

Transform4Europe:

The European University for Knowledge

Entrepreneurs

Erasmus+ European Universities

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TRANSFORM4EUROPE: THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR KNOWLEDGE ENTREPRENEURS

T4E Student & Staff Card Implementation Report

Lead Beneficiary

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the results of the Work package 7 task 7.1 Student and Staff Card. In the course of the work on this task, the competent experts realised in the framework of the 7.1 Student & Staff Cards Implementation Report (by Estonian Academy of Arts, 03/02/2022) that creating a unified system for a joint card would be very difficult or rather impossible due to the strict timeline and inadequate funding, and that it seems very improbable that such a card created in parallel to the existing ones would be used by a broad group of the alliance community. However, what seems promising and fully in line with the European higher education policies, is to prepare the implementation of the European Student Card (ESC) at all alliance universities. Thus, it has been decided to identify the preparational steps for implementing the ESC that can already been taken and realise those. In the lead up to this, the Student and Staff Card concept¹ (by Saarland University, D7.1, 31/10/2022) provides the necessary roadmap. Besides this preparation of the ESC implementation, it has been decided to find a solution to enhance the common Transform4Europe identity, e.g. by printing our logo on all student and staff cards used by our institutions. The present report briefly describes the task development and implementation and then focuses on the current state of implementation of the ESC at each partner university.

2. TASK DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

2.1. Concept

As stated in chapter 1, T4EU has decided to identify the preparational steps for implementing the ESC that can already been taken and realise those. This decision was supported by the fact that a proper, “analogue” T4EU Student & Staff Card would not offer the same services as the ESC and would cost a considerable amount of time and money to implement – not even considering the difficulties in joining all the different university services in one card. Instead, the preparations for the ESC (see also the following chapter) allow for the use of federated identities to access the different university services.

In concrete terms, students would make use of the European Student Identifier to identify themselves at the host university. The host university can in the first step – after verification of the federated identity – hand out a student or staff card offering the services needed. The final objective will then be to issue student cards containing the ESC Hologram and QR Code for authentication and therefore without the need to issue a new card at the host institution. In a long term, T4EU believes in a more sustainable way of issuing

¹ Even if the European Student Card is addressed to students, the functional and technical steps necessary for its implementation described in this concept also lead to the possible implementation of a similar “European HEI Staff Card.” Therefore, there is no differentiation between Student and Staff Cards being made in the concept.

these cards, e.g. via a European Student Card App. This way, services on the different campuses can be easily accessed without the necessity to get an “analogue” card.

The T4EU strategy for the ESC’s implementation consists of the following steps:

1. Implementing the European Student Identifier at each partner university.
2. Registering on the European Student Card exchange platform by each partner university.²
3. Registering the students of each partner university, who then have the choice to opt-in for the registration.
4. Getting the partner universities ready to issue student cards with the ESC Hologram and QR Code for authentication.

2.2. Implementation and communication

For the first step, Saarland University as task lead has approached the partner universities’ IT departments and continually assists with the implementation of the European Student Identifier (ESI). As can be seen in Table 1, five of the seven partners have implemented the ESI, while Estonian Academy of Arts has during the last months formalized their membership with eduGAIN, a prerequisite for the implementation of the European Student Identifier, and is currently working on its implementation. The technical aspects for the ESC’s implementation can be found in the Student and Staff Card Concept (D7.1).

University	ESI implemented	Registered on ESC-Router	ESC rolled out
Saarland University	X	X	(X)
University of Alicante	X	X	(X)
Estonian Academy of Arts	(X)		
University of Silesia	X		
Sofia University	X	X	X
University of Trieste	X	X	
Vytautas Magnus University	X	X	

Table 1: Status of implementation at each partner institution (as of 27/09/2023).

The second step consisted of defining two responsible persons per HEI in the field of the ESC’s functional and technical implementation respectively. These persons must register on the European Student Card exchange platform (ESC-Router). As shown in Table 1, also five institutions successfully registered on the ESC-Router during the project phase. In this case, at University of Silesia and Estonian Academy of Arts, the decision from a higher level is still pending whom to register on the Router.

² <https://europeanstudentcard.eu/institutions/> [27/09/2023].

The responsible person for the technical aspects of the implementation must then, in the third step, register the students of the HEI who are then informed about their registration and have to confirm the registration on the platform. This, as well as the final step of the ESC's full implementation by handing out student cards with the ESC Hologram and QR Code, is currently only being achieved at Sofia University. The University of Alicante is about to launch it and is currently in the testing phase. The local Student Service is already creating the informative website and planning the promotion. Saarland University is currently taking the necessary steps towards a cooperation with the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) to be able to hand out the ESC soon for its mobile students. The other partners are taking the necessary steps in this regard, but in many cases interfaces with different Student Management Systems need to be implemented and decisions on the highest level for the de facto change of the current use of the local student card are still pending. This poses the greatest challenge to the implementation of the ESC.

Without a doubt, the implementation of the ESC counts among the most ambitious tasks of the project. The progress made in this regard, with nearly every partner having taken the most important steps by the end of the project phase, can be seen as a big success – especially when comparing to universities not member of a European University Alliance who lie far behind. In particular, the best practice example of Sofia University, which is already handing out an ESC in cooperation with the ISIC and the European Youth Card (EYC), was very useful for the future development of the concept and its successful implementation, as they explained in detail how it is being done at their university to the partners. For example,

3. TRANSFERABILITY

First, the alliance members hugely benefitted from the knowledge of Sofia University in how they implement the European Student Card. Second, the monitoring by Saarland University immensely helped moving forward the internal discussions at each partner university. Regular update requests helped to keep the implementation on the members' agenda. The biggest challenge certainly is the difference in Student Management Systems and Student Card providers used, with some partners where the Student Cards are being printed and handed out on a national level (e.g. Lithuania and Estonia). Nevertheless, we saw also a rise in national activities in these countries thanks to the efforts of the alliance's member universities. Lastly, it is crucial for the last steps of the ESC's implementation to keep it on the agenda of the partner universities' decision-making bodies and to exchange on different means of handing out an ESC, e.g. in cooperation with ISIC.