

MCMC 2025: FROM INNOVATION TO INTEGRATION

Building trust and recognition in the global micro-credential ecosystem - reshaping lifelong learning



ORGANISED BY



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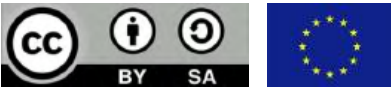


Table of content

8 Introduction

10 Opening speeches

12 Keynotes

- **Shizuka Kato:** Scaling up micro-credentials - from innovation to mass adoption
- **Mislav Balković:** Micro-credentials during times of rapid technological change
- **Andy Poole:** The impact of AI on micro-credentials - a case study from Coursera
- **Anastasia Pouliou:** Micro-credentials - a labour market megatrend
- **Christiane Butler:** Certification of international micro-credentials using the EQAR regime
- **Colin Tück and Ronald Ham:** Creating an open ecosystem for quality data

20 Session 1: Recognition and mobility

- **Alessandra Antonaci and Mirna Zeman:** Micro-credentials and interoperability - three years of insights from the MCE project
- **Michał Nowakowski:** The Polish approach to micro-credentials - quality standards and the Odznaka+ application
- **Lucie Mičínová and Irena Kottová:** Czechia on the path to micro-credentials - sharing experiences
- **Merel Eimers:** Recognition from Bologna to beyond. Recognition of prior learning light and the micro-evaluator as solutions for recognising micro-credentials
- **Robert Kay:** Creating a recognition eco-system

26 Session 2: Social inclusion

- **Beatriz Pont:** IIEP Global Campus micro-credentials - training policy makers and planners worldwide to improve education
- **Viola Pinzi:** Micro-credentials empowering adult migrant learners in Germany, Italy, Spain and Turkey
- **Virve Oksanen and Kati Marin:** Embarking on the learning adventure - modular micro-credentials for personalised and connected competence development
- **Kay Berkling:** Social and inclusion

32 Session 3: Labour market and industry partnerships

- **Mitchell Peters:** Building high-quality micro-credential programmes for labour market alignment - lessons from UOC's institutional and transnational initiatives
- **Thu Van Le Thi:** Industry partnerships in micro-credentials - enhancing data literacy and lifelong learning in Higher Education context
- **Preyansi Mani:** Academia-industry synergy for micro-credential implementation - insights from the digital skills to succeed in Asia project
- **Petri Liukkonen:** Micro-credentials as resilience builders

38 Session 4: Futures and innovation

- **Kathleen deLaski:** Who needs university anymore? The rise of micro-credentials in the US as a degree alternative
- **Ádám Tóth:** Imagined futures for micro-credential development - a preliminary conceptual framework
- **Henri Pirkkaleinen:** Creating AI-support for micro-credential-based learning pathways in ECIU University

42 Session 5: Interoperability

- **Tim Couper:** Credentials are the backbone of modern education technology: Unifying the micro-credentials landscape
- **Ildiko Mazar:** Micro-credentials under the microscope
- **Peter Leijnse:** Putting micro-credentials into a macro perspective
- **Rob van der Werff and Frans Ward:** Edubadges: Shaping the future of micro-mredentials in Dutch higher education
- **Melita Gulja:** Velocert - gateway to interoperable and legally valid digital credentials

48 Session 6: Quality assurance

- **Cora van Haaren and Clelia Paraluppi:** Quality assurance of micro-credentials - from pilot project to large-scale offer in the Dutch context
- **Tiina Parkkonen and Cai Weaver:** Creating decentralised micro-credentials models and common quality assurance policies for INGENIUM Alliance
- **Órla Barry:** Exploring the role of qualifications frameworks and existing approaches to quality assurance to build trust in micro-credentials
- **Aleksandra Zhivkovikj:** Micro-credentials in European quality assurance for higher education

54 Session 7: Sharing practices I

- **Bram van der Kruk and Bart Lamboo:** The Dutch approach to micro-credentials - lessons from the past and challenges for the future
- **Borut Stojilković and Mojmir Flisek:** Policy pathways to implementing higher education micro-credentials in Slovenia
- **Stefan Jahnke:** Empowering adult learning: Integrating micro-credentials into individual learning accounts - the RALExILA project

58 Session 8: Sharing practices II

- **Atiyeh Ghane:** Building trust in education and employment with micro-credentials
- **Denes Zarka:** Open badges and gamification in pedagogical context
- **Stefano Tirati:** Making micro-credentials matter - the World Alliance for Microcredentials Foundation (WAMf)-connecting advocates in practice and implementation

62 Closing panel

66 Personal reflection

68 Looking ahead: MCMC 2026

Bringing experts together for better learning pathways

The Micro-Credentials Masterclass 2025 united education practitioners, policymakers, stakeholders, and experts working on state-of-the-art personalised learning and career pathways.

We wrapped up MCMC 2025 in Zagreb at Algebra Bernays University on 19-20 March. It brought together bright minds from around the world to share ideas about micro-credentialing projects.

Building on past success, the event covered six key themes:

- Recognition and mobility
- Innovation (especially AI impacts)
- Social inclusion
- Industry partnerships
- Quality assurance
- Interoperability

Experts from North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia shared what works - and what doesn't.

Many participants joined our Strategy Design Workshop on 18 March. This gave them space to develop their own micro-credentialing projects before the main event.

In the following pages, you'll find summaries and links linking to videos and presentations (PDF). We couldn't have done it without our main sponsor [Velocert](#), our hosts [Algebra Bernays University](#), and our collaborator [QualityLink](#).

We're championing short-form education as the currency of human capital to tackle today's biggest challenges.

Thanks for being part of it!

Your Knowledge Innovation Centre team



Magazin introduction

Event Opening

Event Opening

Anthony F. Camilleri

Knowledge Information Centre (KIC) - co-founder and senior partner

Ivan Vidiš

Croatia Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy - state secretary

Anthony F. Camilleri, co-founder and senior partner of the Knowledge Information Centre (KIC) opened the 2025 Micro-credential Masterclass 2025 (MCMC).

Following the welcome, Ivan Vidiš, state secretary at the Croatia Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, spoke about Micro-credentials during times of rapid technological change.

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Scaling up micro-credentials – from innovation to mass adoption

Shizuka Kato

OECD – policy analyst, Skills and Future Readiness Division

Shizuka Kato explored how micro-credentials can move from innovation to everyday use. She shared lessons from OECD research on what works and what doesn't. Many countries are testing new approaches, but scaling up needs a clear strategy. Shizuka argued for a harmonised system that lets different providers work together while making credentials easy to recognise and trust. She called for better data, common standards, and policies that support flexible learning for all. The goal? To make micro-credentials part of lifelong learning systems everywhere, helping people build skills at any stage of life.

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Keynotes
speeches

KEYNOTES SPEECHES

Micro-credentials during times of rapid technological change

Mislav Balković

Algebra Bernays University - rector, associate professor

Mislav Balković set the stage by linking global trends—like decarbonisation, digitalisation and skills gaps—to the urgent need for micro-credentials. He argued that knowledge isn't locked to one place anymore. In a fast-changing world, learning must be quicker and more flexible. That's where micro-credentials come in. Mislav pointed to the EU's "Union of Skills" strategy, which supports micro-credentials to boost mobility, upskilling and lifelong learning. He made the case that these tools can help countries stay competitive, foster innovation and better match people with jobs. The takeaway? Micro-credentials are a smart response to a world in flux.



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KEYNOTES SPEECHES

The impact of AI on micro-credentials - a case study from Coursera

Andy Poole

Coursera for Campus – partnerships director, Europe

Andy Poole explored how Coursera is using AI to improve micro-credentials. He showed how AI helps make learning more personal, flexible, and global. Coursera now offers courses in over 21 languages and supports learners with an AI-powered study assistant called Coursera Coach. AI also helps educators create content faster, check for plagiarism, and adapt courses to meet learners' needs. Andy stressed that AI must be used responsibly – with fairness, transparency and safety at its core. This case study highlighted how AI can close skill gaps and boost access to job-ready learning across the world.

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KEYNOTES SPEECHES

Micro-credentials - a labour market megatrend

Anastasia Pouliou

Cedefop - Expert in Qualifications and Credentials

Anastasia Pouliou explored how microcredentials have become a key part of Europe's training systems. She showed that while they're not entirely new, they offer a better way to shape and recognise short, focused learning. Microcredentials are growing fast across sectors like ICT, manufacturing, and healthcare. They offer flexible options for learners and help employers meet skills needs. Anastasia also looked at how countries are adding them to their national frameworks. She raised key questions on quality, trust, and how these tools can boost inclusion for disadvantaged groups. The talk offered a fresh view of how micro-credentials are shaping Europe's future of work.

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KEYNOTES SPEECHES

Certification of international micro-credentials using the EQAR regime

Christiane Butler

FIBAA - deputy division manager certification

Christiane Butler explained how micro-credentials can be quality assured using European frameworks like EQF, ESG and ECTS. She shared how FIBAA certifies continuing education courses from both universities and alternative providers. Examples included Coursera, Sparkassenakademie NRW and the University of Augsburg. Christiane stressed the importance of transparency, clear learning outcomes and standards-based assessment. She noted the success of aligning micro-credentials with lifelong learning goals. But challenges remain, especially around consistency and rigour for non-traditional providers. Her message was clear: quality assurance must grow alongside innovation to build trust in micro-credentials.

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KEYNOTES SPEECHES

Creating an open ecosystem for quality data

Colin Tück

Knowledge Information Centre (KIC) - policy consultant

Ronald Ham

SURF - information and software architect

Colin Tück and Ronald Ham introduced QualityLink, a project aiming to improve how micro-credentials are shared and recognised. They argued that data about short courses often isn't open or consistent. Their solution? A flexible system that lets institutions publish course data using shared European standards. This would help students, employers and recognition officers find trusted, comparable information. The team shared technical challenges like vocabulary mismatches and missing data but stressed collaboration as the key. Their message: we need to work together to build an open ecosystem that makes micro-credentials visible, valuable, and verifiable.

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I see micro-credentials as extremely important to the future of education. We need a system that is adaptable and flexible, and meets the emerging needs of society, industry, and the economy.

- Andy Poole (Coursera for Campus)

Session 1: Recognition and mobility

Examine innovative strategies for facilitating micro-learning exchanges across post-secondary education and training. This session explores how organisational systems and digital platforms can enhance academic progression and learner mobility by providing targeted, flexible micro-credentials that support lifelong learning.

Micro-credentials and interoperability: Three years of insights from the MCE project

Dr. Alessandra Antonaci

EADTU - programme manager

Dr. Mirna Zeman

FernUniversität Hagen - research assistant

Alessandra Antonaci and Mirna Zeman shared key findings from the MCE project, which studied micro-credentials over three years. They found big differences across Europe in how these credentials are defined, quality assured, and recognised. Learners prefer flexible, stackable courses that are short and self-paced. But trust, portability, and employer recognition remain challenges. The speakers stressed the need for EU-wide standards, better policy alignment, and interoperable digital systems like shared platforms and student wallets. They also called for closer ties between universities, employers, and policymakers. Their vision: a seamless, trusted system where learning can move across borders with ease.

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The Polish approach to micro-credentials - quality standards and the Odznaka+ application

Michał Nowakowski

Educational Research Institute - project leader

Michał Nowakowski presented how Poland is shaping its own micro-credential system. His talk highlighted the great progress Poland has done with their national system to achieve key goals: improving lifelong learning, boosting employability, and supporting digital transformation. The next step will be for Poland to align further with EU recommendations such as the European Learning Model further. He stressed the importance of cooperation between universities, public institutions, and employers to adapt to local needs. Digital credentials, stackable learning, and links to national qualification frameworks are central to the Polish strategy. Michał also addressed challenges such as legal frameworks, recognition, and public awareness. His message: Poland's micro-credential journey is still evolving, but strong foundations are now in place.



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Czechia on the path to micro-credentials - sharing experiences

Lucie Mičínová

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic - coordinator National Recovery Plan

Irena Kottová

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic - ministerial council member

Lucie Mičínová and Irena Kottová shared how Czechia is building a qualifications ecosystem. Despite high employment, adult learning rates remain low, especially for vulnerable groups. The country is working with the OECD to raise awareness and align efforts through the EU's Technical Support Instrument. Charles University is leading the way with digital delivery and a quality-assured micro-credential catalogue. Czechia is also building on its strong National Qualifications Framework, which already supports over 1,400 professional qualifications. Employers play a key role, ensuring the system stays relevant to the labour market. Their approach combines legal clarity, public tools, and flexible learning.

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Recognition from Bologna to beyond - recognition of prior learning light and the micro-evaluator as solutions for recognising micro-credentials

Merel Eimers

Nuffic (Netherlands organisation for internationalisation in education) - policy officer

Merel Eimers explored how “RPL light” can help integrate micro-credentials into formal education systems. Standard recognition processes often need more data than micro-credentials provide. That’s where RPL light comes in, a simplified evaluation of prior learning based on key criteria like workload, learning outcomes and assessment. She shared practical examples, such as using micro-credentials to replace parts of transition programmes or for advanced standing in master’s degrees. The approach aims to balance flexibility with trust. Merel stressed that recognition doesn’t have to be all-or-nothing: small, verified steps can still open academic and career doors.

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Creating a recognition eco-system

Dr. Robert Kay

Incept Labs - co-founder and executive director

Robert Kay introduced an important global perspective to this session, sharing his experience from Australia. With the introduction of the Global Certificate of Public Accounting (GCPA), a competency-based micro-credential model, he provided a concrete example that rethinks professional recognition. He explained how traditional qualification paths are long and inflexible, especially in fields like accounting, which is facing major skill shortages not only in Australia. The GCPA uses 50 micro-credentials across three skill domains, technical, professional, and trans-disciplinary. Learners can build credentials step by step, and prior learning is recognised through an RPL framework. Robert highlighted a “recognition engine” that uses AI to match learning evidence with credential requirements. His vision: a system where professional certification, education, and employers connect through trusted digital credentials.

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Session 2: Social inclusion

Learn how micro-credentials can be leveraged to create accessible and inclusive, personalised learning pathways, particularly in contexts of international development. This session highlights practical approaches to overcoming barriers in education, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to acquire recognised skills and competencies.

IIEP Global Campus micro-credentials - training policy makers and planners worldwide to improve education

Beatriz Pont

IIEP-UNESCO - global training lead

Beatriz Pont presented the IIEP Global Campus, a training platform using micro-credentials to strengthen education systems around the world. Many education planners lack formal training, especially in low-income and fragile contexts. The IIEP Global Campus responds with modular, practitioner-focused courses that offer flexible learning. These micro-credentials help policymakers gain real-world skills in planning, finance, governance, and inclusion. The programme uses a competency framework and is backed by rigorous quality assurance. Learners earn IIEP credits that build toward diplomas. With a global reach and local focus, this initiative aims to make education planning more inclusive, effective, and sustainable.

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Micro-credentials empowering adult migrant learners in Germany, Italy, Spain and Turkey

Viola Pinzi

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) - technical advisor

Viola Pinzi introduced the PRISCILA method, a project that uses micro-credentials to support adult migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The aim is to help these learners gain skills recognition that opens doors to jobs and further training. Built on EU models like KeyComp and EntreComp, the micro-credentials focus on core skills such as citizenship and intercultural competence. They're issued as digital credentials using tools like Europass and the European Learning Model. While small organisations face technical and funding barriers, they have deep community reach. Viola stressed that inclusive, bottom-up designed, non-formal learning can offer powerful pathways—if it's supported and recognised.

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Embarking on the learning adventure - modular micro-credentials for personalised and connected competence development

Kati Marin

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences - expert in lifelong learning

Virve Oksanen

Laurea University of Applied Sciences - expert in continuous learning

Kati Marin and Virve Oksanen shared how Finnish universities are building modular micro-credentials that let learners shape their own learning journeys. They described how current lifelong learning offers are often fragmented and hard to navigate. Their solution: stackable, flexible courses mapped to national and EU qualifications. Learners move from novice to expert using the Dreyfus model, gaining credits along the way. This approach works well for adults in different life stages—whether changing careers, boosting skills, or finishing a degree. It's all about recognising real progress and connecting learning with the needs of both people and the labour market.

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SESSION 2

Social and inclusion

Prof. Dr. Kay Berkling

DHBW - senator, chair Digitalization Committee

Kay Berkling shared a personal story from running inclusive online micro-credential pilots. She highlighted how trust, flexibility, and determination can make micro-credentials work - even when systems don't. Her programming course attracted people with diverse backgrounds, and from 19 different countries. Many of whom wouldn't be able to join without the online format, collaboration across many universities and projects, or through personal recommendations via emails and word-of-mouth. Grades were issued using Europass and Erasmus tools, with creative use of AI to support the process. Kay's core message: real inclusion starts with human connection. Micro-credentials designed with openness can unlock not just learning, but meaningful collaboration and intercultural exchange.

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The potential of micro-credentialing for us is to change the status quo of learning, where you can learn anytime, anywhere, based on the skills you need.

- Beatriz Pont (IIEP-UNESCO)

Session 3: Labour market and industry partnerships

Investigate how strategic collaborations between industry and academia can bridge the gap between the labour market and formal education. This session will focus on integrating lifelong learning initiatives that are responsive to market needs, ensuring that micro-credentials remain relevant and valuable in a rapidly evolving workforce.

Building high-quality micro-credential programmes for labour market alignment - lessons from UOC's institutional and transnational initiatives

Mitchell Peters

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) - European project lead

Mitchell Peters outlined how UOC is developing a high-quality micro-credential system aligned with labour market needs. Quickly polling the audience showed a overall lower maturity levels of micro-credential implementation and labour market alignment in attending institutions. He then shared a 10-step model that starts with research and ends with scalability. At UOC, a dedicated unit (UPAL) tracks job market trends to design relevant courses. Popular topics include Python, mediation, AI, and emotional intelligence. Peters stressed that success relies on teamwork, cross-departmental collaboration, and smart tech infrastructure. He also introduced UOC's maturity model, which tracks quality, policy, data, and sustainability. His takeaway? Micro-credentials only work if they're built for real-world demand—and if the whole institution is on board.

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Industry partnerships in micro-credentials: Enhancing data literacy and lifelong learning in Higher Education context

Thu Van Le Thi

Nuremberg Institute of Technology Georg Simon Ohm - digital competences officer

Thu Van Le Thi shared how the MC4Data project is boosting data literacy through strong university-industry collaboration. The programme combines modular learning, real-world tools like Python and Power BI, and mentoring from companies such as Siemens and UL Solutions. In this programme, micro-credentials are digital, compact, and built around labour market needs. Students complete practical assessments and a final portfolio to show their skills. Industry partners support every stage—from planning and content creation to internships and feedback. While balancing academic and industry needs is tricky, the benefits include relevance, networking, and strong career preparation. A question raised by the audience was how to best align internal and external know-how when developing micro-credentials with industry partners throughout all stages of the process.



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Academia-industry synergy for micro-credential implementation - insights from the digital skills to succeed in Asia project

Preyansi Mani

German International Cooperation (GIZ) - education and youth advisor

Preyansi Mani presented lessons from the “Digital Skills to Succeed in Asia” (DS2S) project, which equips young people—especially women—with job-ready digital skills. Partner universities in India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Germany developed micro-credentials in AI, data, and digital entrepreneurship. These were co-designed with industry to ensure practical relevance. Preyansi described three strategies for embedding micro-credentials: minimal, partial, or full integration. She reported an incredible high buy-in for micro-credentials in India at HE level. Yet, she also noted challenges exist around quality, recognition, and alignment between academic goals and business needs. Her key points: While degrees are still important, employers focus more on practical skills and competencies. Students want more and more skill-based courses, byte size learning. Micro-credentials should be tools to boost employability, not ends in themselves—and partnerships are essential to making them work. Preyansi pictured an increasingly non-linear career landscape where “the career ladder is dead”. Cross cutting career growth needs multifaceted and flexible reskilling or upskilling.

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SESSION 3

Micro-credentials as resilience builders

Petri Liukkonen

JAMK University of Applied Sciences - service business specialist

Petri Liukkonen shared how a Finnish project helped small and micro-enterprises bounce back after COVID-19. The initiative included 22 of the 24 applied science university. Those universities used micro-courses and one-on-one coaching to support over 280 businesses with skills in digitalisation, sustainability, and adaptability. A national network of universities offered nearly 100 courses tailored to business needs. Companies also joined sparring sessions and inspiration events. Results showed that SMEs gained real, usable skills and saw universities as valuable long-term partners. Petri stressed the need to expand digital training and build policies that support these collaborations. His key point: micro-credentials aren't just about skills—they help businesses thrive.

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For some people, there's not enough time to enter a full degree study programme, so micro-credentials provide a format to acquire quality skills.

- Christiane Butler (FIBAA)

Session 4: Futures and innovation

Discover the transformative impact of emerging technologies—particularly artificial intelligence—on the design and generation of micro-credentials. Experts will share insights into how these advancements are redefining educational frameworks and shaping the future landscape of skills development.

Who needs university anymore? The rise of micro-credentials in the US as a degree alternative

Kathleen deLaski

Education Design Lab - founder and board chair

Kathleen deLaski offered a thought-provoking view of how micro-credentials are disrupting higher education in the US. As college enrolments fall, more learners are turning to shorter, skills-based pathways. Community colleges and industries are designing “micro-pathways” that lead to jobs in tech, healthcare, law, and trades. These often combine soft and technical skills in stackable formats. Kathleen warned that the hardest part isn’t offering courses—it’s building trust and shared standards. Her “stepladder” model calls for visible, certifiable steps from learning to work. The talk challenged educators to ask: is the university degree still the only path forward?

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Imagined futures for micro-credential development - a preliminary conceptual framework

Ádám Tóth

CHARM-EU and Utrecht University - researcher

Ádám Tóth explored how imagined futures can shape the development of micro-credentials. He examined themes like sustainability, active learning, AI, and mobility, drawing on European education policies and GreenComp. Using scenario-building, he presented possible outcomes - from green washed credentials to AI-driven learning hubs. His preferred vision? A "Smart, Sustainable & Borderless Learning Ecosystem" powered by modular education, AI, and seamless mobility. He raised important questions: How do we get there? Will employers value it? Can active learning work at scale? The session challenged participants to think beyond trends and start designing real change.

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Creating AI-support for micro-credential-based learning pathways in ECIU University

Prof. Henri Pirkkalainen

Tampere University, Finland - professor of information and knowledge management

Henri Pirkkalainen presented how ECIU University is using AI to support flexible, personalised learning through micro-credentials. Henri conceded that motivating and engage learners to use the micro-modules is a challenge. He shared ECIU's approach to this challenge: Learners can build unique pathways using micro-modules from across Europe and track them via the Engage platform. But planning a learning path isn't always easy - so ECIU explored AI tools like chatbots and avatars to help. At a student hackathon, teams designed AI assistants for learning guidance, course selection, and career planning. Henri also highlighted challenges like keeping up with fast-evolving tools and ensuring relevant data access. The message: AI won't replace human support, but it can make lifelong learning smoother and smarter.

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Session 5: Interoperability

Explore the challenges and opportunities in upscaling digital credentialing models to achieve greater interoperability. Participants will discuss strategies for aligning diverse credential systems, paving the way for seamless recognition of skills and qualifications across educational institutions and industry sectors.

Credentials are the backbone of modern education technology - unifying the micro-credentials landscape

Tim Couper

1EdTech Consortium - chief architect and associate CTO

Tim Couper explained how digital credentials can connect diverse learning pathways - formal education, vocational training, and self-paced learning. He showed how 1EdTech standards, like Open Badges, CASE, and Edu-API, support global recognition of micro-credentials. These tools ensure credentials are secure, verifiable, and linked to real learning outcomes. Tim stressed that micro-credentials require a new kind of interoperability - one that bridges systems, skill frameworks, and even continents. He highlighted collaboration with the European Learning Model (ELM) and projects like QualityLink to align global data flows. His key point: credentials are the infrastructure we need to build a learner-centred future.

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Micro-credentials under the microscope

Ildiko Mazar

NTT DATA, Inc. - solutions specific knowledge leader

Ildiko Mazar offered a clear-eyed look at the challenges and progress in micro-credential interoperability. She showed how aligning standards like Open Badges, W3C Verifiable Credentials, ELMO, and the European Digital Credentials for Learning is complex - but essential. Ildiko highlighted mapping efforts by Credential Engine, SURF, and 1EdTech, plus ontology work from QualityLink. Her message? Micro-credentials must be readable by both humans and machines, trusted, portable, and transparent. She reminded the audience that while the tech is tricky, the goal is simple: to empower learners and employers with credentials that work across systems and borders.

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Putting micro-credentials into a macro perspective

Peter Leijnse

SURF and Npuls - enterprise-architect

Peter Leijnse challenged the audience to step back and see micro-credentials not just as tools - but as part of a much bigger educational system. He compared three key perspectives: education, infrastructure, and information systems. From flexible learning paths to digital wallets and evolving tech standards, each lens offers different strengths and tensions. Peter argued that better understanding between these groups can unlock more value and help us build systems that truly support lifelong learning. His question to the room: where do you sit in this ecosystem - and how can we work together to connect the pieces?

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Edubadges - shaping the future of micro-credentials in Dutch higher education

Rob van der Werff
SURF - product manager

Frans Ward
SURF - technical product manager and project leader

Rob van der Werff and Frans Ward showcased how the Edubadges platform is helping to standardise digital credentials across Dutch higher education. Since 2020, it's supported over 20,000 credentials with features like GDPR compliance, learner-managed identities (eduID), and micro-credentials aligned to EU frameworks. They've added 17 metadata extensions to fit European standards like ELM and the Bologna tools. But challenges remain - like semantic interoperability between systems and credential models. Their message: don't wait for perfect solutions. Get involved now, test new tools like Eduwallet, and help shape an open-source, future-ready credential ecosystem.

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Velocert - gateway to interoperable and legally valid digital credentials

Melita Gulja
Netis d.o.o. - head of communication

Melita Gulja introduced Velocert, a platform designed to help institutions issue digital credentials that meet EU legal and technical standards. With a user-friendly dashboard, Velocert guides institutions from data entry to signing, sending, and storing credentials in Europass in just minutes. It also ensures security, data ownership, and trust. Melita showed how the tool simplifies complex processes while offering students instant, secure access to their achievements. Her pitch was clear: digital credentials must be seamless, legal, and learner-centred - and Velocert delivers.

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Session 6: Quality assurance

Delve into the development of open trust frameworks designed to ensure that micro-credentials are robust tools for empowerment. Experts will examine quality assurance mechanisms and standardisation efforts that help build confidence in these credentials, ultimately supporting their recognition and acceptance across various sectors.

Quality assurance of micro-credentials - from pilot project to large-scale offer in the Dutch context

Cora van Haaren

Delft University of Technology - project manager lifelong learning

Clelia Paraluppi

Delft University of Technology - quality assurance officer

Cora van Haaren and Clelia Paraluppi shared how TU Delft and the Dutch higher education sector scaled micro-credentials from a national pilot to an integrated offer. Using a centralised QA framework, TU Delft ensures each micro-credential (3–30 ECTS) meets standards on learning outcomes, assessment, and delivery. The QA model includes expert review, internal evaluation, and strategic alignment. What began as ad-hoc is now a process-driven approach supported by dedicated staff and national policy. Their advice? Keep quality high - but practical. Scale carefully, involve stakeholders, and make it sustainable.

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Creating decentralised micro-credentials models and common quality assurance policies for INGENIUM Alliance

Tiina Parkkonen

Xamk, INGENIUM European University - project manager

Tiina Parkkonen and Cai Weaver shared how the INGENIUM Alliance built a decentralised but quality-assured model for micro-credentials across 10 European universities. The alliance defined micro-credentials as stackable, flexible learning units designed for both students and professionals. They created three models: realigned, jointly-developed, and decentralised. Each partner follows shared QA processes - such as a descriptor form, peer review, and branding - while keeping local procedures. They also set up an "Education Lab" for proposals and a pedagogical support team. Their takeaway: with clear standards and trust, decentralised micro-credentials can work across borders while meeting local needs.

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Cai Weaver

Xamk - language specialist



Exploring the role of qualifications frameworks and existing approaches to quality assurance to build trust in micro-credentials

Órla Barry

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) - head of qualifications information and learning opportunities division

Órla Barry offered a deep dive into how Ireland is using its National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to support micro-credentials. She explained that micro-credentials are already a familiar part of the Irish system, often as minor or special-purpose awards. QQI's streamlined validation process allows small courses to be recognised quickly - if they link to larger qualifications. A Green Paper (due June 2025) will explore how to stack, level and assure micro-credentials fairly. Órla stressed that trust depends on more than the provider - it's built through a solid, transparent system that learners understand and believe in.

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SESSION 6

Micro-credentials in European quality assurance for higher education

Aleksandra Zhivkovikj

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) - policy and project officer

Aleksandra Zhivkovikj explained how DEQAR, the European database of quality assurance results, is now tracking micro-credentials alongside full degrees. She shared that most micro-credentials are under 20 ECTS and are being reviewed by a growing number of QA agencies. DEQAR now includes courses from both higher education institutions and other providers. These are checked using the ESG standards and show up in the same trusted space as full degrees. Aleksandra highlighted how DEQAR connects with other tools like Europass and the European Digital Credentials for Learning. Her key message: for micro-credentials to gain trust, quality assurance must be consistent, integrated and visible.

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I very much hope that micro-credentials will really filter through across the whole lifelong learning of people, allowing them to be more mobile on the labour market.

- Ildiko Mazar (NTT Data)



Session 7: Sharing practices I

The Dutch approach to micro-credentials: Lessons from the past and challenges for the future

Bram van der Kruk

Npuls - strategic coordinator and project leader

Bart Lamboo

*Npuls - leader transformation hub agile
and efficiently organised education*

Bram van der Kruk and Bart Lamboo presented how the Netherlands has taken a structured, collaborative approach to implementing micro-credentials across higher and vocational education. Pilots involving over 60 institutions developed a national quality framework based on EU and Bologna tools. Edubadges - a shared digital platform - ensures consistency and trust. Micro-credentials target labour market needs and are typically 3-30 ECTS (or 240 hours in VET). Bram and Bart shared that Quality Assurance is a key component. Peer reviews and learning communities keep quality strong while institutions test smaller formats and new delivery models. Their key message: trust, shared infrastructure, and sector-wide collaboration and knowledge sharing are vital to scaling up micro-credentials.

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Policy pathways to implementing higher education micro-credentials in Slovenia

Dr. Borut Stojilković

Ministry of Higher Education, Slovenia
- undersecretary

Borut Stojilković and Mojmir Flisek pictured an environment where people need to gain more knowledge. They found the need to go digital to close the gap to meet the needs of the labour market. The speakers outlined how Slovenia is embedding micro-credentials into its national education system. With support from the Recovery and Resilience Plan, 38 pilot projects involving all public universities launched over 70 new micro-credentials. These short courses (0.5–9 ECTS) link closely to market needs. Borut and Mojmir shared how a national working group shaped legislation that defines micro-credentials in law, ensuring institutions retain autonomy while external bodies uphold trust. The journey includes quality loops, institutional evaluations, and plans for a micro-credentials register. Their conclusion: micro-credentials are now central to Slovenia's strategy for employability and lifelong learning.

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Mojmir Flisek

Ministry of Higher Education, Slovenia
- policy officer



Empowering adult learning - integrating micro-credentials into individual learning accounts - the RALExILA project

Stefan Jahnke

Knowledge Innovation Centre (KIC) - policy consultant

Stefan Jahnke introduced the work done to create a European model for adult learning registries that is ready to be linked to Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs). Through the RALExILA project, piloted in Cyprus, Croatia, Malta and Slovakia, the system tracks entitlements and learning opportunities for Adult Learners. The registry model is based on micro-credential formats, recording learning outcomes, workload, assessment, quality assurance and more. The ILAs include entitlements like funding, vouchers or credits tied to the learner's profile that are typically provided by governments to boost both employability and personal development. The approach to create a modular European model for this will help harmonise national adult learning registers, supporting adults to access relevant courses easily and help governments take better data-driven decisions on funding and recognising adult learning. The key message: a shared digital infrastructure is the future of adult learning.

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🔗 Explore RALExILA

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Session 8: Sharing practices II

Building trust in education and employment with micro-credentials

Atiyeh Ghane

University of Ljubljana - project manager

Atiyeh Ghane presented EDUxCERT, a secure platform designed to connect learners, educators, and employers using verifiable digital credentials. The platform supports GDPR and W3C standards and integrates with the EUDI wallet for identity verification. EDUxCERT allows students to manage micro-credentials, build skill-based CVs, and connect with mentors and job opportunities. Educators can design, award, and track micro-credentials, while employers match candidates to jobs based on verified competencies. A pilot at the University of Ljubljana showed strong student satisfaction. Atiyeh's message: trust, usability, and interoperability are key to building a digital credentialing system that works for everyone.

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Open badges and gamification in pedagogical context

Denes Zarka

Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) - director Institute of Continuing Engineering Education

Dénes Zarka shared insights from the DISCO SMS project, which explores how open badges and gamification can boost learner motivation. He introduced DIScoPLAYER, a multilingual badge platform supporting stackable digital credentials across education sectors. Badges reward achievements beyond formal outcomes - like participation, effort, and peer recognition. Stackability allows learners to build “meta-badges” by collecting smaller ones. The platform uses competition, leaderboards, and notifications to engage different learner types. Dénes argued that badges aren't just for assessment - they're tools for motivation, progression, and personalisation in digital learning environments.



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Making micro-credentials matter - the World Alliance for Microcredentials Foundation (WAMf)-connecting advocates in practice and implementation

Stefano Tirati

Learningdigital - CEO

Stefano Tirati introduced the World Alliance for Microcredentials (WAM), a global initiative aiming to standardise and scale micro-credentials across sectors. WAM brings together experts, institutions, and companies from over 20 countries to support lifelong learning and employability. The alliance works on research, policy, quality frameworks, and global standards. It also runs capacity-building programmes, creates technical specs, and advocates for recognition of micro-credentials across borders. Stefano invited attendees to join WAM and help shape a shared ecosystem where micro-credentials are trusted and meaningful worldwide.



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10 things I learned about micro-credentials

Anthony F. Camilleri

Knowledge Innovation Centre (KIC) - co-founder and senior partner

Anthony F. Camilleri shared 10 things he learned about micro-credentials during the Micro-credential Masterclass 2025 (MCMC). He noted a shift away from asking what micro-credentials are, towards how we can use them. He highlighted key issues like unclear learning outcomes, the slow take-up of stackability, and the still-uncertain role of universities. While adult and lifelong learning sectors are leading the way, quality assurance and technical standards are slowly aligning. Anthony also called for more focus on how we assess learning. Though AI hasn't changed everything yet, the potential is clear. His honest take gave the audience much to think about.

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Closing
panel

10 THINGS LEARNED

from MCMC2025

- 1

The conversation has evolved from defining micro-credentials to focusing on their practical applications ("We have stopped asking 'What are micro-credentials' and started asking 'How can we use them?'")
- 2

Despite decades of educational theory, there are still challenges in writing effective learning outcomes and competencies ("60 years after Bloom, we still can't write learning outcomes and competencies")
- 3

Quality assurance frameworks for micro-credentials are making progress ("Quality Assurance is increasingly being solved")
- 4

AI has potential to impact micro-credentials but hasn't fully transformed the field yet ("AI hasn't changed everything... yet")
- 5

Adult and lifelong learning sectors are adopting micro-credentials at a significant scale ("Adult & Lifelong Learning are adopting micro-credentials at scale")
- 6

Universities remain undecided about their strategic approach to micro-credentials ("Universities have not decided their role with respect to micro-credentials")
- 7

Official recognition provides value, but the stackability of micro-credentials hasn't gained widespread traction ("Official Status is valuable.... but stackability hasn't taken off")
- 8

Micro-credentials are primarily being used for professional development rather than as pathways to education ("Micro-Credentials are tools for upskilling rather than tools for access")
- 9

Assessment methods for micro-credentials need more attention and development ("We need to talk much more about assessment")
- 10

Technical standards for microcredentials are becoming more unified across different platforms and systems ("Technical Standards are Converging")

Panellists

Isabel Ladron Arroyo
European Commission - policy officer

Levente Varga
European Students Union - executive committee member

Janina van Hees
CHARM-EU European University Alliance - project manager

Aleksandar Šušnjar
EQAR - director

During the closing panel, moderated by Stefan Jahnke from the Knowledge Innovation Centre, the four panelists provided their perspectives on the 10 reflections on Micro-credentials Anthony presented. With their diverse perspectives, representing a variety of stakeholder views, they sparked discussions with the audience. Through an engaging exchange between the panel and audience members, everyone had the chance for some final reflections and to look into the future for Micro-credentials, the next MCMC and lessons they will take home from the MCMC 2025.

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Personal reflection

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Building the future of learning together

A personal reflection on micro-credentials and community

Thank you to everyone who made MCMC 2025 such a success.

Zagreb welcomed us with open arms. Algebra Bernays University provided the perfect space. Our main sponsor Velocert and collaborator QualityLink made it all possible.

The real magic came from you - the participants. Over two days, we heard from experts across four continents. We explored recognition systems, learned how micro-credentials help students and businesses, and saw new approaches to quality assurance.

What struck me most was how the conversation has evolved. Three years ago, we asked “What are micro-credentials?” Now we ask “How can we use them better?” That shift shows real progress.

Challenges remain. Universities haven’t clarified their role yet. Stackability hasn’t taken off. Assessment needs attention. But we’re making headway on quality assurance and technical standards.

The future looks bright. Adult learning sectors are adopting micro-credentials at scale. AI offers new possibilities. Digital tools are making credentials more trusted.

Thank you for being part of this journey. The connections you made and projects you’re building will shape the future of learning.

See you at the MCMC 2026.

Anthony F. Camilleri

Co-founder and Senior Partner

Knowledge Innovation Centre



Looking ahead: MCMC 2026

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Amsterdam awaits: Supercharging the micro-credential ecosystem

Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Date: 23-27 February 2026

The conversation is shifting. We're no longer asking if micro-credentials will scale. We're asking how they can deliver on their promise.

MCMC 2026 will explore how digital tools are supercharging the entire ecosystem. From design to delivery. From learner support to labour market relevance.

We'll examine how emerging technologies are reshaping learning itself. Not just the format, but its quality, equity, and recognition. We'll explore how to co-create trusted micro-credentials that are rigorous and inclusive.

Amsterdam will host our biggest masterclass yet. Expect sessions on AI-powered learning pathways, blockchain verification, and inclusive design. We'll bring together experts from education, technology, policy, and industry.

The micro-credential revolution is just beginning. Join us in Amsterdam to help shape what comes next.

[Sign up and get notified about updates for next year's MCMC 2026.](#)



