

# **Micro-credentials and Bologna Key Commitments**

**State of play in the European Higher Education  
Area**



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MICROBOL QF & ECTS Working Group - 27/01/2021



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# Context of the study and data collection

- **Aim of the survey:** gain a picture on the state-of-play on micro-credentials in different member states of the European Higher Education Area and encouraging national discussion
- **Target:** members of the BFUG as well as the nominated representatives in the MICROBOL working groups
- **Period:** 15 October 2020 to 25 November 2020
- **Respondents:** 34 countries participated in the survey

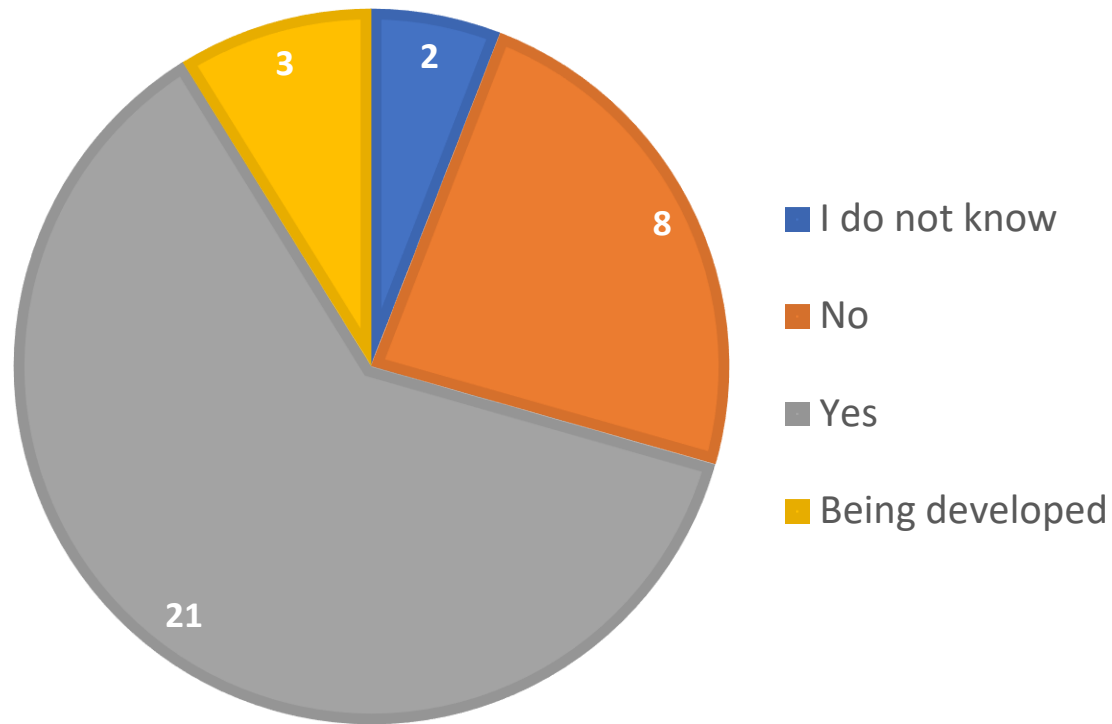


# Section 1

## Investigating the use of micro-credentials

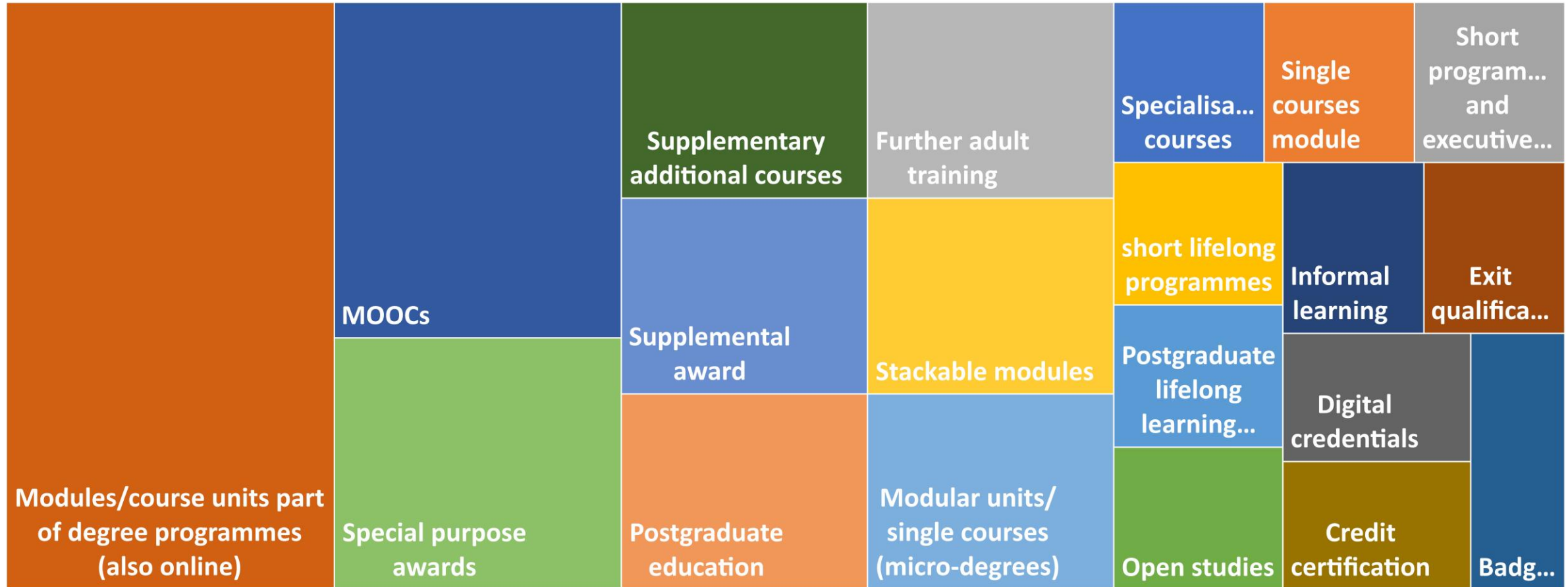
- Overview of micro-credentials offered or being developed
- Regulation of micro-credentials at national level

# Countries that offer or are developing micro-credentials

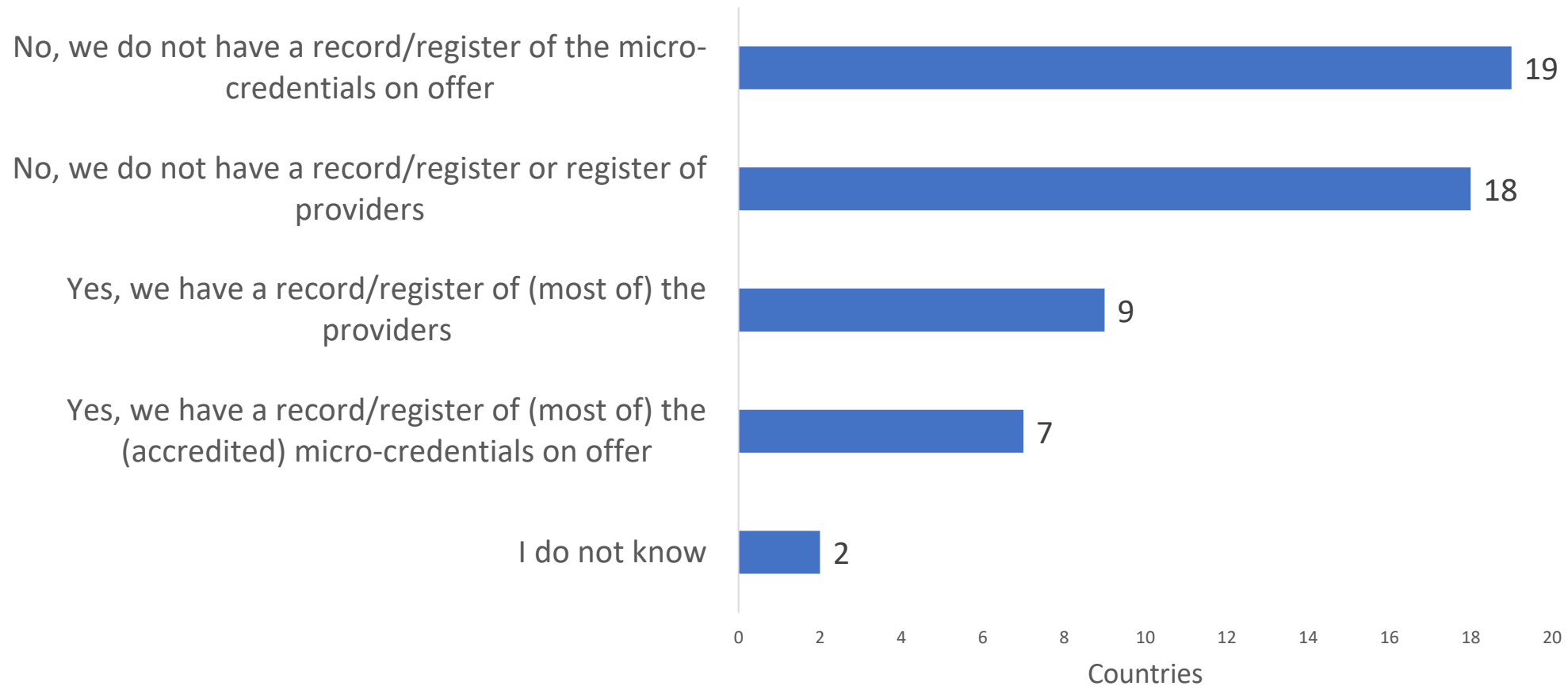


- Offered: 21 countries
- Being developed: 3 countries
- Not offered/being developed: 8 countries

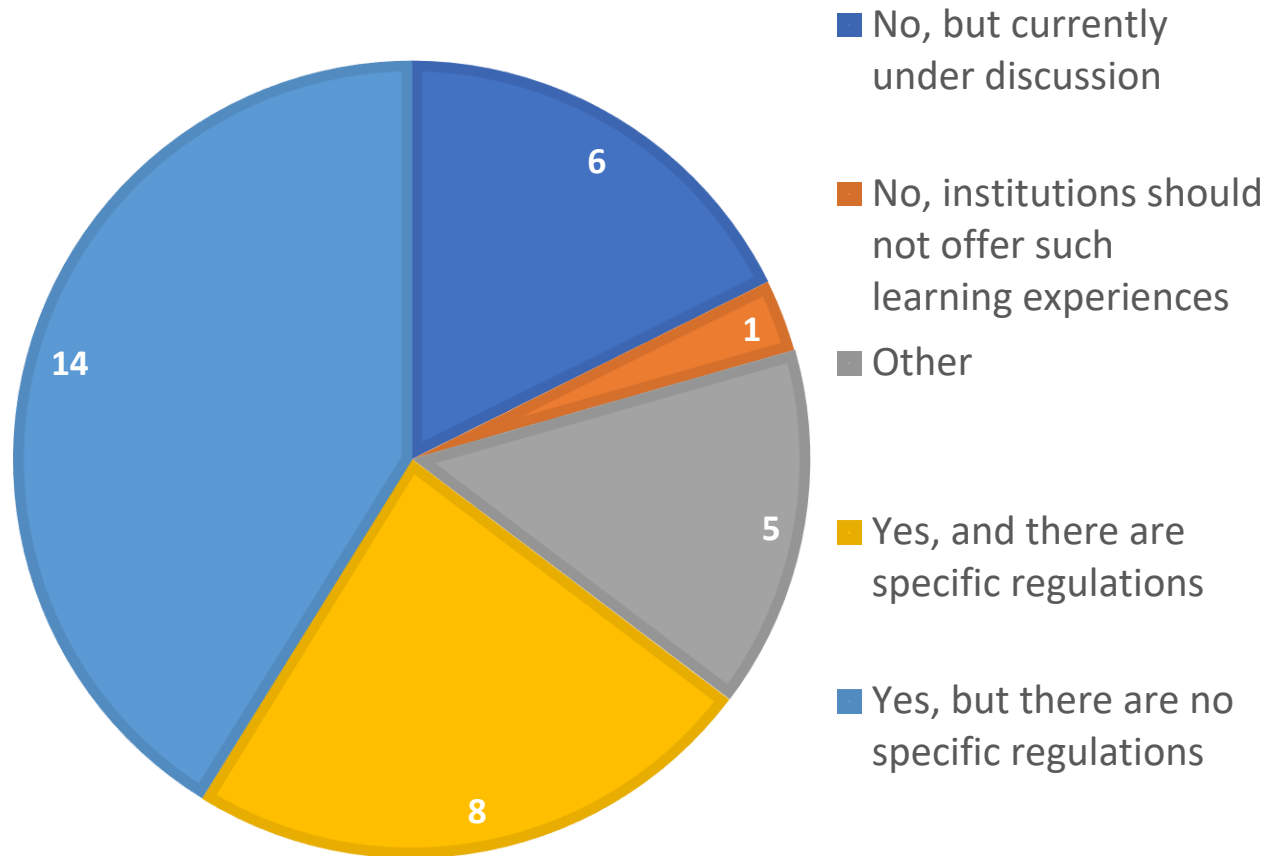
# Examples of micro-credentials offered/recognised by HEIs



# Official record or register of micro-credentials and providers



# Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (I)



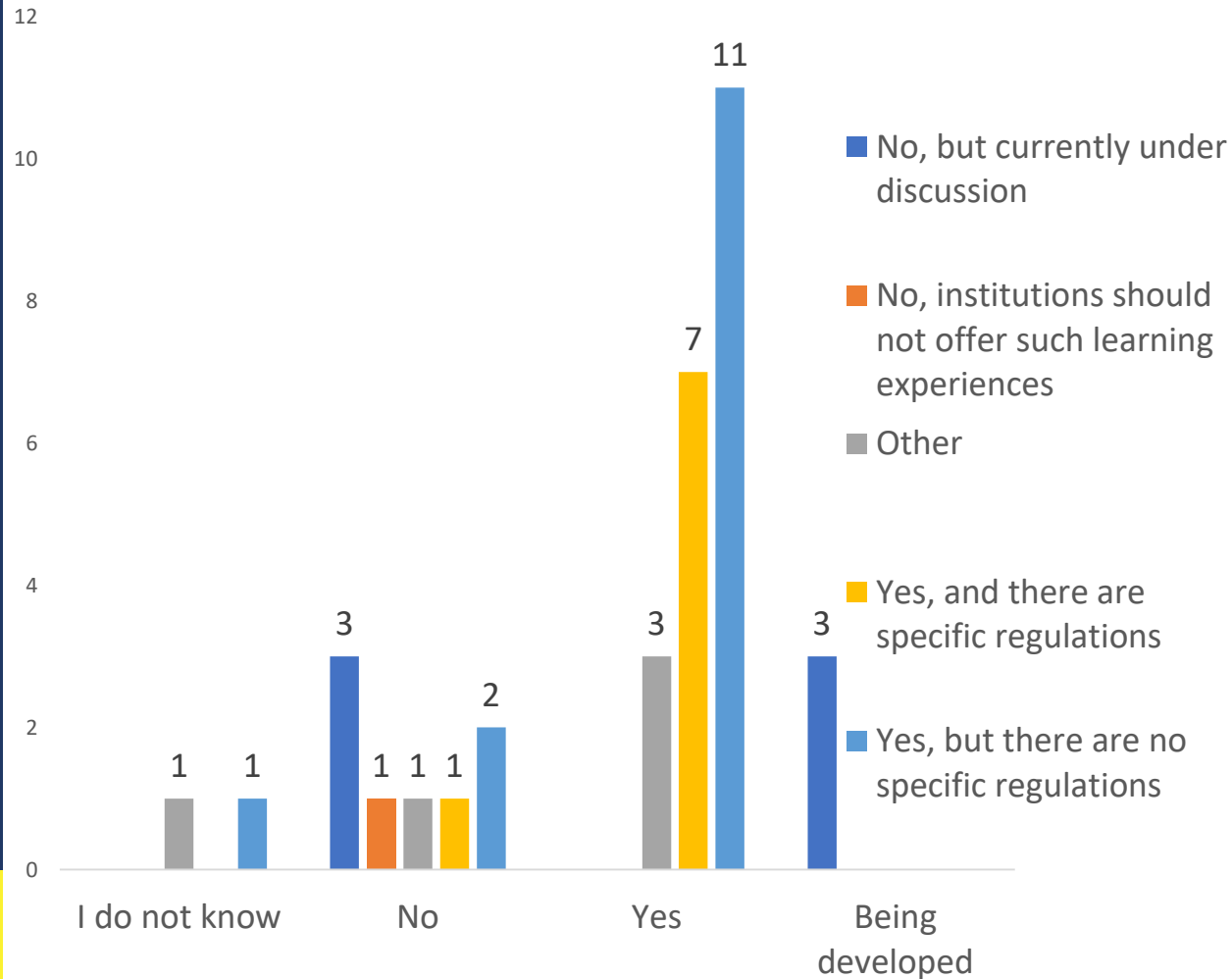
- Regulated/allowed at national level: 22 countries
  - Specific regulations: 8
  - No specific regulations: 14
- Under discussion: 6 countries
- Institutions should not offer MCs: 1 country



# Regulation of micro-credentials at national level (II)

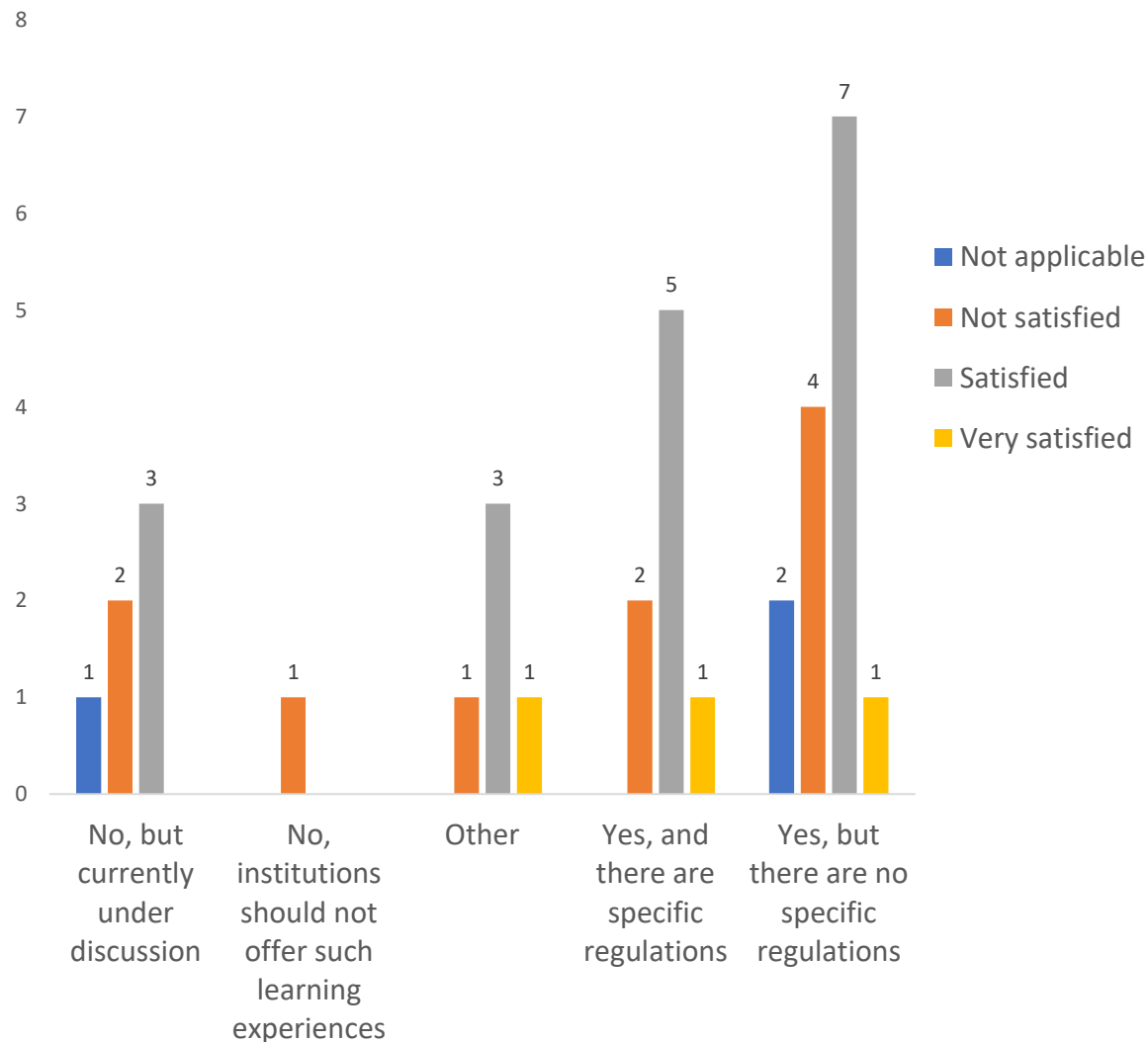
| Answer                                 | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>No specific regulations</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modular units/single courses within a study programme</li><li>• Lifelong learning, further and adult education, general postgraduate education, continuing education, specialisation programmes</li><li>• Recognition of prior learning (of non-formal learning)</li><li>• Recognition of credits obtained in the framework of any credentials</li></ul>                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Specific regulations</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinction between degree and award</li><li>• Regulations on adult education and lifelong learning</li><li>• Elements that can correspond to MC<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A course unit within the framework of adult higher education</li><li>• A course unit followed in single modules delivered by higher education institutions</li><li>• “Continuing Education” programmes</li></ul></li><li>• Regulations on recognition of extra-curricular prior learning</li></ul> |
| <b>Countries should not provide MC</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MC should be incorporated into legislation on lifelong learning and integrated into regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Other</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No provisions in the field</li><li>• Lifelong learning provision</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

# Cross analysis: micro-credentials offered/being developed and national legislation



- 21 countries offering MC
  - 11 Regulated at national level
  - 7 Specific regulations
  - 3 Under discussion
- 8 countries NOT offering MC
  - 3 Under discussion
  - 2 Regulated at national level
  - 1 Specific regulations
  - 1 Institutions should not offer MC
  - 1 Other

# Cross analysis: regulation of micro-credentials and satisfaction with the current uptake



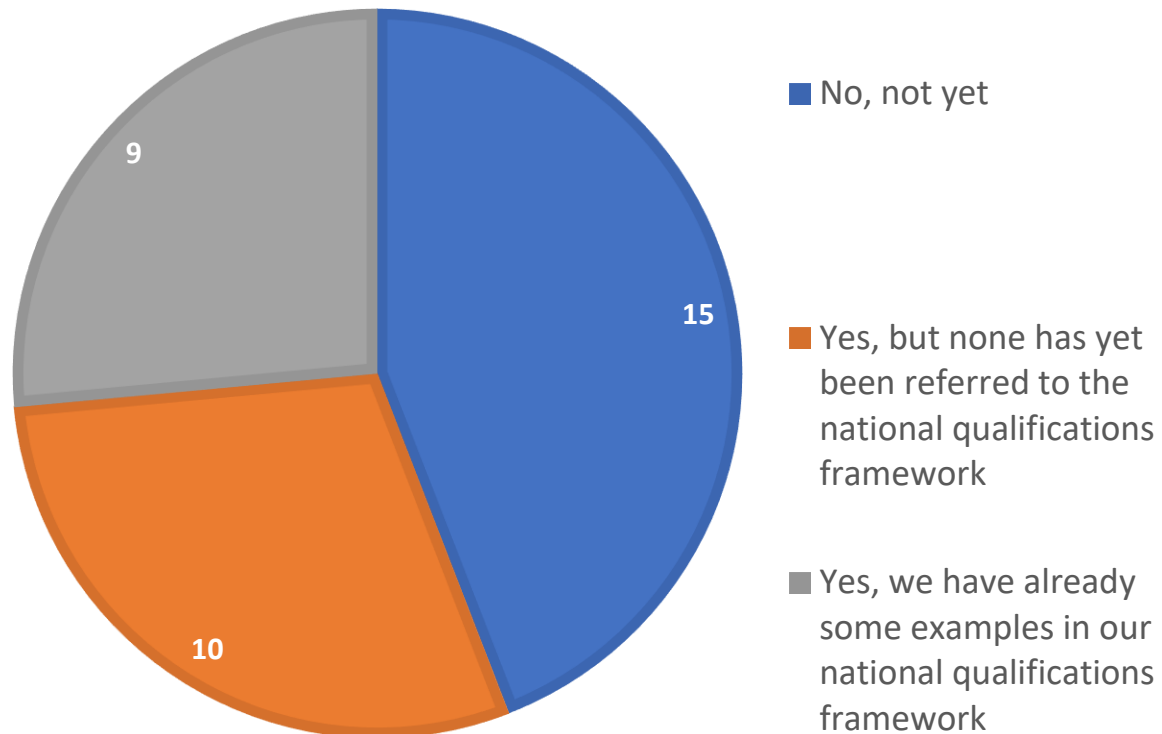
- Countries having regulations
  - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action
  - 2 very satisfied
  - 4 little interest
  - 2 not a national priority
- Countries in which regulation is under discussion
  - most of them appreciate the increasing national interest and action

# Section 2

# Applying Bologna tools to micro-credentials

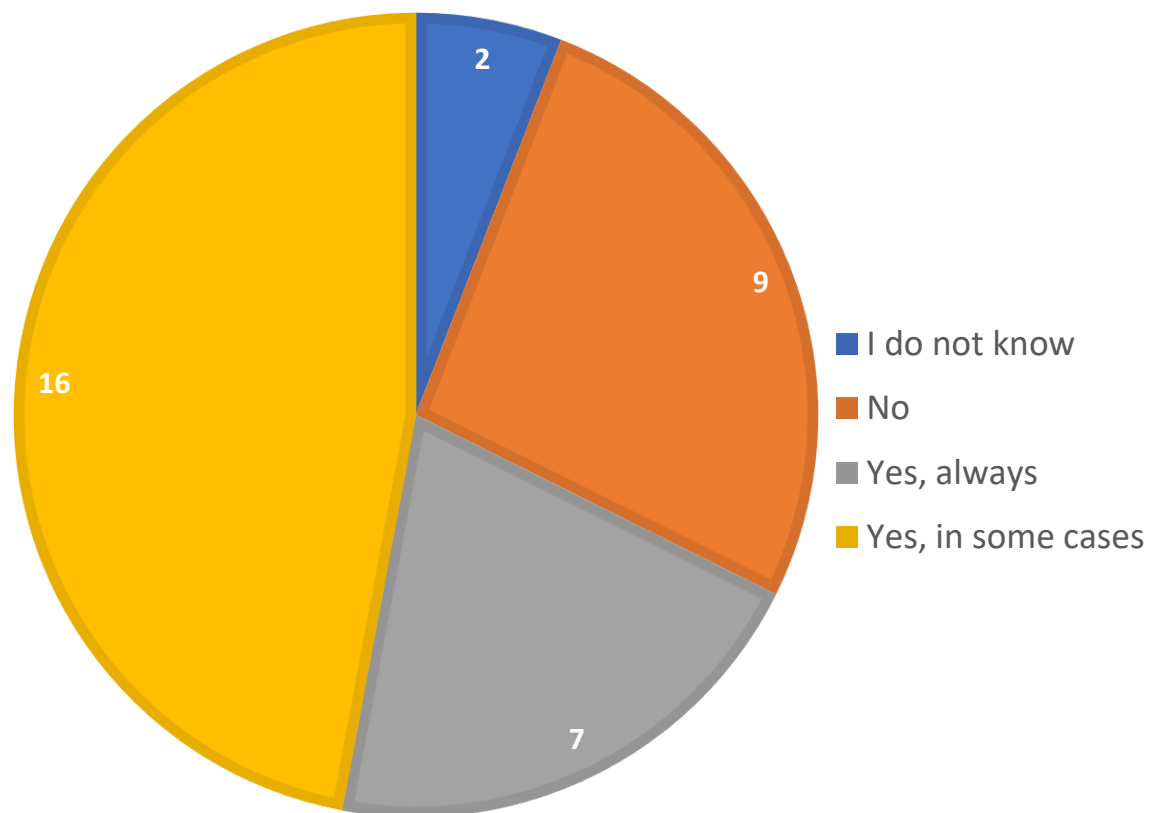
- QF & ECTS

# National framework open to micro-credentials



- **Open to MCs: 10 countries**
  - At any level
  - 5, 6 and 7
  - 6
  - MCs awarded by HEIs can be referred to QF
  - Full degree referred to QF
  - Single module within a full degree (HEIs) can be referred to QF
- **Some examples of MCs referred to QF: 9 countries**
  - 1 to 7
  - 2 to 8
  - 2 to 7
  - 5 to 8
  - HE level
  - **Not yet: 15 countries**

# Micro-credential expressed in ECTS



- **MCs expressed in ECTS in some cases**

- 2-4-6 ECTS
- 4-6 ECTS
- Usually less than 10 ECTS
- 3-20 ECTS (module/single course within a full degree)
- 3-25 ECTS
- 20-50 ECTS
- 1-60 ECTS
- Maximum 30 ECTS
- Awarded by HEIs 13-30 ECTS (less frequently 0-6 ECTS. Continuing education 10 ECTS)

- **MCs always expressed in ECTS**

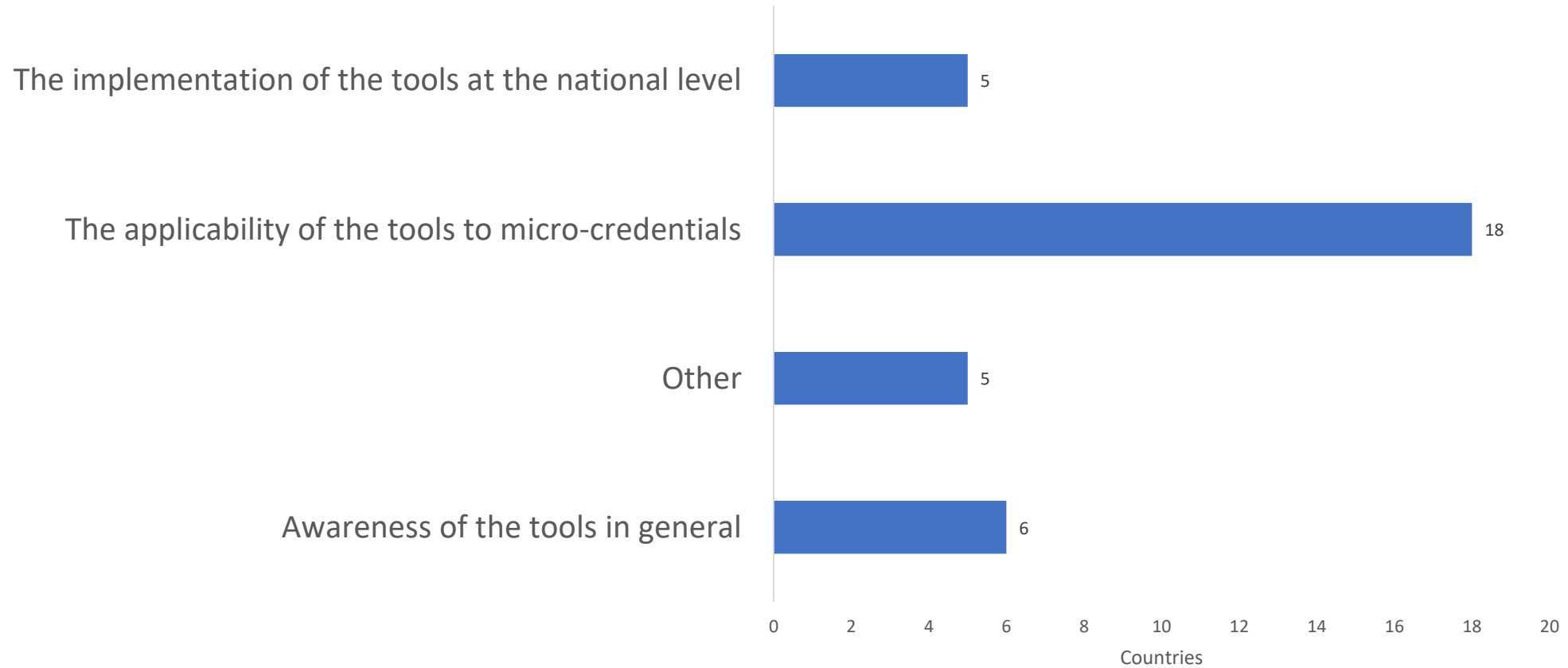
- 1 to 5 ECTS;
- 3 to 6 ECTS;
- from 3 to 36 ECTS;
- 7.5 credits, 15 and 30 credits (for single courses within a full study programme in HE);
- 20-30 ECTS;
- 2-70 ECTS;
- from less than 180 to less than 30 ECTS.



# **Section 3**

## **Challenges regarding the application of Bologna tools to micro-credentials**

# Biggest challenges to apply Bologna Key Commitments to micro-credentials





# Points raised

- Need for common understanding and terminology, and comparability and transparency of information;
- Tools should apply first and foremost to the full degrees, and then may be applied to micro-credentials;
- Key challenge: the adoption of the Common Framework;
- MCs already offered by a broad range of non formal providers without the use of Bologna tools (ECTS, NFQ, QA, etc.) and employers/individuals appear to accept these. Challenge in moving from this situation to a more “regulated” environment;
- Challenge not lie in the tools but rather in the cooperation to be developed between the different providers of education, vocational training and enterprises;
- Leave enough flexibility in definitions incl. number of ECTS for MS to decide;
- Relationship between ECTS and learning outcomes;
- MC refers both to the training and to the qualifications awarded, whereas the qualifications framework refers to qualifications NQF (training ≠ credential);
- Minimum size of ECTS to be assigned to a level in the QF?
- What if QF-EHEA and EQF are not integrated at a national level?



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**Thanks for your attention!**



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