**ESCI Day in Cyprus, 25 September 2025, University of Cyprus**

**Synthesis Report**



The **1st ESCI Day in Cyprus** was held at the University of Cyprus on **25 September 2025**. The agenda included keynote messages, policy updates, a panel discussion, and practical workshops on the EWP Dashboard and ESC tools. The event aimed at sharing the latest policy updates, provided hands-on training, promoted support for smooth digital transitions in higher education, encouraged collaboration, and strengthened Cyprus’ role in the ESCI. The overall vision is to create a unified European digital student identity that simplifies mobility, enhances student experiences and fosters cross-border cooperation.

The Deputy Head of Unit Higher Education - DG EAC, **Mr. Stefan Zotti,** greeted the event and emphasized the importance of joint efforts in advancing the implementation of the EWP, highlighting Cyprus as a leading example in this area. He also expressed his hope that similar success will be achieved with the rollout and use of the European Student Card.

The DG EAC Policy Officer, **Mr. Victor Aguilar Mendez** introduced the general framework of ESCI and outlined its three main components, emphasizing that implementing the Initiative is a commitment required of all ECHE holders. The ESC aims to establish a common European framework, ensuring students can access services not only during Erasmus mobilities but also whenever they are abroad. Digitalisation has shown strong growth, with EWP exchanges rising from 8% in 2021/22 to 67% in 2024/25, and IIAs from 23% in 2023 to 45% in 2025. Cyprus stands out as a top performer in EWP, achieving a 100% digitalisation rate in 2024—well above the European Commission’s 95% target—which is expected to maintain in 2025. While national figures show full digitalisation, variations exist across institutions, with some exceeding 100% (compensating for others with lower adoption). This highlights the need for targeted support to sustain progress.

He also clarified that the ESC is not a new card but rather an upgrade of existing student cards, with common European visual and technical elements, adaptable to both physical and digital formats. This ensures students’ status is easily recognised across Europe. He noted that most EU countries, not just Cyprus, face challenges in implementation, and stressed the importance of addressing barriers preventing Cypriot HEIs from issuing ESCs, particularly those linked to the ESC-R.

Looking ahead to the end of the current Erasmus+ programming period, he highlighted priorities such as consolidating and improving existing processes, ensuring service continuity, and scaling up through user- and provider-driven consultation. Finally, he mentioned Cyprus’ role as an ESCI Champion (with UCY currently serving as Champion) and announced the upcoming ESCI Community Space, which will showcase Champions’ testimonials and resources.

During the Panel discussion, IDEP Director, **Dr. Stylianos Mavromoustakos,** highlighted that Cyprus ranks among the top countries for EWP digitalisation in Erasmus+, maintaining one of the highest rates in the last 2 years. This success, he mentioned, can be attributed to several factors: strong support and open communication channels with beneficiaries, positioning EWP as a tool supporting the green priority, promoting digitalisation in parallel with the NA’s own digital transition, ensuring free access to EWP services, and fostering peer support through exchanges with other users. To further strengthen this achievement, targeted support will be provided to the few institutions that have not yet reached the 95% threshold. In contrast, he mentioned that no Cypriot HEI has issued ESCs so far, despite some being connected to the ESC-Router. This gap can be explained by several factors: the NA lacks sufficient centralized information on the ESC roll-out and in combination with limited resources, it becomes difficult for officers to provide proper support; and, until recently, no events on ESCI had been organized in Cyprus, leaving the NA without the knowledge base to advise institutions effectively.

The Head of the Mobility Office of the University of Cyprus (ESCI Champion), **Ms Emma Zeniou,** commenting on the impact of EWP on Student Mobility Management, mentioned that UCY, as the institution with the highest number of outgoing student mobilities in Cyprus, has experienced significant benefits from EWP. The shift has reduced paperwork, supported environmental sustainability, and centralized all documents, enabling faster and more efficient information exchange in daily management. In addition, she mentioned that UCYis expecting that in the future key priorities will include strengthening Erasmus international actions, advancing the rollout of the European Student Card (ESCI), enhancing support for international mobility, and expanding integration—particularly in areas such as nominations and Transcripts of Records (ToR).

In addition, Senior Project Manager - EUF (EWP+ Consortium), **Ms. Daiga Kuzmane,** expressed the view that Cyprus’ experience shows that success relies on shared values and a common vision. Stronger communication, fostering a change in mindset, and ensuring an early and persistent start are key elements that can be scaled or adapted to similar higher education systems across Europe. Furthermore, she mentioned that the rollout of nominations and ToRs is already underway, with implementation in progress. The next steps involve more advanced testing and system improvements to ensure better quality assurance and minimize technical issues. In addition, workshops are planned for mid-October to support institutions and facilitate a smoother adoption process.

Finally, Project Lead for the ESC Project, **Ms. Jasmine Stephanie Castro,** restated that the European Student Card (ESC) is often mistaken for a brand-new card, but in fact, it consists of common visual and technical elements added to existing student cards, making student authentication seamless across Europe. For universities, incorporating these elements is simple and flexible: they can be applied to both physical and digital cards and issued either centrally or in a decentralized manner, depending on institutional needs. For Cypriot universities, the key is to leverage this flexibility and integrate the ESC elements into their current systems to facilitate smooth adoption. In addition, she mentioned that withnearly two million ESCs already issued across Europe, the benefits are clear. The card provides a common European standard that allows students to access services immediately—whether at home or abroad—without the need for a new ID each time they move. It enhances security for both students and institutions, while also fostering a sense of belonging to a wider European higher education community.

**Conclusion and Wrap Up**

Progress is being made in advancing digitalization, and while challenges are still present in the effective use of the tools, the process is strengthened by a shared sense of community. The implementation of ESCI, driven by the European Commission and key stakeholders, highlights the importance of collaboration. Crucially, without testing, validation, and continuous feedback, the tools cannot be fully optimized, and the process of digital transformation cannot be effectively facilitated or improved.