



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Interoperability and ESCI in European University Alliances

Heta Koski

Auli Pitkänen

ESCI Day Finland 19.11.2026

Presenters and topics today



Policy recommendations for Finnish HEIs in European University Alliances

- **Heta Koski**
- Head of Services for Student Admission, Internationalization and Doctoral Studies, Student and Academic Services at JYU
- Member of [KOOTuki – EU-korkeakouluallianssien tukiryhmä \(2024-2025\)](#), chair since 05/2025

ESCI and EWP in the FORTHEM Alliance

- **Auli Pitkänen**
- Team leader of the JYU International Office, Erasmus Institutional Coordinator, responsible for EWP at JYU
- Member of WP3/Task 3.2. concerning ESC/EWP issues in the FORTHEM Alliance

Policy recommendations for Finnish HEIs in European University Alliances

KOOTuki – Support Group for European University Alliances (2024-2025)

Background



- In its April 2024 meeting, the KOOTuki group decided to establish a working group (2024-2025) to support higher education institutions in their participation in European university alliances, particularly in the context of digital services for education.
 - Representatives were invited from OHA Forum, AMK-OHA, AAPA, FUCIO, the Finnish National Agency for Education, and Digivisio. The composition of the group, as well as meeting agendas and minutes, can be found on <https://wiki.eduuni.fi/x/mGn5HQ>.
- The working group has prepared six recommendations on digital services and interoperability for Finnish higher education institutions participating in European university alliances. Each recommendation includes a list of clarifications, which either provide background or specify details of the recommendation.
- The working group is also preparing a common roadmap presenting existing and upcoming interoperability tools and digital services. The roadmap will identify which services are essential from the perspective of national cooperation.

Policy Recommendations 1/2



- R1: Ensure interoperability, compliance, and mutual benefit between member organizations and the alliance through agreements and common practices.
- R2: Ensure national-level cooperation between alliance member institutions, for example by expanding existing networks or establishing new ones where necessary. This enables the formation of shared national positions that can be promoted both within alliances and in broader European discussions on service and standard development.

Higher education institutions are responsible for creating the necessary internal governance structures and involving all relevant stakeholders, such as student administration, IT services, and international services.

Policy Recommendations 2/2



- R3: Agree nationally on the key interoperability and common solution areas to be promoted within alliances and in broader international mobility.
- R4: To ensure efficient and secure data transfer within alliances, special attention must be paid to the compatibility of standards (protocols), compliance with data protection laws and practices, and identity and access management solutions for handling student data.
- R5: Promote interoperability by primarily using standards and tools widely adopted across Europe, as well as existing solutions where available.
- R6: To ensure interoperability, alliances should primarily apply a decentralized data management strategy.

Progress of the Work



- The first version of the national recommendations was open for public comments from June to August 2025. A total of 16 responses were received from various respondents/organizations/networks, particularly from student administration, university leadership, and joint comments involving international staff, IT, and alliance coordinators.
- Based on the feedback, the group prepared the next version of the recommendation, which was reviewed by the KOOTuki group on 27 October and by the Ministry of Education and Culture's working group on developing conditions for European higher education cooperation on 7 November.
- Delivery of the alliance group's results to the KOOTuki group on 9 December. The overall package will include the roadmap.

Questions?

ESCI and EWP work in FORTHM alliance

Auli Pitkänen
University of Jyväskylä
19.11.2025



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ESCI and EWP activities during the current funding period

- EWP matters combined in one Work Package (WP3) and Task 3.2
 - European Student Card + EWP issues (DLAs, IIAs, ToRs, nominations)
 - The task also broadly covers many other topics, so unfortunately it is not guaranteed that an EWP expert from every FORTHEM university is involved
 - Participants are from international offices or FORTHEM offices
- The University of Valencia is leading the Task 3.2
 - UV monitors development and informs partners + leads the work within the task
 - UV has experienced difficulties in aligning their current systems with EWP and, thus, is in the process of changing their mobility management system --> has probably slowed down a bit the work in the group

What have we been working on? 1/2

- **Collected information on the EWP status of different FORTHM universities in an Excel file**
 - Enables learning from each other and understanding each other's situation
 - Challenges, lessons learned, good practices, and expectations for collaboration with partners
 - Separate tables for General EWP, IIAs, DLAs, ToRs and Nominations
 - Updated at certain intervals

- **Example of information: IIAs**
 - System used
 - Contact person(s) for IIAs
 - Current situation on digitalized IIAs
 - Solution for non-digitalized IIAs
 - Support from NA or others
 - Wished support from FORTHM colleagues
 - Best practices
 - Obstacles

What have we been working on? 2/2

- **EWP User's Guide under development**

- Brings together information related to EWP / ESCI in one place, especially useful links
- Sharing good practices
- A valuable package, especially for newer staff

- **Contents of the guide:**

- General introduction to ESCI and EWP
- Current status of EWP in FORTHEM Universities (link to the excel)
- Solutions to EWP challenges – how we made it work?
- Thoughts about the upcoming processes
- Links to the various tools and websites for further information



What have we found out?

1. FORTHEM Universities are at different stages in their ESCI/EWP work and digitalisation in general
2. Willingness to align with EWP and simplify processes exists
3. Local, third-party and national systems are being used
4. Many of the upcoming EWP processes (nominations and ToRs) are still handled manually, but there is a clear trend towards digitalisation (both in and outside of EWP)
5. At least 3 FORTHEM universities will be changing their mobility management system in the near future > further challenges?
6. There is a clear need for better cooperation between the EWP experts in FORTHEM universities

How could we work in the future?

- Dedicated FORTHEM EWP track was organised during JYU Staff Week in March 2025
 - Mari Pohjola from EDUFI visited to present Finland's EWP work, cooperation between higher education institutions, and current EWP-related topics
 - Universities showcased their own mobility management systems and EWP status --> possibility to get a better insight, ask questions and have conversations
 - It was concluded that there is a need for an alliance-level EWP group, including an EWP expert from each university, which could meet regularly in the future
 - We should also use this network for any testing of new features

Any questions?

Discussion

Discussion in groups

Guiding questions for discussion

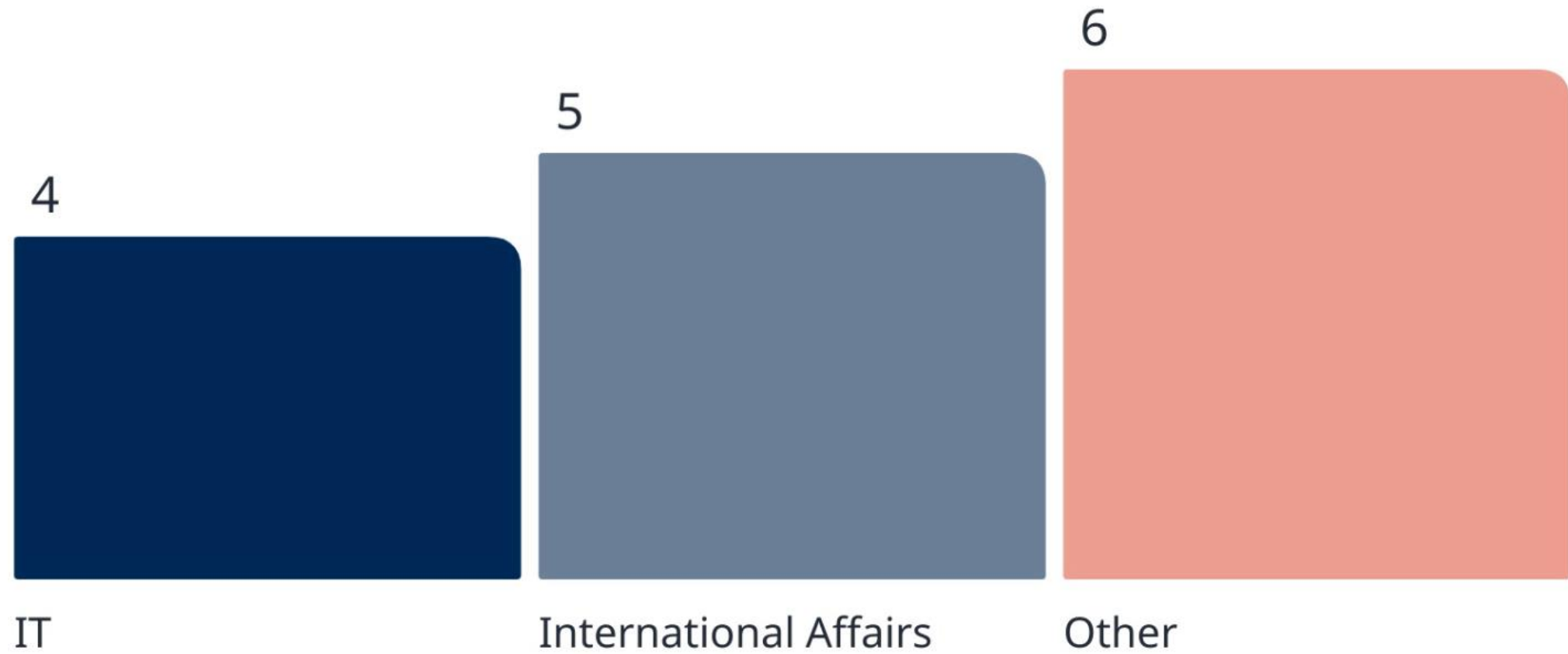


- What do you see as the biggest barrier to interoperability of digital services within European University Alliances?
- Which of the policy recommendations do you see as the most challenging or requiring the most effort?
- What lessons from your own institution could help others improve interoperability?
- Do you have any experiences with alliance collaboration on digital services or ESCI/EWP? What has worked well and what hasn't?

Round 1 – Mentimeter

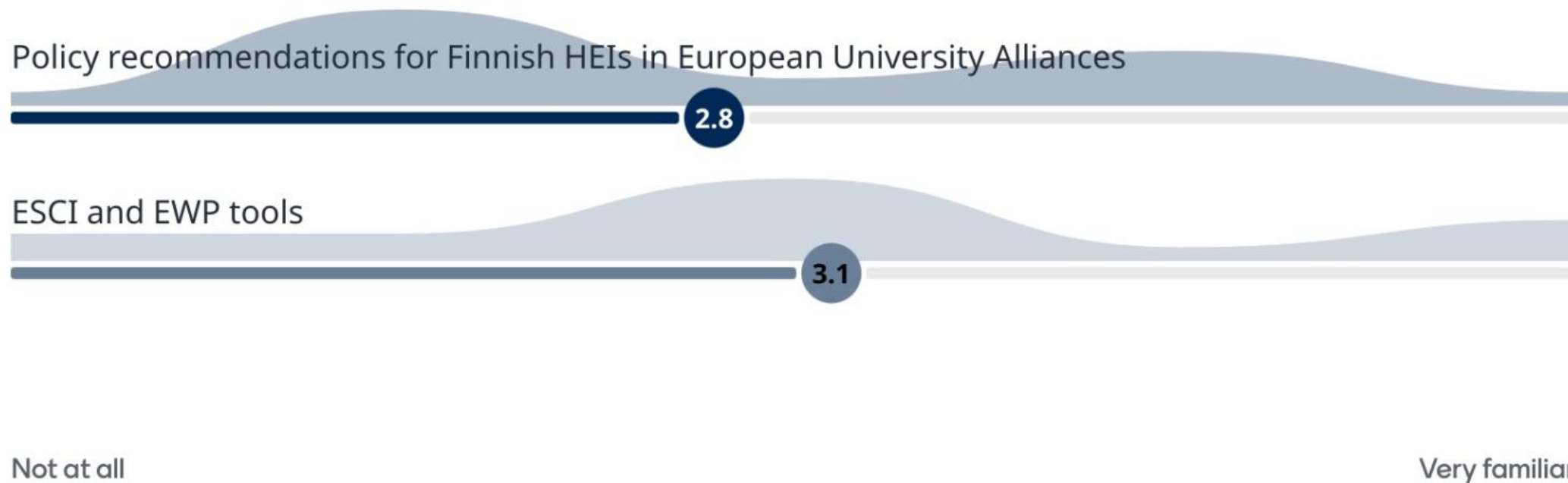


Who are we?





How familiar are you with the themes of this session?





How challenging do you consider implementing each recommendation or reaching its intended goal?

R1: Ensure interoperability, compliance, and mutual benefit between member organizations and the alliance through agreements and common practices.

1.9

R2: Ensure national-level cooperation between alliance member institutions, for example by expanding existing networks or establishing new ones...

3.0

R3: Agree nationally on the key interoperability and common solution areas to be promoted within alliances and in broader international mobility.

2.9

R4: To ensure efficient and secure data transfer within alliances, special attention must be paid to the compatibility of standards (protocols)...

2.0

R5: Promote interoperability by primarily using standards and tools widely adopted across Europe, as well as existing solutions where available.

2.6

R6: To ensure interoperability, alliances should primarily apply a decentralized data management strategy.

2.6

Very challenging

Not at all challenging



What lessons from your own institution could help others improve interoperability, digital services or ESCI/EWP?

Use the existing services as much as possible.

Define common processes early with administration and it and prioritize the first problems to solve together. Dealing with these after the fact is hard.

To ensure co-operation inside a HEI to include the expertise needed to have several perspectives on a topic and to identify possible gaps in a process.

Try to focus on opportunity and solutions in renewing systems and processes instead of focusing on the problems and how you do it now.

Clarity is the key! Make sure that every part of the process/services/ESCI is clear with everybody in the HEIs (administration, staff, student actives, students)

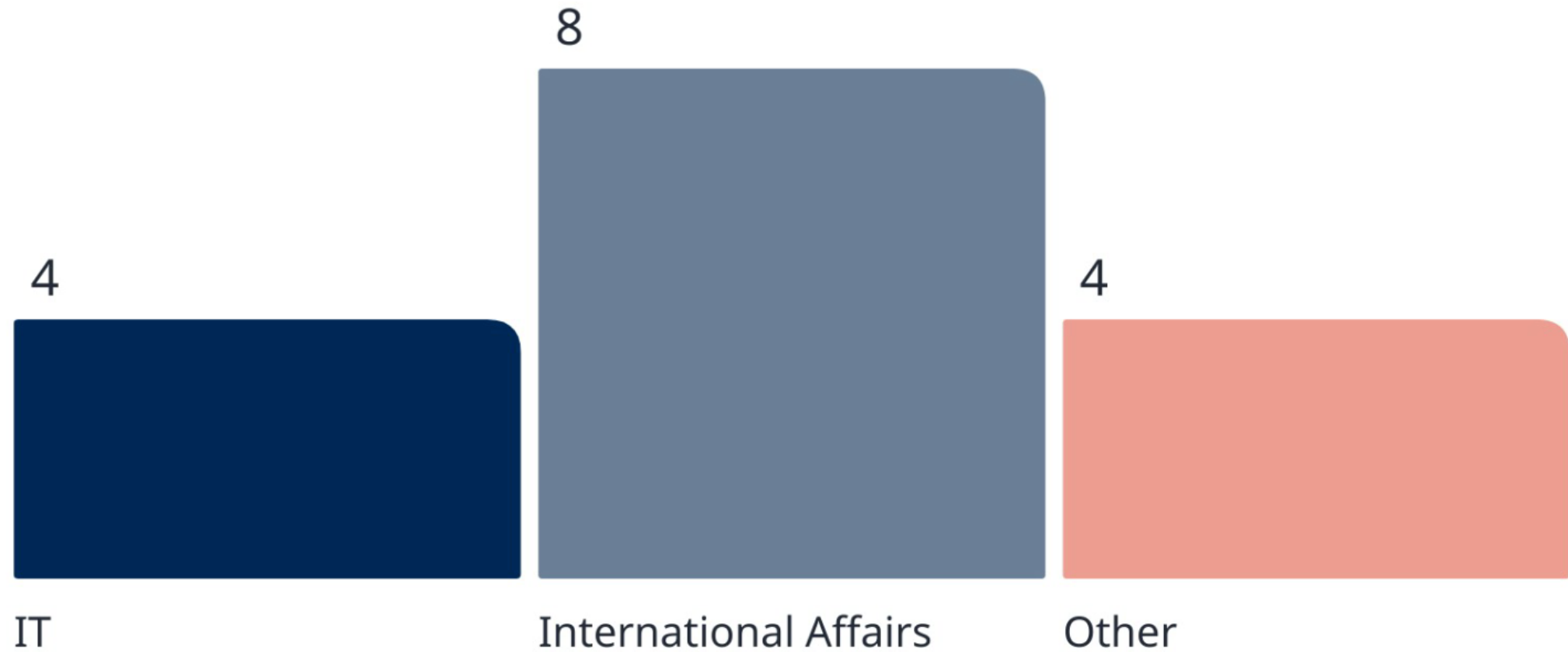
Dealing with problems together often ends up in no action. Emphasizing individual responsibility instead of "shared responsibility" is more important. In the meantime, check in with each other.



Round 2 - Mentimeter

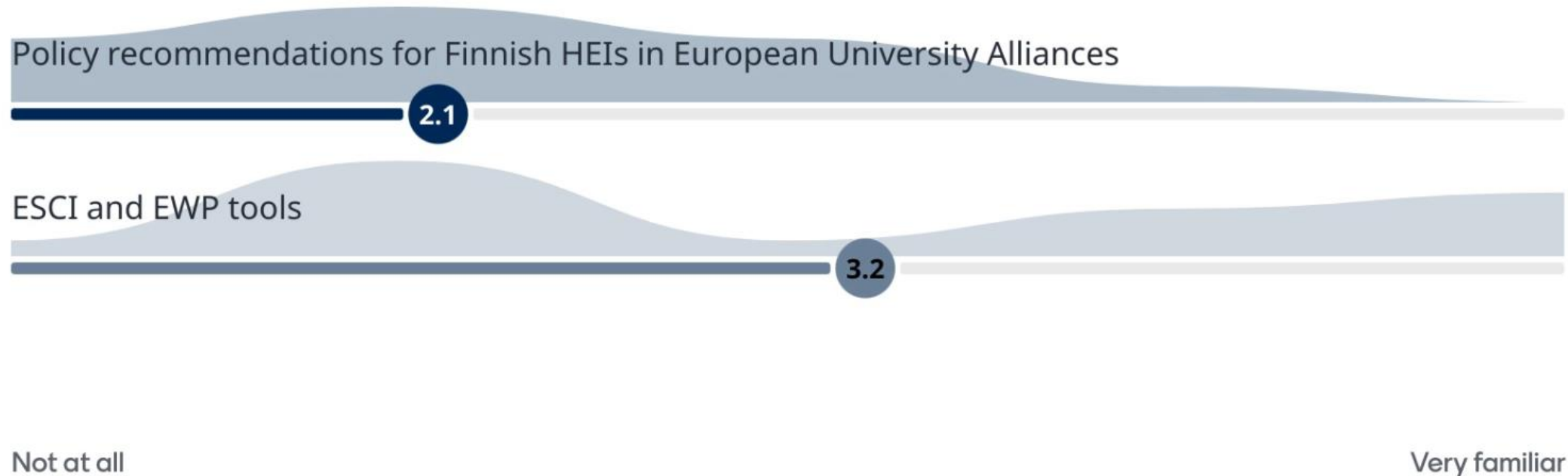


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Very challenging

Not at all challenging



9



What lessons from your own institution could help others improve interoperability, digital services or ESCI/EWP?

Seurata muiden hyviä käytänteitä

Jakakaa enemmän hyviä käytänteitä ja hyödyntäkää vertaistukea.

Named person responsible for EWP who keeps track of latest updates and divides information to other colleagues when needed