

ERASMUS+ PROJECT 2023-1-RS01-KA220-HED-000156660

## EPIR | E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Documents

### 1. Introduction

The University of Split participated in the analysis and design activities within Work Package 3 with the aim of identifying organisational, legal and technical requirements for the future development of digital tools supporting the recognition of foreign higher education documents.

The purpose of this activity was to analyse the existing recognition procedure, identify strengths and weaknesses of the current process, gather user requirements, and define a preliminary system design that could serve as a guideline for programming and implementation activities in the later phases of the project.

The analysis involved administrative staff responsible for recognition procedures, legal experts, academic staff participating in decision-making processes, and project partners engaged in WP3 activities.

### 2. Analysis of the Existing Recognition Procedure

The recognition process at the University of Split is currently characterised by a significant number of manual administrative activities. Candidates submit applications together with supporting documentation, while communication between administrative staff, faculty representatives and external stakeholders is mostly conducted via paper documents and e-mail correspondence.

The analysis identified several challenges:

- lengthy administrative procedures,
- multiple manual document exchanges,
- difficulties in tracking application status,
- limited transparency for applicants,
- dependence on paper documentation,
- lack of a centralised digital repository for case-related documents,
- limited automation of notifications and workflow management.

These challenges become increasingly important due to the growing number of international students interested in continuing their studies at the University of Split.

EPIR project partners:



UNIVERSITY  
OF NOVI SAD



UNIVERSITÀ  
POLITECNICA  
DELLE MARCHE



ROMANIA  
1 DECEMBRIE 1918  
UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA



50 years of  
University  
of Split



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
Qualifications Agency

### **3. SWOT Analysis**

During project meetings and consultations with partners, a SWOT analysis of the current recognition process was performed.

#### **Strengths**

- Compliance with international and national recognition standards,
- Transparent and clearly defined procedural framework,
- Existence of specialised bodies and advisory mechanisms responsible for recognition decisions.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lengthy processing times,
- Complex documentation requirements,
- Dependence on external evaluations,
- Limited digitalisation of administrative procedures.

#### **Opportunities**

- Digitalisation and automation of the recognition process,
- Improved international cooperation and exchange of information,
- Better information availability for applicants,
- More flexible and efficient assessment procedures.

#### **Threats**

- Continuous changes in foreign education systems,
- Growing number of international applications,
- Limited administrative resources,
- Insufficient adaptation to technological developments.

The SWOT analysis was used as the basis for defining system requirements and future development priorities.

### **4. Stakeholder Requirements**

Based on meetings, consultations and analysis of the existing procedure, the following stakeholder requirements were identified:

#### **Applicants**

- Online submission of applications,
- Ability to upload supporting documentation electronically,
- Transparent monitoring of application status,
- Automatic notifications regarding progress and required actions.

#### **Administrative Staff**

- Centralised management of applications,
- Electronic document storage,
- Easier communication with academic evaluators,
- Reduction of manual data entry,
- Automatic tracking of workflow stages.

### **Academic Staff and Evaluators**

- Controlled access to documentation,
- Ability to review submitted documents electronically,
- Efficient communication with administrative personnel,
- Faster preparation of opinions and recommendations.

### **University Management**

- Better monitoring of processing times,
- Availability of statistical data and reports,
- Improved transparency and quality assurance.

## **5. Functional Requirements**

The future solution should support the following functionalities:

1. Online application form for recognition requests.
2. Secure upload and storage of supporting documents.
3. Creation of a digital case for each application.
4. Role-based access management.
5. Workflow and status management.
6. Automated notifications to applicants and staff.
7. Document sharing among authorised participants.
8. Case history and audit trail.
9. Reporting and statistics generation.
10. Integration with institutional web resources and relevant databases.

These functionalities were identified as necessary elements for improving efficiency and transparency of the recognition procedure.

## **6. Non-Functional Requirements**

The future system should fulfil the following non-functional requirements:

- Compliance with GDPR and institutional regulations,
- Secure user authentication and authorisation,
- High data availability and reliability,
- User-friendly interface,
- Scalability to accommodate increasing application volumes,
- Compatibility with existing university digital infrastructure,
- Support for multilingual communication where appropriate.

## **7. Preliminary System Design**

Based on the conducted analysis, the University of Split proposed a digital solution relying on Microsoft 365 technologies.

The proposed architecture includes:

### **SharePoint Communication Site**

A dedicated SharePoint communication site containing:

- legal regulations,

- procedures and instructions,
- application forms,
- process flow diagrams,
- guidance materials for applicants.

### **Online Application Form**

An electronic form enabling applicants to:

- submit applications,
- enter required personal and educational data,
- upload supporting documentation.

### **Digital Case Management**

For each submitted application, a digital case folder would be created containing:

- submitted documents,
- correspondence records,
- evaluation reports,
- status information.

### **Access Rights Management**

Access would be granted according to user roles:

- administrative staff,
- authorised academic evaluators,
- external experts where applicable,
- Agency for Science and Higher Education representatives when required.

### **Workflow and Notifications**

The system should support automated status changes and notifications throughout the recognition process, ensuring better communication among all participants and increased transparency for applicants.

## **8. Regulatory and Organisational Considerations**

During the analysis phase, special attention was devoted to reviewing existing regulations, forms and legal requirements governing recognition procedures.

Cooperation with the University's legal department was identified as a prerequisite for implementation of the future digital solution, ensuring full compliance with institutional and national regulations before documents and workflows are transferred to the digital environment.

## **9. Interoperability and Future Development**

The analysis also considered the role of the University Computing Centre (SRCE), which provides central ICT infrastructure and digital services for the Croatian academic community.

Although SRCE currently does not provide a dedicated information system for recognition procedures, the increasing number of international students and the broader need for digitalisation indicate future opportunities for interoperability and possible integration with national digital services.

## **10. Conclusion**

The conducted system analysis enabled the University of Split to identify organisational, functional and technical requirements necessary for the digital transformation of the recognition process for foreign higher education documents.

The resulting system design defines the main architecture, user roles, workflows and functional requirements of the future solution and serves as a guideline for the programming and implementation of IT tools within the EPIR project.

The proposed solution is expected to improve transparency, efficiency, traceability and user experience while reducing administrative workload and supporting the growing internationalisation of higher education at the University of Split.