

Micro-credentials and Bologna Key Commitments

**State of play in the European Higher Education
Area**



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MICROBOL QF & ECTS Working Group - 27/01/2021



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Context of the study and data collection

- **Aim of the survey:** gain a picture on the state-of-play on micro-credentials in different member states of the European Higher Education Area and encouraging national discussion
- **Target:** members of the BFUG as well as the nominated representatives in the MICROBOL working groups
- **Period:** 15 October 2020 to 25 November 2020
- **Respondents:** 34 countries participated in the survey

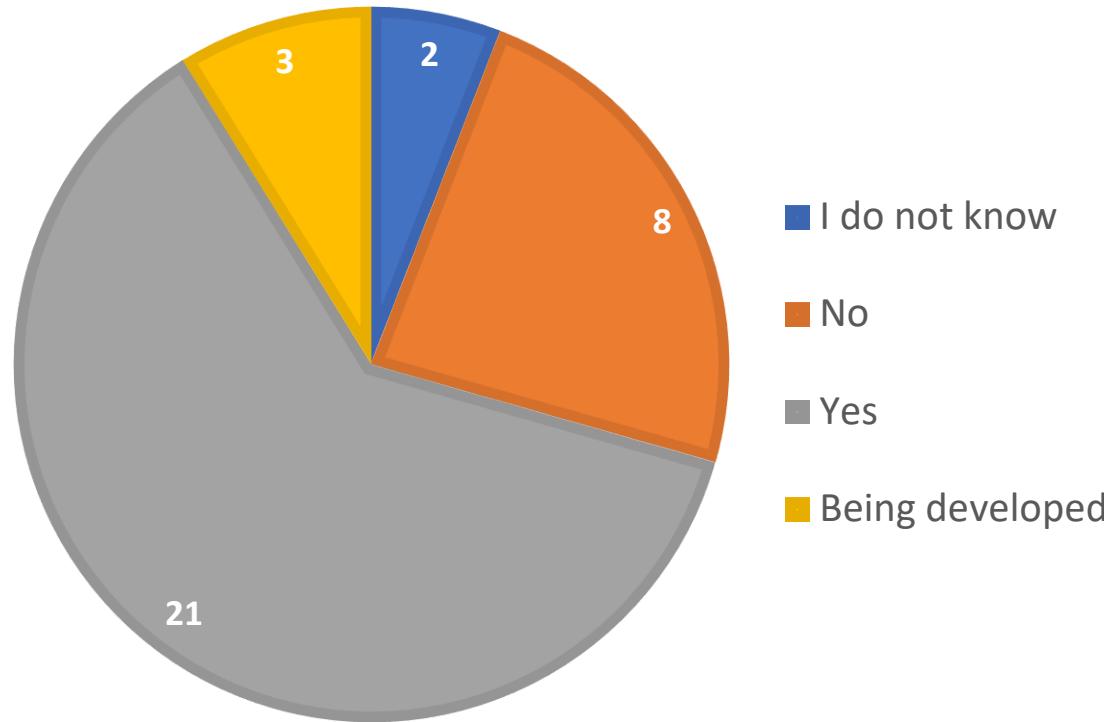


Section 1

Investigating the use of micro-credentials

- Overview of micro-credentials offered or being developed
- Regulation of micro-credentials at national level

Countries that offer or are developing micro-credentials



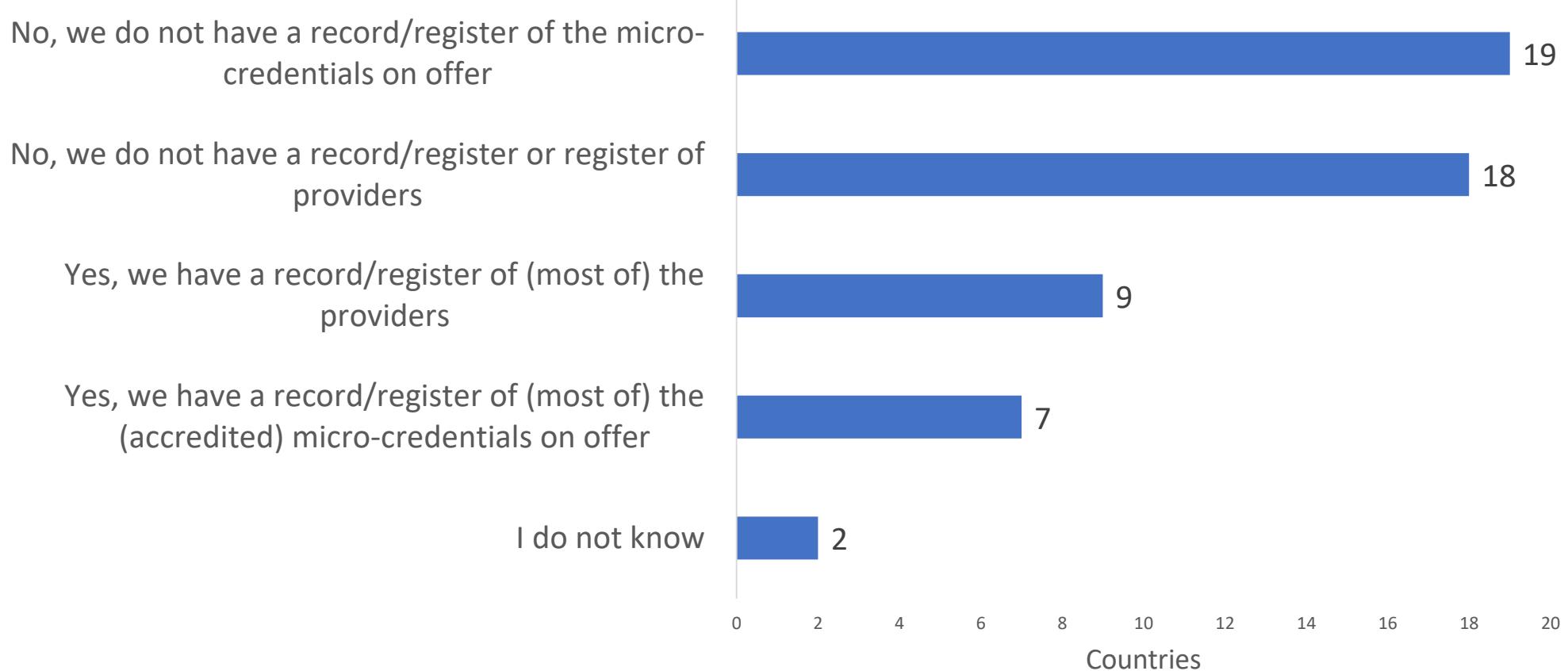
- Offered: 21 countries
- Being developed: 3 countries
- Not offered/being developed: 8 countries

Examples of micro-credentials offered/recognised by HEIs

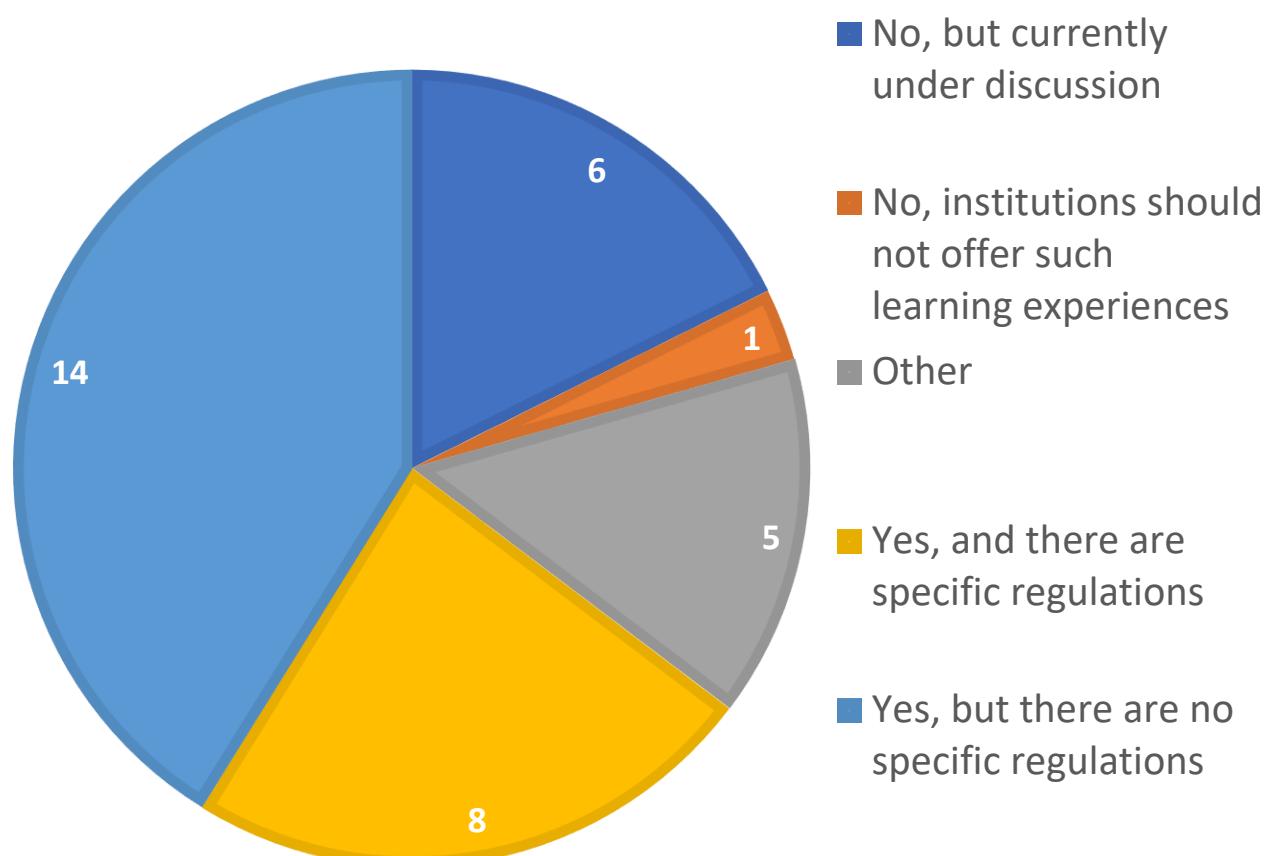
Modules/course units part of degree programmes (also online)	Special purpose awards	Postgraduate education	Modular units/ single courses (micro-degrees)	Specialisa... courses	Single courses module	Short program... and executive...	
				Further adult training	short lifelong programmes	Informal learning	Exit qualifica...
MOOCs	Supplementary additional courses	Supplemental award	Stackable modules	Postgraduate lifelong learning...	Digital credentials	Credit certification	Badg...
				Open studies			



Official record or register of micro-credentials and providers



Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (I)

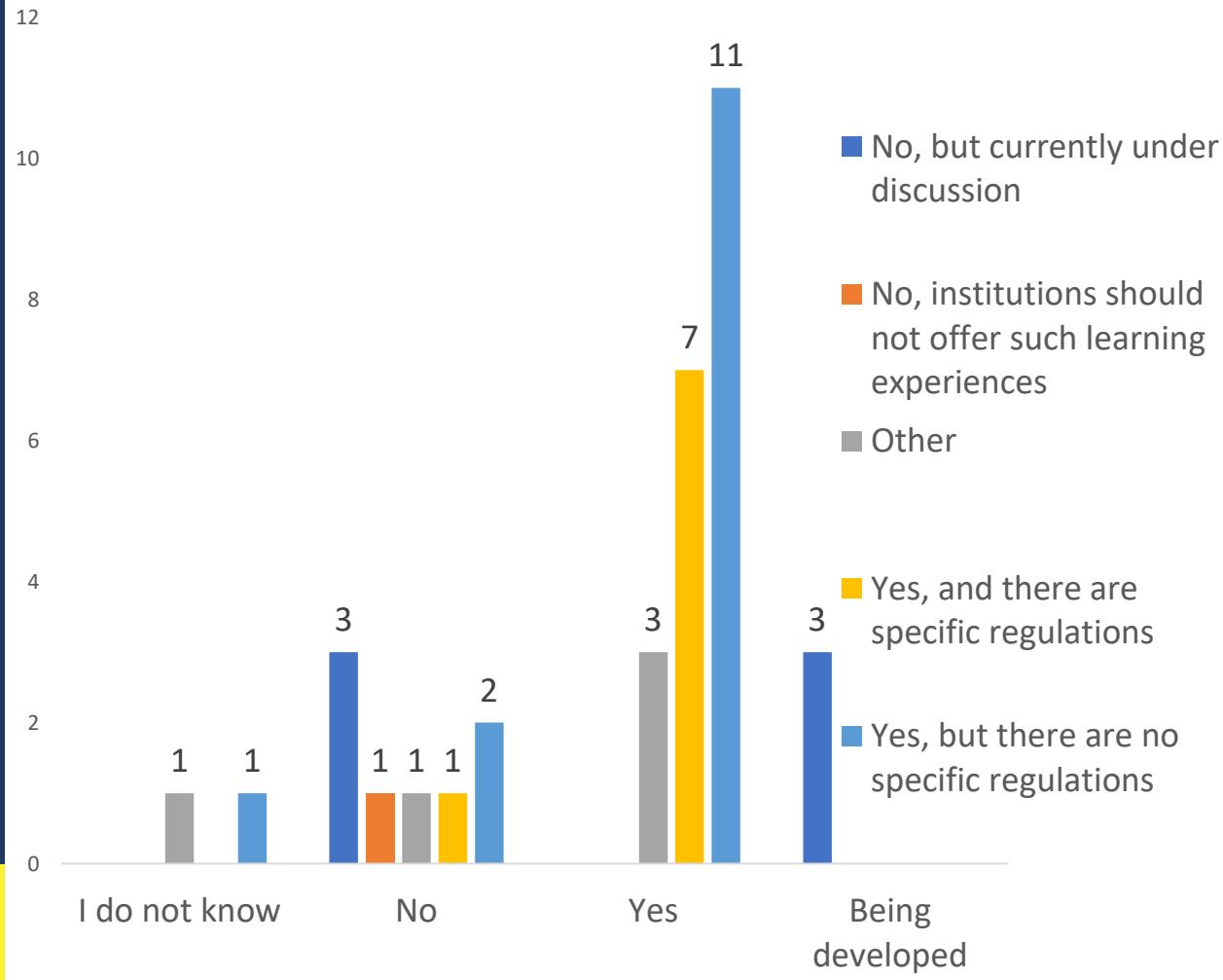


- Regulated/allowed at national level: 22 countries
 - Specific regulations: 8
 - No specific regulations: 14
- Under discussion: 6 countries
- Institutions should not offer MCs: 1 country

Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (II)

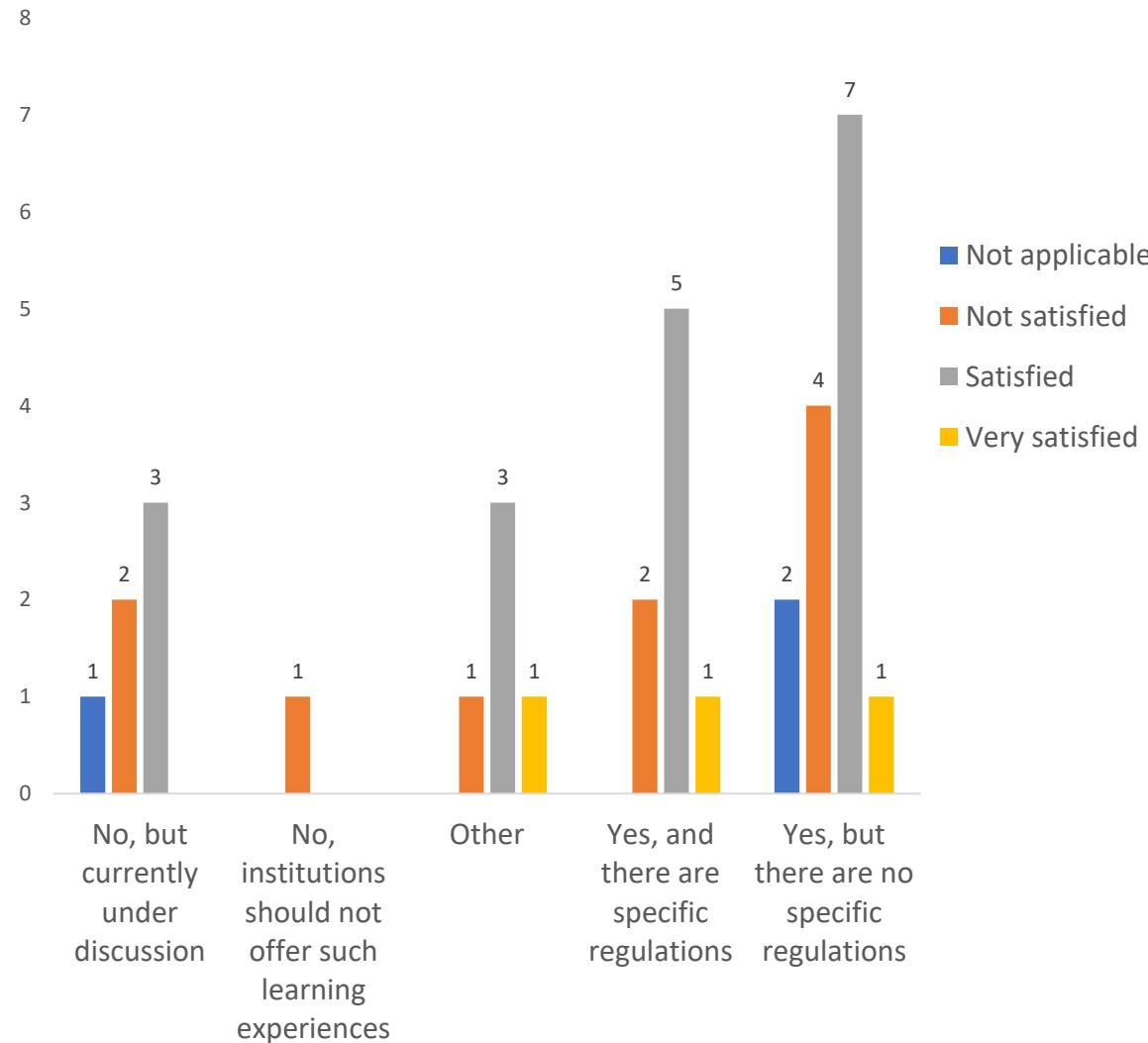
Answer	Details
No specific regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modular units/single courses within a study programme• Lifelong learning, further and adult education, general postgraduate education, continuing education, specialisation programmes• Recognition of prior learning (of non-formal learning)• Recognition of credits obtained in the framework of any credentials
Specific regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinction between degree and award• Regulations on adult education and lifelong learning• Elements that can correspond to MC<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A course unit within the framework of adult higher education• A course unit followed in single modules delivered by higher education institutions• “Continuing Education” programmes• Regulations on recognition of extra-curricular prior learning
Countries should not provide MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MC should be incorporated into legislation on lifelong learning and integrated into regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No provisions in the field• Lifelong learning provision

Cross analysis: micro-credentials offered/being developed and national legislation



- 21 countries offering MC
 - 11 Regulated at national level
 - 7 Specific regulations
 - 3 Under discussion
- 8 countries NOT offering MC
 - 3 Under discussion
 - 2 Regulated at national level
 - 1 Specific regulations
 - 1 Institutions should not offer MC
 - 1 Other

Cross analysis: regulation of micro-credentials and satisfaction with the current uptake



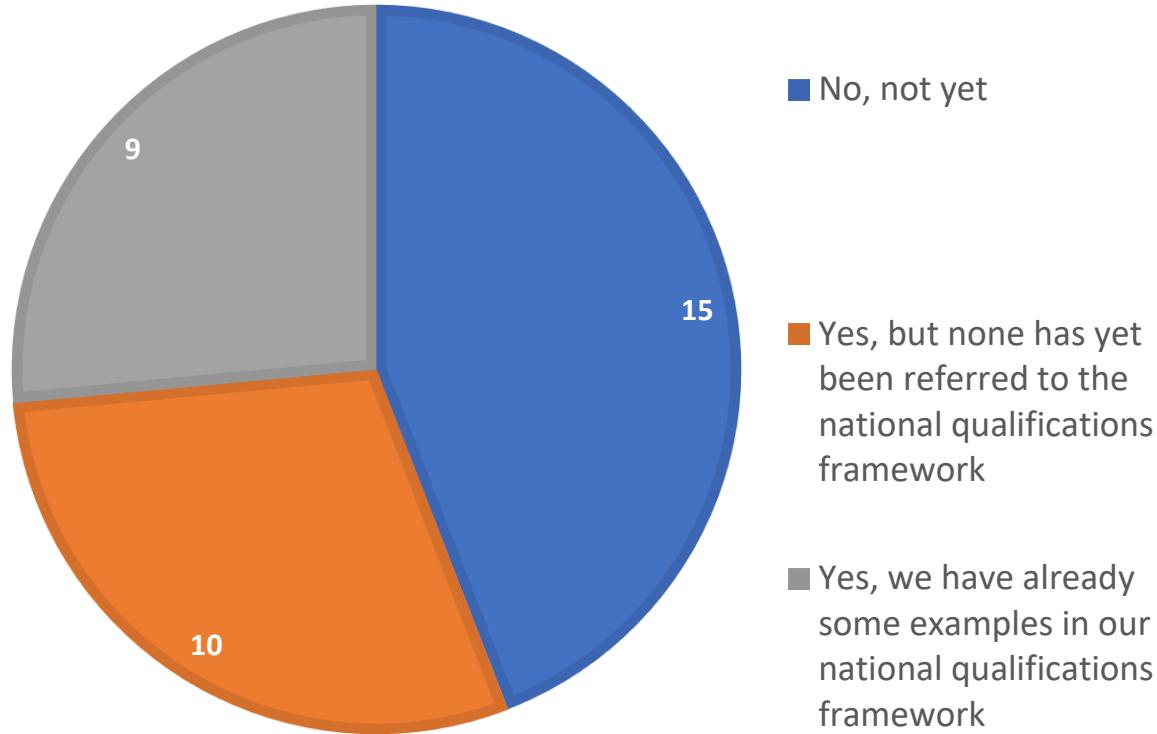
- Countries having regulations
 - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action
 - 2 very satisfied
 - 4 little interest
 - 2 not a national priority
- Countries in which regulation is under discussion
 - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action

Section 2

Applying Bologna tools to micro-credentials

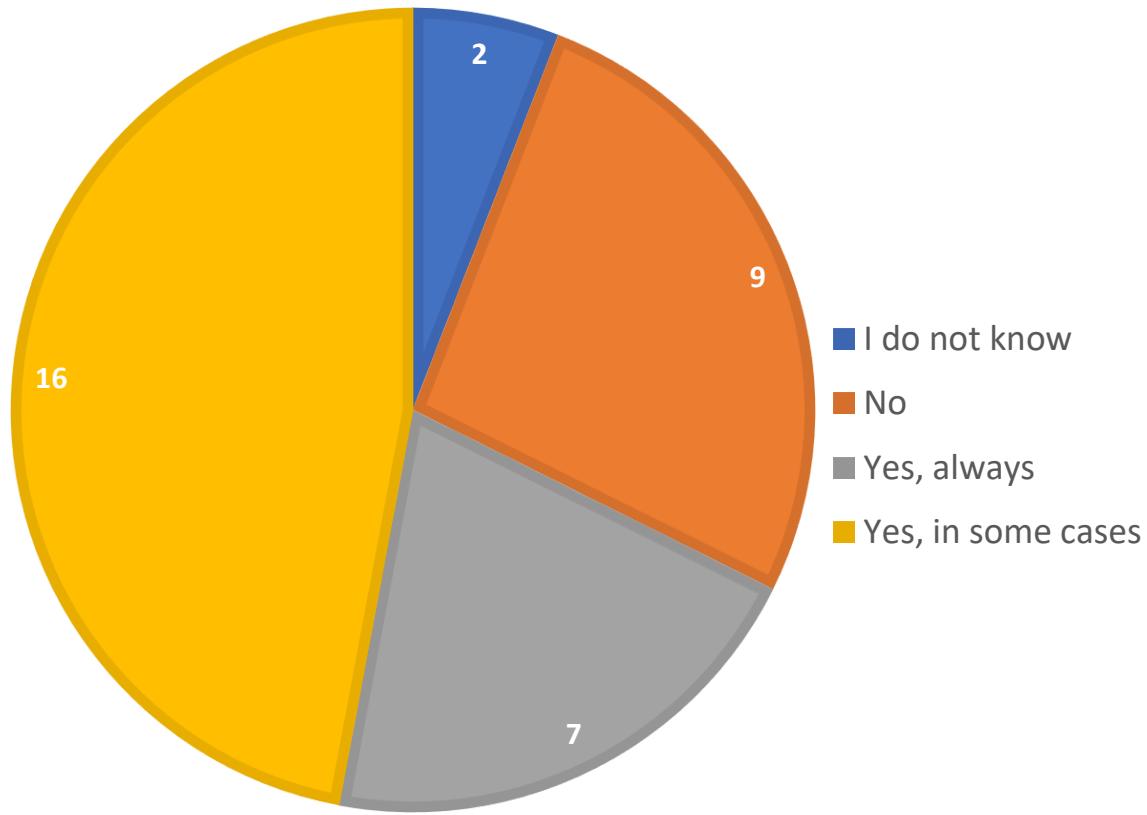
- QF & ECTS

National framework open to micro-credentials



- **Open to MCs:** 10 countries
 - At any level
 - 5, 6 and 7
 - 6
 - MCs awarded by HEIs can be referred to QF
 - Full degree referred to QF
 - Single module within a full degree (HEIs) can be referred to QF
- **Some examples of MCs referred to QF:** 9 countries
 - 1 to 7
 - 2 to 8
 - 2 to 7
 - 5 to 8
 - HE level
- **Not yet:** 15 countries

Micro-credential expressed in ECTS



- MCs expressed in ECTS in some cases

- 2-4-6 ECTS
- 4-6 ECTS
- Usually less than 10 ECTS
- 3-20 ECTS (module/single course within a full degree)
- 3-25 ECTS
- 20-50 ECTS
- 1-60 ECTS
- Maximum 30 ECTS
- Awarded by HEIs 13-30 ECTS (less frequently 0-6 ECTS. Continuing education 10 ECTS

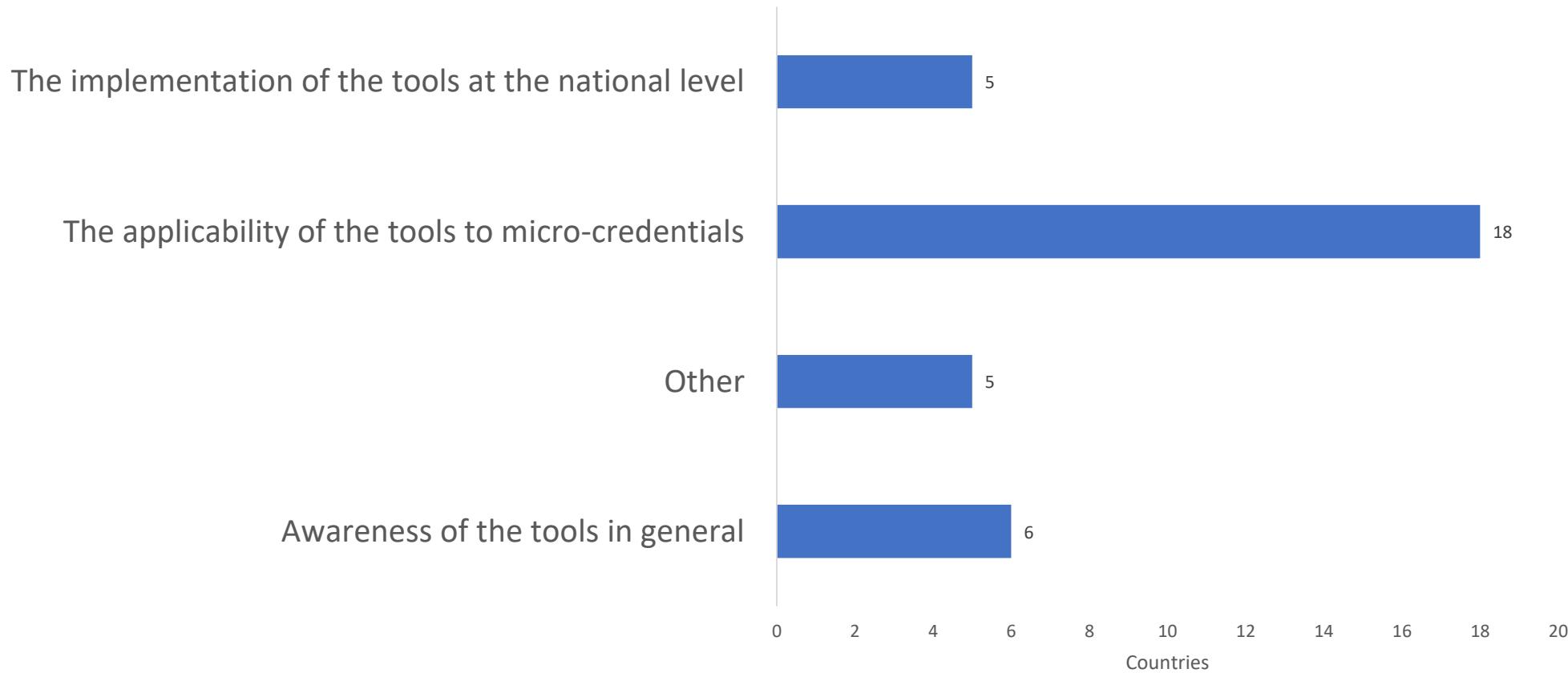
- MCs always expressed in ECTS

- 1 to 5 ECTS;
- 3 to 6 ECTS;
- from 3 to 36 ECTS;
- 7.5 credits, 15 and 30 credits (for single courses within a full study programme in HE);
- 20-30 ECTS;
- 2-70 ECTS;
- from less than 180 to less than 30 ECTS.

Section 3

Challenges regarding the application of Bologna tools to micro-credentials

Biggest challenges to apply Bologna Key Commitments to micro- credentials



Points raised

- Need for common understanding and terminology, and comparability and transparency of information;
- Tools should apply first and foremost to the full degrees, and then may be applied to micro-credentials;
- Key challenge: the adoption of the Common Framework;
- MCs already offered by a broad range of non formal providers without the use of Bologna tools (ECTS, NFQ, QA, etc.) and employers/individuals appear to accept these. Challenge in moving from this situation to a more “regulated” environment;
- Challenge not lie in the tools but rather in the cooperation to be developed between the different providers of education, vocational training and enterprises;
- Leave enough flexibility in definitions incl. number of ECTS for MS to decide;
- Relationship between ECTS and learning outcomes;
- MC refers both to the training and to the qualifications awarded, whereas the qualifications framework refers to qualifications NQF (training ≠ credential);
- Minimum size of ECTS to be assigned to a level in the QF?
- What if QF-EHEA and EQF are not integrated at a national level?



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Thanks for your attention!



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