This project has received funding from the Euratom research and training programme 2014-2018 under grant agreement No 662287.

EJP-CONCERT

European Joint Programme for the Integration of Radiation Protection Research

H2020 – 662287

D 7.6 - Report on potential transferability and mutual recognition of E&T credits and qualifications in Europe

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Work package / Task	**WP 7**	**ST 7.1.2**
Deliverable nature:	**Report**	
Dissemination level: (Confidentiality)	**Public**	
Contractual delivery date:	**Month 36**	
Actual delivery date:	**Month 42**	
Version:		
Total number of pages:	**5**	
Keywords:	**Education and training transferability**	
Approved by the coordinator:	**Month 42**	
Submitted to EC by the coordinator:	**Month 42**	

Abstract

The possibility of increasing transferability within the EU states was investigated, in order to facilitate cross-crediting university course modules (such as the MScs in Radiobiology and Radioecology), and work towards full mutual recognition of pre-requisites and degrees.

Content

Subtask 7.1.2.

The possibility of increasing transferability within the EU states will be investigated, in order to facilitate cross-crediting university course modules (such as the MScs in Radiobiology and Radioecology), and work towards full mutual recognition of pre-requisites and degrees. Dialogue with institutions involved will be maintained through a regular forum coordinated by this task.

General information about transferability within the EU states

The ECTS credit system permits students from EU-countries to go abroad and study in order to obtain a degree that is universally accepted all throughout the European Union. The system is used for recognising not just study exchange experiences, but full Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees. The only exception not included or accepted by the ECTS is the final degree certificate. This certificate is granted by a single university although joint university degrees are possible between universities which signed a mutual agreement. Joint university degrees are programme-specific, meaning that they can only be granted for a specific field of study.

By completing a course, seminar, module etc., students are awarded ECTS-credit points. Every ECTS credit point represents the amount of workload you accomplished in that period of time. Mobility is only possible between universities which are holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

MSc programmes and education programs in radiation biology in the EU

Currently, two MSc programmes in radiation biology are offered within the EU: at the University of Oxford and at the Technical University in Munich. Courses in radiation biology and radiation ecology within the broader life science education programmes are offered at several universities such as Gent, Stockholm or Ås.

Transferability of students within the field of radiation protection research

A meeting devoted to this task was held on Friday October 5th 2018, in the frame of the ERPW2018 meeting in Rovinj. Transferability of students in the field of radiation protection research was discussed. An increased transferability within the EU states in the field would be possible by setting up European master course programmes. Such a programme would be possible on the basis of Joint Programmes at the Masters and Doctorate levels. These could be facilitated by individual scholarships/fellowships to participants. A joint programme would lead to the award of recognised joint, double or multiple degrees (covering the entire study programme).

A university joint degree is based on a study programme jointly developed and recognised by several institutions. Outsourcing of teaching is not permitted by universities. Hence, a formal agreement between participating universities is required for a joint degree. Students at participating institutions spend part of their studies at another institution. The periods of study and examinations, which are completed at other institutions, are automatically

recognised in full at their home institutions. The teaching staff of each participating institution works out the curriculum together, formulates regulations for admission and the examination conditions and also teaches at the other institutions. Upon completion of the study programme, students receive either national degrees from the individual institutions or a degree which is jointly conferred. It appears desirable to set up a university joint degree programme in the field of radiation biology.

A problem with setting up such a programme is that, currently, there are only two MSc programmes (mentioned above) organised by EU universities. And one of them is in a country which is preparing to leave the EU. Several universities have courses in radiation biology, but these are given in the framework of more general biology or natural sciences programmes. This is the case at the Stockholm University, where a radiobiology course for MSc students runs each year, but the MSc title is granted in the field of molecular biosciences.

The time plan of the courses differs between universities: they may be spread out during the whole duration of a term and interlaced with other courses or they may be blocked. The “block system” allows forming a study programme where students can integrate different courses at different universities within the duration of a single term. This is not possible for courses which are run in the “spread-out system”. This difference in course organisation and the list of offered courses sets limits as to which universities could create a programme in radiation protection research that would cover all topics required for a thorough education in the field. Thus a joint degree programme in the field of radiation biology is currently not achievable.

The participants of the meeting in Rovinj agreed that the short-term courses organised within the E&T work packages of DOREMI and CONCERT for Ph.D. students and young researchers play an important role in maintaining and building up EU-wide collaboration in the field. Participants of the courses not only gain knowledge but also set up contacts which are of benefit for long-term competence building. It is highly recommended that a similar course programme be an integral part of a future EJP.