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Roundtable “Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia” Report

CIMEA, ArmENIC and NCEQE

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Acronyms

ANQA: Armenian National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation

EHEA: European Higher Education Area

EMIS: Education Management Information System

ENIC: European Network of Information Centres

HEI: Higher Education Institution

IMINQA: “Implementation and Innovation in Quality Assurance through Peer Learning” Project

LRC: Lisbon Recognition Convention

Micro-GEAR: “Micro-credentials for Higher Education Systems of Georgia and Armenia: South Caucasus Lighthouse” project

NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union

NCEQE: National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement

OCRA: Online course catalogues and databases for transparency and recognition

TPG A: Thematic Peer Group on Qualification Frameworks

TPG B: Thematic Peer Group on Recognition

TPG C: Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance

Executive Summary

This document provides a series of recommendations stemming from the discussions during the roundtable sessions conducted with partners from Armenia and Georgia. ArmENIC and NCEQE served as rapporteurs of these sessions, with CIMEA as moderator.

With regards to Armenia, the discussion was opened by a reflection on the main tracks of recognition in the country, and on the importance of information provision on micro-credentials. Another focus of discussion was then the role of public bodies as leaders in developing an efficient ecosystem for micro-credentials and facilitating their recognition.

Looking at Georgia, the discussion focused on the necessary legal changes at the national level to implement and recognise micro-credentials within the higher education institutions. The definition of the type of institution offering micro-credentials was another point of discussion, alongside the responsibility for recognising micro-credentials obtained within the country and abroad. Finally, the group reflected also on the approaches to encourage employers to value micro-credentials and specific systems or platforms supporting their transferability.

From these discussions, two sets of recommendations are provided for Armenia and Georgia respectively with aim of supporting the introduction of micro-credentials in the higher education sectors of the two countries.

Introduction

Micro-credentials are not a new concept, but they have gained importance in Europe as an innovative mean to support skills development, lifelong learning, and inclusion within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Union. These “small volumes of learning [...] assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria” play a pivotal role in “provid[ing] the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs” (*Council Recommendation 2022/C 243/02*). They have the potential to enhance upskilling and reskilling efforts, by supporting individuals in advancing their professional or educational pathways.

Within this framework, the co-funded Erasmus+ project “Micro-credentials for Higher Education Systems of Georgia and Armenia: South Caucasus Lighthouse” (Micro-GEAR), seeks to structurally reform the higher education sectors in Armenia and Georgia through the introduction of micro-credentials. A shared objective for both countries is to improve the relevance, quality, and flexibility of higher education by encouraging updates to their National Qualification Frameworks in line with micro-credential principles, and by facilitating their recognition. At national level, both Armenia and Georgia have demonstrated strong interest on this topic, supported by several national developments and active participation in various initiatives.

In Armenia, micro-credentials have been identified as a priority in the “State Education Development Plan of the Republic of Armenia until 2030”, and the newly adopted Law on Higher Education and Science contribute to create of the regulatory framework. The law has the common definition for micro-credentials. (Micro-GEAR Report on Regional Micro-Credentials Status-Quo Study Armenia, 2023). Furthermore, since 2018 when the Bologna Process formally established the three thematic groups following the commitments of the Paris Communiqué, Armenia was engaged in all three of them namely, the EHEA Thematic Peer Groups on Qualifications Frameworks (TPG A), Recognition (TPG B), Quality Assurance (TPG C). Currently, Armenia is co-chairing the Working Group on Micro-Credentials within TPG C on Quality Assurance.

In parallel, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) in Georgia initiated efforts to establish a micro-credentialing system in higher education in 2020. Within this context, Georgia has already implemented small-credential educational programmes similar to micro-credentials in the non-formal education sector and, since 2019, has developed vocational education and training programmes that serve as micro-credentials for professional development (Micro-GEAR Report on Regional Micro-Credentials Status-Quo Study Georgia, 2023).

ArmENIC as a partner in Erasmus+ OCTRA and OCTRA2 projects jointly developed a set of recommendations for higher education institutions on information provision and recognition of micro-credentials for academic and professional purposes through the Armenian National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA) and NCEQE, have contributed

to the “Micro-Credentials Quality Assurance Working Group” within the work of the TPG C, launched as part of the “Implementation and Innovation in Quality Assurance through Peer Learning” Project (IMINQA). ANQA, as part of the TPG A activities, conducted an online survey to assess the current situation in Armenia and, on the other side, NCEQE conducted research aimed at collecting information on the recognition of micro-credentials in formal education settings (Micro-GEAR Report on Regional Micro-Credentials Status-Quo Study, 2023). The findings of both studies revealed shared challenges, particularly the absence of specific recognition procedures for learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal education. In this context, academic recognition remains one of the foundational elements of the European approach to micro-credentials and it is crucial to ensure their acceptance and uptake within the higher education sector.

Based on the work already done by partners’ organisations, this report aims to **present the discussions** that took place during the roundtables sessions and further activities carried out **on the topic of micro-credentials**, with a particular focus on **promoting their recognition in Armenia and Georgia and cross-border**. The results are a series of recommendations based on the discussions incurred among project partners, such as Ministries of Education, National Accreditation Agencies and ENIC Centres, Higher Education Institutions, representatives of training providers, and relevant stakeholders at the national level.

Methodology

Building on the work carried out by project partners within the framework of the *D1.1 Report on Regional Micro-Credentials Status-Quo Study* in both countries and the *D1.2 National Roadmaps for Micro-Credentials and White Paper on Micro-Credentials*, two roundtables were organised with both Armenian and Georgian partners.

The roundtables were held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on June 5, 2025, with the Georgian partners attending in person and the Armenian partners joining online. Participants from both countries were divided into two groups, each supported by one rapporteur, ArmENIC for the Armenian participants and NCEQE for the Georgian group; the sessions were moderated by CIMEA. An online tool, Padlet, was used to collect input from the discussions, making it convenient to share comments and feedback with all participants at the end of the roundtables. The moderators guided the group discussions, while the rapporteurs presented the key findings during the plenary session.

For the group discussions, a set of questions was agreed in advance with both rapporteurs, ArmENIC and NCEQE. These were tailored to the specific needs of each country and focused on the main challenges related to the recognition of micro-credentials at national level. The questions are listed below:

GEORGIA - QUESTIONS

- What **legal changes** are needed at the national level to successfully implement and recognize micro-credentials in higher education?
- **Who can offer** micro-credentials? (Universities, industry associations, training centres, etc.);
- Who should be **responsible for recognizing** micro-credentials earned within the country? And who should **validate those obtained abroad**?
- How can we **encourage employers** to value micro-credentials? Why might they prefer credentials from universities or authorized providers over certificates from informal education programmes?
- What **systems or platforms** can help ensure that micro-credentials are easily transferable?
- How can micro-credentials be **combined** within higher education to support broader qualifications?
- What are the biggest **challenges or risks** for universities when recognizing micro-credentials?

ARMENIA - QUESTIONS

- What are the **main steps** towards efficient and fair recognition of micro-credentials?
- What are **the main tracks** of recognition?
- What is the **role of the State** in developing an effective ecosystem for micro-credentials facilitating recognition?
- What is the role of **provision of information** on micro-credentials in the recognition process?
- How to **link** micro-credentials to **QA** and **national qualifications framework**?

Table 1 Roundtables questions for Armenia and Georgia

Following the group discussions, the rapporteurs presented and discussed the outcomes during the plenary session, outlining an initial set of recommendations based on the needs and issues identified. Two short reports were then drafted, one for Armenia and one for Georgia, which

provided the basis for further elaboration of possible recommendations and the key elements with external stakeholders. NCEQE reviewed the draft recommendations with the head of Quality Assurance at national level, while ArmENIC revised the recommendations after the consultation with the HEIs.

The roundtable discussions and the results of the national-level consultations were analysed and incorporated to draft specific recommendations aimed at further promoting the recognition of micro-credentials in Armenia and Georgia.

Recommendations

As previously mentioned, based on the questions outlined above, both the Armenian and Georgian partners and stakeholders were asked to discuss the key issues that need to be addressed within their national context. The results of these group discussions are presented below, followed by the main recommendations derived from these exchanges.

Recommendations in Armenia

The discussion with Armenian colleagues and stakeholders began with a reflection on the **main tracks of recognition in the country**. From the beginning, the focus was on the need to share experiences with other countries as a valuable mean of exchanging good practices. In this context, the extreme importance of information provision on micro-credentials was emphasised, to support their evaluation and recognition specially, for further studies. At the EHEA level, recognition of micro-credentials should be carried out in compliance with the main principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), once sufficient information has been gathered on how to integrate them in line with the LRC. Separately, higher education institutions agreed to provide specific information on the certificates, in accordance with the Council Recommendation on micro-credentials, to facilitate their recognition and create a smoother process.

The discussion then focused on the **role of public bodies** in developing an efficient ecosystem for micro-credentials and facilitating their recognition. The role of public bodies in the recognition process was discussed and highlighted as their participation from the very beginning is crucial. Given that Armenia adheres to the Lisbon, Tokyo, and Global Conventions, the new Law on Higher Education and Science, adopted in September 2025, includes provisions on micro-credentials and it should align with EU standards and definitions, with a specific reference to credit allocation. In this context, the importance of ongoing reports was highlighted, specifically *D2.1 “Roundtable: Micro-credentials for Georgia and Armenia Report”* and *D1.2 “National Roadmaps for Micro-credentials and White Papers on Micro-credentials”*, which are considered valuable resources for the future development of specific legislative acts to implement micro-credentials at the national level.

Based on this discussion, **five recommendations** were drafted, as specified below:

1. The Draft Law on Higher Education and Science should highlight the two possible recognition tracks: lifelong learning and institutional recognition.
2. Align the Draft Law on Higher Education and Science with the definition, standards and elements used within the Bologna Process across EHEA, with a focus on credits.
3. Include all the elements of micro-credentials to give enough information on the certificate and to foster their recognition.
4. Stress the importance of Quality Assurance within institutions following the European Standards and Guidelines.
5. Consider the Micro-GEAR White Paper and all the work done for the further development of micro-credentials at national level.

Recommendations in Georgia

The discussion started with a brainstorming on **what legal changes are needed** at the national level to implement and recognise micro-credentials within the higher education institutions. The need for urgent amendments to the higher education law was discussed, especially regarding which institutions can offer specific courses. The need to revise quality assessment principles to maintain relevance was also considered as well as the integration of further databases in the Education Management Information System (EMIS). It was stressed the important role of the Ministry enacting legislative changes and the possibility to involve the National Bank of Georgia in the process, as its expertise could support successful sector developments.

The discussion moved further on the definition of **what type of institution** can and should offer micro-credentials. On this topic, emphasis was placed on involving organisations and individuals with proven experience in delivering successful training programme. Higher education institutions, colleges, and training centres were identified as primary implementers. In terms of quality assurance system, the need to establish a specific department within NCEQE to oversee micro-credentials was highlighted, to support the identified providers in implementing micro-credentials, and define a micro-credential framework to build courses accordingly.

Regarding the **responsibility for recognising micro-credentials obtained both within the country and abroad**, it was stressed that initial implementation should be centralised to provide a

controlled framework before expanding recognition. A blockchain system could facilitate verification and eliminate potential issues with recognition, and its inclusion in higher education institutions systems should be considered. Finally, several points must be clarified before advancing recognition, including the legislative definition of micro-credentials, necessary legal framework changes, identification of providers, and the qualification level within the national qualifications' framework.

The ways to **encourage employers** to value micro-credentials and **specific systems or platforms that can support the transferability** of micro-credentials, were also discussed. In this sense, the blockchain system, as well as the Europass system, were mentioned and the importance of including them into this process was stressed.

From this discussion, **six recommendations** at national level were identified.

1. Amend the Higher Education Law and the Quality Assurance Law to define micro-credentials, including their size, providers, quality assurance mechanism, and recognition processes.
2. Allow universities, training centres, and professional associations to act as micro-credentials providers.
3. Discuss ENIC Georgia's potential role in supporting recognition, once micro-credentials are defined legislative, the framework updated, and providers are established.
4. Enable universities to recognise their own micro-credentials nationally, while credentials obtained abroad should be recognised by NCEQE.
5. Ensure that stakeholders are directly involved in the micro-credential development and implementation process, with transparent quality assurance and highly qualified programme staff.
6. Adopt Europass platform and blockchain systems for issuing and verifying micro-credentials.

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