VIETSCH FOUNDATION – REPORT III

Project: Expanding the EMREX Network to EU and beyond

This is a report of activities in the project Expanding the EMREX Network to EU and beyond.

Report time period: December 5th 2020 – February 12th 2021.

The project is divided into two parts:

1. Industrializing the EMREX Registry and reviewing the ELMO standard.
2. Dissemination of EMREX services and building the EMREX brand.

Industrializing the EMREX Registry and reviewing the ELMO standard – Final Report

The first part of the project "Industrializing the EMREX Registry and reviewing the ELMO standard" was originally supposed to last until December 31st 2020 but due to delays it was prolonged until the beginning of 2021. Part 1 of the project had three goals

1. Organize on-line teleconferences and webinars or if possible on-site technical workshops.
2. Carry research on how to change the standard format ELMO to fit new requirements and prepare draft specification of the new version.
3. Give technical help to potential/new members of the network.

It also has the following expected outcomes

1. Technical specification of the new EMREX registry. This document will be the basis for future development of EMREG. The document will be posted publicly at emrex.eu.
2. Specification of the new ELMO version. ELMO versions are described in GitHub, information on changes is sent to the subscribers. The main addition to this version will be the possibility for ENIC-NARIC organizations to submit results of recognition to the EMREX network. The document will be posted publicly in GitHub. This way it will also become available for reference to other parties.

This is the final report on the first part of the project.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic there was no chance of organizing on-site workshops. However, several on-line meetings were held first restricted to parties in charge of preparing the proposal for the expected outcomes and define the requirements for those proposals. In January this work culminated with a webinar for the entire EMREX network and other interested parties to present and discuss the proposals.

Outcome 1: Technical specification of the new EMREX registry.

European Commission's European Student Card Initiative requires HEIs to exchange more data digitally and to make information more accessible to students. HEIs are expected to use the Erasmus Without Paper infrastructure to exchange date. By 2022 it will be compulsory to exchange inter-institutional agreements digitally.

Increased number of student mobilities and virtual mobilities will significantly increase the number of transcripts that will have to be issued and sent to students/partner HEIs. Therefore, it is essential to simplify the process and to lessen the burden on IROs/Student Offices or other units issuing transcripts. The EMREX network has within this project prepared a technical solution to support this process and data transfers with a shared register for EMREX and Erasmus Without Paper infrastructure. The technical specifications are published and can be found here https://emrex.eu/2021-technical-meeting/

Outcome 2: Specification of the new ELMO version.

Work with ELMO standard has been ongoing and a proposal was presented at the technical webinar in January. The proposal included support to adding attachments containing digitally signed Diplomas and Micro credentials and the final schema will soon be included in ELMO1.5.1/ELMO1.6. and published here https://github.com/emrex-eu/elmo-schemas/issues/50

Based on previous, the work with ELMO will continue e.g. with collaboration with CEF project EDSSI to explore need of changes for exchanging data within the EWP network. This work will be done Spring 2021. The EMREX user group is also exploring the connection between ELMO and EDCI (Europass Digital Credentials) to enable cross platform data exchange between these two architectures.

Technical support was given to existing, new and prospect members when needed.

No project funds were spent during the first part of the project.

Dissemination of EMREX services and building the EMREX brand

Technical workshop on changes in ELMO and EMREG, January 2021

On January 29 over 30 attendants from 15 countries gathered online to discuss need for changes in the ELMO-format, further cooperation with other organizations and needs for converters between different formats. Furthermore, a suggestion how to make the EMREX registry more robust and easier to maintain was presented.

EMREG is a centralized service that has to be available to all SMPs. It gives a list of all available NCPs, as well as other information necessary to establish communication with each of them. A proposal was presented for the registry model including technical and policy issues.

Work with ELMO standard was also discussed. We have already enabled digitally signed diplomas and micro credentials to the existing structured ELMO data. EMREX is also cooperating

with Enic-Naric organization within the new DigiNet project (Erasmus+). To do this, ELMO needs to be upgraded to process results of recognition.

Another important task brought up at the workshop was to move forward with exploring the relation between ELMO and Europass Digital Credentials Infrastructure (EDCI). When EDCI was designed, Europass did align this to the ELMO format. https://github.com/european-commission-europass/Europass-Learning-Model. We will bring up concrete examples of the mapping between ELMO and EDCI, to ensure there will be no loss of information when converting data from ELMO to EDCI. Any findings of missing data from this exercise will be brought forward to Europass as a change proposal for EDCI. This work may lead to setting up converters to enable automatic data exchange from ELMO to EDCI, and vice versa.

In addition, it was noted that ELMO is one of the tasks in the CEF-project EDSSI to explore need of changes for exchanging data within the EWP network. This work will be done Spring 2021 and EMREX will need to be a part of this.

Workshop 4EU+ Mobilities: Digitalisation of Data Exchange, January 2021

On January 26, 2021 the University of Warsaw organized the workshop for partner universities, members of 4EU+ Alliance. The main goal of the meeting was to decide how to make mobility data exchange between 4EU+ partners as easy as possible. One possible solution is EMREX. "The purpose of EMREX, with its electronic data exchange solution, is to empower individuals to control their own student data and exchange throughout lifespan, across borders for various purposes."

During the meeting EMREX has been presented in detail:
- Presentation
- Recording (embedded in the EMREX portal)

Project advancement

Despite the special situation with COVID-19 the project has been able to finish tasks. The technical specifications for the improved registry are publicly available at the website and have been communicated to stakeholders. The specifications for the new ELMO version have been discussed and, as the requirements are broad, further investigation is needed. The user group has announced a call for cooperation for spring 2021 for the stakeholders of enhancements of ELMO.