State of play: micro-credentials in Europe

ELENA CIRLAN
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Stakeholders perspective

Policymakers’ perspective
- increasing need for upskilling and reskilling
- need for flexible and inclusive learning paths

Learners’ perspective
- an entry mechanism to a degree programme
- a way to acquire interdisciplinary knowledge and skills
- a way to more flexibility in planning their studies

Higher education institutions’ perspective
- a way to provide targeted and specialised training
- increase their visibility and reputation
- increase their responsiveness to students’ and labour markets’ demands
- experiment with new pedagogies and technologies

Employers’ perspective
- micro-credentials may help them to better understand specific skills of a prospective employee
- may serve as on-job training
Higher education institutions provide

credit-bearing micro-credentials
and non credit-bearing micro-credentials

as separate learning modules
as part of a conventional degree
as part of the LLL provision

in face-to-face, online and hybrid modes
Issues and constraints

- lack a consensus on a definition
- lack of clarity which leads to confusion for learners and employers
- lack of validation mechanisms
- lack of funding mechanisms in many continental European countries
- issues related to their storage and portability
Quality assurance of micro-credentials

- the ESG “apply to all higher education offered in the EHEA regardless of the mode of study or place of delivery.” (ESG, 2015, p. 7)
- main responsibility for quality assurance lies within HEIs
  - what about other providers?
- external quality assurance lacking, when
  - the provider is other than a HEI?
  - when it focuses on programme accreditation and a micro-credential is not part of a larger programme?
- QA of the credential itself
Conclusion:

- Micro-credentials are not a new phenomenon.
- They do not substitute but complement conventional higher education qualifications.
- Consensus on a definition is needed.
- Diversity a strength.