

LEBPASS

The diploma supplement as a tool of higher education policy in Europe and beyond

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The Diploma Supplement: official definition

- The Diploma Supplement (DS) is a **document attached to a higher education diploma aimed at improving international 'transparency' and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications** (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that have been successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible non-prescriptive tool which is designed to save time, money and workload. It is capable of adaptation to local needs.
- The DS is produced by national institutions according to a template that has been developed by a Joint European Commission - Council of Europe - UNESCO working party that tested and refined it.
- The DS is composed of eight sections (information identifying the holder of the qualification, information identifying the qualification, information on the level of the qualification, information on the contents and results gained, information on the function of the qualification, additional information, certification of the Supplement, information on the national higher education system).



The pivotal role of higher education and the DS as policy tool

- HE at the forefront of international interest and public policy in contemporary knowledge societies as a matter with social, economic and political relevance (Vinokur, 2003; Gumpert, 2007; Clark, 2007; Stavrou, 2017)
- The DS as strategic policy tool for enhancing the role of HE within the country and overseas



DS and European policy: some key dates

- 1957 – Treaty of Rome establishing the EEC
- 1987 – Erasmus programme for the mobility of young people in HE
- 1989 – Directive for the recognition of professional education and training
- 1989 – ECTS as common system for recognizing and transferring credits
- **1997 – Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention)**



The DS in the Bologna process: some key dates

- 1998 – Sorbonne Declaration: First intergovernmental declaration for the harmonisation of HE systems in European countries
- 1999 – Bologna Declaration : Launch of the Bologna process and the EHEA – adoption of DS in participating countries
- 2003 – Berlin Communiqué : Establishing the right to the DS in the EHEA
- 2004 – Single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (EUROPass)
- 2018 – Paris Communiqué: Adoption of the Revised Diploma Supplement
- 2018 – Thematic Peer Group B on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention within the Bologna process

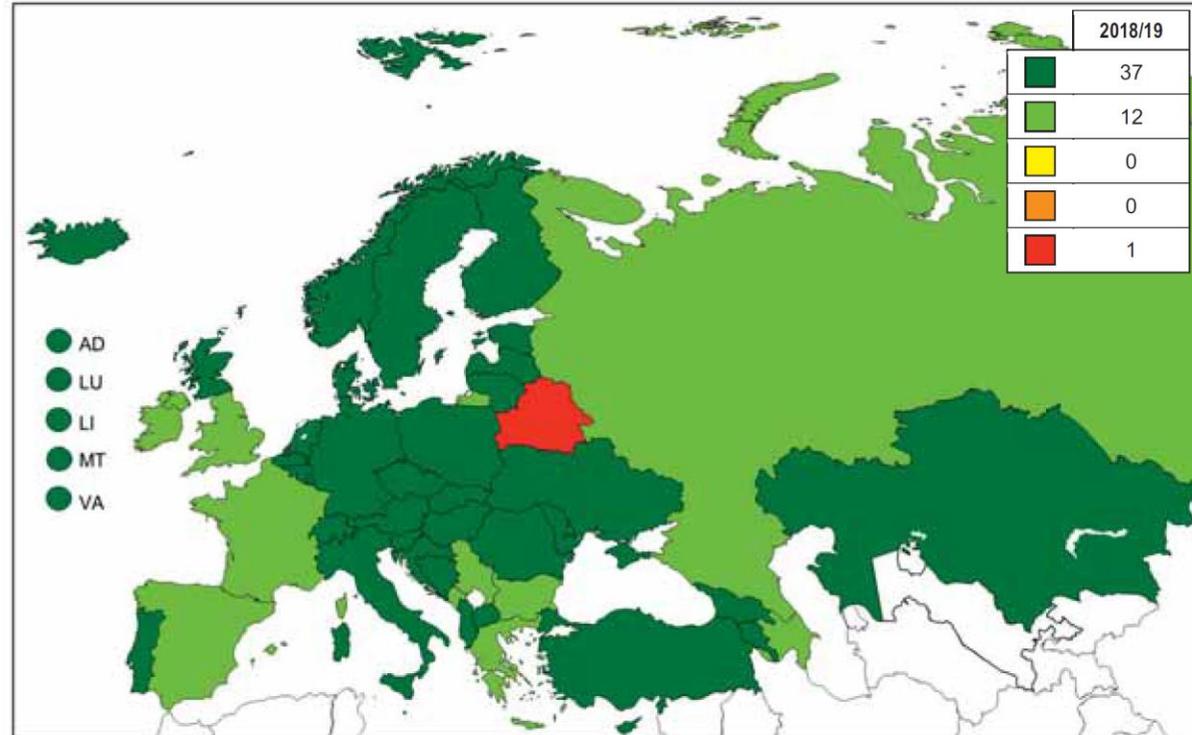


Interrelated areas of the Bologna process policy action

- **Comparability and recognition of degrees:** structural reform tools (Diploma Supplement, 3-5-8, semesters, ECTS, qualification frameworks)
- **European mobility and internationalization:** mobility of students, staff, graduates for studies and employment
- **Quality-assurance:** agencies and mechanisms of evaluation of the quality and efficiency of higher education systems
- **Connection of HE with the economy, enhancing employability:** revision of programme design and descriptors in terms of learning outcomes and closer links with the labour market



State of the implementation of the DS in EHEA (Bologna Implementation Report, 2020)



Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

	Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format is issued to first- and second-cycle graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to every graduate; ○ automatically; ○ in a widely spoken European language; ○ free of charge.
	Three of the above criteria are met.
	Two of the above criteria are met.
	Only one criterion is met.
	None of the above criteria is met.

The use of the DS: benefits for stakeholders

- **For students**

Easily readable description of individual qualifications which can enhance study and work opportunities within the country and abroad

- **For HEIs and national HE systems**

Helpful tool for internal procedures of HEIs, increasing visibility and attractiveness of HEIs and international cooperation

- **For employers**

Source of information for assessing the content and value of qualifications, knowledge and skills acquired through higher education



The use of the DS: advantages and opportunities

- **Transparency and lisibility of higher education qualifications**, especially from foreign countries, enabling informed judgment about qualifications
- **Avoid value-judgement** about qualifications and HEIs
- **Limit misunderstandings** regarding higher education degrees and institutions in the labour market
- **Considering diversity of qualifications**, flexibility and rapid changes in educational structures and their degrees
- **Increase mobility, access to further education and lifelong learning and employability**
- **Operate as communication tool** between stakeholders even within the same country (graduates, HEIs, employers, quality-assurance agencies)
- **Enable the elaboration of stronger information systems** and processes that contribute to the overall quality of HE activity (challenge of digitization)





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