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Youth, Education and Erasmus+  
Erasmus+ Coordination

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## NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF ERASMUS+ NATIONAL AGENCIES

**Subject: The European Student Card Initiative – Further clarifications regarding the timeline of digitalisation of Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) for higher education mobility**

This note is a follow-up to [Note 002: European Student Card initiative – State of play and next steps](#) and [Note 036: The European Student Card Initiative – Further clarifications regarding the timeline of digitalisation of Inter-Institutional Agreements \(IIAs\)](#) providing further clarifications on the timeline of implementation of digital Inter-Institutional Agreements in the higher education mobility action, following the feedback received from higher education institutions and National Agencies.

We continue to urge all higher education institutions (HEIs) to be ready to exchange digitally Inter-Institutional Agreements by using the new template through Erasmus Without Paper as soon as possible for them and their partners during the 2021/2022 academic year. This is key because the Erasmus Without Paper Network can only fulfil its purpose if all higher education institutions are reachable through it at the same time.

### **State of play:**

All HEIs were encouraged as of June 2021 to exchange digitally Inter-Institutional Agreements for bilateral intra-European mobility as soon as their IT systems are ready to connect to Erasmus Without Paper, either via the Dashboard or via direct nodes to the Erasmus Without Paper Network<sup>1</sup>. As at December 2021, 2318 higher education institutions are connected to the Erasmus Without Paper Network, which corresponds to approximately 85% of all HEIs that require digital Inter-Institutional Agreements and Online Learning Agreements at this point in time. Over 3000 HEIs are active on the Dashboard, of which 1648 are implementing the basic Inter-Institutional Agreement application programming interfaces (APIs).

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<sup>1</sup> The Inter-Institutional Agreements template is available [here](#) and the instructions on how to implement the Inter-Institutional Agreements API are available [here](#).

The interoperability between the Dashboard and other mobility management systems when it comes to exchanging Inter-Institutional Agreements is not achieved yet. Some 8518 digital Inter-Institutional Agreements have been initiated and 1026 Inter-Institutional Agreements signed, primarily among Dashboard users, whereas many more HEIs are already starting to arrange mobilities for the first semester of the academic year 2022/2023. It is important that these mobilities are arranged in the framework of valid underlying Inter-Institutional Agreements.

### **Precision about deadline:**

For that purpose, we confirm that ‘old’ Inter-Institutional Agreements can be further extended by the agreement of both partners to cover mobilities of the 2022/2023 academic year (regardless of the Erasmus+ call year through which they are funded), accompanied by email exchanges. Alternatively, paper agreements can be signed for cases where the extension of old bilateral Inter-Institutional Agreements is not an option. As soon as both partners are ready to exchange the Inter-Institutional Agreements data digitally, and at the latest by 31 December 2022, they transfer all the information from email exchanges and paper agreements onto digital Inter-Institutional Agreements templates on the Erasmus Without Paper system (they can complement them with additional information relevant for subsequent years of the programming period).

### **Monitoring**

The current academic year 2021/2022 has been considered as a transitional year, where there is a level of tolerance applied towards HEIs that are experiencing delays and difficulties in connecting to Erasmus Without Paper or applying student identification methods. This transitional year is extended until the end of the calendar year 2022, after which digital readiness (which is part of the ECHE commitments) will become subject to a monitoring process by National Agencies. An ECHE Working Group of National Agency representatives and external stakeholders will reconvene as of January 2022 to work on the update of the ECHE monitoring guidelines and to define precise criteria for the fulfillment of the ECHE commitments in the area of digitalisation and the triggers that may lead to the withdrawal of the ECHE as of 2023. The Working Group will be duly informed of the details of the digitalisation timeline set out in this note and the potential mitigating circumstances.

### **Support**

The European Commission has tendered out the ‘development, implementation and support of online systems, processes and services in relation to learning exchanges with HEIs’ and National Agencies to the Erasmus Without Paper+ consortium. The award notice can be accessed via the following [link](#). As part of the assignment for ‘Track 1: Reinforcing the Erasmus Without Paper Network and coordinating further digitalisation of Erasmus+ programme’, the consortium will, as of January 2022, be involved in the delivery of the following tasks:

- To address the need for timely and transparent information to all HEIs in the Erasmus+ programme countries about the state of play and next steps of the initiative, a new communication and community outreach strategy will be put in place (due by Month 1 of the project) and progressively all guidance and training documents will be consolidated and published in one central information portal.

- To address the need for more targeted and timely support, a Centralised Service Desk will be put in place in order to provide ongoing support to higher education institutions (HEIs) when connecting to and exchanging digitally via the Erasmus Without Paper Network, regardless of whether they are Dashboard users or using 3<sup>rd</sup> party software providers or in house software to connect to the Network. The Centralised Service Desk will provide support and guidance to the users while all documentation, guidance and information targeting users will be consolidated, updated and shared with open access (due by Month 3 of the project).
- To address the need for better steering, planning and evaluation of the overall Erasmus+ digitalisation process and to engage National Agencies and HEIs directly in the decision-making around the digitalisation needs, goals and methods, an Erasmus Without Paper governance structure will be set up with several decision-making and operational bodies representing HEIs, Erasmus+ National Agencies, representatives of 3<sup>rd</sup> party software providers, stakeholders like students and European University Alliances, contractors and the European Commission. The governance bodies will convene on a regular basis (due by Month 3 of the project).
- To address the technical challenges that the Erasmus Without Paper systems have been facing due to the increased traffic, urgent enhancements will be undertaken on the Erasmus Without Paper Dashboard and in the Erasmus Without Paper Registry to increase capacity and allow accessibility and seamless use by all HEIs, including HEIs using 3<sup>rd</sup> party software providers and HEIs using their own mobility software solutions (progressively but fully due by Month 12 of the project). It is the requirement of the tender that all developments on the Erasmus Without Paper Network are fully in line with the European data protection legislation.

It is important to note that the deployment of Erasmus Without Paper APIs in the IT systems of 3<sup>rd</sup> party software providers or HEIs is excluded from this contract, due to the decentralised nature of the Erasmus Without Paper Network, where each 'node' is responsible for its own data. Equally, while the service desk will process tickets of all users, they cannot guarantee to solve specific technical problems of individual software providers connecting to Erasmus Without Paper.

Kind regards,

Ute HALLER-BLOCK  
Head of Unit