

# **SIG Mobility and Digital Credentials** **EUNIS24 preconference workshop**



## **ANALYSIS OF MISCONCEPTIONS**

Misconception analysis:  
**Educational identity problems will be resolved by  
the EU identity wallet**

*“Soon, with eIDAS2 and the wallet ecosystem, we have a solution for identity that ‘solves’ our challenges with identity in education”*

(minutes of a policy advisory board of an Education Department)

# EU identity initiatives vs. (EU) educational initiatives

## A fast review of the road towards credentials and wallets

### European Union

- Electronic signatures
- Cross-border eID & Trust (eIDAS)
- EUDI – European Digital Identity (eIDAS2, proposed)
  - EUDI Wallet – a secure solution that basically allows any citizen to store and use around proof of identity and other personal attributes and credentials
  - Legislation & Large scale pilots (LSPs)
  - ARF architectural reference framework

### Educational sector

- Diplomas and certificates
  - Diploma supplement
- Open badges, microcredentials
  - Verifiable credentials
- Cross-border student mobility
- Life-long learning
- Employment

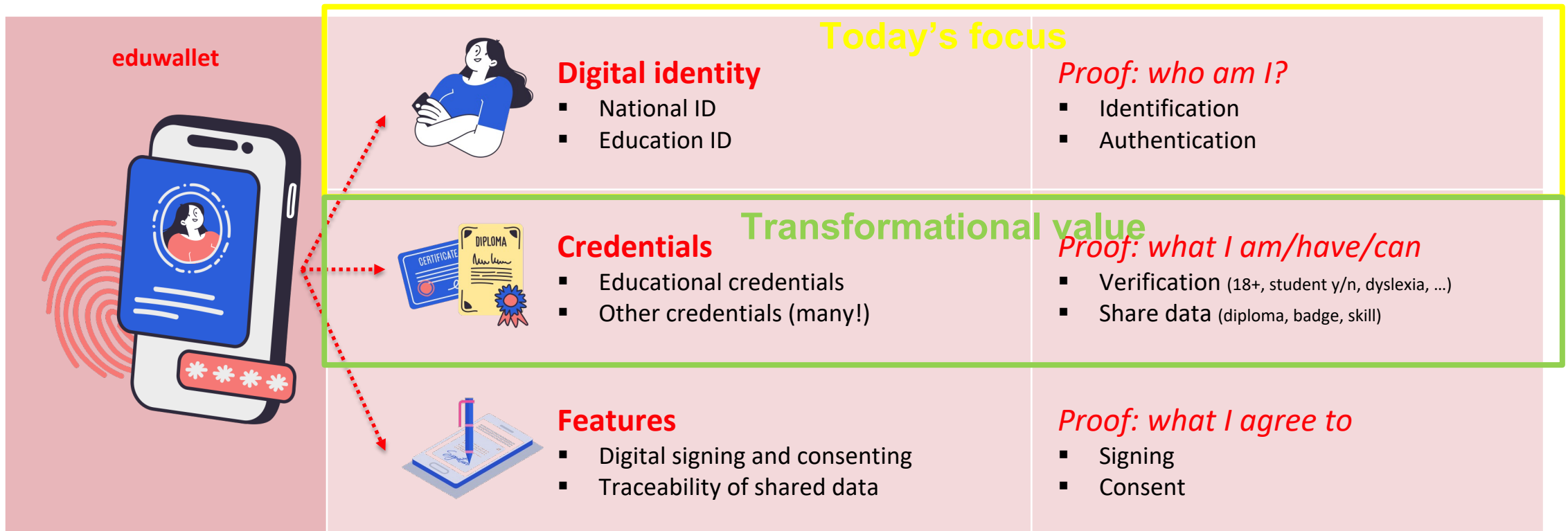
Do they correspond?



# What are the roles of a wallet?



A wallet uses the concepts of decentralizations for digital identity, credentials and other features



# Why is it a misconception?

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**FOUR MAIN REASONS** (elaborated in the next sheets):

- **There is no such thing as a ‘big unified identity system’**
- **Educational identity systems have additional requirements**
- **‘One identity rules them all’ is at odds with privacy and security**
- **Not every identity use case will be covered by wallets**

# There is no such thing as a 'big unified identity system'



## Distinction between 'foundational' and 'functional' identity systems (World Bank)

- Foundational identity system: 'an identification system primarily created to manage identity information *for the general population* [usually a national identification system]
- Functional identity system: 'An identification system ... *for a particular service or transaction* [e.g. education, research]

## There will be (at least) as many foundational identity systems as there are member states

- eIDAS will harmonize the technical format of the 'PID' and a minimum set of attributes
- A functional identity system must provide uniform identity *across* all existing foundational identities (inside and outside EU)

# Educational identity systems have additional requirements



## A FOUNDATIONAL IDENTITY SYSTEM (e.g. national ID) IS NOT ENOUGH

- ‘Mismatch’ between scope of foundational and functional identity systems (see previous slide)
- Basic set of Personal ID attributes (name, birthdate, ...) is not sufficient
- Additional attributes that define role (student, researcher), affiliation, local identifier etc.
- Did someone say SCHAC or REFEDS?

# ‘One identity rules them all’ is at odds with privacy and security



## EUROPEAN IDENTITY SYSTEM ≠ EUROPEAN IDENTIFIER

- The prime goal of introducing a decentralized identity system *should* be to prevent traceability and linkability (read the W3C Verifiable Credentials standard)
- Technology and standards to limit linking identities and personal information to unique interactions or consented relations exist
- Reusing or scaling up existing national (education) identifier schemes is dangerous! (unless we introduce adequate pseudonymization or anonymization as well)



# Not every identity use case will be covered by wallets



**WALLETS WILL NOT BE UBIQUITOUS, and are no 'haarlem oil' (medicamentum gratia probatum)**

- **EU citizens are allowed to NOT use the wallet**
- **Non-EU users may have incompatible systems or no system at all**
- **No good fit with use cases that do not involve the user directly**
- **Previous generations of technical identity systems will only slowly (or never) disappear**

# Consequences of the misconception



## NON-LIMITATIVE LIST

- **Losing valuable time to learn, adopt and adapt**
- **Losing focus or delaying the real value of educational credentials**
- **Not taking ownership of what you have to organize, with the risk that you lose influence or control**
- **Not leveraging the data, standards and working solutions you already have**
- **Obscure the organizational challenges with too much focus on technology**
- **Suboptimal solutions that do not support the higher goal of educational interoperability**

# What could/should be done?

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## NON-LIMITATIVE LIST

- **Map the roles and tasks as defined for the EU digital identity system to actors in our R&E system**  
(what should NRENs, individual HEIs, educational legislators etc do?)
- **Discern the different areas where value for educational business processes can be expected** (e.g. enrollment processes, using educational identity, exchanging diplomas/microcredentials/skills)
- **Reuse, refurbish, extend existing schemes for educational identity and information exchange** (and limit the variation)
- **Analyze the coherence between physical enrollment** (resulting in issuing a student *card*) **and digital enrollment** (resulting in issuing a student *account*)



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