you think is best positioned to **award** the European Degree Label?
 - a. What might be an appropriate **frequency for renewing the label**?
9. What key factors should be **prioritized when planning the label's deployment**?
10. How can discussions about the European Degree Label be more **consensus-driven**?
11. Is there any **other feedback** or insight you'd like to share regarding the European Degree Label?

Note: This interview guide provides a framework for the discussion, and follow-up questions or prompts may be introduced based on the interviewee's responses to delve deeper into specific areas of interest or expertise.

2.2.3. Programme selection questionnaire

The programme selection questionnaire was aimed at validating the European Degree Label criteria against the selected CIVIS and partners' programs. Apart from being used as a selection tool for programs that would later participate in the SMARTT survey, the selection questionnaire also allowed us to map the existing programs in CIVIS in relation to the EDL.

Objectives:

1. Provide evidence-based insights to inform decision-making processes regarding the EDL.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria aligns with the selected programs.
3. Validate the relevance of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each EDL criterion/cluster in relation to the selected programs.
5. Identify opportunities to better align program elements and the EDL criteria to further improve the quality of education and student experiences.

6. Identify best practices and lessons learned from selected joint degree programs or initiatives that can inform the EDL.
7. Provide feedback on the applicability of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
8. Identify the potential benefits of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
9. Identify the potential drawbacks of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
10. Explore attitudes and perception of CIVIS members and partners with regards to the EDL.

Approach

The programmes will be **selected from**:

- the CIVIS alliance (a minimum of 50 programmes)
 - other partner alliances (depending on nominations)
- This specific programme selection process will only be undertaken within CIVIS, while the other alliances will either fill out the questionnaire or nominate the programmes based on their internal selection process.
 - The types of programs that will be included in the selection process are as follows:
 - Joint Degrees
 - Double Degrees
 - Multiple Degrees
 - Other types of degree, if deemed relevant
 - The coordinator/programme manager will also have to specify the field of study in which the programme falls. The types included in the survey are: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics- STEM; Social Science; Humanities; Arts; Health.
 - The programme selection criteria are **based on**:
 - the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria (*Par. 2.1.1*)
 - general standards for joint programmes¹
 - general-structural principles.
 - The entire selection and validation process will have a maximum duration of 3 months (July - September 2023) and will be developed in 3 operational phases, distinct albeit interconnected and consequential:
 - **Phase 1:** Pre-selection of programs (31 July - 07 September 2023) (*for details see dedicated section*) subdivided into 3 intermediate steps:
 - a. **Development of the Survey Tool and of the Scoring System** (*Par. 2.1*);
 - b. **Internal selection procedure** (*Par. 2.2*);
 - c. **Results** (*Par. 2.3*)
 - **Phase 2:** Selection of programs (08 September - 30 September 2023) (*for details see dedicated section*);

Phase 1

- The **objective** of this phase is the collection of all the programs of the partner universities, out of which 50 programs will be selected to be sent to the validation phase (*case studies*).
- **Responsible** for this phase will be Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM) and Sapienza University of Rome (SUR), which will specifically deal with:

¹ Based on <https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf>

- Build the **methodological framework**:
 - a. creation of the **survey tool**: access available at a **Google Form** link (see Par. 2.1.1);
 - b. construction of the **scoring system** according to each of the **EDL Criteria** (see Par. 2.1.1);
 - c. **Monitoring** system of the pre-selection procedure (see Par. 2.2).
- Directly **involve partner universities** in order to update the list of programs available that will be part of the pre-selection phase:
 - a. involvement of **CIVIS partners**, who will send a minimum of 5 up to a maximum of 20 programs to be selected (see Par. 2.2);
 - b. send the survey tool to the **coordinators/programme managers** by sharing a Google Form link.
- The pre-screening is not intended to create a hierarchy amongst existing programmes, but rather to provide support for the selection of relevant programmes that will help test and validate the EDL criteria. In other words, the EDL criteria is being tested, not the programmes.

2.1 The Survey Tool and the Scoring System (3-31 July 2023)

- To facilitate the program selection process, in an ex-ante phase to that of pre-selection, the SUR team, in agreement with UAM, will elaborate:
 - The survey tool: the **online questionnaire**:
 - a. the questionnaire will have a twofold structure (*see Draft checklist for program selection, Par. 2.1.2*):
 - i. **general and structural information** on the home university and on the active partnerships: open-ended and multiple-choice questions;
 - ii. questions on the **Presence or Absence of EDLs Criteria**: multiple choice questions with dichotomous modality (Yes/No);
 - b. the platform used to fill out the questionnaire will be Google Forms;
 - c. the expected duration for filling out the questionnaire will be approximately *10 minutes*.
 - d. UAM will send to each coordinator/programme manager the link to the questionnaire.
 - e. the coordinators/managers will autonomously complete (self-administered) the questionnaire.
- At the same time, SUR, in agreement with UAM, will finalise a **Scoring System**, whereby a score will be assigned for each response obtained by the coordinators on each criterion entered in the online questionnaire (*see Draft checklist for program selection, Par. 2.1.2*).
 - Scores have been allocated to each single criterion as follows:
 - i. for each of the **11 compulsory criteria**:
 - +7 points (Yes)
 - +0 points (No)
 - ii. for the **9 optional criteria**:
 - +1 or +2 or +3 points (Yes)
 - +0 points (No)

for a maximum of 100 points.

 - iii. further **structural-general criteria** that guarantee evidence also about the

- proportional representation of Universities
 - different geographical distribution
 - types of programmes
 - fields of study
 - partnership number and Country/ies
- to which will be assigned a score (to be agreed with partner universities) or which will be only taken into consideration.

2.1.1 List of criteria and proposed scores

No.	COMPULSORY CRITERIA	Score	OPTIONAL CRITERIA	Score
	Higher education institutions involved	7	In addition to physical mobility, the joint programme (JP) includes additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions.	3
	Transnational joint degree delivery	7	The JP offers the possibility to take language classes so as to enhance the command of multiple European languages.	1
	Transparency of the learning outcomes	7	The JP includes components and actions related to environmental sustainability and implements measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities.	2
	Quality assurance arrangements	7	The JP includes components and actions related to the development of high-level digital skills of students, it offers high-quality digital education content, as well as assessment of student skills.	3
	Joint policies for the joint programme	7	The JP offers the possibility for students to participate in activities promoting democratic values and addressing societal needs of the local community(ies), including volunteering, and to receive ECTS for it.	2
	Transnational campus – access to services	7	The JP supports future labour market needs and/or includes cooperation with businesses and sectors in its curriculum	3
	Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements	7	The JP provides opportunities for international professional internships/work-based learning recognised through the award of ECTS	3
	Multilingualism	7	The JP includes a career development plan devised with the candidate and/or exposure to the non-academic sector	3
	Innovative learning approaches	7	The higher education institutions offering the joint study programme conducts joint promotion and awareness-raising activities to ensure visibility of the joint programme.	3
	Graduate outcomes	7		
	Inclusiveness and sustainability	7		

2.1.2. Checklist/questionnaire for programme selection

Cluster/ category	Criterion	Criterion for selection	Answer	Score
General- Structural	Type of programme	Joint programme	Yes/No	
		Double degrees	Yes/No	
		Multiple degrees	Yes/No	
		EMJM	Yes/No filter question (If Yes) Country/ies open question	
	Field of studies	STEM	Yes/No	
		Social Sciences	Yes/No	
		Humanities	Yes/No	
		Arts	Yes/No	
		Health	Yes/No	
	Timeframe	Planned OR in process of accreditation	Yes/No	
		Implemented for less than 6 months	Yes/No	
		Implemented for more than 6 months	Yes/No	
	Funding	Organisational	Yes/No	
		European	Yes/No	
		Third parties (companies etc.)	Yes/No	
		Mixed	Yes/No	
	Other	Name of partner university	Drop down list	
		Country	Drop down list	
		Name of coordinator	open field	
		Email address coordinator	open field	
		Agreements with non CIVIS countries"	Yes/No filter question	
		Number of agreements with non CIVIS countries	(If Yes) open question	
		Partner countries	(If Yes) open question	
I. Structural: Transnational Cooperation	1. Higher education institutions involved	Involvement of at least 2 higher education institutions From at least 2 different EU Member states OR From at least 2 different states, one from the EU	Yes/No	3,5/0
		The joint programme has an integrated curriculum	Yes/No	3,5/0
	2. Transnational joint degree delivery	The joint programme leads to the award of a joint degree or multiple degrees.	Yes/No	3,5/0
		Evaluation of learning outcomes is done by representatives from at least 2 different institutions located in 2 different countries	Yes/No	3,5
	5. Joint policies for the joint programme	The involved HEIs have a joint policy for admission	Yes/No	1,12
		The involved HEIs have a joint policy for selection	Yes/No	1,12
		The involved HEIs have a joint policy for supervision	Yes/No	1,12
		The involved HEIs have a joint policy for monitoring	Yes/No	1,12
		The involved HEIs have a joint policy for assessment	Yes/No	1,12

	6. Transnational campus – access to services	The involved HEIs have a joint recognition procedure	Yes/No	1,12	
		No specific admission requirements depending on students' location	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to IT services	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to shared infrastructure	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to library services	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to faculty development and support	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to academic guidance and psychological counselling	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to career advice/mentoring	Yes/No	0,78	
		Students have free and easy access to alumni systems	Yes/No	0,78	
		i. Visibility & awareness (optional)	The HEIs involved conduct joint promotion activities to ensure visibility	Yes/No	0,75
	The HEIs involved conduct joint awareness activities to ensure visibility		Yes/No	0,75	
	The HEIs involved conduct joint activities to provide necessary information to students		Yes/No	0,75	
	The HEIs involved conduct joint activities to provide necessary information to other relevant stakeholders (eg. Employers)		Yes/No	0,75	
	II. Functional: Labour Market & Employability	10. Graduate outcomes	The joint programme has a system to monitor graduate outcomes, either at the level of the programme or at the institutional level(s).	Yes/No	3,5
The content is aligned to the survey content of EUROGRADUATE.			Yes/No	3,5	
f. Cooperation with the labour market (optional)		The joint programme supports future labour market needs and/or includes cooperation with businesses and sectors in its curriculum.	Yes/No	3	
		g. Internships / work-based learning* (optional)	The joint programme provides opportunities for international professional internships/work-based learning recognised through the award of ECTS.	Yes/No	3
h. Career development plan* (optional)			The joint programme includes a career development plan devised with the candidate and/or exposure to the non-academic sector (such as internships, seminars, networking).	Yes/No	3
		III. Qualitative: Student Centred	3. Transparency of the learning outcomes	The joint programme is described in ECTS	Yes/No
The joint programme issues a Joint Diploma Supplement				Yes/No	3,5

Teaching & Learning				
	4. Quality assurance arrangements	Accredited programme	Yes/No	1,75
		Internal QA in accordance with ESG	Yes/No	1,75
		External QA in accordance with ESG	Yes/No	1,75
		European Approach for QA for Joint Programmes is used	Yes/No	1,75
	7. Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements	The joint programme includes at least 1 period of student physical mobility at another partner institution of at least 30 ECTS	Yes/No	2,34
		The joint programme includes a total of at least 6 months of physical mobility at another partner institution (including secondment).	Yes/No	2,33
		The joint programme includes opportunities for doctoral candidates to participate in one or more of these activities at another partner institution: teaching activities, international events, international conferences, joint research scientific projects between partner institutions, joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions.	Yes/No	2,33
	9. Innovative learning approaches	The joint programme includes embedded interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary student-centered and/or challenged-based approaches.	Yes/No	3,5
		The joint programme includes embedded inter-sectoral components using student-centered and/or challenged-based approaches.	Yes/No	3,5
		a. Alternative learning formats (optional)	The joint programme includes additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions (e.g., online or blended, in the format of regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools).	Yes/No
d. Digital skills (optional)	The joint programme includes components and actions related to the development of high-level digital skills of students,	Yes/No	1	
	The joint programme offers high quality digital education content,	Yes/No	1	
	The joint programme offers assessment of student (digital) skills.	Yes/No	1	
IV. European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability	8. Multilingualism	During the joint programme, students are exposed to at least 2 different EU official languages (language classes excluded).	Yes/No	3,5
		Exposure to EU official languages in active and/or passive use of language(s), at any level in	Yes/No	3,5

	teaching and/or learning activities, examinations, research activities, professional or civic engagement activities and during mobility periods, including by going on mobility to a country where a different EU official language is predominantly used in daily life.		
11. Inclusiveness & Sustainability	The joint programme commits to wide participation through socially and geographically inclusive admission through tailored measures for all categories of disadvantaged students	Yes/No	3,5
	The joint programme commits to respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and commits to the principles of the MSCA Green Charter.	Yes/No	3,5
b. Language classes (optional)	The joint programme offers the possibility to take language classes to enhance the command of multiple European languages.	Yes/No	1
c. Environmental care (optional)	The joint programme includes components and actions related to environmental sustainability	Yes/No	1
	The joint programme implements measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities	Yes/No	1
e. Democratic values (optional)	The joint programme offers the possibility for students to participate in activities promoting democratic values and addressing societal needs of the local community (ies),	Yes/No	0,5
	The joint programme includes volunteering opportunities.	Yes/No	0,5
	The joint programme offers the option for students to receive ECTS for these activities (volunteering, involvement in the local community, etc.).	Yes/No	1
	TOTAL		100

2.2 Internal selection procedure

- **The team in charge of this phase (UAM) will have to ask the contact persons in each of the CIVIS partners for the programs to be included in the evaluation and draw up a complete list (Excel matrix). In particular:**
 - each CIVIS partner will have to select and send a **list of a maximum of 20 programmes**, indicating the name and e-mail address of the coordinators/programme managers;
 - to ensure a **correct proportionality of proposed programs**, the partners will be asked to identify, independently and at their own discretion, a heterogeneity of the

- programs in order to guarantee a representativeness of all the Fields of studies and the Types of programmes;
 - UAM/SUR will draw up the overall list and **send the link for completing the survey directly to each coordinator/programme manager** (see Par. 2.1);
 - the responses sent will automatically be entered into an **Excel matrix**.
- During such process, SUR will be responsible for the **monitoring phase** aimed at guaranteeing:
 - the correct entry of information in the matrix;
 - reminders sent via e-mail aimed at the coordinators/programme managers, who will not have completed the survey while the deadline of the pre-selection phase is approaching:
 - a. send the questionnaire: 31 July 2023
 - b. first *reminder*: 28 August 2023
 - c. second *reminder* 4 September 2023
 - d. third *reminder*: 11 September 2023
 - e. fourth *reminder*: 14 e 15 September 2023.

2.3 Results

- SUR, once the **data collection phase** has been **completed** (see Par. 2.2):
 - will download and clean the matrix automatically generated by Google, containing the answers of the single programs;
 - the matrix will represent the basis (dataset) for the ascription of scores;
 - a copy of the matrix and list will be shared with all CIVIS partners.

Phase 2

- Its aim was the selection of 50 programs (case studies) from a list (online matrix of cases by variables) automatically generated during the filling out of the questionnaires by the program coordinators/managers (pre-selection phase).
- Based on the **scoring scheme** (*List of criteria - par. 2.1.1*) developed in **Phase I** (July 2023) in collaboration with UAM, the factors undergoing the assessment will be:
 - **EDL criteria (compulsory and optional)**, inserted as indicators in the questionnaire sent to the coordinators/programme managers (pre-selection phase).
 - other **general-structural information**.
- The scores assigned for each criterion will not be immediately disclosed to the coordinators/programme managers so as not to affect the quality and truthfulness of data.
- Once the scoring phase has been completed, a **ranking list**, with all the pre-selected programmes including the single scores for each answer as well as the total score, will be drawn up and announced. The programs will be listed in a decreasing order of score up to the 50th place, including all those programs that are found to have the same score as the 50th.
- The duly signed Agreement of the investigated program, will only be asked to the manager/coordinators of the 50 selected programmes through the email addresses of the managers (UAM), in order to guarantee the transparency of the information.
- The complete ranking of the pre-selected programs will be discussed with the CEG to carry out a validation phase.

- Statistical and graphical reports will be presented during the EDL validation process throughout the 50 selected programs (and the programs nominated by the partner alliances) and WP3 coordinators (UAM and SUR).

2.2.4. The SMARTT survey

The WP2 and WP3 leaders developed the general approach for the SMARTT survey, as well as the draft in order to allow for pre-testing on EUROSUD. The SMARTT survey was initially carried out in a pre-testing phase on EUROSUD, in order to allow for the revision of the final version of the survey, that was later disseminated throughout the 50+ CIVIS and partner programmes.

Objectives

The survey is aimed at validating the European Degree Label criteria against the selected CIVIS and partners' programs:

1. Provide evidence-based insights to inform decision-making processes regarding the EDL.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria aligns with the selected programs.
3. Validate the relevance of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each EDL criterion/cluster in relation to the selected programs.
5. Identify opportunities to better align program elements and the EDL criteria to further improve the quality of education and student experiences.
6. Identify best practices and lessons learned from selected joint degree programs or initiatives that can inform the EDL.
7. Provide feedback on the applicability of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
8. Identify the potential benefits of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
9. Identify the potential drawbacks of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
10. Explore attitudes and perception of CIVIS members and partners with regards to the EDL.

By addressing these objectives, the project aims to:

- provide a comprehensive assessment of the alignment between the selected programs and the EDL criteria,
- offer insights and recommendations for EDL development
- contribute to the continuous improvement of joint degree programs in higher education.

General approach

- The survey is specifically addressed to representatives of the selected CIVIS and partners' programs. It aims to gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria from the perspective of the selected programs.
- The purpose of the survey is to validate the EDL criteria through the perspective of the selected programs.
 - The purpose of the survey is **NOT** that of evaluating the selected programs.
- As the questionnaire used for the selection of the programs addressed the partial/full alignment of the programs with the EDL, the SMARTT survey attempts to analyse the EDL

through specific criteria, attempting to identify its strong points and areas of improvement (while not duplicating the effort of the program selection questionnaire).

- For clarity, the SMARTT survey will use the word `descriptors` to refer to the EDL criteria.

Participants

- Representatives of the 50+ selected CIVIS programs (based on the selection procedure)
- Representatives of the project partners' selected programs (based on a nomination process).

The primary aim of this survey is to gather valuable insights into the application and relevance of the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria within existing joint degree programs. Through the responses, we seek to understand how the EDL criteria align with the specificities and objectives of selected programmes, and how these criteria might be refined or enhanced to better support the development and recognition of high-quality joint degree programs across Europe.

The survey can be filled out by representatives from all partner institutions participating in the selected or nominated joint degree programs. This will allow for an analysis of different perceptions of the EDL within the same program. However, for the final reporting purposes, results will be based on the program's main institutional coordinators' input.

In order to draft the SMARTT Survey, a series of meta-criteria were identified, which helped guide the survey questions: clarity, specificity, relevance, comprehensiveness, measurability, consistency, feasibility, differentiation, applicability, adaptability, alignment, ethics.

The survey sections were developed as follows:

1. Section 1: General information
2. Section 2: EDL criteria validation against the program
3. Section 3: Attitudes and Perceptions
4. Section 4: Final considerations

Insofar Section 3 is concerned, the survey uses a theoretical predictive framework based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991)². This section specifically looks at how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) affect the real and intended behaviors of important stakeholders when it comes to the adoption of EDL.

The full survey comprises of 10 open-ended questions and 54 questions with multiple choice responses on a five-point rating system.

- the first 12 and the last 2 questions refer to general information;
- 25 questions evaluate the participants' opinions about the EDL, based on 7 pre-established meta-criteria: clarity, relevance, specificity, measurability, flexibility, readiness, and consistency;
- 26 multiple-answer questions relate to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework: 6 questions about Attitude (AT), 6 about Subjective Norms (SN), 9 about Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), and 5 about Utilization Intention (UI).

² Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)

The survey is distributed electronically using SoSci Survey³, a platform that ensures data privacy and ease of access for respondents.

The initial versions of the SMARTT survey were presented in a workshop dedicated to both the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group and a preliminary version was made available in order for the experts to share their feedback and input. Also, representatives of EUROSUD provided feedback and filled-out the survey in a pre-test phase, allowing for preliminary results and input for a final version of the SMARTT Survey.

Survey

I. Section 1: General information:

For the name of the program, if available, please use the name used for marketing the program, not the specific national/institutional name:

1. Name of Program *[Text box for response]*
2. Coordinating partner/Partner: *[Text box for response]*
3. Partner Institutions Involved:

Name the full partner name, associated partners as well as their country of origin

3.1 Full Partners: *[Text box for response]*

3.1.a. Country of the full partner *[Text box for response]*

3.2 Associated Partner: *[Text box for response]*

3.2.a. Country of the full partner *[Text box for response]*

4. Any Other Relevant Program Information: *[Text box for response]*
5. May we reach out to you for additional inquiries regarding the survey?
 - 5.1. Name *[Text box for response]*
 - 5.2. Host institution *[Text box for response]*
 - 5.3. Role of the contact person *[Text box for response]*
 - 5.4. Email for the contact person *[Text box for response]*
 - 5.5. Telephone number *[Text box for response]*

II. Section 2: EDL criteria validation against the program

A. Clarity and Understanding of the EDL Criteria

Please rate the following aspects on a scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

1. The EDL criteria are clearly presented in the context of our program.
2. It is easy to understand the EDL criteria as they apply to our program.

³ <https://www.soscisurvey.de/>

3. The EDL criteria accurately convey their intended meanings and outcomes in our program's context.

B. Relevance and Alignment

4. The EDL criteria align well with our program's outcomes and goals.
5. The EDL is relevant in the context of our program.
6. The EDL criteria are applicable across different cultural and educational contexts, including international applicability.

C. Specificity and Detail

7. The EDL criteria provide detailed guidance specific to our program.
8. The EDL criteria comprehensively reflect the quality and standards of our program.
9. Which criteria are most relevant in the context of your program? *[Text box for response]*
10. Which criteria are least relevant in the context of your program? *[Text box for response]*
11. Are there obstacles in EDL's global/European applicability in the context of your program? *[Text box for response]*

D. Need for Adaptation and Reformulation

12. Are there elements within the EDL (criteria, clusters, indicators) that require reformulation for your program? *[Text box for response]*
13. Do you perceive any conflict between the criteria and existing quality assurance frameworks or standards in your program? *[Text box for response]*

E. Measurability and Distinctions

14. The EDL criteria are measurable within our program's context.
15. There should be clear distinctions between criteria that indicate higher and lower levels of attainment in relation to the EDL criteria.

F. Flexibility and Future Readiness

16. The EDL criteria are flexible in adapting to future changes in education, technology, and societal needs.
17. Implementing the EDL is feasible in the context of our program.

G. Consistency with Broader Goals and Values

18. The criteria are consistent with broader goals at various levels (institutional, accreditation body, national, European, etc.).
19. The EDL criteria align well with the expectations of different stakeholders (students, employers, etc.).
20. The criteria are consistent with the values of fairness, transparency, and integrity in the context of our program.
21. The criteria will significantly contribute to enhancing the reputation and value of our program.

H. Impact Assessment

22. Identify the main resources in implementing the EDL within your program. *[Text box for response]*
23. What are the key strengths of the EDL as they pertain to your program? *[Text box for response]*
24. Provide your recommendations for enhancing the EDL. *[Text box for response]*

III. Section 3: Attitudes and Perceptions

Tell us how you feel towards the European Degree Label. Rate the following on a scale from 1 to 5 where:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Attitude *(This component assesses personal attitudes towards the behaviour)*

1. The EDL is valuable in promoting and recognizing high-quality joint/multiple degree programs.
2. Adopting the EDL will significantly contribute to the educational excellence of our program.
3. It is important for our program to align with the EDL criteria.
4. Aligning our program with the EDL criteria fits well with our long-term educational goals.
5. Obtaining the EDL would be a competitive advantage for our program.
6. Obtaining the EDL will significantly benefit our program.

Subjective Norms *(This component measures perceived social pressures or norms)*

7. Our stakeholders (faculty, students, alumni) encourage the alignment with the EDL.
8. There is a general expectation from the wider educational community that programs like ours should align with the EDL.
9. Our program team collectively believes that aligning with the EDL is important.
10. Our program team would recommend other relevant programs to pursue the EDL.
11. The decision of other similar programs to pursue the EDL influences our decision to do the same.
12. Most similar programs perceive the EDL positively and see it as beneficial.

Perceived Behavioural Control *(This component evaluates perceived control over the behaviour)*

13. As a program team, we are familiar with the EDL framework and its descriptors.
14. Implementing the criteria required for the EDL in our program would be manageable.
15. We are confident in our ability to meet the requirements for obtaining the EDL.
16. We perceive the process of obtaining the EDL for our program as challenging.
17. We have sufficient resources to successfully align our program with the EDL.
18. We have access to adequate guidance and support for the EDL application process.
19. Our program team is capable of overcoming challenges that may arise in the process of aligning with the EDL.
20. Our program team feels motivated and committed to ensuring our program obtains the EDL.
21. The requirements of the EDL align well with our current program practices and policies.

EDL Utilisation Intent *(This component evaluates intention to act towards EDL utilisation)*

22. Our program is planning to apply for the EDL when available.

23. We are committed to integrating and upholding the EDL criteria in our program, irrespective of the formal pursuit of the label.
24. Regardless of the current status, our program intends to align with the EDL criteria in the future.
25. Obtaining or aligning with the EDL will be a priority in our program's strategic planning.
26. Our program actively advocates for and recommends the adoption of the EDL to other similar programs.

IV. Section 4: Final considerations

27. Could you share any best practices or lessons learned from your program that you believe could inform the development or refinement of the EDL?
28. Is there any additional feedback or comments you would like to provide regarding the EDL and its criteria?

2.2.5. Results

Based on the data collected, this report includes an integrated analysis drawing from:

- The results of the Core and Enlarged Experts Groups' working sessions/workshops.
- The results of the selection questionnaire, mapping the CIVIS and partner alliances' programmes
- The results of the SMARTT survey
- Results from the focus groups and interviews with relevant stakeholders

3

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

CIVIS Data

3. Results and Analysis

3.1. Selection Questionnaire

3.1.1. The methodological framework

3.1.1.a. The definition of the unit of analysis

The general objective of this phase of the research is to examine the characteristics of the programmes prepared by the universities belonging to the CIVIS alliance⁴ and by external partners (Neurotech- European University of brain and technology and UNITA- Universitas Montium) in order to identify which of them - and to what extent - adhere to the European Degree Label criteria and the general standards for joint programmes⁵.

The first step in reducing the complexity of reality was to specify the unit of analysis to be included in the selection process, i.e. what are the requirements that the programs must meet to be included in the pre-selection process. Among the basic defining elements chosen by the research team, there are mainly two.

1. The first element is the “**Type of program - Selected program**” that must fall into at least one of the following five categories:
 - a. Joint Degrees
 - b. Double Degrees
 - c. Dual Degrees
 - d. Multiple Degrees
 - e. Mixed Degrees (es. joint & multiple degrees, double & multiple degree, ecc.).

The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes defines a “*joint programme*” as «an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from EHEA countries and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree» (source: definition on EQAR website). This is the most official definition of a joint programme, although clearly a joint programme can be offered by institutions from different countries, whether or not (some of) these institutions are located within or outside of the EHEA. The “*double*” or “*multiple degrees*”- instead – are defined like «separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme (if two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a “double degree”）」 (*ibidem*).

Lastly, a “dual degree” is not awarded by a joint programme, but the definition is included in this guide because many prospective joint programme coordinators ask about the

⁴ Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg (Austria), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), Aix-Marseille Université (France), Université de Lille (France), Universität Tübingen (Germany), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy), University of Bucharest (Romania), University of Glasgow (Scotland), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain) and Stockholm University (Sweden).

⁵ Based on <https://impea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Joint-Programmes-from-A-to-Z-Report-2020.pdf>

difference between a double and a dual degree. A “dual degree” refers to «two degrees awarded individually, attesting the successful completion of two separate curricula, with potential overlap and efficiencies in course-taking, and, if more than one institution is involved, each institution is primarily responsible for its own degree». Students complete the requirements for two degrees from one or two institutions, with efficiencies in course taking. A dual degree is thus awarded for two programmes separately, and these two programmes have some coordination and coordinated elements, but there are two separate curricula that are not integrated (source: ECA definition).

The two main differences between a dual degree and a double degree are the following:

- a dual degree is not awarded by a joint programme, and
 - in many cases, issuing a dual degree does not require a joint international admission procedure developed by the partner institutions; instead, students are chosen among the students that already have been admitted to the home institutions.
2. The second element is "**Fields of study of the programs**". Since the first half of the 1970s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been constantly involved in the construction of frameworks for assembling, compiling, and analyzing cross-nationally comparable statistics on education, through the promotion of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), whose project has identified 10 subgroups of "fields of studies" (source: UNESCO, 2015):⁶
- Education
 - Arts and Humanities
 - Social Sciences, Journalism, and Information
 - Business, Administration and Law
 - Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics
 - Information and Communication Technologies
 - Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary
 - Health and Welfare
 - Services.

For methodological reasons, the research team proposed a simplification of the UNESCO model in order to achieve the objectives of the selection procedure envisaged by the survey. The simplification procedure is characterized above all by the internal reorganization of the fields of study (e.g. "Education" is no longer a separate category but falls under "Social Science") and has produced a typological classification used during all phases of the research:

- a) *Arts* (Fashion, interior and industrial design; Fine Arts; Handcrafts; Music and Performing Art)

⁶ <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-fields-of-education-and-training-2013-detailed-field-descriptions-2015-en.pdf>

- b) *Humanities* (Religion and theology; History and Archaeology; Philosophy and ethics; Language acquisition; Literature and linguistics; Education; Finance, banking and insurance; Marketing and advertising; Management and administration; Law)
- c) *Social Science* (Economics; Political Science and Civics; Psychology; Sociology and cultural studies; Journalism and reporting; Library, information, and archival studies).
- d) *STEM* (Biology and Microbiology; Biochemistry; Environmental science; Chemistry; Earth Sciences; Physics; Mathematics; Statistics; Computer Use; Database and network design and administration; Software and applications development and analysis; Chemical engineering and processes; Environmental protection technology; Electricity and energy; Electronics and automation; Mechanics and metal trades; Motor vehicles, ships and aircraft; Architecture and town planning; Building and civil engineering; Agricolture; Forestry; Fisheries; Veterinary)
- e) *Health and Human Care* (Dental Studies; Medicine; Nursing and midwifery; Medical diagnostic and treatment technology; Pharmacy)
- f) *Transdisciplinary or Mixed*, which includes all multidisciplinary programmes.

The choice of the defining elements was the first important step for the methodological and statistical definition of the unit of analysis, which, of course, did not limit itself to the identification of only two factors (type of programme and fields of study) but also considered the principles of representativeness and inclusiveness, which were explained in the following variables:

- Number of universities and partner institutions in each country involved. This information is useful from a statistical point of view as it limits an over-representation or under-representation of a partner university or institution during the data analysis and criteria evaluation phase. The "principle of inclusivity" ensures that all partners are present and involved in this phase of the survey, regardless of the absolute number of joint degrees present in that specific university/institution or partner country.
- Number and Type of programs promoted by each partner university and institution. These variables follow the same procedure of statistical correctness described above, i.e. to limit as much as possible an over-representation (or under-representation) of the programs. The main objective of the principle of representativeness is to obtain a variable statistical distribution and to make the sample as heterogeneous as possible. During data analysis and evaluation, it will be possible to compare variability, dispersion, variation, and inequality in and between types of programs.
- Mapping and geographical location of the countries involved. The basis of this element is to understand whether the number and quality of programs can be influenced by independent external variables. Specifically, the research team questioned whether and how the geographical affiliation of the partner universities/institutions (e.g. Northern and Southern Europe) can influence the success of a program - understood as more adherent to the European Degree Label (EDL) - and the greater productivity or interest in creating joint degrees.
- General standards for joint programmes, General-structural principles and about 58 different variables produced by the 20 indispensable and optional criteria indicated by the European Degree Label (EDL). These methodological principles have been

created to respond to the overall evaluation objective of the survey, which is to describe, identify, monitor, and evaluate whether and how the programs adhere to the principles of the EDL.

3.1.1.b. Operational steps of the process

The process of identifying and validating the pre-selection procedures of the programmes took place between July 2023 and December of the same year, with a total duration of 5 months. Given the intrinsic complexity of the procedure and the units of analysis, once the methodological framework was defined, the research team developed a tight structuring of the entire methodological and statistical work of the research.

This schematization has a double value:

- On the one hand, there is a "methodological-operational" purpose in order to be able to open the so-called "black-box", unpacking the elements and objectives of the survey and anchoring them to the concrete level of reality (i.e., whether and how to achieve the objectives through the choice of variables and statistical indicators). This part will be fundamental to identify all the fundamental variables that will constitute the program evaluation tool.
- On the other hand, there is a mainly "descriptive-organizational" purpose, i.e. to immediately focus on the complexity of the entire process, influence, and reiteration between procedures as well as an organizational definition of the work among researchers (e.g. compliance with deadlines for the elaboration of deliverables).

The entire work can be divided – for simplification – into three distinct yet interconnected and consequential operational phases, each of which has one or more objectives and multiple methodological, statistical, and organizational procedures to be preserved, so as to be able to achieve the final objective of the survey and to be able to correctly evaluate the programs in relation to the EDL. The structure of this phase of the project is developed as follows:

- **Phase 1- Pre-screening of programs** (31 July - 12 November 2023). It is divided into three intermediate steps:
 - Construction of the Detection Instrument
 - Elaboration of the Scoring System
 - Launch of the survey
- **Phase 2- Internal selection of programs** (November 2023), which included the following activities:
 - Matrix and Database Extraction and Cleaning Procedures
 - Scoring on all variables
 - Descriptive statistical analysis of programs
- **Phase 3- Validation of the results** and the drafting of lists or rankings of the programs based on adherence to the European Degree Label Criteria (December 2023).

In this section, the phases of the research have only been indicated but will be described and deepened in detail in the following paragraphs.

PHASE I - The pre-screening of programs

Once the programmes to be included in the survey have been defined in the methodological framework, the programme evaluation procedure begins with the "programme pre-selection" phase, which aims to collect as many programmes as possible from the partner universities and, by constantly monitoring the principle of representativeness and inclusiveness (page 10), a sufficient minimum number of programmes will be identified and evaluated in relation to the adherence to the EDL and included as *case studies* in the in-depth survey managed by WP4. In the pre-selection phase, the research team worked specifically on the development of the survey tool and the scoring scale to start a preliminary phase of evaluation of the programmes.

The web survey and the online questionnaire

Having the complete and up-to-date list of the e-mail addresses of the managers and coordinators of the programmes and having to launch a survey on an international territory - dealing with the intrinsic instrumental and technical differences of each CIVIS partner - it was decided to use, for the purposes of the survey, the technique of the closed web survey addressed to a special population (in our case represented by the programme managers).

As can be read in more detail in the following paragraphs, the link to the online questionnaire, through the CIVIS partners, assisted by the coordinators/programme managers (called upon to identify, within the university to which they belong, one or more joint degrees to be involved in the survey), was sent to all the coordinating professors of the partner universities, so that they, by self-filling in the questionnaire within the chosen time unit, could provide answers to questions via the web. This operational choice, moreover "forced" by a very large spatial context, presented limits and advantages. Typical critical issues of the web survey, including:

1. The mortality of the sample (the subjects reached by the link to the questionnaire fill in the survey form on a voluntary basis; however, the fact of being part of a special population, therefore with defined contours, and the participation in one of the most ambitious projects of the European Union - although, in our case, very large - turns out to be rather incentive for the purpose of "conscientious" participation in a research experience) or, again,
2. Its lack of statistical representativeness (the sample reached, so to speak, turns out to be "self-extracted" or "self-selected, as the self-compilation and self-selection of the programs to be involved were chosen directly by the CIVIS Partners, without any control by the research team either on the veracity of the information or on the weighted and statistical choice of programs on the basis of the contents). In any case, the advantages typically associated with the use of this survey technique are numerous and also concern, in their own right, the survey in question: wide sample coverage and higher response rate than other surveys (the total sample reached is of 95 programs promoted by 13 partner universities and distributed over 10 European countries, being widely heterogeneous with respect to the strategic variables identified for the purposes of programme evaluation and data analysis (Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2));

3. Possibility of comparison, a posteriori and in progress, between the sample reached and the reference population with respect to the known socio-demographic and structural characteristics;
4. Reduction of data collection and entry costs;
5. Possibility of reminders, even replicated, to the response of members of the population, as well as renewed forms of contact in case of approximation of the answers to the questionnaire or the communication of deadlines through a remainder system.

The survey questionnaire is semi-structured and has been digitized using the Google Form platform; It consists of 62 questions and is a rather complex and ambitious tool (see Annex for an in-depth analysis of the individual questions and for an examination of the choices made on the different levels - wording, sequence of questions and order of the answer alternatives, graphic design, scales in use, etc.). The survey tool houses closed, semi-closed and open questions; single-answer questions, multiple-choice questions, and battery-operated questions; Filter-questions and conditional answers. The survey questionnaire used for the web survey represents the result of a meticulous testing work on the instrumentation that involved the research team and CIVIS partners both offline and during numerous face-to-face and remote meetings. Thanks to the many valuable indications that emerged during the tests, action was taken to improve and refine the questionnaire on several fronts: simplification of the texts of questions and methods of answering; correct functioning of the filters introduced; elimination of items and answer options; homogenization of the stairs used; elimination of forms of verbal ambiguity; use of a vocabulary that is as dry, direct, and institutional as possible.

At the end of the testing phase, the questionnaire used in the survey has a dual structure, 1. the first is composed of **general and structural information** on the home university and on the active partnerships. This part responds not only to the criteria of representativeness and inclusiveness of the programs and universities, but also guarantees the possibility of unpacking the variables as much as possible and knowing better the constituent elements of each program. The simplicity of the questions (10 main ones) gave researchers the opportunity to use more heterogeneous answer methods, using closed-ended, semi-closed and open-ended questions that did not compromise the quality of the information and the comparison of the answers. In this section, teachers were asked to answer general information about the programme in order to be able to describe and analyse it in its simplest components (Title of the programme, Type of the programme, If is programme include Erasmus Mundus and which country do it work with, Fields of study, if there is planned or a process of accreditation, type of founding, if the programme include an agreement or partnership with European countries outside the CIVIS Partner, University and Country Home); 2. the second structure, on the other hand, is completely focused on the 20 Criteria promoted by the **European Degree Label (EDLs Criteria)** and consists of 20 multiple-choice questions in a dichotomous mode (Yes/No), in which the program is compared on the numerous aspects prepared by the EDLs Criteria - in terms of the Presence or Absence of the single factor on each program (see next paragraph). The choice of this type of response method was the product of a long methodological reflection by the researchers, as the operational choice would inevitably have led to advantages and disadvantages in terms of data analysis. Among the advantages of closed-ended and dichotomous response modes there is certainly

1. the simplicity of the answers allows a coding to be carried out directly by the respondent - as it is a self-completed questionnaire - and this significantly reduces processing times and coding errors,
2. they facilitate the respondent's task because they do not involve excessive processing efforts, and finally,
3. it makes case comparison much easier and more immediate.

Among the methodological disadvantages there is certainly

1. the greater propensity to make unreasoned choices due to forms of acquiescence as well as
2. less information, even useful information, that can be deepened during the data analysis phase.

Criteria and the Scoring Scale

The basis of the evaluation process is to understand if and how many programs align with the proposed directives of the European Union, thus obtaining a screening and mapping of the current situation of European universities and identifying the best practices that can serve as an example for other programs with a view to positive evaluation and comparison. In this case, therefore, the evaluation of "performance" is not intended to create a hierarchy amongst existing programmes with a value judgement in relation to programmes, coordinators and CIVIS Partners, but rather to provide support for the selection of relevant programmes that will help test and validate only the EDL criteria. In other words, the EDL criteria is being tested, not the programmes in order to understand - as mentioned above - how much the programs currently promoted by universities refer to the guidelines proposed by the European Union. To achieve this, the research team worked on building a complex scoring system based on the responses provided by the programme coordinators on the questions related to the 20 criteria outlined by the EDLs Criteria, presented in the second structure of the online questionnaire (see par.1.2.1).

The scores were distributed through a weighting system based on the relevance attributed - autonomously by the researchers - to each criterion and sub-criterion. A maximum total score of 7 points was assigned to each positive response recorded in the matrix by the programme coordinator for each variable linked to one of the 11 compulsory criteria, while for the optional criteria the sum of the scores on each criterion is a maximum of 3 points,⁷ obtaining a total score of 100 points for each programme. Since this is a positive and comparative assessment and therefore not aimed at a negative value judgment, no provision was made - in the absence of one or more criteria - for the deduction of scores, whether they were mandatory or optional criteria.

Taking up the structure prepared by SMARTT in the Kickoff Meeting of 5 April 2023 in which all CIVIS Partners participated, with reference to the Criteria and Clusters, the assignment of the weighted scores followed the following scheme (cf. Fig. 1):

1. **Cluster I related to "Structural: Transational Cooperation"** is composed of 5 EDLs Criteria, 4 compulsory criteria and 1 optional criterion:

⁷ The maximum score assigned to each criterion (7 for each positive answer and 0 for each negative answer in the compulsory and 3 for the positive answer and 0 for each negative answer for the elective) is to be referred to as the sum of the scores assigned to each sub-criterion or the variable that makes up the criterion itself (see attachment).

- Higher education institutions involved, compulsory criteria (max 7 pt);
 - Joint Policies for the joint programme, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Transnational joint degree delivers, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Transnational campus- accesso to service, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Visibility & awareness, optional criteria (max 3 pt);
2. **Cluster II “Functional: Labour Market & Employability”** is composed of 4 EDLs Criteria, 1 compulsory criteria e 3 optional criteria:
- Graduate outcomes, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Cooperation with labour market, optional criteria (max 3 pt);
 - Internships/ work-based learning, optional criteria (max 3 pt);
 - Career development, optional criteria (max 3 pt).
3. **Cluster III “Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning”** is composed of 6 EDLs Criteria, 4 compulsory criteria and 2 optional criteria:
- Trasparency of the learning outcomes, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Quality assurance arrangements, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Flexible and embedded students’ mobility, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Innovative learninf approaches, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Alternative learning formats, optional criteria (max 3 pt);
 - Digital skills, optional criteria (max 3 pt).
4. **Cluster IV “European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability”** composed of 5 EDLs Criteria, 2 compulsory criteria and 3 optional criteria:
- Multilingualism, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Incllusiveness & sustainability, compulsory criteria (max 7pt);
 - Language classes, optional criteria (max 1 pt);
 - Environmental care, optional criteria (max 2 pt);
 - Democratic values, optional criteria (max 2 pt).

For stylistic reasons, the synoptic table and the text of the Report do not specify the weighted scores assigned to the sub-criteria, which represent the variables and statistical indicators elaborated by the researchers and included in the questionnaire and which make up each criterion, so readers are invited to read the Annex to deepen this aspect.

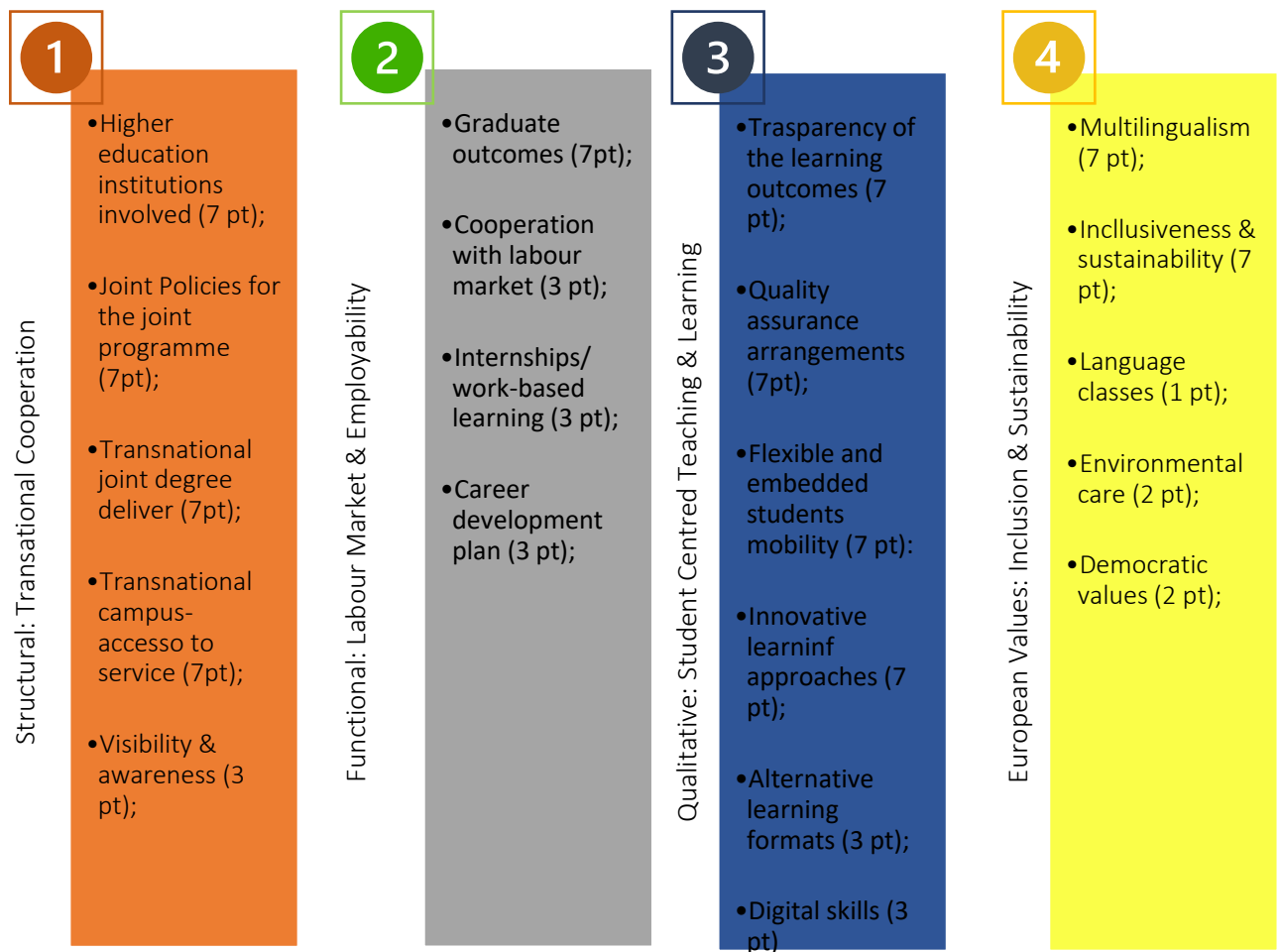


Fig. 1- Synoptic Table of Criteria & Clusters with scores.

Engagement Strategy and Reminder System

Once the questionnaire drafting and testing phases were nearing completion, the strategy to involve in the survey a large sample of professors/program coordinators of the partner universities was implemented, starting from the exhaustive database of teacher contacts made available to CIVIS partners. The survey, officially launched in September 2023, has included, since its inception, a socialization plan of the results achieved to be shared with all CIVIS partners and with the managers of the Work Packages of the SMARTT project.

Concretely, a letter of request to join the European survey was drafted and addressed to coordinators/programme managers and sent to their institutional e-mail addresses. The letter clarified the nature of the European project, the objectives of the survey and explained the timing of the research and the terms of the collaboration (the need to disseminate the online questionnaire to the coordinating teachers of the programs, to attach documentation attesting to the truthfulness of the information included in the questionnaire and to take care to self-select as many

heterogeneous programs as possible with respect to the main characteristics identified by the researchers. Guaranteeing the possibility of online bilateral meetings, in case problems or uncertainties were encountered during the completion of the questionnaire. Below is the full text of the letter (for details, see Annex):

Dear institutional coordinators and colleagues,

The CIVIS alliance contributes, through the Erasmus + SMARTT project, to one of the most ambitious objectives that the European Union has set itself with the launch of the European Alliances programme, which aims to develop a common approach for planning and implementation of joint diplomas and, in the near future, to the creation of a European qualification called "European Degree", awarded to the study courses of the 3 cycles of higher education that meet certain requirements.

To this end, some alliances have been involved in an experiment that aims to analyse, test and pilot the criteria of the "European Label", improving its quality and increasing its transferability throughout Europe and beyond.

In the first phase of the project, the SMARTT team has refined some methodological tools (criteria descriptors, questionnaires, etc.) and is preparing an extended pilot phase to be tested on at least 50 programs with joint, multiple or double degrees delivered in transnational cooperation between different institutions of higher education.

The 50 selected programs will participate in subsequent phases of testing and interviews through which the project team will develop recommendations and proposals addressed to the European Commission and the Member States, for the subsequent development of the "European degree".

Sincerely thanking you for your availability, below we send you the **Google Form link** for completing the questionnaire and some recommendations/practical instructions to be sent to the programs coordinators, that they will autonomously complete the questionnaire (self-administered):

<https://forms.gle/Hkd6LYgsdchyLqCE6>

The objective of this online questionnaire is the collection all the information about the programs of the partner universities, out of which 50 programs will be selected to be sent to the validation phase.

In this pre-selection phase, there is no maximum number of programs to be submitted or involved in the analysis step. However, it is important that the institutional coordinators indicate the right coordinators/programmes managers and that they ensure that the right offices or people in the different universities fill it out by the deadline: **XX/XX/2023**

The questionnaire consists in **XX simple questions** and the expected duration for filling out the questionnaire will be *approximately XX minutes*.

In general, the survey will have a twofold structure:

- general and structural information on the home university and on the active partnerships: open-ended and multiple-choice questions: **XX questions**. This information will be used only to observe and map the distribution of submitted programmes (*non-active or "observative" variables*).
- questions on the Presence or Absence of EDLs Criteria: multiple choice questions with dichotomous modality (Yes/No): **XX questions**. This will be the information that will be then evaluated through

the assignment of a score and on which the selection of the 50 programs will be based (*active variables*).

The pre-screening is not intended to create a hierarchy amongst existing programmes, but rather to provide support for the selection of relevant programmes that will help test and validate the EDL criteria. In other words, the EDL criteria is being tested, not the programmes.

Also, the duly signed Agreement of the investigated program, will only be asked to the manager/coordinators of the 50 selected programmes through the email addresses of the managers (email), to guarantee the transparency of the information.

Please complete a questionnaire for each program for which you are a representative. We are obviously available for bilateral meetings during which to support in the compilation. If the characteristics are the same for the different programs, you can let us know and we will fill in the further questionnaires.

Sincerely, WP3 Team.

Until 15 September 2023, the research team constantly monitored and incentivised the adhesion of partners through the preparation of a dunning plan, described in detail in the table below.

<i>Type of e-mail</i>	<i>Date</i>
Send the questionnaire	31 July 2023
<i>first reminder</i>	28 August 2023
<i>second reminder</i>	4 September 2023
<i>third reminder</i>	6 September 2023
<i>fourth reminder</i>	7 September 2023
Last reminder	15 September 2023

PHASE II and III - Internal Program Selection

With the conclusion of Phase I, which ended with the closure of the questionnaire, we moved on to the next step. Unlike the previous one which had the objective of collecting programs through the dissemination of the questionnaire, the second phase gets to the heart of the operational and statistical issue.

The objective of Phase II is to attribute - on all the programs inserted by the coordinators - a specific score for each variable of the questionnaire pre-coded in the previous phase (see 1.2.2.).

However, before being able to achieve this objective and be able to statistically analyze the data collected, it was necessary to start a preliminary procedure such as cleaning the data in the matrix, or carrying out control and "sieve" procedures, case by case, for any insertion errors of the information in the matrix. The data cleaning procedure, carried out in this phase, and explored further in the following paragraph, will focus above all on 3 fundamental aspects:

- **Plausibility checks:** this involves checking that all the values of the variables are plausible, i.e. they belong to the range of values foreseen by the code.
- **Congruence checks:** the distributions of two variables can be compared to highlight any inconsistencies between the variables themselves.

- **Missing values:** a certain case in a certain variable is assigned a "missing value" if that case lacks information on that variable. There are four cases of missing value: "does not know", "not applicable", "does not answer", "implausible value". Usually there is a tendency to expose "non-responders" in the monivariate analysis and to exclude them in the multivariable analysis.

1.3.1 Data cleaning

The data cleansing process (or data cleaning) is the process of preparing data for the next phase analyses. The goal is to correct (or, in some cases, eliminate) any elements distortive, due to the errors seen in the previous paragraph, which would affect the research results.

A first procedure to follow is that of visual checks. This procedure, optional because it is approximate, still allows in some cases to identify transcription, transposition or formatting errors but has a limited as it is not possible to display analytically and simultaneously each of the variables in the matrix. These controls, as their main purpose, have to identify empty cells in a data matrix (missing values). To correct as many missing values as possible, this would have resulted in a large loss of information as well as an understatement of values in the valuation process. Two strategies have been implemented. The first is to start the procedures of congruence and plausibility check, trying to reconstruct the missing data from the other information inserted in the matrix (assigning, in this case, the default score according to the scheme). The other, if it was not possible to trace the information, was to leave the missing value and give it the score of 0 pts, in order to minimize the influence of the programme in the evaluation phase.

If the codes for missing values have been set for each variable, no cell of the matrix should, in fact, be empty. The checks to be carried out following the entry of data into the matrix are possible distinguish between plausibility checks and congruence checks.

The plausibility checks have the purpose of identifying the wild codes, i.e. verifying that in each column of the matrix (therefore for each variable) only relevant information is inserted and in the format defined in the codebook. In addition to the visual check, the strategy to follow to carry out these essential checks is to carry out a monivariate analysis (see 1.4) of each of the variables that make up the data matrix. Seppur molti errori in matrice possono essere rilevati attraverso una fase preanalitica delle distribuzioni monovariate dei dati (plausibility checks), ci sono alcune problematiche (o errori materiali) che possono essere riscontrate soltanto attraverso la congruence checks.

Considering that the online questionnaire has been self-filed by the coordinators of the programmes themselves and providing them with the utmost confidence regarding the actual correctness of the information in terms of reality (given the impossibility for us researchers to check the status of each program), it is not unlikely that an error of entering some information in the wrong answer categories can be obtained in the matrix. Through the congruence checks, we want to highlight any inconsistencies between pairs of variables, i.e. by jointly taking into account the frequency distribution of two variables through a contingency table. Even in this case it will be necessary go back to the questionnaire and identify the error in the matrix to correct it or, in extreme cases, eliminate the inconsistent information (by setting the less plausible value, or both, with the code used for the missing non due). Consistency checks are also extremely useful for verifying the correct setting of the missing values.

This type of control mainly includes filter questions, the consistency checks allow you to identify cases that should not have responded but have equally answered (values that will be corrected in the matrix with the code dedicated to the undue missing) and the cases that should have answered but not they responded (missing due).

Once this very delicate and important phase of data cleaning and data correction in matrix has been completed, we have passed to the assignment of scores on the variables on each program and to the creation of the ranking list that represents, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, not an evaluation of the quality of the programmes but rather how much the programmes currently submitted by the CIVIS Partners adhere to the criteria established by the European Union (EDLs Criteria).

The data matrix. A descriptive analysis of the programs

On 16 December 2023, following the closure of the online survey and questionnaire, the data collection phase was concluded, which made it possible to reach and evaluate a total of 95 programmes. Considering the self-sampling and self-filling nature of the survey, as well as the limited time frame in which the coordinators were able to fill in the online questionnaire, the number of programmes achieved is sufficiently positive, as the heterogeneity of the programmes in relation to the fundamental variables, allows not only to have an overview tout court of the current European situation but also to observe an evaluation between cases, providing useful information on how to compare different programs or how programs that apparently have the same characteristics behave.

The achievement of 85 programs was possible thanks to the collaboration and commitment of 11 partner universities⁸ that have, to varying degrees and on the basis of their possibilities, contributed to the achievement of the project's objective, showing interest and enthusiasm in the evaluation of their work.

⁸ Among the 17 partners initially involved in the project, 13 (11 universities + 2 institutions) are actually represented. At the close of the survey, the Vrije Unversiteit Brussel, University of Ljubljana and Eutopia did not submit any programmes. The programs shown in the table refer only to the programs included by the CIVIS universities, excluding those promoted by UNITA-Universitas Montium (7 programs) and Neurotech-European University of brain and technology (3 programs).

Table 1- Distribution of programmes by university of affiliation (N and %)

Univeristy	N	%
University of Glasgow	26	30,6
Sapienza Università di Roma	18	21,2
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	8	9,4
University of Bucharest	8	9,4
Aix-Marseille Université	7	8,2
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	6	7,1
Université de Lille	6	7,1
Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg	3	3,5
Universität Tübingen	1	1,2
Stockholm University	1	1,2
Université Libre de Bruxelles	1	1,2
Total	85	100,0

52% of the programmes analysed and subsequently evaluated were promoted by the University of Glasgow and Sapienza University of Rome, although the distribution is not very heterogeneous and a bit unbalanced, due to the greater concentration of programmes in Scotland and Italy, it is possible to have a fairly representative geographical mapping of the other CIVIS countries.

In general, it is possible to begin to describe in depth the matrix of the data starting from the monivariate analysis of the descriptive variables. A third of the programs in the matrix are Double Degree Programme (35, about 37% of the total) (Fig. 2.) This is in line with current trends that make Double Degree Programmes a fair compromise between student demand and the organisational and economic management of the programme by the institutions(??). To date, in fact, participating in a Double Degree Program is the most attractive choice by students because the double degree program, especially the one that allows you to study at a university in a different country and, allows you to earn two unique qualifications at the same time. In addition, the choice of Double Degree Programs offers several plus points such as 1. deeper understanding of specific subjects that students also gain richer points of view of subjects that seem different but are actually related; 2. higher employability in national and international levels; closely linked to the previous point, 3. studying two programs gives you a wider network, from fellow students to lecturers, experts, researchers, and even company representatives. Networking skill is important in the professional world, and it will give added benefits in the future and, of course, 4. the dual degrees requires you to develop multiple practical and specialist skills to thrive in workplaces.

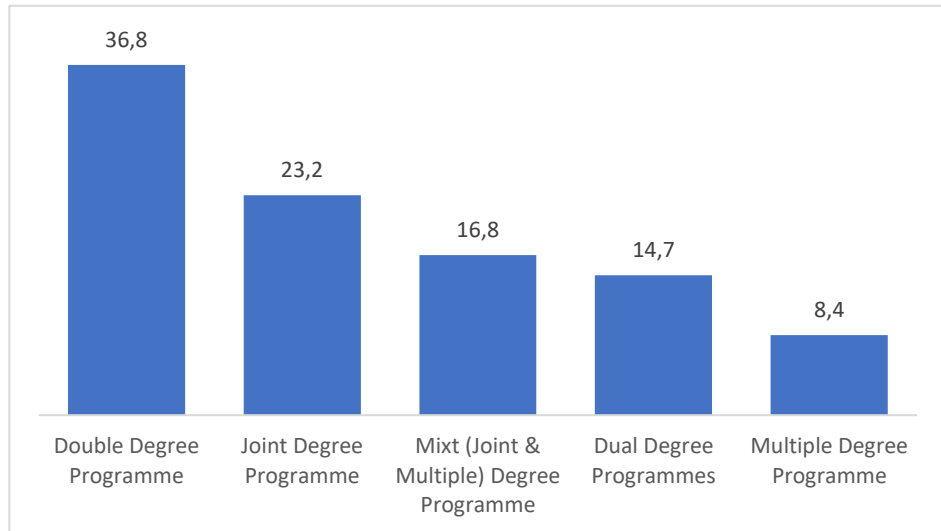


Fig. 2- Type of programmes (%)

The second most common type of program in our sample are the Joint Degree Programs which, together with the Double Degree Program (22 av, 23%), represent 60% of the total programs involved in this survey exercise. Multiple degrees, on the other hand, are the least represented as they are present in smaller numbers in the matrix: out of 95 total programs, only 8 are multiple (about 8%). In spite of everything, the distribution appears to be partially balanced and allows us to observe and appear the heterogeneity of the components of the matrix.

On the other hand, it is different in the distribution of the second "definitory" element discussed at length in Chapter 1.1, namely the Fields of study (Fig. 3). In this case, 48% of the programs fall into the category of "Social Sciences" (46 av), while the STEM category, despite being the category that incorporates the largest number of courses, occupies the second position with 22% of the programs present (21 av). A further fundamental figure is that shown by the "Transdisciplinary" category (9.5%), as it provides not only more information for all those multidisciplinary programs but its "weight" in the matrix and in the distribution gives the singular possibility of observing a new "idea" of university mobility programs that consider the complementary and synergistic study of two or more fields of study to guarantee the student a greater understanding of the object of study study through the study of multiple "points of view", providing the student with greater technical and professional skills. Focusing on this specific category (see Statistical Appendix), it can be observed that scientific disciplines (STEM) are the most chosen in transdisciplinary programs. In fact, 5 out of 9 multidisciplinary programs include a "scientific" discipline combined with the others: STEM and Humanities (2), STEM and Health (1), STEM and Social Science (1) and, even, an ambitious program, combining all fields of study: STEM, Health, Social Science and Humanities. This value could be given by the flexibility of the sciences in adapting to any field of study as well as by the importance, increasingly preponderant in the professional and academic field, of the "scientific technique" linked to the construction of scientific standards and values that can be replicated and compared even in different contexts.

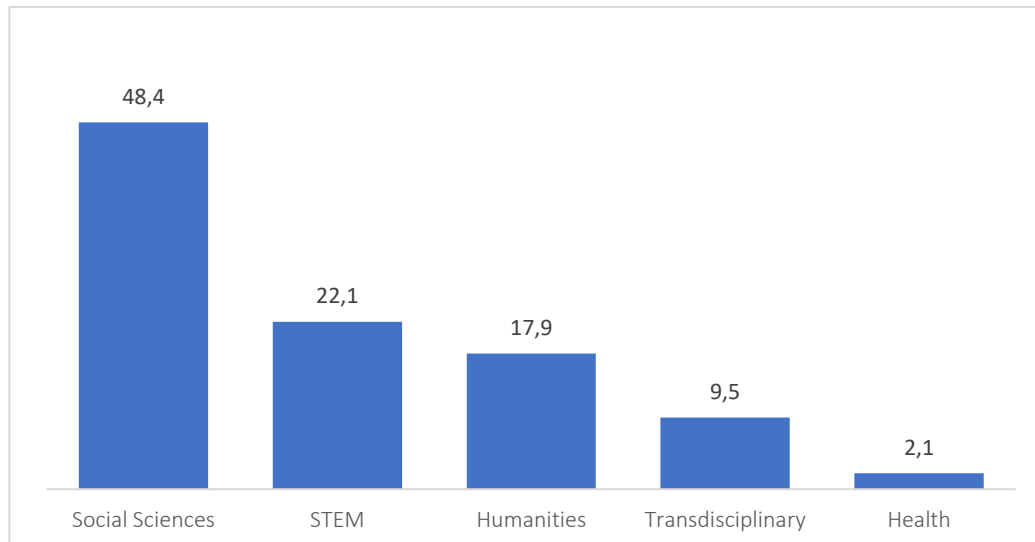


Fig.3- Distribution of Fields of study (%)

One of the main objectives of the establishment of the Single European Area is undoubtedly to facilitate and improve the international mobility of students through the agreements guaranteed by European universities. Consequently, it is of paramount importance to observe how the programmes set up by CIVIS universities behave in relation to the Community area. 62% of the programmes included in the matrix declare to have an Erasmus Mundus providing academic and professional relationships both with other countries of the European Union and outside Europe. Among the countries most "attentive" to this aspect is certainly Scotland which, out of 26 programs proposed in the survey, 14 provide an Erasmus Mundus actively collaborating with the largest number of countries (23) compared to the other partners: Poland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, UK, Italy, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Malta, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Czech Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Colombia, Denmark (see Statistical Appendix). France is the second CIVIS partner, which has developed the largest number of programmes that includes Erasmus Mundus (10), involving 12 different countries: Poland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Greece, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Taiwan. Finally, although with a smaller number of Erasmus Mundus (4), Italy is the only CIVIS country to have established a collaboration with South Africa⁹ (Tab.2).

⁹ This information is to be understood only on the basis of the programs included in the matrix and self-selected by the CIVIS partners in the participation in the project.

Table 2- Distribution of Erasmus Mundus and Program for each country (%)

Country	Total Erasmus Mundus	Total Programme	% Total Programme	% is Total Erasmus Mundus	% N Erasmus Mundus/N Programme
Belgium	0	1	1,1	0,0	0,0
Germany	0	1	1,1	0,0	0,0
Austria	2	3	3,2	5,3	66,7
Sweden	2	3	3,2	5,3	66,7
Greece	3	6	6,3	7,9	50,0
Romania	0	10	10,5	0,0	0,0
Spain	3	10	10,5	7,9	30,0
France	10	14	14,7	26,3	71,4
Italy	4	21	22,1	10,5	19,0
Scotland	14	26	27,4	36,8	53,8
Total	38	95	100,0	100,0	40,0

Lastly, concluding with Erasmus Mundus, among the 6 European countries most involved in international mobility programs we certainly find Spain, UK, France, Italy, Portugal and Germany, while among the non-EU countries: Taiwan (7%), Colombia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and South Africa¹⁰ (4%) (Fig. 4).

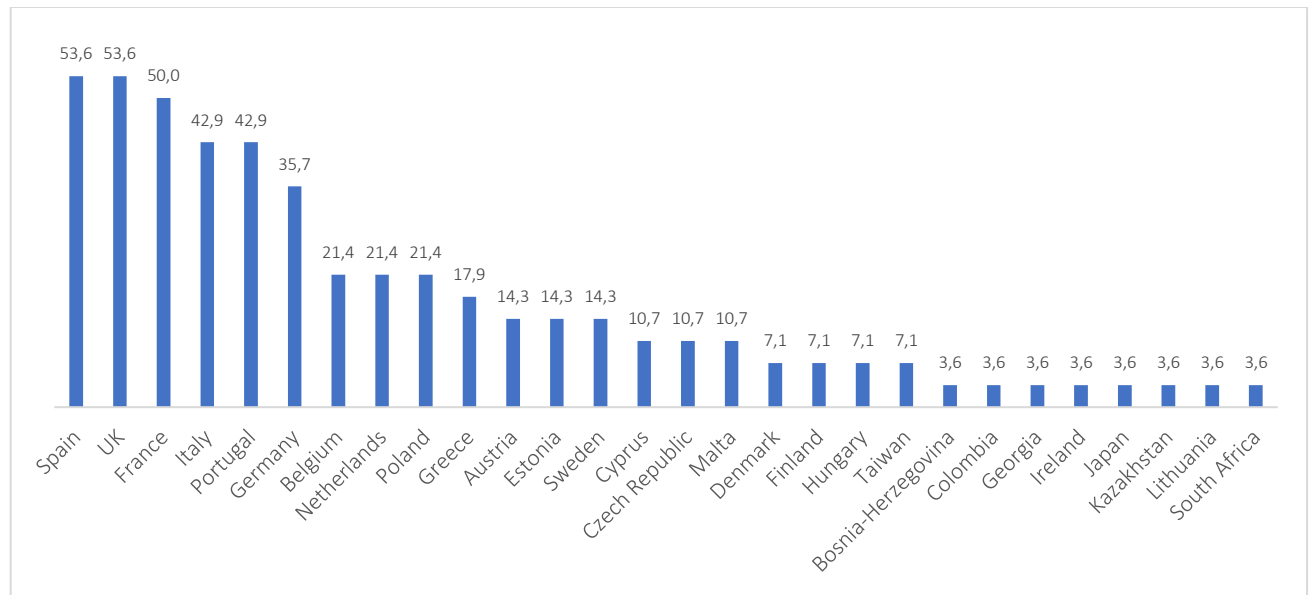


Fig. 4- Distribution of countries with which CIVIS partners have collaborated with their programmes (Erasmus Mundus) (%)

¹⁰ This information is to be understood only on the basis of the programs included in the matrix and self-selected by the CIVIS partners in the participation in the project.

Programmes Evaluation. The relationship between the programmes and the EDL Criteria

The monovariate analysis of the descriptive variables shown in the previous paragraph allowed us to better understand the European programmes that made up the survey sample, answering the question: "what are the programmes?". The next question that we will answer and that represents the core of the entire selection process is "Which programs and to what extent do they conform to the lines of the Criteria proposed by the European Union (EDL Criteria).

As anticipated, the CIVIS partners actively contributed to the project, sending a total of 95 programs (85 university partners, 3 Neurotech- European University of brain and technology and 7 UNITA-Universitas Montium), whose coordinators answered multiple questions related to the 20 criteria proposed by the European Union to which specific scores were assigned (see Par. 1.2.2).

The table below (Table 3) shows the indices of statistical position relative¹¹ to the average scores obtained by the sample; this information provides fundamental elements to observe in an overall and immediate way the work, carried out by the programs and coordinators, through the average scores obtained on the Clusters. Having divided 7 total points for the variables that make up the 11 essential criteria and a maximum of 3 points for the optional, the maximum score that each program could have achieved is 100 points.

Looking at the table, we can see that the highest value (x max) recorded in the matrix is about 95 points. obtained by 4 programs of the Aix-Marseille Université (France), while the lowest (x min) is about 42 points obtained by a program of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). It is of fundamental importance to remember that the scores obtained by the programmes do not in any way represent a qualitative evaluation of the programme or the work of the coordinators, but rather a tool of "linearity relationship" with the principles of the European Degree Label Criteria, consequently even low scores as well as high scores, are essential to understand if and how to improve the general evaluation system of the programmes and the EDL Criteria, thus creating a process of "positive and virtuous evaluation".

x	Total score	Score Cluster I	Score Cluster II	Score Cluster III	Score Cluster IV
min	42,2	17,3	0	8,8	5,5
Q1	67,9	22,1	13	16	13
Q2	70,7	27,5	13	19,6	13,5
Q3	84,2	30,1	16	23,7	15,5
max	94,9	31	16	29,4	18,5

¹¹ The mean score was calculated from the ratio of the sum of the scores obtained by the programs to the number of programs: $\mu = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N x_i}{N}$. To know the specific score of each program, see Statistical Appendix X

Beyond the values of basic positions (minimum and maximum value), in order to better understand the heterogeneity and distribution of the programs, it is necessary to analyze and compare the score obtained by the programs not on the maximum score that can be obtained (100 pt) but in relation to the total average value, as this value is the only one that provides us with a "real" measure of distance between one program and another.

The average value recorded by all the programs that participated in this part of the survey is 73 total points (only -27 points from the maximum expected by the researchers). To answer the question of how the programs were distributed in relation to the central mean value, it is necessary to resort to an additional position index: the quartiles. Quartiles are three position indices (quartiles) that divide a statistical distribution into four equal parts. Each part is a group that has the same number of elements. There are three quartiles:

- The first quartile (Q1) groups 1/4 of the elements (25%) of the distribution on the left.
- The second quartile (Q2) groups 2/4 of the elements (50%) of the distribution on the left
- The third quartile (Q3) groups 3/4 of the elements (75%) of the distribution on the left

Taking Table 3 as a reference despite the heterogeneity of the scores obtained by the individual programmes, 25% of the programmes obtained a maximum of 68 points. From a statistical point of view, the first quartile (Q1) represents the group of programs that obtained the lowest score, i.e. it falls within a *range* from the lowest value (42 pts) to Q1 (68 pts). Specifically, this group includes 24 programmes:

- 2 Aix-Marseille University and 2 University of Lille (France)
- 1 University of Tübingen (Germany)
- 1 National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece)
- 9 Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)
- 5 University of Bucharest (Romania)
- 1 Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)
- 3 UNITA- Universitas Montium (Italy, Romania, and Spain).

The last quartiles¹² (Q3 and Q4), on the other hand, group together the programs that have obtained a score very close to and above average (73 pts), i.e. those that we could consider more "virtuous" from an evaluation point of view, with reference to linearity with the principles expressed by the EDL Criteria. This classification includes 48 programmes, which have obtained a score ranging from 70.71 pt to 95 pt. The programs are:

- 3 Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg (Austria), all the programs submitted by the Austrian university scored very highly.
- 5 Aix-Marseille Université (France). 71% of the programmes submitted by the university and 38% of the programmes submitted by France.

¹² The third quartile (Q3) includes all those programs that have obtained a minimum of 70.71 (maximum value of Q2) up to a maximum of 84.2 pt. Covering 75% of the programs present in the matrix. The fourth quartile (Q4), on the other hand, the programs that obtained a minimum value of 84.21 pt up to the maximum value (x max) obtained by the programs (95 pt), thus reaching 100% of the ordered sample.

- 2 Université de Lille (France). 33% of the programs presented by the University and 15% presented by the country.
- 5 National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), 83% of the programmes presented by the university.
- 6 Sapienza University of Rome (Italy), 33% of the programs presented by the university.
- 3 University of Bucharest (Romania), il 37,5% of the programmes.
- 11 University of Glasgow (Scotland), il 42% of the programmes.
- 7 Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), 87.5%.
- 1 Stockholm University (Sweden), the only program presented by the university.
- 3 UNITA- Universitas Montium (1 France and 2 Italy), 43% of the programmes presented by the partner institution.
- 2 Neurotech- European University of brain and technology (Spain e Sweden), 67% of the programmes submitted.

Although it will be further explored later, there is a great heterogeneity and dispersion of the scores obtained of the programs in relation to the Clusters, however these data may have been influenced by the variable number of indicators that referred to the optional and indispensable criteria that make up each individual Cluster. In any case, Cluster I concerning the "Structural: Transational Cooperation" is the one that obtained the highest average score value (27 pts), which means that - despite being the Cluster that contains the highest number of criteria - 54 programs (57%) declared to possess those specific characteristics and therefore in line with the criteria proposed by the European Union.

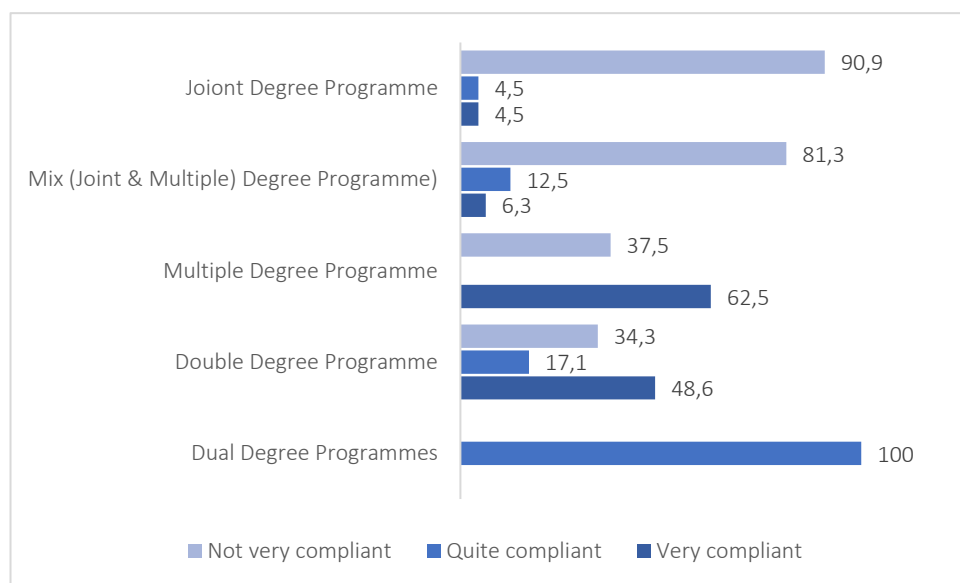
On the contrary, the Clusters that have generally obtained the lowest scores are:

- Cluster II "Functional: Labour Market & Employability" (maximum achievable value 16 pts). Just under half (48%) of the sample obtained the highest score while 19 programs (20%) obtained a score ≤ 10 pt (4 programs recorded 0 points, and therefore do not possess any EDL Criteria);
- Cluster IV "European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability" (maximum score 19 pts). In contrast to the previous case, none of the programmes presented achieved the maximum score, however 24 programmes (25%) scored high (≥ 16 pts) while another considerable proportion of programmes (23.24%) scored quite high (23.24%) Low (< 13 pt), with a minimum value of 5.5 pt.

Going down from the level of general abstraction of Clusters and statistical scores and anchoring ourselves more on the level of descriptive "simplicity" of the characteristics of the programs. In order to make the degree of compliance of the programs with the EDL Criteria immediately visible, the "Compliance" index was constructed through the statistical subdivision or cut on the total score obtained by the programs. The index consists of 3 grades:

- "Very compliant", which includes all programs that recorded a score ≥ 70.731 pts (48, 51%)
- "Quite compliant", which included programmes that scored ≥ 68.1 pt and ≤ 70.73 (23, 24%)
- "Not very compliant", all programs that obtained a total score ≤ 68 pts (24.25%).

The Joint Degree Programmes presented by the coordinators in this first phase of the survey are the types of programmes that are "greater" in line with the European Union directives and have, on average, the highest number of criteria included in the EDL Criteria (91%¹³). In addition to the Joint Degree Programmes, another considerable share are the so-called "mixed programmes", i.e. those that arise from the combination of Joint & Multiple Degree Programmes (81%). On the contrary, the programmes that are most distant from the European Union directives and on which they should most integrate indicators or factors that fall within the EDL Criteria are the Multiple Degree Programmes - which only 3 (37.5%) of the programmes were found to comply with the EDL Criteria while the remaining 5 (62.5%) do not - and the Double Degree Programmes which, despite being the most numerous types of programs (35), the largest number of programs (35, 48.5%) obtained a rather low total score on the variables of the questionnaire, resulting in little compliance with the EDL Criteria (Fig.4)

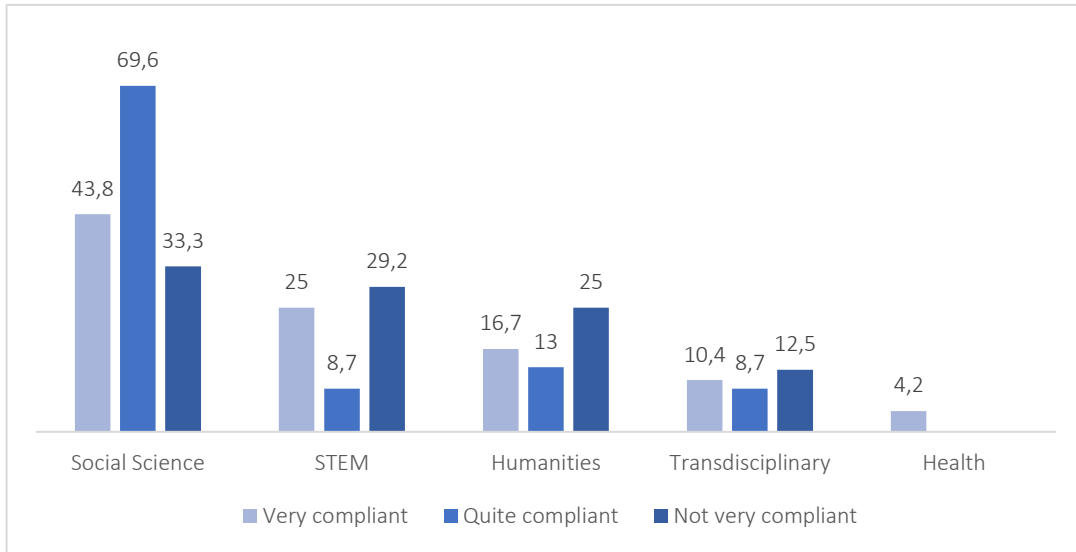


The figure below (Fig.5) shows the compliance index in relation to the Fields of study of the programs in the matrix. Also in this case, the distribution appears extremely heterogeneous, revealing a rather high concentration of programs related to the Social Sciences (21.44%)¹⁴ that record greater linearity and compliance with the EDL Criteria. Another sizable, albeit lower, share is characterised by science programmes (STEM), which account for 25% (12) of programmes with a higher average score. Unfortunately, transdisciplinary and health-related programs have obtained the lowest percentage of this category (very compliant), however it should be considered that the percentage takes into account the size of the database, which means that it is strongly affected by the overall number of these types within the matrix. In fact, the transdisciplinary (10) and Health (2)

¹³ The percentages shown in Fig.4 have been calculated for the Total Row, i.e. the ratio between the compliance index and the total of program types. In other words, the ratio of the number of "very compliant", "somewhat compliant" and "slightly compliant" to the total number of Double D.P, Dual D.P, Joint D.P, Mixt D.P. and Multiple D.P.

¹⁴ In this case, the percentages shown in Fig.5 have been calculated for the Total Column, i.e. the ratio of the Fields of study to the total of the degrees of compliance. In other words, the ratio of the number of Social Sciences, STEM, Humanities, Transdisciplinary and Health to the total of "very compliant", "somewhat compliant" and "not very compliant".

programs are the programs with a smaller number within the distribution, representing 10% and 2% of the total programs, thus influencing the percentage value and consequently, a probable statistical overestimation.



Once we have looked at how the types of programmes and fields of study relate to the EDL Criteria, the following table shows whether there is a relationship between programmes that include Erasmus Mundus and compliance with the Clusters – with reference to the European criteria. In other words, are international mobility programmes that include an Erasmus Mundus more compliant with the EDL Criteria? To answer this question, we subjected the variables to a linear correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient¹⁵. This correlation coefficient is calculated as the ratio of the covariance of the two variables to the product of their standard deviations, providing not only information about the strength between the variables but also about the direction of the correlation. Returning to our question, we can confirm a positive linear relationship: Programmes that include Erasmus Mundus (62% of the programs in the matrix) are more inclined to observe and comply with the criteria of the European Degree Lable Criteria, especially in the criteria that make up Cluster I (0.6) and Cluster III (0.5), while there is no relationship with the criteria of Cluster IV (non-significant relationship).

¹⁵ Pearson's r correlation index is always between the values -1 (indicating a perfect linear negative relationship between the two variables) and +1 (indicating a perfect linear positive relationship between the two variables). The closer the index is to zero, the weaker the relationship will be, the closer it is to -1 or +1 the stronger the relationship will be.

Table 4- Correlation Analysis

Correlations Analysis ¹⁶	Erasmus Mundus	Cluser I	Cluser II	Cluser III	Cluser IV
Erasmus Mundus	1	,612**	,433**	,502**	0,042
Cluser I		1	,458**	,505**	0,091
Cluser II			1	,412**	,275**
Cluser III				1	,289**
Cluser IV					1

Table 4 also gives us another piece of information, namely the existence of an internal relationship between the Clusters. It appears that programs that comply with the criteria of the first cluster reflect compliance with the criteria of cluster II (0.46) and cluster III (0.5). On the other hand, programs that comply with the criteria of the second cluster are also compliant with the criteria of III (0.4) and IV (0.27).

Coming to the end of this chapter, Table 5 shows the distribution of the average scores¹⁷ obtained by each partner's programmes on the total number of programmes and broken down by cluster. Statistically, the mean score was calculated from the ratio of the sum of the scores obtained by the

programs to the number of programs: $\mu = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N x_i}{N}$.

In general, the position index guarantees the observation of the intrinsic characteristics of the programs, i.e. it is possible to understand which elements are present and not in the programs, with reference to the EDL Criteria.

As can be seen from Table 5, the programs presented by CIVIS Partners – in this first part of the survey – are generally compliant and in line with the directives proposed by the European Union, obtaining a score of 73 pts. The classification by geographical areas, i.e. by country of relevance of the program, shows a rather heterogeneous distribution of the compliance index. Specifically, 73 programs from 6 different countries fall into the "Very Compliant" category, constituting, through the scores obtained from the online survey, the programs containing the highest number of the criteria proposed in the EDL Criteria and consequently those - from an evaluation point of view - "most virtuous". Despite this common definition, each country faced different difficulties within the Cluster programme. To help us correctly read the percentages in the table, it is necessary to go back to the constitution of the Clusters and the maximum score that can be obtained in each of them.

- Cluster I- "Structural: Transational Cooperation", maximum score 31 pt
- Cluster II- "Functional: Labour Market & Employability", maximum score 16 pt
- Cluster III- "Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning", maximum score 34 pt
- Cluster IV- "European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability", maximum score 19 pt.

In fact, only from the variation of the average score obtained and the maximum score for each Cluster, it gives us the opportunity to understand which is the cluster that presents the most

¹⁶ ** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 (2-code) level.

¹⁷ The distribution in Table 5, ordered by the average score obtained through the classification of CIVIS Partner Countries, is different from the ranking list of the scores obtained by the individual programmes. To know the specific score of each program, see the statistical appendix.

difficulty in applying it in reality contexts and which are the criteria least present within the programs.

Starting a concise and transversal description of the data obtained by the partner countries on each cluster, we can observe that on average Cluster I obtained a fairly high score of 26.6 with reference to the maximum achievable (31 pts). As far as the variables (questionnaire questions) most present in 98% of programs are concerned, and those that obtained a greater number of "Yes" votes, are:

- Students have free and easy access to: [IT services], Absent in only 1 program.
- Students have free and easy access to: [Library services], present in all programmes
- Students have free and easy access to: [Academic guidance and psychological counselling], present in all programmes
- The HEIs involved conducting joint... [Activities to provide necessary information to students], absent in only 2 programmes

On the contrary, the replies to the questionnaire that record a higher number of "No" and therefore the absence of indicators that refer to the EDL Criteria, are:

- The joint programme has an integrated curriculum? 25 programmes claim not to have this indicator
- Indicate the Joint policies for the joint programme: [The involved HEIs have a joint policy for monitoring], 27 No
- There is no specific admission requirement depending on students' location, 37 No
- The HEIs involved conducting joint... [Activities to provide necessary information to other relevant stakeholders (eg. Employers)], 40 No.

The Second Cluster ("Functional: Labour Market & Employability") is the one that, together with Cluster I, has worked better and whose Criteria are more present in the Programs (13/16 pt). In this case, the variable that has recorded more "Yes" (45 Programs) is: "The joint program: [It has a system to monitor graduate results, either at the program level or at the institutional level(s)] while the one that has recorded more absences (28) is: "The joint programme: [Provides opportunities for international professional internships/work-based learning recognized through the ECTS award.]".

As anticipated, the Cluster relating to "Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning" (III) is the one that has created the greatest difficulty for the programs and the highest number of absent criteria, observable by the average score obtained by the Cluster: 20/36 pts. If they all answered in the affirmative to the question: "Is the joint programme described in ECTS?" and 95 programmes have the joint programme includes at least 1 period of student physical mobility at another partner institution of at least 30 ECTS. On the other hand, we have a rather high number of variables that are almost completely absent in the programs:

- The joint programme issues a Joint Diploma Supplement? 54 negative replies
- Additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions (e.g., online or blended, in the format of regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools), absent in 35 programs.
- Additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions (e.g., online or blended, in the format of regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools), 43 No

- Opportunities for doctoral candidates to participate in one or more of these activities at another partner institution: teaching activities, international events, international conferences, joint research scientific projects between partner institutions, joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions., 61 programs do not have this indicator.
- The joint programme offers Assessment of student (digital) skills, this is the factor that registers the highest number of absences in the programmes: 70 negative responses in the matrix.

Finally, with reference to Cluster IV-"European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability", the programmes obtained an average low score of 14/19 pts. This value is explained by 4 factors that are less frequently present in the programs, attributable to the questions:

The joint programme includes components and actions related to environmental sustainability? 56 absences out of 95 programmes

- The joint programme implements measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities? 59 absences
- The option for students to receive ECTS for these activities (volunteering, involvement in the local community, etc.), 65 "no"
- The joint programme includes volunteering opportunities? 67 negative responses from the programs

In conclusion, the scoring system used in this phase of the survey can be considered a fairly effective evaluation tool, especially when combined with a more in-depth survey and qualitative analysis tools (interviews and focus groups). In general, the programs self-selected by the program coordinators and CIVIS Partners give a very positive image of mobility programs, as they are mostly compliant and in line with the Criteria prepared by the European Union and the EDL Criteria. Obviously, there are some aspects on which it is necessary to intervene more in order to understand whether the absence of criteria on the part of the programs is linked to purely descriptive factors (lack of attention on the part of the project coordinators during the drafting of the program) or to a structural impossibility of any kind (administrative, bureaucratic, etc.) to be able to effectively concretize these factors in reality. Going back to the questions asked to the coordinators in the online survey, the factors that need to be addressed are:

- The option for students to receive ECTS for these activities (volunteering, involvement in the local community, etc.)
- Activities to provide necessary information to other relevant stakeholders (eg. Employers)],
- The joint programme includes volunteering opportunities?
- Opportunities for doctoral candidates to participate in one or more of these activities at another partner institution: teaching activities, international events, international conferences, joint research scientific projects between partner institutions, joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions.
- The joint programme offers Assessment of student digital skills.

On the contrary, the variables that currently already work very well are:

- Students have free and easy access to: IT services, Library services and Academic guidance and psychological counselling.

- The Joint Programme has a system to monitor graduate outcomes, either at the level of the programme or at the institutional level(s)
- Activities to provide necessary information to students.
- Exposure to EU official languages in active and/or passive use of language(s), at any level in teaching and/or learning activities, examinations, research activities, professional or civic engagement activities and during mobility periods, including by going on mobility to a country where a different EU official language is predominantly used in daily life.

To observe in more detail the scores obtained by the individual programmes, please refer to the statistical appendix in the Annex.

Table 5 - Distribution of average scores obtained by the programs by home university.

Country/University	Total Score	Compliance Index	Score Cluster I	Score Cluster II	Score Cluster III	Score Cluster IV	N Programmes
Sweden	83,7	Very compliant	26,6	16,0	23,6	17,5	1
Stockholm University	83,7		26,6	16,0	23,6	17,5	
Austria	83,3	Very compliant	29,6	15,4	23,6	14,7	3
Paris Lodron University Salzburg	83,3		29,6	15,4	23,6	14,7	
Scotland	76,5	Very compliant	27,2	14,1	21,2	14,0	26
University of Glasgow	76,5		27,2	14,1	21,2	14,0	
Greece	75,2	Very compliant	27,1	13,9	20,3	13,8	6
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	75,2		27,1	13,9	20,3	13,8	
Italy	72,3	Very compliant	26,5	13,0	19,3	13,6	18
Sapienza University of Rome	72,3		26,5	13,0	19,3	13,6	
France	71,4	Very compliant	26,0	13,0	19,1	13,3	13
Aix-Marseille University	73,4	Very compliant	26,7	13,0	19,8	13,8	7
University of Lille	69,5	Quite compliant	25,4	13,0	18,4	12,7	6
Romania	69,2	Quite compliant	25,5	12,4	17,7	13,5	8
University of Bucharest	69,2		25,5	12,4	17,7	13,5	
Belgium	68,4	Quite compliant	24,8	7,0	21,6	15,0	1
Université Libre de Bruxelles	68,4		24,8	7,0	21,6	15,0	
Spain	68,3	Quite compliant	25,4	12,0	17,7	13,2	8

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	68,3		25,4	12,0	17,7	13,2	
Germany	46,9	Not very compliant	21,9	7,0	12,5	5,5	1
University of Tübingen	46,9		21,9	7,0	12,5	5,5	
Neurotech- European University of brain and technology	76,9	Very compliant	27,4	14,1	21,3	14,0	3
Sweden	78,4	Very compliant	30,1	13,0	21,3	14,0	2
Spain	85,4	Very compliant	31,0	13,0	27,4	14,0	1
UNITA- Universitas Montium	70,6	Very compliant	25,7	13,4	18,1	13,4	7
Italy	72,4	Very compliant	25,7	10,7	20,3	15,8	3
France	82,3	Very compliant	27,5	16,0	23,8	15,0	1
Romania	64,2	Not very compliant	23,0	9,5	15,7	16,0	2
Spain	67,6	Not very compliant	29,8	16,0	14,8	7,0	1
Total	73	Very compliant	26,6	12,9	19,8	13,7	95

3.2. SMARTT Survey

3.2.1. Description of the survey

The survey consists of fifty-four questions that offer multiple answers on a scale of five points, along with ten questions that are open-ended. The initial twelve questions, as well as the last two, cover general topics. Twenty-five questions are specifically designed to evaluate the participants' opinions about the EDL, based on seven pre-established meta-criteria: clarity, relevance, specificity, measurability, flexibility, readiness, and consistency. Within the survey, there are twenty-six multiple-answer questions that relate to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework, distributed as follows: six questions about Attitude (AT), six about Subjective Norms (SN), nine about Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), and five about Utilization Intention (UI).

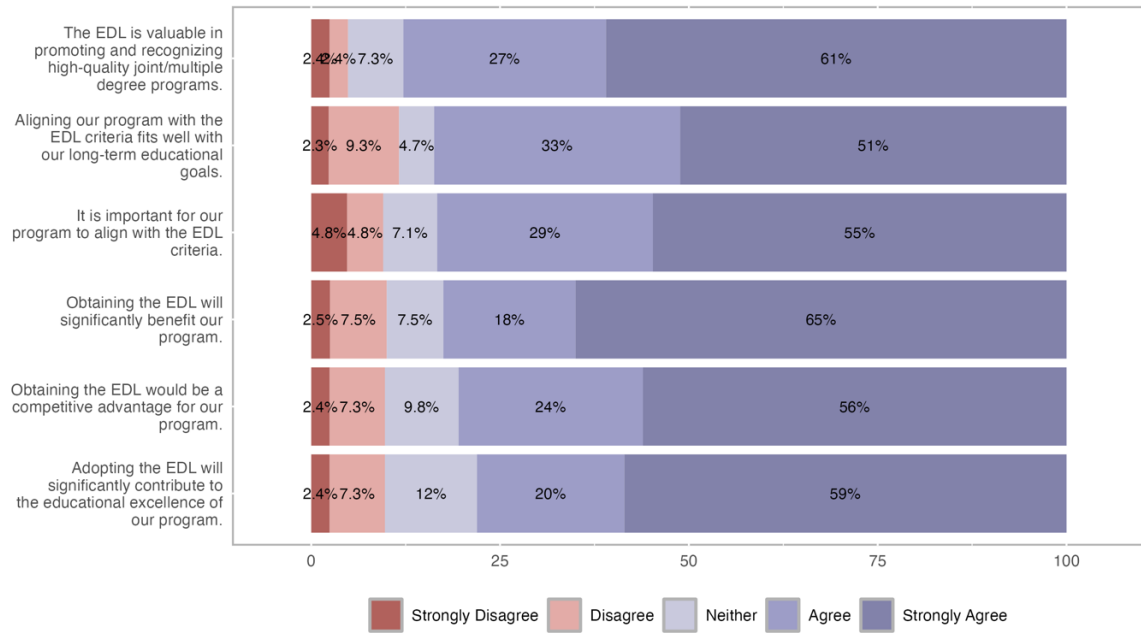
The survey was administered from December 2023 to February 2024 to representatives (academic and administrative staff) of ninety-five double, multiple and joint programmes from fourteen HEIs part of CIVIS and from the project's partner alliances, selected through an initial mapping of the CIVIS and partners' programmes based on the EDL criteria. The questionnaire yielded sixty-four responses. Of these, fifty-two were deemed complete and subsequently incorporated into the final dataset for analysis. The results are based on responses from ten European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK), reflecting the perspective of twenty-six coordinating universities and of fifty programmes, comprising more than one hundred partner universities from all across the world.

The survey was distributed electronically using SoSci Survey, a platform that ensures data privacy and ease of access for respondents. In conducting this research, ethical considerations were addressed, such as informed consent, confidentiality, data protection and voluntary participation.

3.2.2. Results of the SMARTT survey

Participants in the survey were asked to express their level of agreement with each statement on a scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

1. Attitudes



The EDL is widely regarded as instrumental in enhancing and acknowledging the quality of collaborative degree programs. Survey data reveals that a significant majority, 61%, strongly agree with this statement that the EDL is valuable in promoting and recognizing high-quality joint/multiple degree programmes, while 27% agree. A similar positive sentiment is evident when considering the alignment of the EDL with long-term educational objectives; 33% agree and a substantial 51% strongly agree that the EDL's criteria are in harmony with their programs' goals.

The importance of adhering to the EDL criteria is also emphasized, with 29% in agreement and a notable 55% expressing strong agreement, suggesting that meeting these criteria is seen as a priority for many. This perspective is further reinforced by the view that securing the EDL would be greatly beneficial, with 18% agreeing and 65% strongly agreeing, indicating a belief in the significant advantages it could offer.

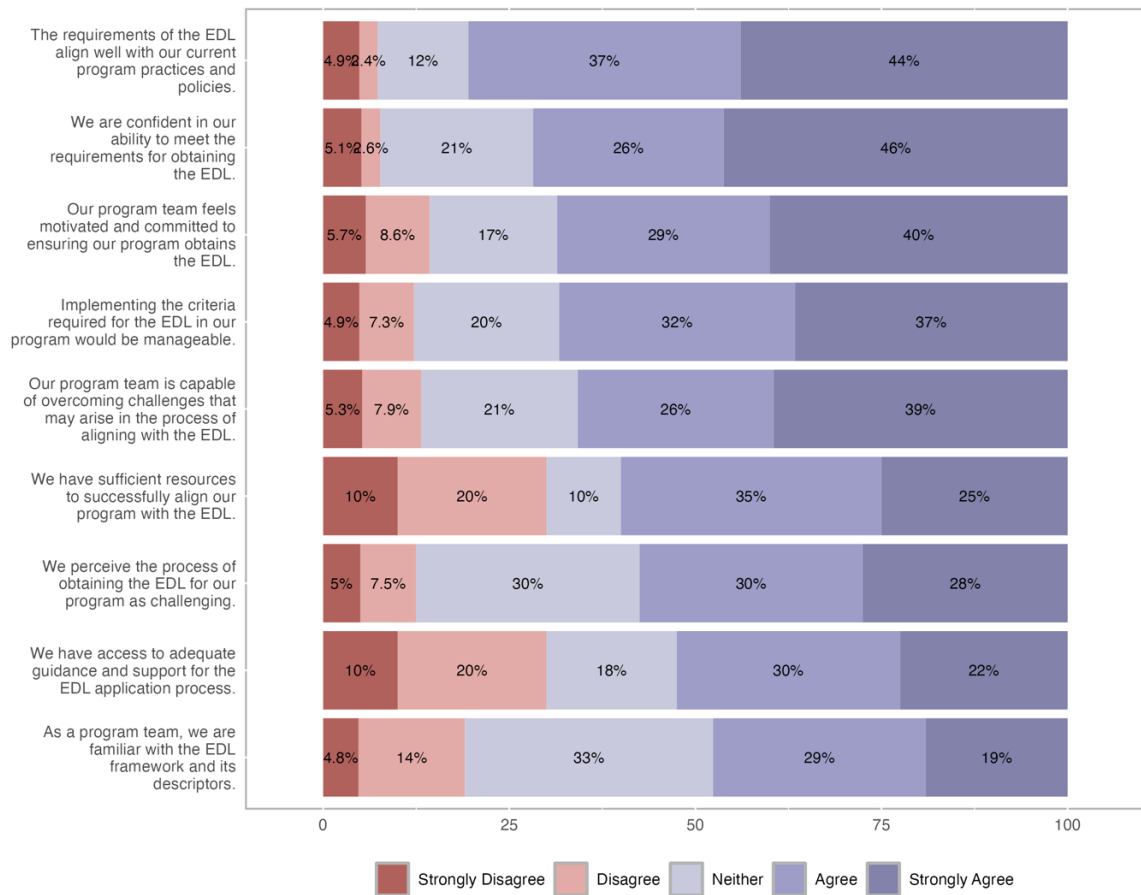
Competitive advantage is another key consideration; 24% agree and 56% strongly believe that having the EDL would set their program apart from others, highlighting the perceived strategic benefit in a competitive educational landscape.

Lastly, the role of the EDL in fostering educational excellence is also acknowledged, with 20% agreeing and 59% strongly agreeing that adopting the EDL will enhance their program's quality. This response underscores a widespread expectation that the EDL's adoption will drive educational improvement.

There is a level of neutrality ("Neither") for some statements, especially for the competitive advantage and educational excellence contributions, which may indicate some uncertainty or lack of information about the specific outcomes of adopting the EDL. The overall sentiment from this data suggests that the surveyed group believes that the EDL is beneficial, aligns with long-term goals, and is important for the program's success. However, there is a slight hesitation or uncertainty about its role in competitive advantage and promotion of educational excellence, which may require further exploration or information dissemination.

2. Perceived control





The survey results indicate that the EDL resonates well with the current practices and policies of existing programmes, with a notable majority of 81% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this alignment. Confidence in the ability to meet the EDL requirements is also high, as reflected by 72% of respondents who are either confident or very confident in their ability to comply with these requirements.

There appears to be a sense of motivation and commitment, with 69% feeling driven to ensure the program achieves the EDL. The practicality of implementing the EDL's criteria is acknowledged by 69% of the respondents, who believe it would be manageable within the context of their program.

The respondents' capability to handle potential challenges associated with aligning with the EDL is also a point of confidence, with 65% feeling capable of addressing any issues that may arise. However, perceptions about the sufficiency of resources for alignment show a more mixed view, with 60% agreeing they have what's needed, yet a considerable 30% expressing neutrality or doubt.

The complexity of obtaining the EDL is perceived variably, with an even split between those who find it challenging and those who don't, and a significant 30% remaining neutral. Regarding the accessibility of guidance and support during the application process, responses are more diverse, with 52% agreeing that adequate assistance is available, but another 30% expressing neutrality or lack of familiarity with available support.

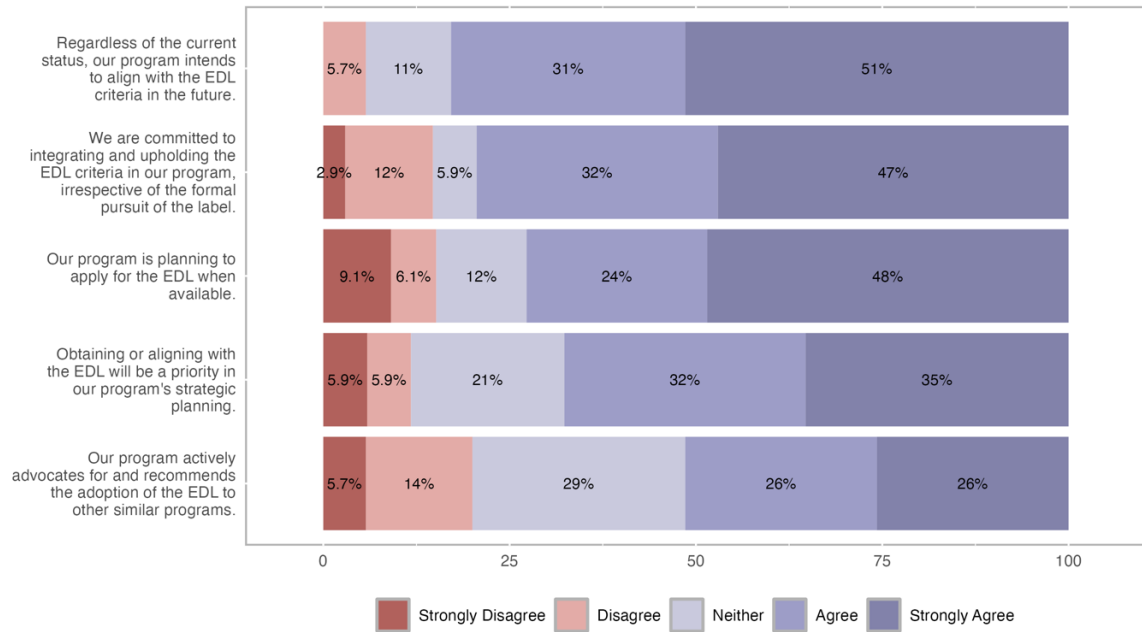
Lastly, familiarity with the EDL framework itself is somewhat less assured, with 48% indicating they know it well, while a third of respondents do not feel as well acquainted with the framework and its descriptors.

In summary, while there is a strong belief in the compatibility of the EDL with the program and a general confidence in meeting its criteria, views are more varied when it comes to resource



sufficiency, the perceived challenge of obtaining the EDL, and familiarity with the EDL framework. This suggests a need for further engagement and resource planning to ensure the respondents feels fully prepared and supported in the process of aligning with the EDL.

3. Intent of Use



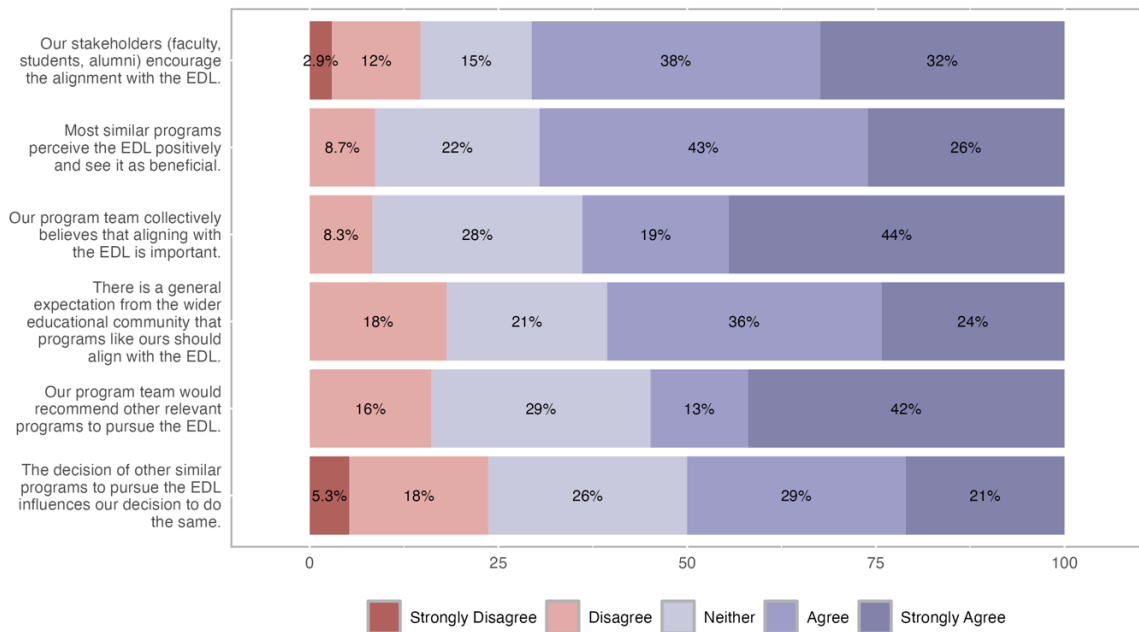
The collective responses indicate a forward-looking stance toward aligning with the EDL criteria in the future, with the majority of the respondents (82%) indicating agreement or strong agreement to this. Additionally, there is a pronounced dedication to not just integrating but also maintaining the EDL standards within existing programmes, as evidenced by 79% of participants expressing agreement or strong agreement, regardless of whether there is a formal label to be achieved.

In terms of actionable steps, a significant proportion of the program (72%) is gearing up to apply for the EDL as soon as it becomes possible, reflecting a proactive approach. This intent is further underlined by the strategic planning aspect, where 67% of responses show an agreement or strong agreement that pursuing or aligning with the EDL is a strategic priority, although 21% of respondents remain neutral, suggesting some hesitation or competing priorities.

Moreover, there is a balanced perspective on advocacy for the EDL, with 52% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would recommend the EDL to their peers. However, a relatively high 29% of respondents have not taken a definitive stance on advocacy, which could indicate a cautious approach to recommending the EDL before fully realizing its benefits within their own program.

4. Subjective norms





Respondents appear to be largely supportive of their programme’s alignment with the EDL, with 70% in agreement or strong agreement, although a small fraction of 15% remain neutral. When looking at the wider landscape, most programmes view the EDL in a positive light and acknowledge its benefits, with 69% expressing their agreement or strong agreement. However, there is a significant portion of 30.7% who disagree or strongly disagree, showing some disparity in perception.

There appears to be a shared sense of the importance of aligning with the EDL—63% agree and strongly agree. However, a combined 36.3% either disagree or are undecided, indicating some debate on the issue.

The sentiment within the broader community seems to lean towards an expectation that programmes should align with the EDL, with 60% in agreement. Still, a fair amount of disagreement and neutrality exists, hinting at a diversity of opinions on this topic.

As for advocating the EDL to other programs, respondents are somewhat divided; 55% would recommend it, but a significant number either are neutral (29%) or feel disagreement (16%), suggesting that while there is support, it's not without its reservations.

Lastly, the decision-making regarding the EDL is somewhat influenced by the actions of other programmes, with 50% of respondents saying that their peers' pursuit of the EDL has an impact on their own decisions. Yet, a notable 26% remain neutral, indicating that while there is some peer influence, it is not the sole determinant in the decision to align with the EDL.

Going back to the theoretical framework, Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that an individual's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior, which is itself influenced by three components: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Focusing on the analysis of these components, the results of the survey indicate the following:

Attitudes Toward the Behavior (Alignment with the EDL):



- **Positive attitudes:** The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that stakeholders encourage alignment with the EDL, respondents perceive the EDL positively and they believe aligning with the EDL is important. This suggests a positive attitude towards the behavior of aligning with the EDL.
- **Negative attitudes:** However, there are segments of respondents who disagree or are neutral, indicating not all share this positive attitude, which could influence the overall intention to align with the EDL.

Subjective Norms (Social Pressure to Align with the EDL):

- **Perceived social pressure:** The mixed responses to the expectation from the wider community and the influence of decisions by similar programmes reflect variability in subjective norms. While there is some recognition of a general expectation to align and some degree of peer influence, the significant neutrality and disagreement suggests that subjective norms may not be uniformly strong across the respondent group.
- **Internal norms:** The respondents' collective belief in the importance of the EDL and their willingness to recommend the EDL to others suggest that internal subjective norms are fairly strong, although not unanimous.

Perceived Behavioral Control (Perceived ease or difficulty of aligning with the EDL):

- **Resource availability:** Responses indicated some concern about the sufficiency of resources and guidance for aligning with the EDL, which could negatively impact perceived behavioral control.
- **Capability and manageability:** The self-belief in respondents' capability to overcome challenges and the manageability of implementing EDL criteria indicates a positive perception of behavioral control.

Intent of Use

- **Intention to align with the EDL:** The intention is generally strong, as seen in the responses indicating plans to align with or apply for the EDL. According to TPB, this intention is the most immediate predictor of behavior, suggesting a high likelihood that the programmes will follow through with the alignment.
- **Behavioral achievement:** The TPB posits that the stronger the intention and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the more likely the behavior will be performed. The mixed perceptions of behavioral control could, therefore, introduce some variability in whether the intention translates into action.

The analysis suggests that while attitudes toward aligning with the EDL are generally positive and intentions are strong, subjective norms are mixed, and perceived behavioral control varies, which could affect the translation of intentions into actual alignment with the EDL. To increase the likelihood of alignment, the program may need to address the areas of perceived insufficiency in resources and guidance, reinforce the positive attitudes, and work towards a stronger consensus within the program team and the wider CIVIS community, including programmes of partner alliances.

In order to provide a more comprehensive analysis within this framework, we employed a linear regression model, operationalizing the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by examining the roles of attitudes (AT), perceived behavioural control (PBC), and subjective norms (SN). The model was

estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, with the intention to use the EDL as the dependent variable and attitudes, control, and norms as independent variables. The specified model is $\text{intention} \sim \text{attitudes} + \text{control} + \text{norms}$.

The analysis revealed that the model significantly predicts the intention to use the European Degree Label, explaining a substantial proportion of variance in intentions ($R^2 = 0.72$, $F(3, 35) = 30.27$, $p < .001$).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals for the TPB variables (in EDL context)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Attitudes Toward Adoption	4.26	0.99			
2. Perceived Behavioural Control	3.63	0.96	.68** [.47, .81]		
3. Subjective Norms	3.75	0.94	.63** [.40, .78]	.66** [.44, .80]	
4. Intention of Use	3.90	1.12	.74** [.56, .86]	.71** [.51, .84]	.67** [.45, .81]

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Response range is: 1 – 5. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

The effects of the TPB components on intention were as follows:

Attitudes: There is a significant and positive relationship between attitudes towards the European Degree Label and the intention to use it ($\beta = 0.34$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.60], $t(35) = 2.65$, $p = 0.012$). The standardized beta coefficient (Std. $\beta = 0.34$) confirms the strength of this relationship, indicating that more favourable attitudes are associated with stronger intentions to use the Label.

Perceived Behavioural Control: Similarly, perceived control over using the European Degree Label shows a significant and positive effect on intention ($\beta = 0.52$, 95% CI [0.22, 0.83], $t(35) = 3.51$, $p = 0.001$). The standardized beta (Std. $\beta = 0.46$) underscores the importance of perceived control,

suggesting that individuals who feel more capable of using the label are more likely to intend to do so.

Subjective Norms: The influence of subjective norms on intention, while positive, did not reach statistical significance (beta = 0.17, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.44], $t(35) = 1.30$, $p = 0.204$). The standardized beta (Std. beta = 0.16) suggests a modest, non-significant trend. The effect of subjective norms may be more nuanced and could also be influenced by other variables.

Prediction of the intention of EDL use with the TPB components.

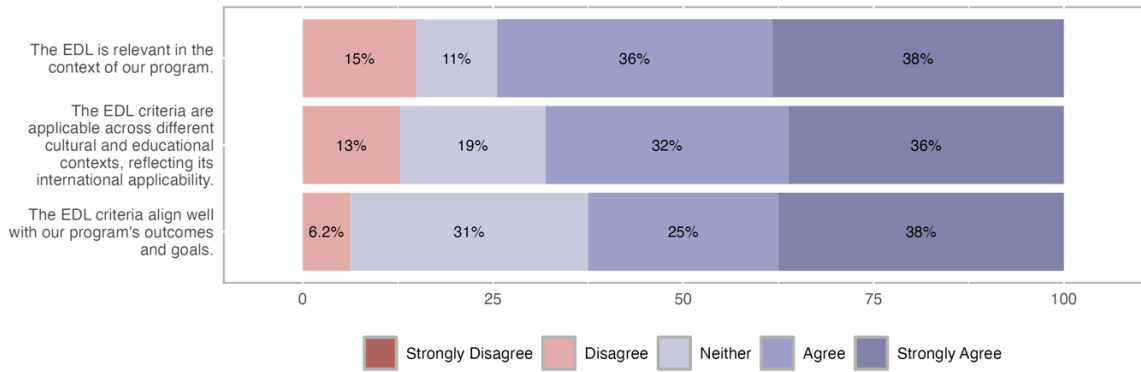
Predictor	<i>b</i>		<i>beta</i>		<i>sr</i> ²		<i>r</i>	Fit
	<i>b</i>	95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> ²	95% CI [LL, UL]		
(Intercept)	-0.04	[-0.92, 0.84]						
Attitudes	0.34*	[0.08, 0.60]	0.34	[0.08, 0.59]	.06	[-.03, .14]	.74**	
Control	0.52**	[0.22, 0.83]	0.46	[0.19, 0.73]	.10	[-.01, .21]	.79**	
Subjective Norms	0.17	[-0.10, 0.44]	0.16	[-0.09, 0.41]	.01	[-.03, .05]	.67**	
								$R^2 = .722^{**}$
								95% CI[.51,.80]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Based on the meta-criteria established to analyze the data, the report will now focus on Relevance, Specificity, Measurability, Flexibility, and Consistency.

5. Relevance





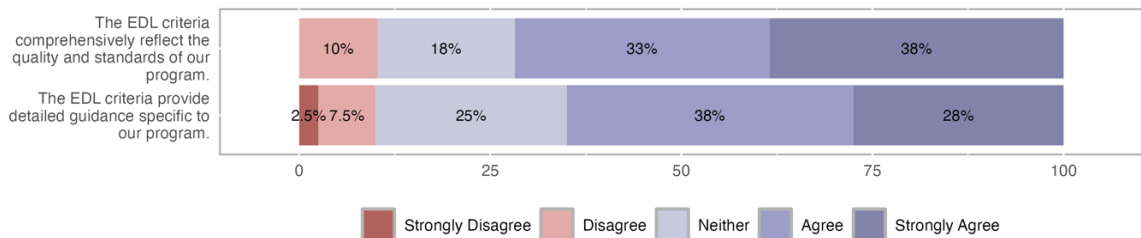
In considering the relevance of the EDL, opinions are somewhat mixed. While a combined 74% of respondents agree that the EDL is relevant, 15% express disagreement, and 11% remain undecided, suggesting some ambiguity or variance in how the EDL's relevance is perceived within their programmes' context.

When it comes to the applicability of the EDL criteria across various cultural and educational settings, which would speak to its international relevance, the responses are similarly divided. Thirty-six percent strongly agree and 32% agree with the applicability, indicating recognition of the EDL's global potential. However, thirteen percent disagree, highlighting there are reservations about the EDL's universal suitability.

Regarding the alignment of the EDL criteria with their programmes' specific outcomes and goals, 63% of respondents recognize this alignment, 31% remain neutral, while 6.2% disagree. This spread of perspectives suggests that there is a balance between those who see the EDL as aligned with the programmes' direction and those who do not (or are neutral), with a noteworthy segment of respondents indicating agreement in relation to this alignment.

The overall sentiment suggests that the respondents are split in their views of the EDL's relevance, applicability, and alignment with the programmes' goals and outcomes. The substantial neutral responses in all categories indicate uncertainty or a lack of information, which could be an area for the EDL to address through more detailed communication about how the EDL criteria might be integrated and beneficial to the programmes' unique contexts. While there are positive perceptions of the EDL, significant work may be needed to build consensus around its adoption.

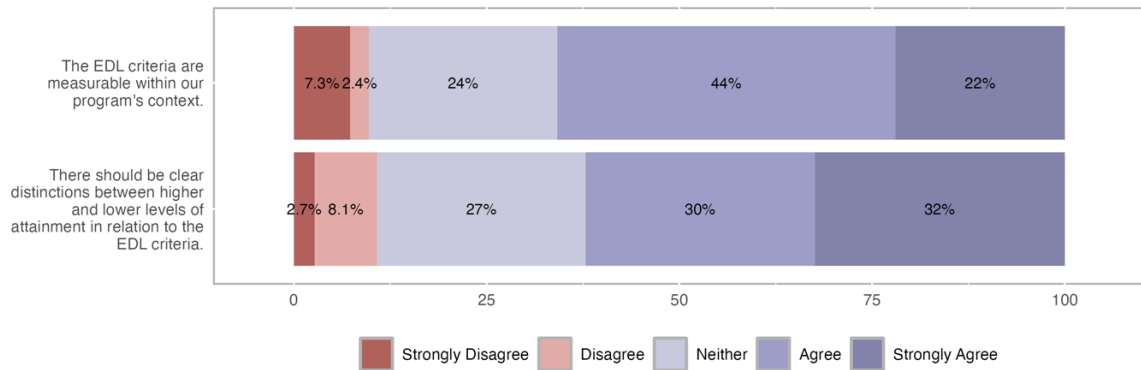
6. Specificity



The responses reveal nuanced perspectives on the EDL criteria's relevance and utility to the programmes. When asked if the EDL criteria adequately reflect the quality and standards, opinions are quite spread out. A total of 71% of respondents feel that the EDL criteria do indeed capture the essence of the programmes' quality and standards, while 10% express disagreement, and a significant 18% remain neutral, indicating that there's some amount of ambivalence or uncertainty about how well the EDL criteria represent the programmes' quality and standards comprehensively.

On the matter of the EDL criteria providing detailed, program-specific guidance, the responses are more favorable. Sixty-six percent of the participants agree or strongly agree that the EDL offers detailed guidance applicable to their programmes, suggesting a recognition of its utility in providing direction. This contrasts with a smaller segment of 10% who disagree with this view and 25% who remain neutral. The more positive reception to the EDL's guidance capabilities suggests that, despite some reservations about its comprehensive reflection of program standards and quality, there is an appreciation for the detailed and specific guidance it provides.

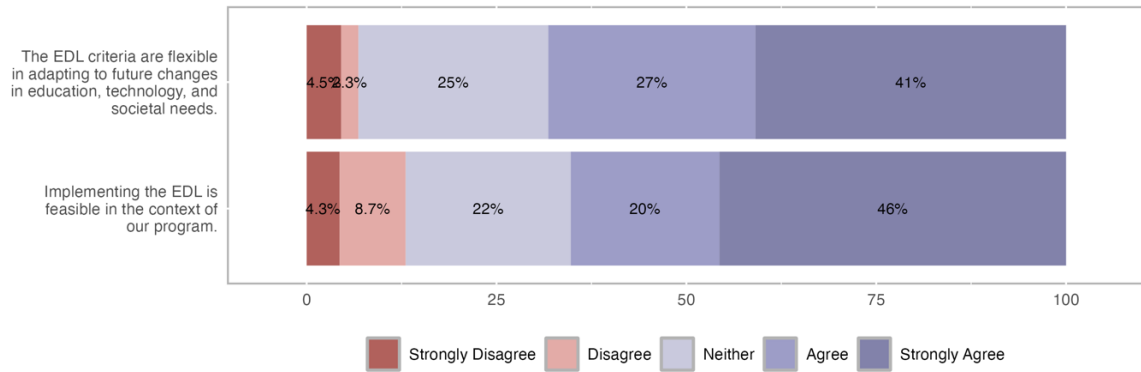
7. Measurability



In assessing the adaptability of the EDL criteria to their programmes, a notable majority of respondents—66%—view these criteria as measurable within their context. This group includes 44% who agree and 22% who strongly agree, suggesting a confidence in the program's ability to quantify adherence to the EDL standards. However, there's a segment of the responses, 7.3%, that strongly disagrees, accompanied by a modest 2.4% in disagreement and a significant 24% remaining neutral, indicating some reservations or uncertainties about the measurability of these criteria.

Furthermore, the survey highlights a strong sentiment for the need for clarity in differentiating levels of achievement regarding the EDL criteria. A combined 62% of participants believe there should be distinct tiers of attainment, with 32% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing, underscoring a desire for a well-defined framework that distinguishes varying degrees of compliance or excellence. Conversely, a smaller portion of respondents expresses skepticism, with 2.7% strongly disagreeing and 8.1% disagreeing with the need for such distinctions. Meanwhile, 27% of respondents have not formed a definitive view on this issue, suggesting that while there is a consensus on the importance of clear benchmarks, there's still a dialogue to be had about how these distinctions are implemented or understood.

8. Flexibility

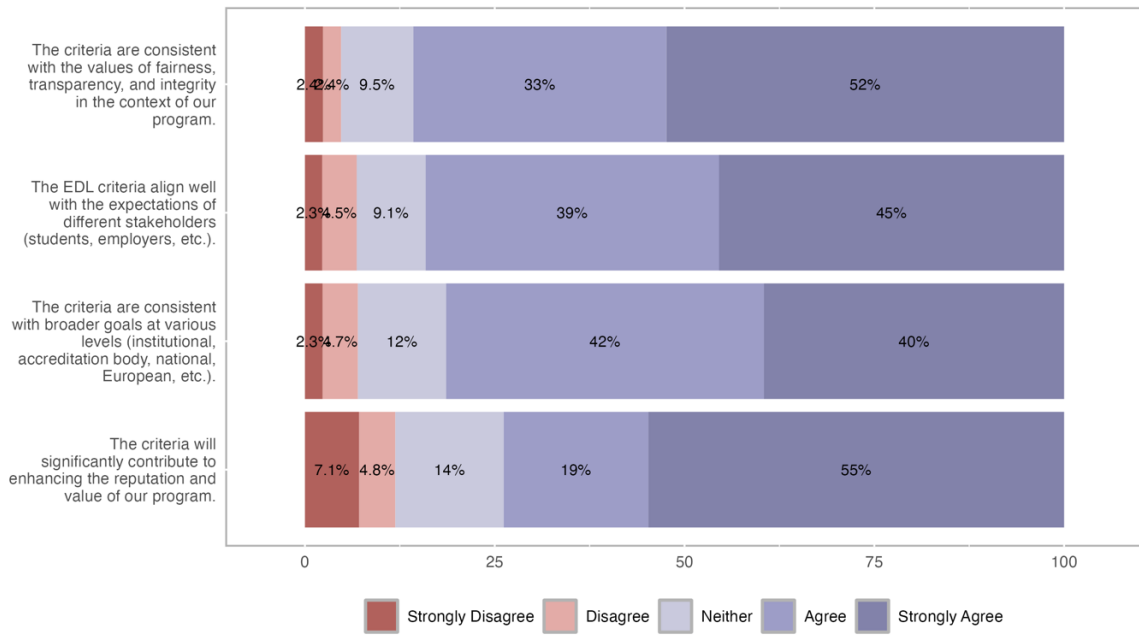


The view on the EDL criteria suggests a strong belief in their adaptability and relevance to future developments in education, technology, and societal shifts. A significant 68% of respondents are optimistic about the EDL criteria's flexibility, with 41% strongly agreeing and 27% agreeing that these standards can evolve in response to changing demands. However, a portion remains undecided, with 25% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, indicating some uncertainty or a wait-and-see attitude towards how the EDL will adapt over time. Only a small minority express outright skepticism, with 4.5% strongly disagreeing and 2.3% disagreeing with the criteria's adaptability.

When it comes to the practicality of implementing the EDL, the sentiment is also predominantly positive. A majority of 66% consider it feasible to integrate the EDL standards into their operations, including a notable 46% who strongly believe in the feasibility of this endeavor. This confidence is tempered by a significant 22% of respondents who remain on the fence, highlighting some reservations or potential challenges perceived in the implementation process. Meanwhile, the opposition to this view is relatively modest, with 4.3% strongly disagreeing and 8.7% disagreeing that implementing the EDL is a practical goal for our program.

In summary, the consensus points towards an acknowledgment of the EDL's potential to remain relevant and adaptable to future educational trends and the feasibility of its integration into existing programmes, albeit with an undercurrent of cautious optimism and acknowledged challenges that need to be addressed.

9. Consistency



The survey results provide insightful reflections on how the EDL criteria resonate within existing programmes, touching upon fundamental values, stakeholder expectations, alignment with broader educational goals, and the potential impact on the programmes’ reputation and value.

A majority of respondents, totaling 85%, agree that the EDL criteria uphold the values of fairness, transparency, and integrity within the context of their programmes, with 52% strongly affirming this stance. This reflects a positive reception towards the ethical foundation of the EDL, despite a 9.5% of participants remaining neutral and approximately 5% expressing disagreement, indicating some uncertainty or need for further clarification on how these values are consistently applied.

When considering the alignment of the EDL criteria with the expectations of various stakeholders, including students and employers, there's a general consensus with 84% in agreement or strong agreement. However, 9.1% of respondents have not definitively sided, suggesting that while there's recognition of the EDL's relevance to stakeholder needs, the extent of this alignment might still be up for discussion or not fully realized by all parties involved.

In terms of consistency with broader educational and institutional goals—spanning local to international scopes—a compelling 82% of participants acknowledge this alignment, showcasing a strong belief in the EDL's capability to integrate with and support overarching educational objectives. This indicates a widespread view of the EDL as a beneficial framework conducive to fulfilling broader educational mandates and aspirations.

Lastly, the potential of the EDL criteria to significantly enhance the program's reputation and value is met with an enthusiastic response, with 74% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This underscores a strong belief in the transformative power of the EDL, seen as a catalyst for elevating the programmes’ standing and perceived value within the educational community, despite a quarter of respondents expressing dissent (11.9%) or neutrality (14%).

Overall, these responses underscore a broad endorsement of the EDL's principles and its perceived benefits, from aligning with core values and meeting stakeholder expectations to contributing to broader educational goals and enhancing the programmes’ reputation. Yet, the presence of neutral

responses across these areas signals a need for ongoing dialogue and perhaps more information to fully harness the EDL's potential and address any uncertainties within our community.

Drawing on these results, it appears that there is a **general positive perception of the EDL**: there is a clear trend across the responses indicating that stakeholders view the EDL positively. They believe it is beneficial and that alignment with the EDL criteria could enhance the programmes' reputation and value. There is also a **strong belief in the EDL's relevance and applicability**: respondents generally agree that the EDL criteria are relevant, flexible, and adaptable to future changes in the educational landscape, which suggests confidence in the EDL's durability and relevance over time. Overall, there appears to be **consensus on the EDL's strategic importance**: the majority of respondents see the alignment with the EDL as a strategic priority and believe that it fits well with long-term educational goals and provides a competitive advantage.

However, there are notable **levels of neutrality and some disagreement** concerning the measurability of the EDL criteria, their alignment with program outcomes, and the clarity of guidance provided by the EDL. This points to uncertainties and potential concerns about the implementation process and the evaluation of compliance with the EDL standards. While most respondents agree that the EDL criteria align with broader institutional and external goals and values, there is still an increased proportion of neutral responses that reflect ambivalence or lack of clarity about how these alignments manifest.

In preparation for the CIVIS recommendations deliverable, there are some intermediary recommendations that could be directly drawn from this analysis:

- Address the neutrality by providing more information about the EDL's goals, benefits, and the practicalities of its criteria. This could involve workshops, FAQs, or detailed guidance documents.
- Develop clear metrics and benchmarks for measuring compliance with EDL criteria and the programmes' progress towards EDL alignment, which can help reduce uncertainty.
- Engage more deeply with stakeholders to understand their expectations and to ensure the EDL criteria reflect the diversity of stakeholder needs, including students, faculty, and employers.
- Highlight successful case studies or scenarios where EDL alignment could (or has) positively impact(ed) similar programmes, to reinforce the perceived benefits and encourage broader support.
- Identify and address perceived barriers to EDL implementation, potentially through targeted support, resources, and guidance for different program areas.
- Ensure that EDL criteria remain relevant and beneficial through regular reviews and updates, incorporating feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.
- Foster internal advocacy by recognizing and rewarding efforts to align with the EDL, thus creating champions within the program who can influence others and support the alignment process.

3.3. SMARTT interviews and focus-groups

The discussions from focus groups and interviews with representatives of National Quality Assurance Agencies and of National Ministries of Education have yielded insightful perspectives on the awarding, criteria, and implementation of the EDL, as well as the role of quality assurance (QA) agencies and the European Approach in the context of joint degree programs.

EDL Awarding:

There is a consensus that entities like Quality Agencies and the European Commission are viewed as suitable for awarding the EDL. However, there are significant reservations about the idea of universities self-awarding the label, highlighting the importance of having clear criteria and a recognized authority to ensure compliance.

Criteria Recommendations:

Participants show a preference for refining the existing criteria, emphasizing the need for clarity and ease of measuring compliance, rather than increasing their number. A strong recommendation is for the criteria to foster the internalization of learning experiences across universities and countries. Moreover, student-centered teaching and learning, along with robust quality assurance arrangements, are pinpointed as critical criteria, with the latter deemed most crucial for the label's integrity. Collaboration among countries is also encouraged to enhance the educational experience.

Role of QA Agencies:

The validation of EDL criteria by national or regional quality assurance agencies, particularly those registered with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), is suggested. There's a clear preference for these agencies to take on the responsibility of issuing the EDL, emphasizing their proximity and relevance to higher education institutions.

European Approach:

The European Approach (EA) for joint programs receives positive feedback for its potential to facilitate the recognition of foreign joint degree programs, aligning with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). However, some feedback points to its complexity and the financial burden it imposes, calling for a possible revision to make it more accessible and efficient.

Reservations about EDL:

While the EDL is recognized for its potential value, there are voiced concerns about its necessity, given the existing frameworks like the EA, and the risk of complicating the accreditation landscape. Doubts are raised about the label's demand and its differentiation from existing programs. The possibility of creating a competitive rift between EDL-endorsed programs and traditional ones is also a concern, underscoring the need for careful consideration of the EDL's positioning and value proposition.

In summary, while there is support for the concept of the EDL and its potential to enhance educational quality and collaboration across borders, these discussions highlight the need for clear, measurable criteria, a trusted awarding body, and careful integration with existing quality assurance frameworks. Addressing the concerns and suggestions raised could help ensure that the

EDL effectively contributes to the advancement and recognition of joint degree programs in Europe.

Interviews from various quality assurance (QA) agencies and ministries across Europe reveals a diverse range of perspectives on the development and implementation of the EDL. These insights highlight the complexity of harmonizing educational standards while respecting national frameworks and the autonomy of higher education institutions.

Internationalization and Quality Assurance:

- Some stakeholders emphasize the importance of internationalization, suggesting that national or regional agencies, especially those registered with the European network, validate the EDL criteria. However, there are concerns about the complexity of the European Approach.
- Some stakeholders advocate for validation by national quality agencies and stresses student-centered teaching, suggesting mandatory criteria for the EDL.
- Some stakeholders call for a European-level solution to overcome national barriers and support the European Approach for joint program quality assurance, highlighting the need for clearer criteria distinctions.

Criteria clarity and accreditation concerns:

- Some stakeholders express concerns about self-awarding by universities and the additional burdens on accreditation processes. They call for clearer and more innovative learning criteria, with some advocating for a reduction rather than an expansion of criteria.
- Some stakeholders support the European Approach for quality assurance and stress the importance of internal quality assurance and collaboration among countries.

Label issuance and European Degree Label:

- Opinions vary on who should issue the EDL, with preferences ranging from national quality agencies to the European Commission. Some stakeholders suggest a European Quality Agency could be suitable for this role.
- There's a noted tension between national sovereignty and the flexibility required for the EDL.
- Some stakeholders acknowledge potential benefits in employability and the labor market.

Concerns about stratification and necessity:

- Some entities criticize the potential stratification effect of labels on the university system, while others question the necessity of an additional label, considering existing frameworks and accreditations.

Recommendations for implementation:

- Clear rules, stakeholder collaboration, and a balance between labeled and conventional programs are emphasized as critical for the successful implementation of the EDL.

- There's a call for clarity on the differences between the EDL and the European Approach, with a general preference for flexibility in criteria and caution against an extensive list of requirements.

In summary, while there is a general consensus on the value of the EDL in fostering internationalization and enhancing the quality of higher education in Europe, there are significant discussions around the criteria's clarity, the label's issuance, and the balance between national sovereignty and European integration. The feedback underscores the need for a collaborative, flexible approach that aligns with the diverse educational landscapes across Europe.

Students' perspective

Students view the EDL as a significant enhancer of their educational and career prospects, emphasizing the importance of internationalization, multilingualism, and exposure to diverse perspectives through joint programs. They value the integration of European values like inclusiveness and sustainability into their curriculum, seeing it as a means to foster mobility within the European Union and align with broader societal goals.

Added value of the EDL for students:

Students appreciate the EDL for its potential to equalize career opportunities and studies across countries, promoting a sense of unity and shared standards within European education. They highlight the empowerment that comes from multilingual education and the exposure to various cultural and intellectual viewpoints. Suggestions for incorporating micro-credentials on democratic values or European legislation indicate a desire for the EDL to not only facilitate academic and professional mobility but also to deepen understanding of European identity and values.

Recommendations to EDL criteria from students:

Students propose more practical and proactive approaches to internships within EDL programs, emphasizing the need for tangible skills and hands-on experience that align with labor market demands. They suggest that programs could offer guidance by providing lists of company profiles or internship opportunities, thus aiding students in making meaningful career connections. Transparency about the benefits of the EDL and joint programs is deemed crucial for attracting students and ensuring they are well-informed about their options. Additionally, including students in the quality assurance processes at national and European levels is seen as essential for capturing and incorporating student feedback into program evaluations and development.

In summary, students underscore the EDL's role in enhancing the educational landscape by fostering international competencies, practical skills, and a deepened understanding of European values. Their recommendations focus on ensuring that EDL criteria and joint programs are designed with a clear, practical benefit to students, highlighting the need for transparency, inclusivity, and direct engagement with the labor market. By addressing these aspects, the EDL can more effectively meet the needs and expectations of its student beneficiaries, thereby enriching the educational experience and outcomes of European joint programs.