

**FINAL REPORT**

**RESTRICTED**

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**Project nr: SETN-2000-00001**

**Title: Higher Education Reform Network (HERN)**

**Project coordinator: Roehampton University (ROEI.DSC)**

**Partners:** Society for Research into Higher Education, UK (SRHE)  
Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHESCZ), Prague, Czech Republic  
Vytautas Magnus University (UMAGN.FSS.CVER), Kaunas, Lithuania  
Bureau for Educational Services (BESBG), Sofia, Bulgaria  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (UAT.PSY), Athens, Greece  
Kungliga Tekniska Hoegskolan (RIT.LL), Stockholm, Sweden  
Johannes Kepler Universitaet Linz (ULINZ.ISUSS), Linz, Austria  
Universiteit Leiden (RUL.SW.LO.ESREA), Leiden, Netherlands  
Continuing Education Development Foundation (CEDEF), Riga, Latvia  
Jagellonian University (UJAG.FC), Krakow, Poland

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## **HERN FINAL REPORT**

### **Part 1 – Scientific report**

#### ***ABSTRACT***

Across the world, higher education institutions are being encouraged to widen participation in learning and increase access for up to half the workforce in a system that is fully accountable. As the Berlin Communiqué and the developing UNESCO/OECD guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education show, the principal element of any change strategy for European-level higher education is to enhance the portability of credit and qualifications.

The project's principal conclusion and recommendation concerns the need to create a European higher education quality and accreditation body, building on the foundations laid by the Bologna process and the recommendations in the Berlin Communiqué. To facilitate the development of such a body, there is a need specifically to review and compare existing research; to develop a comprehensive and objective set of European quality indicators based on existing, relevant and robust methodologies and to take positive action to redress the wide variations in the equality of opportunity in and between national higher education systems with particular respect to Disability, Gender and Citizenship.

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

The Higher Education Reform Network (HERN) comprises 11 partners in 10 countries. At the start of the project, in November 2001, there were 5 EU and 5 non-EU countries in the network but by the end only 1 country (BG) remained outside the EU. Of the 11 partners, 4 were organisations concerned with research into higher education; one of which was a charity with the status of an NGO, one was primarily state funded, one located within the Ministry of Education but acting like an NGO and one channelled the consultancy activities of university-based academics. The other 7 partners were universities.

### **1.1 Aim and Objectives**

The overall scientific objective of the network is to address the question: **What is the relationship between HE and society in a world of change?** through a series of research sub questions in a key action thematic framework as follows:

Key action theme 1 - social trends, citizenship . Research focus: *What are the perceived roles of HE for society in a world of change?*

Key action theme 2 - governance and structural change. Research focus: *What are the governance challenges for different nation institutions in managing change?*

Key action theme 3 - society and employment. Research focus: *What is the role of tomorrow's university in developing an inclusive and socially responsible workforce of the future?*

Key action theme 4 - society, technology, new development models fostering growth and employment Research focus: *How can the modern university develop quality teaching and learning strategies which are appropriate and accessible for the needs of tomorrow's knowledge society?*

Within the foregoing framework the project's objectives were to:

Analyse past and present social trends and structural changes influencing HE in each country and its responses to new perspectives for learning;  
Identify the different value systems underlying the evolving strategies and decision making processes of HE in a changing society with particular reference to European enlargement;

Examine the extent to which HE in each network country perceives its social responsibility towards Europe and the development of tomorrow's citizens;  
Identify the perceived and actual relationship between HE and transitions to work;

Disseminate these findings to the wider world and policy makers to broaden understanding of their implications for lifelong learning in Europe.

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### **1.2 Method**

The project comprised 11 scientific workpackages (WP) and 2 project support workpackages. Two of the scientific workpackages were specifically concerned with issues relating to disability and formed the Disability Research Group's activities. The remaining 9 scientific workpackages were grouped into 3 thematic areas defined by the domains of Society, Governance and teaching and learning. Each of these workpackages had a specific conceptual focus. Each workpackage drew in a number of the partners who collaborated on holding a seminar followed by an electronic discussion forum and leading to the production of a paper suitable for conference presentation and a document identifying the policy recommendations arising from the workpackage.

Project support and co-ordination was provided by Roehampton University. Project management meetings were held at each of the seminars (3 per year). The meetings were minuted and the outcomes distributed to all partners.

spread over 3 years. The network will hold its meetings in accordance with the work packages, with a final meeting in Brussels aimed at presenting the findings of the project and the policy relevance of the work to stakeholders selected by the European Commission. The project steering group will comprise of representatives from each partner country and will meet when the project partners meet for a major network activity. There will be regular written annual progress reports plus 6-monthly interim reports.

### **1.3 Context**

Across the world institutions are being encouraged to widen participation to learning and increase access to higher education for up to half the workforce. There is also pressure on higher education to provide portable, economically relevant qualifications in a system that is fully accountable. Within the European Union there is a need to accommodate a diversity of cultural and economic influences whilst moving towards a compatible qualifications system.

UNESCO and the OECD are presently drafting guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education (third and final draft meeting, OECD HQ, Paris, 17/18 January 2005) that envisages a voluntary code of practice. Their deliberations are concerned with a structure that is truly global and it is at the very least a pragmatic decision to seek a voluntary code. In "Realising the European Higher Education Area" (Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003), the Ministers called upon ENQA through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in at their next meeting in Bergen in May 2005.

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The major European policy initiatives relating to the knowledge society affect all European countries and, because they arise from the same global processes and pressures the broad policy may be seen to follow logically from these wider environmental conditions. The broad mechanism for promoting and steering change that HERN proposes comprises a framework of common definitions and legal safeguards, standards that are accepted by all partners and open, transparent and public inspection of the processes of regulation. Since there are models of good practice in operation in every area under discussion somewhere in one or more countries of the EHEA there is little need to do anything truly novel but rather to promote the wider adoption of such good practice. But, because the EC cannot dictate national HE policy, the change process must be facilitative.

HERN was tasked to provide policy developers with a better understanding of changes in higher education governance, teaching and learning and quality assurance with particular respect to a number of specific areas in the context of a growing European community. The problem for policy makers working at the European level is that HE is a national responsibility and therefore any policy is necessarily limited to areas that properly require supranational regulation. This, in our view, is the opportunity which policy makers should exploit: to ensure that the accreditation of national qualifications in other European states should be regulated by a single European agency responsible for the trans-national and inter-national aspects of HE accreditation and quality assurance.

The outcome for many students attending HE is a qualification that allows them to take up their chosen employment. In the current economic climate the richer regions of Europe have a need of more skilled labour than they can themselves produce and there is therefore a de facto market in graduate skills with considerable mobility between the poorer and richer regions in the same country and to a lesser extent between such regions in different countries. HERN has argued that HE must maximise the potential of every learner to play a full part in the knowledge society. Certainly this means that disability or gender or ethnic background should not limit an individual's capability; but equality of opportunity can also have a socio-geographic component and so enhancing mobility through positive action can also be an inclusive strategy.

### **1.4 Change strategy**

The first task for any change strategy is to have some means of benchmarking progress. To that end, HERN suggests that the EC should develop a comprehensive and objective set of European quality indicators for all aspects of HE. There are many national and international systems of assessing and ranking higher education institutions. Some, such as the world ranking compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, are based on detailed but narrowly based criteria. Others, such as the UK Times newspaper's league tables are comprehensive but fail to correlate with anything similar published in any other country. The EC should base their indicators on those aspects of HE that have a pan-European

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dimension, such as might affect the portability of a credit or qualification. There is probably little need to invent a new set of indicators, rather to choose the most relevant and robust methodologies wherever they may be found, apply them universally and rigorously, and to ensure that both the processes and the outcomes are open to public scrutiny.

The second task of a change strategy is how to facilitate the pincer movement of enthusiasts working at the grass-roots and visionaries mapping out the future. In some cases, such as with disability, it may be necessary for the EC to consider something as broad as a European Disability Act as the foundation for subsequent positive action programmes. In all areas there is a need for accurate and objective information, which should be available from the quality benchmarking procedure above, upon which to base positive action. Positive action should be targeted very carefully to create small changes in strategically important areas. Positive action costs money and so the EC should be willing to support it financially: but that may not always fund yet more projects. It could, for example be a condition of receiving any European funding that certain basic conditions should be met – which might range from a requirement that all selection panels are gender balanced to compliance with quite specific requirements for the modification of accreditation procedures.

The third task concerns the transparency of the change process. In between the grass-roots activists and the senior visionaries are the many who need a very good reason to even consider changing their customs and habits. Publication and dissemination keeps the issue in the public eye; open and public processes allow the inquisitive sceptics the chance to explore the situation for themselves; recognising and rewarding the activists and publicising their achievements also helps; providing funds to support staff training and development for tyro activists increases the chances of moving change into the mainstream and, by no means least, providing funds to support demonstration projects in key strategic areas is often necessary to overcome institutional inertia.

## 1.5 Conclusions

As the Berlin Communiqué and the developing UNESCO/OECD guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education show, the principal element of any change strategy for European-level higher education is to enhance the portability of credit and qualifications. To do that requires co-ordination at the supra-national level, and ENQA has already been given the task of developing this within the EHEA. HERN agrees with Van Damme (2002) that there is room for a body to undertake the direct international accreditation of the outputs of higher education. However, at present, Europe is at the first level of Van Damme's six strategic levels leading to real international accreditation. Therefore, the project's principal conclusion was:

**There is a need to address international accreditation of the outputs of European higher education in order to develop a robust, Europe-wide quality assurance and accreditation framework that is also compatible with emerging international standards.**

Other broad conclusions were: -

European higher education is very far from being a single, homogeneous system; however diversity is important for the vitality of higher education.

For some countries, higher education is about skills and employability and economic growth. Whilst, for others, it is part of the struggle to re-assert a sense of national independence.

Possibly, the only common feature of European higher education systems, in respect of Knowledge Society goals, is that they are under-funded.

All countries should improve the "inclusivity" of higher education and increase the support given in areas fundamental to the development of a vibrant knowledge society.

Other specific conclusions: -

The diversity of the many national higher education systems is the keystone of the strength of a European higher education area. While all systems are changing, they are changing in different ways and at different rates, but diversity should still be encouraged.

Although quality and accreditation are still national responsibilities, it is acknowledged that this must change with the creation of a pan-European Qualification and Accreditation structure and through various initiatives to improve the portability of certain professional qualifications.

There is a need for a rigorous objective benchmarked approach, relating each country's quality regime to other countries. Presently, differences in nomenclature or definition confound accurate comparability of qualifications and reduce the portability of qualifications and the mobility of labour.

Each country's higher education system operates under a different legal framework, has its own funding regime, accreditation and quality assurance

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procedures that determine how it functions. As no one national system is exactly like any other, this contributes to diversity. However, this is also a crucial factor in any attempt to establish equivalence because many aspects of this diversity are enshrined in legislation rather than custom.

“Employability”, “learning” and “inclusivity” are three environmental factors most likely to have a significant impact on the processes of change in higher education, and over which there might be some degree of political control: -

*Employability* - Economic activity is unevenly distributed across Europe and mobility of labour at the European level is seen to be a necessity if sufficient skilled workers are to be available in the areas of high economic growth. Open, portable qualifications structures should be supported by a multi-disciplinary approach to skills and careers education in higher education.

*Learning* - Higher education is becoming increasingly just a stage in the lifelong educational process. The portability of learning necessitates “blended learning” which frees the learner from constraints of place and time and blends physical virtual mobility. Increasing the portability of learning opportunities must become one of the most important strategic priorities for European higher education at every level.

*Inclusivity* - The basic premise, that everyone who can benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so, is already well established as a guiding principle in every higher education system. But it was identified that : -

Higher education is almost never an inclusive learning opportunity for people with a disability.

Higher education needs to encourage the participation of those that have been marginalized.

Gender participation in higher education varies, especially with regard to seniority in the academic hierarchy. Improving equality of opportunity requires a fundamental change in attitudes reinforced by positive action.

Higher education may be taken by an increasing proportion of the population, but that alone does not guarantee inclusivity. There is a need to facilitate positive action to redress these imbalances.

## 1.6 Recommendations

The project's principal recommendation is the need to: -

***Create a European higher education quality and accreditation body, building on the foundations laid by the Bologna process and other related work.***

To facilitate the development of such a body, there is a need specifically to address:

**Research** - Such a body needs to be given the resources and direction to review and compare existing research into the international aspects of existing quality and accreditation systems, particularly that undertaken by the OECD and other organisations.

**Benchmarking** - Based on the progress made both by UNESCO and OECD at the global level such a body needs to develop a comprehensive and objective set of European quality indicators for all aspects of higher education that consider the: -

Portability of a credit or qualification at a pan-European level.

Choosing of indicators from existing, relevant and robust methodologies as identified through research and tested in co-operation with national agencies.

Process that should be universal and rigorous and open to public scrutiny. The communication systems employed should facilitate access to the process as well as to its products.

**Positive action** - is needed to redress the wide variations in the equality of opportunity in and between national higher education systems. In order to encourage progress and allow comparability, it is recommended that benchmarking indicators include: -

**Disability** - All Member states need to recognise disability in the same broad terms as the current UK SENDA legislation so that access to higher education by disabled students may be compared with due statistical rigour. In order to achieve this:

- » Access to higher education by disabled persons should be a primary benchmark indicator.
- » The categories of disability reported should be the same in all Member States.
- » There is a need to provide resources that "pump-prime" such development across Member States in order to reach parity.

**Gender** – Participation in higher education becomes increasingly unequal as seniority increases. So, it is recommended that: -

- » Benchmarking of higher education includes accurate, comparable reporting of gender participation by standardised descriptors of institution type, subject area and by level or grade of employment.

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- » The European Commission review its criteria for funding higher education Institution initiatives so as to include a requirement that an institution demonstrates compliance in the equality of opportunity of higher education staff in relation to gender.

**Citizenship** - Higher education quality benchmarks should include a category to reflect the degree to which individual higher education systems underpin the values of active citizenship. Indicators should include a measure of the: -

- » Representation of economic and cultural minority groups in higher education in relation to the norms for higher education as a whole and those of the wider society.
- » Degree to which students in higher education achieve competence in the “key skills” essential to full participation in lifelong learning and the knowledge society.
- » Degree to which students acquire competence in foreign languages.
- » Degree to which students participate in study exchange programmes.
- » Provision of comprehensive guidance and counselling services to all learners in higher education.
- » Scope that higher education out-reach services provide opportunities for non-traditional learners to access formal and informal lifelong learning.

In summary, the project support’s Van Damme’s assertion (Van Damme, 2002; p14) that: -

*“...[d]espite the resistance in some countries against international accreditation, I do believe that such an initiative, given that it can secure its academic status, legitimacy, credibility, and reputation, would be able to realize an important position in the global higher education field...”*

The foregoing recommendations are intended to move this process forward. But, they are not its end point.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT.**

European Ministers of Education (Bologna, 1999) identified a need to facilitate information flow across and between research and development projects. The present EU context of enlargement brings with it social imbalance, particularly in relation to wealth creation and employment and a need to improve cross-cultural understanding between the states of Central, Eastern and Western Europe. The Higher Education Reform Network (HERN) actively links experiences from a range of current EU programmes relating to HE (TEMPUS, SOCRATES, LEONARDO, PHARE, for example) and will provide a direct contribution to EU policy development.

The Higher Education Reform Network (HERN) comprises 11 partners in 10 countries. At the start of the project, in November 2001, there were 5 EU and 5 non-EU countries in the network but by the end only 1 country (BG) remained outside the EU. Of the 11 partners, 4 were organisations concerned with research into higher education; one of which was a charity with the status of an NGO, one was primarily state funded, one located within the Ministry of Education but acting like an NGO and one channelled the consultancy activities of university-based academics. The other 7 partners were universities.

The overall purpose of the network is to explore the differential values underlying strategies for HE reform by addressing the question: "What is the relationship between HE and society in a world of change?", with particular reference to:

- structural changes taking place in European society and ways of managing change

- relationships between technology, employment and society

- mechanisms for collective action in terms of governance and citizenship

- learning development strategies fostering growth, employment and economic and social cohesion

HERN members are connected to an extensive range of professional organisations, networks and end users and this 'networking networks' approach is a fundamental principle of HERN, supported by face-to-face seminars, internet-based, interactive forums, publications and dissemination through national, professional and academic channels in order to inform the widest possible range of interested stakeholders.

The network has explored how different higher education institutions (HEIs) have responded to their histories and see their future. It has explored how different contexts influence changing patterns of governance, decision making, quality assurance and accountability and has included considerations of how women are allowed to play an equal part in these aspects of HE behaviour. The network has identified and analysed the different ways in which various forms of HE see their

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regional role and how they respond to societal trends and needs. Models for fostering growth, social balance and employment were explored and analysed for their implications for the quality of education and training in Europe in order to improve European integration strategies for the future.

HE's current role in providing continuing vocational education and continuing professional development was explored with particular emphasis on the implications for lifelong learning and strategies for addressing social integration, particularly amongst older adults and women who may have been excluded from higher education in the past.

HERN has considered innovative strategies for implementing change in teaching and learning so as to gain new perspectives for teaching and learning. This included the role of technology, flexible study modes, open and distance learning, modular and lifelong learning models and new systems which need to be developed. HERN explored higher education models and approaches to guidance, skills and curriculum that address the interrelationship between learning, employment and citizenship and explored possible solutions to the tensions in student support issues which can influence future access policies in HE.

HERN began three years ago and was conceived two years before that and though there have been many changes and developments in the detail of higher education the broad policy issues have not changed significantly. In general though, HERN has achieved what it set out to do without any significant changes to either its objectives or its methodology. The detailed outcomes are discussed below.

### **3. SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT RESULTS AND METHODOLOGY.**

#### **3.1 Aim and Objectives**

The overall scientific objective of the network is to address the question: **What is the relationship between HE and society in a world of change?** through a series of research sub questions in a key action thematic framework as follows:

Theme 1 - social trends, citizenship . Research focus: *What are the perceived roles of HE for society in a world of change?*

Theme 2 - governance and structural change. Research focus: *What are the governance challenges for different nation institutions in managing change?*

Theme 3 - society and employment. Research focus: *What is the role of tomorrow's university in developing an inclusive and socially responsible workforce of the future?*

Theme 4 - society, technology, new development models fostering growth and employment Research focus: *How can the modern university develop quality teaching and learning strategies which are appropriate and accessible for the needs of tomorrow's knowledge society?*

The methodological context is defined by a structure divided into domains, each of which is addressed through a number of strategies which focus on particular concepts as follows:

##### Domains

**Society:** in terms of underpinning European values in each country;

**Governance:** in terms of institutional management and decision making;

**Teaching and learning** in terms of new developments in different countries;

**Managing change** in the context of European enlargement.

##### Strategies

**access & inclusion** in respect of staff and student equal opportunities in HE;

identifying **the role of HE** in its region and wider society;

enhancing **employability** of graduates and other adults (in relation to competencies and transitions to work).

##### Concepts

development of **citizenship** values in a European context;

understanding the meaning of **European integration** (in respect of different social and cultural value systems);

**lifelong learning** processes for adults in an HE context;

**technology** and **new learning systems** to be developed for the university of tomorrow.

Within the foregoing framework the project's objectives were to:

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Analyse past and present social trends and structural changes influencing HE in each country and its responses to new perspectives for learning;  
Identify the different value systems underlying the evolving strategies and decision making processes of HE in a changing society with particular reference to European enlargement;  
Examine the extent to which HE in each network country perceives its social responsibility towards Europe and the development of tomorrow's citizens;  
Identify the perceived and actual relationship between HE and transitions to work;  
Disseminate these findings to the wider world and policy makers to broaden understanding of their implications for lifelong learning in Europe.

### 3.2 Method

The project comprised 11 scientific workpackages (WP) and 2 project support workpackages. Two of the scientific workpackages were specifically concerned with issues relating to disability and formed the Disability Research Group's activities. The remaining 9 scientific workpackages were grouped into 3 thematic areas defined by the domains of Society, Governance and teaching and learning. Each of these workpackages had a specific conceptual focus. Each workpackage drew in a number of the partners who collaborated on holding a seminar followed by an electronic discussion forum and leading to the production of a paper suitable for conference presentation and a document identifying the policy recommendations arising from the workpackage. Project support and co-ordination was provided by Roehampton University. Project management meetings were held at each of the seminars (3 per year). The meetings were minuted and the outcomes distributed to all partners. The 13 workpackages fall into three categories; 9 thematic workpackages, 2 Disability Research group workpackages and 2 support workpackages as follows:

#### *Thematic workpackages*

**WP 2 - The changing role of HE: contexts, histories and the development of lifelong learning (LLL) through Continuing Education (CE).** Partner responsible: Latvia. Seminar in Riga, Latvia, January 2002. Objectives:

To analyse the historical and forward looking contextual influences on and implications for HE reform in selected national case studies

To exchange and analyse outcomes of existing CE training projects, with a focus on Latvia

To obtain an analytical overview of national responses to EU policy

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policies on CE in Central and Eastern Europe in relation to EU enlargement

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### **WP 3 - The role of tomorrow's HE in fostering gender equity and employment.**

Partner responsible: Greece. Seminar in Athens, Greece, April 2002. Objectives:

To make theoretical comparisons of different underlying economical, political and social contexts for the employment prospects of female graduates

To compare and analyse case studies of strategies for preparing female students for transitions from education to work across different subject areas (for e.g. women & science, women & technology)

To contribute innovative ideas to enhance the study and employment prospects for female students

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policy on relations between HE, gender and employment

**WP 6 - European enlargement and citizenship: the role of HE.** Partner responsible: The Netherlands. Seminar in Leiden, The Netherlands, September 2002. Objectives:

To analyse the social and economic impacts of EU enlargement on HE member states & accession countries

To compare underlying values and analyse outcomes of case studies in partner countries of how HE plays a regional and international role for citizenship and economic development

To use seminar and website discussions to give an analytical overview of national responses to EU policy

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper on "HE's potential role within EU regional policy in relation to EU enlargement"

**WP 7 - Governance challenges for different nation institutions in managing change** Partner responsible: Bulgaria. Seminar in Sofia, Bulgaria, January 2003. Objectives:

To analyse what forms of institutional adaptation and innovation could address the need for effective and equitable policy making in HEIs

To explore the implications of existing governance change projects on HEIs in Bulgaria and other Central and Eastern European countries

To use seminar and website discussions to give an analytical comparison of what forms of institutional decision making can foster or hinder convergence towards a collective European interest

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policies on Governance reform in relation to EU enlargement

**WP 8 - Addressing inequalities of gender participation in institutional decision making systems.** Partners responsible: Sweden and UK. Seminar in Stockholm, Sweden, April 2003. Objectives:

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To explore some of the tensions between institutional change, the position of women in HE and impact of this on the development of women's roles in wider society

To exchange and integrate different theoretical frameworks in relation to gender and institutional change in different national contexts

To explore the implications of different institutional behaviours on staff development for women in HE

To use seminar and website discussions to enhance policy formulation in relation to gender participation in institutional decision making systems

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policies for HE governance and internal management

### **WP 9 - Legitimacy, quality and accountability for lifelong learning and HE.**

Partners responsible: Poland and Czech Republic. Seminar in Krakow, Poland, June 2003. Objectives:

To offer innovative analyses on case studies of what forms of quality and accountability are emerging between the institution, its region and the state

To compare issues of quality assessment, evaluation and control across the EU

To use seminar and website discussions to give an analytical overview of lifelong learning models for quality and accountability

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policies on HE and quality across Europe in the lead up to EU enlargement.

### **WP 10 - Key features of teaching and learning in the university of tomorrow.**

Partners responsible: UK and Lithuania. Seminar in Glasgow, Scotland, January 2004. Objectives:

To achieve a pedagogic understanding of new teaching and learning requirements in a lifelong learning model of HE

To agree appropriate change strategies with reference to different HE contexts

To gather innovations in teaching and learning in HE across the European partners

To evaluate the effectiveness of the innovations in achieving new understandings and achieving effective change in teaching and learning for all students

### **WP 11 - Distance education and the use of technology for tomorrow's knowledge society.**

Partners responsible: Lithuania and Latvia. Seminar in Kaunas, Lithuania, April 2004. Objectives:

To explore the relationship between distance learning strategies and opportunities for inclusion in tomorrow's knowledge society

To exchange and integrate existing conceptual frameworks for ODL case studies throughout Europe and lessons learned for the future

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Project Nr: SETN-2000-00001

To analyse market demands, needs, quality and resources for distance learning methods

**WP 12 - Guidance for employment and inclusion: the development of new competencies.** Partner responsible: Czech Republic. Seminar in Prague, Czech Republic, June 2004. Objectives:

To make theoretical comparisons about different values and approaches to guidance in HE in relation to developing new sets of additional competencies for lifelong learning

To offer new perspectives on case studies of strategies for preparing diverse students for the labour market

To contribute to innovative ideas for ways of enhancing employment prospects for students from diverse backgrounds

To contribute to end of year policy briefing paper for the influence of future policy on guidance for employment and access

To develop an interactive CD ROM to disseminate results of all workpackages (specifically the responsibility of Latvian partner).

### ***Disability research group workpackages***

**WP 4 - Pilot research collaboration: conditions which affect un/employment for disabled graduates.** Partners responsible: Austria, UK and Greece (joint).

Objectives:

To identify and design, within the project's overall theoretical perspectives, successful interventions to integrate disabled graduates into the European labour market

To explore interventions in the context of teaching and learning strategies, curriculum, guidance and support

To analyse the effectiveness of such interventions for encouraging tolerance of difference and integration in society and the labour market

To contribute to policy reports on HE reform, teaching learning and change

**WP 5 - New research collaboration on teaching and learning strategies for visually impaired students.** Partner responsible: Austria. Objectives

To analyse, within the network's overall theoretical perspective how print disabled students are given equitable access to lifelong learning in HE

To explore new ways of supporting print disabled students which can be applied in different European contexts

To publish a scientific monograph on new perspectives for integrating visually impaired students into HE society

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Project Nr: SETN-2000-00001

To provide a comprehensive policy report on strategies for supporting print disabled students in HE

These two workpackages were led by the team at Johannes Kepler university, Linz with support from partners in Greece, UK, Sweden, Poland and Latvia. The group held steering group meetings in Krakow (Jun 03), Glasgow (Jan 04), Kaunas (Apr 04) and Prague (Jun 04) as well as an electronic conference in July 03 and participation in the ICCHP Conferences in Linz 2002, 2003 and 2004.

### ***Project support workpackages***

**WP 1 - Project start-up, Audit of existing networks and case studies on HE reform.** Partner responsible: USR (UK). Objectives:

Establishment of a draft constitution and communications framework for the network

Audit of networks in each country relevant to HE reform and case studies relevant to HERN domains/research questions

Establishment of publicity, website and database frameworks

**WP 13 - Project Management.** Partner responsible: USR (UK). Objectives

Obtain consensus on the constitutional and organisational structure of the network

Agree protocols for communications, data and information exchange

Establish the network's Steering Group, its terms of reference, membership and schedule of meetings

Obtain consensus for a common design scheme for all HERN paper and web materials and products

Represent the Network and partners in dealings with the Funding Body

Organise financial and managerial systems that ensure full transparency and accountability

Organise (in partnership with the hosting institution) and Chair Steering Group meetings ensuring that all necessary information is circulated, that minutes are kept and that progress is monitored

Maintain an accurate database of all partners and contacts and manage the distribution of Steering group papers, seminar papers and other products of the network

Require progress reports from each of the partners to be given at each Steering Group and provide such progress reports to the Funding Body as may be required by them

Ensure that partners are involved in planning for and developing network activities beyond the limits of the present project - both to widen the present network and to develop it into the future

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The project management involved periodic financial and scientific reporting, financial management and overall oversight of the development of the scientific content. Management meetings were held in Riga (Jan 02), Athens (Apr 02), Leiden (Sep 02), Sofia (Jan 03), Stockholm (Apr 03), Krakow (Jun 03), Glasgow (Jan 04), Kaunas (Apr 04) and Prague (Jun 04). A final management meeting was held in Linz in September 2004 to co-ordinate the conclusion of the project.

### ***Seminars and electronic discussion forums***

All nine of the project seminars were held as planned. Each was followed by an electronic discussion forum (eForum) that was intended to allow the seminar debates to be opened to a wider audience. The seminar format proved very successful with the only problem being a tendency for the presentations and discussions to require more time than was available, even when the seminars were extended by fifty percent to a day and a half and still when doubled to two days. The eForums did not generate anything like this degree of commitment or involvement. Several different electronic formats were tried, including live conferencing but, despite very considerable efforts by the organiser these eForums never served as more than a means of tying up loose ends between the key participants rather than as a way of drawing in a wider audience to the discussions.

### ***Deliverables***

The project comprised 53 deliverables Only Deliverable 34 could not be completed because the network with which it was intended to work had ceased to function. All the others have been successfully completed (see Annex B for full listing).

### ***Results: contribution to policy making processes***

The HERN project was expected to make a contribution to the policy-making process in the following areas:

Implications for enlargement/social cohesion. Especially:

*Institutional Contexts.* How different higher education institutions (HEIs) have responded to their histories and influence changing patterns of governance, decision making, quality assurance and accountability, especially how women are allowed to play an equal part in these aspects of HE behaviour.

*Institutional Roles.* The different ways in which various forms of HE see their regional role and how they respond to societal trends and needs with respect to models for fostering growth, social balance and employment.

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Implications for new perspectives for learning. Innovative strategies for implementing change in teaching and learning, including the role of technology, flexible study modes, open and distance learning, modular and lifelong learning models and new systems which need to be developed and approaches to guidance, skills and curriculum that address the interrelationship between learning, employment and citizenship to raise awareness amongst staff and students of the implications for preventing social exclusion.

Implications for education and training of the new educators. The implications of lifelong learning processes for higher education and training in Europe, with reference to Continuing Education services - continuing vocational education and continuing professional development – especially strategies for addressing social integration and lifelong learning, particularly amongst older adults and women who may have been excluded from higher education.

### **3.3 Policy Outcomes.**

Each of the project's thematic workpackages produced a policy guide. This document was produced by the lead partner(s) and incorporated all the various inputs. These included papers presented at the seminars, results of workshops and discussions during the seminars, subsequent discussion generated through the eForum and in the process of developing the conference paper. These policy papers ranged in length from five pages to over 100. The full papers are included in the Annexes. Edited versions of the policy papers are given below. The papers have been edited in order to show the structure of the arguments and the principal recommendations. Every effort has been made to preserve the essence of the original. The edited policy papers are presented below in thematic order.

#### ***General Policy overview (Workpackage 2) Higher Education Reform in the Society of Change***

The paper has been prepared as a general overview of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe with emphasis on the Baltic states and Latvia in particular

##### *Introduction.*

Higher education is one of the driving forces of economic development and higher education institutions are important centres of educating the society. Higher education institutions are both accumulators and creators of knowledge. In the modern world where knowledge resources as development factors are increasingly dominating over material values, the importance of higher education institutions is growing. The international conventions, declarations and agreements relating to higher education that have stimulated the current trends in Europe are:

- The Big University Charter (18 September 1988)

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- Lisbon Convention (11 April 1997)
- Sorbonne Declaration (23 May 1998)
- Bologna Declaration (19 June 1999)
- Salamanca Convention (30 March 2001)
- Prague Communiqué (19 May 2001)

Within the Baltic and Nordic regions there is an additional significant agreement :

- Agreement between the Governments of the Baltic States on Academic Recognition of Educational Qualifications in the Common Baltic Educational Space (18 February 2000)

### *Co-operation between the Baltic States in the area of higher education*

Participation in higher education in the Baltic countries is relatively high with 342 (including part time students) per 100,000 of population in Latvia, 201 in Lithuania and 320 in Estonia. There are over 50 HEIs in the Baltic countries (Estonia 6, Latvia 33, Lithuania 17), some of which are private. In Latvia all the major higher education institutions are in Riga while there are 2 major education centres in Lithuania (Vilnius and Kaunas) and also in Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu). The situation is changing as the regional education policy encourages the development of higher education provision outside the main centres. The Law on Higher Education Institutions stipulates that a university shall carry out scientific research and the results of research shall be published in internationally recognised research journals. There are 5 HEIs in Latvia that match these criteria. Comparing doctoral studies in Latvia and Finland the proportion of doctor's degree holders in Finland is 11% against 1% in Latvia. Common features of the Baltic States education area: all countries have signed the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Convention; education has always been on the top of the value scale of people in the Baltic States; increasing numbers of students; the most popular study programmes are also quite similar (law, economics, political science, architecture). There is also co-operation in the accreditation of study programmes and in participation in international study and research programmes. Key features which could be further developed as the base for a joint Baltic – Nordic education area are:

- The Baltic States is the first unique region in the Central and Eastern Europe where the three prime ministers of three countries have signed an agreement which may be treated as a foundation of the common Baltic educational space;
- Every year there are regular meetings between the representatives of the Rectors' Councils of higher education institutions of the Baltic States, Latvian Higher Education Council, Ministries of Education, etc. aimed to address study quality and further co-operation in the three Baltic states;

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- International organisations treat the Baltic States as a single united educational area. This approach should be further supported and developed. The high level expert analysis was carried out simultaneously in the Baltic States by experts of the international Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development. The quality of higher education in the three Baltic States was positively evaluated, especially marking the achievement of the last decade in modernisation of higher education study programmes and integration in international community.

### *Higher Education in the European Community.*

The demand for, and the supply of, higher education in Europe is growing. At the same time issues of quality, accessibility and relevance to employment continue to add to the complexities of HE governance and management. In addition to their academic role, European HEIs are being required increasingly to engage in a wider range of roles.

### Knowledge management

Management of knowledge is becoming more important in any society. Universities and higher education institutions should find their place in creation of management systems of national knowledge, which relates to management of processes and changes in various institutions (public administration institutions, enterprises, NGOs) and public administration sectors. In conditions of the permanently growing volume of information and knowledge it becomes more and more complicated to establish the knowledge which should be obtained by a younger student and later an adult by various forms and levels of formal, informal education, educational institutions and everyday learning. Universities and higher education institutions should identify methods how they can contribute to management of knowledge within the framework of an educational system and also directly – by forming networks with local communities and other stakeholders.

### Intercultural tasks

International co-operation between higher education institutions in the European Community provides opportunities of wider exchange of experience between old and new member states and also countries representing various geographic regions. Higher education institutions are also responsible for creating foundation for the dialogue between cultures and religions. International co-operation between higher education institutions promotes not only proliferation of knowledge and experience in specific areas of science but also generally between people living in different countries and representing different cultures. Sustainability of co-operation between universities and higher education institutions takes the form of establishing thematic and regional networks of teachers and students exchange, creation and use of joint data bases, development of joint training programmes,

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international research, creation of innovation centres, spreading and aggregation of results of scientific research.

### Employability and basic skills

Contribution of higher education institutions in the basic skills education today and in future is a debatable issue as the very definition of basic skills or key competencies is undergoing rapid evolution in recent years. The reason for such situation is the fact that shortage of basic skills, which earlier was associated mostly with the primary and secondary education content and quality, now more and more often is identified in adults of various age, including also students and graduates of higher education institutions. The basic competencies (skills) considered at the moment are: communication in one's mother tongue; in foreign languages (at least three); competence in mathematics; competence in science and technology; information technology skills; skills of learning; interpersonal and civic competence, entrepreneurial skills, general culture.

In addition to these increases in the complexity of higher education's tasks, European enlargement is increasing not only the size of the market, but also its complexity. EC and national governments can help individual HEIs to capitalise on the increase in opportunity by limiting the range of threats facing them.

The key areas for policy action can be divided into those that affect the processes of higher education (and are essentially internal to the system) and the outputs (or external effects) of higher education:

### *Tasks of future policy in respect of higher education processes:*

To provide a holistic world outlook and create a study environment where a student learns skills of independent scientific research - how to produce rather than reproduce, especially:

Higher education, and especially continuing education, should be more focused on the acquisition of essential competencies (interpersonal and linguistic skills; numeracy; ICT; skills of learning; entrepreneurial skills and civic competence) to cover the educational deficit created by dynamic technological changes,

Higher education and continuing education should include a focus on lifelong learning and the development of individual career development strategies through balanced programmes that include personal development, vocational training (oriented to the labour market) and education for civic participation;

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In the epoch of knowledge, technologies change the value of knowledge and skills and therefore it is necessary to systematically revise the scope and content of education to be acquired in higher education institutions. International mechanisms of updating higher education should be created,

Accessibility of higher education and its quality have a direct impact on social status of people and also an indirect impact through income distribution between social groups. Therefore to promote the role of higher education institutions in the development of socially inclusive society the criteria of access to higher education to non-privileged groups – youth from rural areas persons from low income families, mentally and physically handicapped persons - should be clearly identified,

Links between the academic and professional higher education with employers, non-government organisations, local governments, technological and innovation centres, international organisations, etc should be reinforced; “integration” of higher education in life and the following increase of educational efficiency and quality should be fostered,

*Policy actions directed at the outputs of higher education are:*

Portability of qualifications. Validity of diplomas/degrees obtained in one educational system or area has to be extended to other areas – geographical and in respect of the labour market and further academic studies, particularly through:

Reform of the system of degrees;

Increasing transparency;

Mobility of labour. Eliminating obstacles to mobility of graduates, students and teaching staff and to improve access to the wider European labour market by:

Strengthening the role of the labour market in relation to higher education;

Promoting trust – through European co-operation in the areas of quality assurance, transparency and equivalence.

Globalisation. Enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education, research and other products for the world market.

Promotion of recognition and trust in quality – both for further studies and for the labour market;

### ***Citizenship (Workpackage 6) Citizenship and European Enlargement: the role of Higher Education***

#### *Introduction*

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The European Commission and the Member States have committed themselves to the strategic policy of developing the European Union as an area of lifelong learning in support of the transformation of the European Union and the Member States into the world-wide leaders of knowledge societies in 2010. Two key issues are prominent in this process, namely the enhancement of the competencies of the citizens with regard to both their employability and their active citizenship. However, it is clear that globalisation, economic competitiveness, new information and communication technologies, migration and social inclusion present continuing and growing challenges to the success of such endeavours. This is particularly the case with regard to the role of higher education institutions in the context of European enlargement. Work package 6 of the HERN-project addressed the specific issue as to how higher education institutions can contribute to the development of citizenship competencies and explored how higher education systems and institutions are addressing this challenge in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, with contributions also from the Bulgarian and Czech partners.

### *Citizenship and the management of cultural diversity*

Europe is discovering deep seams of pluralism, diversity and difference as notions of nationhood are reconstructed, sub-national identities from past history are reborn, and 'the other from elsewhere' must be accommodated in some manner, if social cohesion is to be achieved.

There is a need to recognise the specific problems of States that are involved in the as yet uncompleted processes of transformation from state socialism towards liberal democracies and market economies. These modernisation processes have thrown questions of citizenship and identity into sharp relief in many of these countries and in often very different ways. Fundamental issues of citizenship and identity in these countries are associated with the emergence of conflicts associated with struggles for the rights of quite significant ethnic, cultural, linguistic and national minorities with often very different problems relating to social cohesion, inclusion and exclusion. In Ralf Dahrendorf's terms, this process can be recognised in terms of attempts to restore 'national universities' with a monopoly over the creation of national élites together with the production of renewed national identities. This has resulted in the re-establishment of a traditional educational repertoire that seeks a return to some notion of academic excellence insulated from the need of a changing society. The other major transformation on the European stage involves the encounter with the consequences of global migration, including the results of de-colonisation, and the emergence of EU member states as multicultural societies with often quite significant diasporas of immigrant populations. Taken together, these transformations demand the recognition that an enlarging European Union is also a multicultural Europe that embraces sources of cultural diversity from outside of Europe in addition to the cultural diversity of Europe itself.

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There is a need to clarify the role of higher education as an appropriate social arena for the development of policies that are intended to integrate minorities at the national level. Such questions take on very different forms in different States and while policy documents often speak in generous terms about the need to open up higher education to students from the minorities in order to promote cultural integration and social cohesion different States often adopt quite different positions on the appropriate strategies to establish trajectories for the inclusion of minorities in higher education. The Commission and the Member States should initiate the preparation of National Actions Plans on Higher Education and Social Inclusion.

### *European Citizenship and mobility*

No more than 0,1% of European citizens moved to take up employment in another Member States in 2000 and there is a need for further research into these structurally low levels of labour mobility in relation to the development of employability competencies in higher education. There is an urgent need to revise the current narrow emphasis in national systems of higher education upon the enhancement of employability competencies and HERN supports the argument of the European University Association in its 2001 response to the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning that an increasing number of students in Europe will need to have access to and the possibilities to acquire a broader range of generic competencies than those made available by national systems of higher education. Though, on the whole, young people are becoming much more aware of the competencies they require in order to become mobile, and that studying or working abroad for even a short period can be an effective way of preparing themselves for European mobility, they still require improved social and cultural competencies such as intercultural communication and the command of foreign languages.

The current level of student mobility comprises no more than 1% of all students involved in higher education in the Member States but more ambitious targets for participation in mobility programmes are needed to overcome the barriers to mobility in higher education that are caused by differences in social legislation and student funding arrangements. We recommend that a target of 10% of all students in higher education should be involved in mobility programmes that should also resolve the very significant differences between the respective rights of full-time and part-time students across Europe and also seek to balance flows of students between Member States and secure a broader distribution of incoming students from non-European Union countries.

### *European citizenship and linguistic capital*

The core of a European citizenship should be linguistic citizenship that is based upon linguistic capital, or the ability communicate in other languages. In this context, higher education institutions are important locations where citizenship can be worked upon in a multi-cultural and thus multi-lingual European context. The

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Commission and the Member States should take steps to implement the proposals in the Commission's Action Plan for Skills and Mobility to the effect that '...all pupils to be competent in at least two European languages in addition to their mother tongue'. The Commission now needs to secure the co-operation of the Member States in order to implement the appropriate measures to encourage the learning of European languages and ensure that Member States should be required to prepare National Action Plans for the acquisition of European languages. Such plans should include targets to be achieved in primary and secondary education, higher education and adult education.

### *Higher education and active citizenship in the regions*

Higher education institutions make very real contributions to their regional and local economies in that they create employment not only for academic staff but also administrators, secretaries, accountants and financial staff, audio-visual services, ICT-support staff, restaurant and kitchen staff, porters, and cleaners. When institutions of higher education also manage conference centres, residential accommodation, science parks, etc., they may make an additional contribution to the local economy that is of great significance. Estimates from the United Kingdom, for example, suggest that higher education institutions generate no less than 3% of all jobs and an equivalent contribution to the Gross National Product.

At the regional level, the European Commission, the Member States and higher education institutions should focus upon the development of strategic partnerships between higher educational institutions and regional stakeholders to enhance the contribution of higher education institutions, on the one hand, in the generation of regional economic development, and, on the other hand, in the promotion of active citizenship in regional and local communities that constitute the vitality of civil society. In recent policy documents from both the Commission and the Member States there is increasing emphasis on increasingly extensive and complex tasks of European higher education institutions. While the early discourse on lifelong learning in the European Union was dominated by issues related to global competition and economic convergence, it has now been broadened with a second major strand concerned with the questions of governance and citizenship. These economic and social objectives in the current debate about lifelong learning both impact in significant ways upon the emerging discussion of higher education institutions as centres for lifelong learning in the regions. There is, however, a need to support higher education institutions in the recently joined States to develop a greater degree of awareness of their potential contribution to their local and regional economic development rather than merely importing ideas from very different socio-economic environments.

The Commission and the Member States should support initiatives to encourage the engagement by higher education institutions in the development of civil society in their regions. In defining the competencies to be acquired through lifelong learning it is important that skills are perceived to be for citizenship and the

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regional community and that higher education institutions can be places where the values of citizenship and participation can be enhanced. The acquisition of citizenship competencies is not solely a question of learning undertaken by individuals includes a greater emphasis on the importance of non-formal civic and community learning in groups, neighbourhoods and communities, more scope for non-accredited programmes and the significance attached to the collective benefits of learning. This involves building bridges between formal and non-formal learning environments in order to dismantle institutional barriers and involve a broader range of providers of lifelong learning including community groups and non-governmental organisations. The Commission should establish an observatory project that would monitor the development of learning regions and the roles of higher education institutions throughout the Member States.

### *A Final Recommendation*

The Commission and Member States should seek to develop common approaches to the development of higher education institutions as sites for the generation of active citizenship at the European, national and regional levels. This should become an integral element of the key policy objective of establishing a European Higher Education Area based upon lifelong learning in the knowledge society.

### ***Learning (Workpackage 10) “Key issues and strategies for changing pedagogic practice”***

The function of Higher Education in today’s knowledge society is expanding. People are looking towards higher education not only as a means to acquire additional skills and knowledge for the labour market, but also for personal growth and fulfilment. With the growing demands on education, it has become necessary to evolve pedagogic practice in order to provide a flexible and individualised service that people can use at any time in their lives.

The workpackage focused on the drivers for change in pedagogic practice (i.e. educational needs of society and the individual in a socio-economic context) and considered the mechanisms for implementing these changes and the problems involved including quality assurance.

Government policies together with institutional and departmental directives were driving changes in higher curricula and teaching methods with the result that teachers in higher education no longer had control of their own pedagogic practice.

One of the problems identified was that strategies to enable teachers easily to integrate new initiatives into their teaching methods were not effectively in place. Much better mechanisms backed up by appropriate support and training were needed in order to ensure that changes in practice followed smoothly and consistently from changes in policy.

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Furthermore, as higher education's delivery methods and channels (eg, through the increasing use of digital technologies) diversify, it becomes necessary to take into account methods for measuring learning outcomes from the various new methods employed. The responsibility for this is falling increasingly on the individual who is therefore expected to be able to assess their own learning outcomes and HE should therefore provide the tools to be able to analyse and improve learning that takes place outside the formal HE learning space.

It was also agreed that a greater emphasis needed to be placed on Knowledge transfer between disciplines. There are many examples of knowledge transfer from Science, Engineering and Technology departments in higher education institutions. Yet more than half of the University sector in most countries is comprised of Arts, Humanities, Culture, Social Sciences and Education. These disciplines, however, produce a significant proportion of the leaders in a knowledge society, they contribute to in developing creativity for innovations in business and the community, as well as developing attitudes towards society in general and in developing an understanding of ethics in both the profit and not-for-profit sectors. While it is more difficult to develop knowledge transfer in the Arts and Humanities, the potential is there and more effort should be made to facilitate the development of knowledge transfer in these areas.

The Bologna Declaration has established a framework for action but many issues were not considered or have arisen since the declaration was made. Specific policy issues were:

Recognition. One of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration is concerned with the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. A lot of practical reflection is needed how to improve existing recognition mechanisms (NARIC, ENIC, higher education institutions, European Diploma Supplement, etc.). Furthermore, fundamental reflection is required on non-formal learning activities and on the evolution from equivalence to recognition and acceptance and the possible adjustments this might result in from the 1997 UNESCO-Council of Europe Treaty of Lisbon.

Credit accumulation and transfer. The Bologna Declaration encourages the establishment of a system of credits. Special attention will have to be paid to the fact that it is the ambition of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration to establish a credit system which not only allows credit transfer but also credit accumulation. This will no doubt lead to more flexible learning paths and module based curricula. These elements will require in-depth reflection.

Quality assurance and accreditation. The promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance is also one of the aims of the Bologna Declaration. In order to have a good system within which students can be mobile it is essential that the students, and the home institutions, are able to trust the education students receive in other institutions. Therefore it is very important to have a

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good system which can insure the quality of the education within the single countries or constitutional regions.

Life long learning/new target groups. The Bologna Declaration did not mention a life long learning strategy as one of its objectives. The Prague Communiqué changed this by stating explicitly: "Life long learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area." Consequently it encouraged the development of life long learning strategies. Next to this responding to the challenge of the knowledge-based society and economy through life long learning strategies is a main policy concern of the European Commission and of a majority of European countries.

Trans-national education. The importance of trans-national education in European higher education is growing continuously. The appearance of branch campuses franchise universities, corporate universities, e-universities, etc. are confronting the European Higher Education Area with huge challenges. Recognition issues, the problem of rogue providers and diploma mills, the problem of access and equity, the funding issue, the link with GATS, etc. will have to be coherently dealt with

Social dimension of the European higher education area. The Bologna Declaration completely ignored the social dimension of the creation of the European Higher Education Area. Through serious student lobbying this was corrected in the Prague Communiqué as it stated clearly: "Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process

It was agreed that the knowledge society of today required a different set of tools for learning and teaching and diversifying from the more traditional models. This was needed due to the growing demands of society for higher education in a lifelong learning context. The ACCEL Model for effective learning outcomes was presented as an example of the necessary framework::

Active - Learners participate in a learning program that requires thoughtful and engaged activity

Collaborative - Learners engage in discussions, activities and projects with fellow students

Customized and accessible - The learning program is designed to fit the needs and requirements of students in terms of time, career goals, levels of preparation, and learning styles

Excellent quality. Courses are designed with a learner focus, enabling learners to achieve desired goals and objectives. This learning generally includes communication with faculty members and other students, and it includes quick and easy access to high-quality instructional resources.

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Lifestyle-fitted. Interactive distance learning accommodates the lives of students, affording cost-effective educational opportunities anywhere, anytime, and at a reasonable speed

It was recommended that an effective policy framework should be put into place which would provide a Europe-wide standard for delivery of education. Strategic policy aims that should be a priority for the development of higher education system across an enlarging Europe were to support:

Changing pedagogy. The need for pedagogic practice to evolve in order to meet the needs of society in today's changing socio-economic climate (knowledge transfer) with particular emphasis on:

The need for better access through distance education methods incorporating face-to-face interaction (blended learning).

Change of role and professional prospects for pedagogical and academic workers

Underpinning the Knowledge Society. The need for education to perform a function beyond skills and knowledge acquisition and to provide the tools to enable students to assess their own learning outcomes, especially with respect to:

The need to recognize and accommodate the changing needs of students.

The implementation of a widely accessible and flexible system of lifelong learning.

The adaptation of educational and study programmes to the everyday needs of the knowledge society

Ensuring confidence in Quality. Improvement of the monitoring and assessment of quality and effectiveness of education, especially in independent and distance learning, and also facilitating:

Provision of support systems for change and openness of educational institutions

A transition from centralised management to accountable shared decision-making.

### ***Learning (Workpackage 11) "HE Reform, Teaching and Learning, Change and Quality: Student Diversity, Distance Learning and Guidance"***

#### *Introduction*

During the HERN project meeting, issues concerning the implementation, usage and development of Distance Education in all types of Higher Education establishments were discussed. The representatives from Universities, other

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Higher Education institutions, and Distance Education experts have raised different questions. It was agreed that policy in this field should focus on six main issues:

Students' approach. Concerning **students' approach**, the main issue of learning skills "learn how to learn" and "how to learn using ICT" was identified. It should be discussed and suggestions provided how to take advantage of the fact that young people are eager to use new technologies and how to benefit from this eagerness in Higher Education. It was noted that the number of students, especially part-time, is increasing. These students are mainly working adults, and this requires HE institutions to be flexible. One of the solutions would be to introduce e-learning as the possibility to meet growing demand of the market. While doing so we need to treat equally both groups of students – having access to the PC and those who do not. Those who do not have access, have the right to be provided with the possibility to use PC in a special place in the Higher Education institution or in one of the supporting centres (public access points). This also raises the following questions: The capacity of the connection – is it high enough? Are students able to study without the Internet access points (ex. from homes only)? This is very important issue and has to be kept in mind while developing study programmes and the means for their implementation. And finally, Distance Education should be usable for ALL students / customers – it should serve as a tool, be user-friendly.

Teachers' approach. While speaking about the teachers' approach technical and pedagogical support to the teachers should be emphasised, as it is the crucial factor for the success. Only those institutions, which pay sufficient attention on this issue, may expect better results in the implementation and development of Distance Education. It was also pointed out, that there is a lack of highly qualified Distance Education and e-learning staff, and this fact might be the main reason for insufficient support of the teachers. Having that in mind and the need to introduce new techniques, technologies, methodologies, and to adopt the changes of the educational market, learning theories/perceptions in Distance Education should be discussed between the educational and experts of the field and the recommendations should be drafted up for practitioners.

Institutional approach. The discussion about the institutions' approach has raised the problem whether pure Virtual University would be successful, that it might fail as it happened in the UK in April 2004. One of the pure Virtual University's reasons for failure might be unwillingness of students to engage into such type of studies. However, Distance Education gives the ability to operate at a huge scale; however it is related to changing functions *academia*, because only teams of authors would manage the task. Courses should be designed by the Course Teams, which should include

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course author, IT specialist, DE specialist, designer and etc. Distance Education is not cheap, but economically effective. It was also remarked, that there is no real cooperation, mainly competition between Higher Education institutions in Distance Education field – even if one institution has already created a course on a specific topic, another institution will do it again – create its “own” course. Such problem exists and might be partially solved by introducing copyright roles, which would give the possibility for the institutions to allow using their courses without the fear that they might be copied by the user’s institution.

State policy. State policy in the field of Distance Education was mentioned as one of the issues to which the attention should be paid. Participants raised the problem that in many countries there is a lack of strategic approach at governmental level; however, initiatives exist. Higher education institutions lack strategic direction in relation to e-learning and lack of funds for development of programmes. It should be kept in mind that e-learning might help to implement the strategy of wider participation in Higher Education – part of students could be e-students. The same might apply for older people wishing to return into education – they might use DE as a tool for their studies.

Technology. From the technology point of view Distance Education gives better possibility for equal opportunities and social inclusions. Disabled people feel more comfortable and this encourages them to learn. It opens up doors for Higher Education for those, living in rural area. HE becomes reachable from every geographical point of the country. While developing technology-based programmes and introducing Distance Education by using the possibilities of different technologies, it should be noted that technology is a servant, but not the master. New educational methods should be developed before introducing new technologies – methodology should go before technology. From the disability point of view, content in digital format is largely display-independent and this makes it more suitable for this particular target group.

Quality assurance. Quality assurance is a very important issue while speaking about the Distance Education. The question “How to organise effective learning in DE?” is still on the agenda. It is still under the discussion how to achieve quality assurance in Distance Education, what should be the parameters that could help to measure quality in this field. A scientific research should be made here and the tool for measuring quality in DE should be created.

### *Policy recommendations*

As a result of discussions, the following policy recommendations, focusing on three main issues, are proposed:

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The relationship between distance learning strategies and opportunities for inclusion in tomorrow's knowledge society:

All students should be treated equally in terms of funding (full-time, part-time and e-students);

Higher Education has to be inclusive and Open Distance Education can help to achieve this objective;

Accessibility and flexibility of HE should give a possibility to the people with disabilities;

To make e-learning as a service which would be most available and accessible: enhancement of existing e-systems;

Low barrier entrance into education, especially people with disabilities – almost anonymous, flexible in time and place;

Exchanging conceptual frameworks for ODL case studies throughout Europe and lessons learned for the future:

ODL systems should be built as an addition or enhancement of the existing systems – should not be the replacement of existing systems;

Learning skills should be emphasised;

Studies in Distance Education should be applicable in vocational (formal, non-formal and informal) education;

Systems should be behind the technological cutting-edge – technology has to be the one what people have;

The development of pedagogy is slower than development of technology – emphasis on development of new educational methods before introducing new technologies is to be promoted;

Every teacher should master open learning models, be able to chose most appropriate technology and pedagogical methods, as well as be part of Course Team;

Blended learning should be introduced as a term for governmental policy;

Market demands, needs, quality and resources for distance learning methods:

Markets are different and education is and should be different;

Access to the internet is limited – it is impossible to request that person would have a computer at home;

Strategy for needs analysis is needed;

More attention should be given to recognition of Distance Learning, e.g., records in Diploma Supplement;

Need to study organisational culture;

Quality assurance regulations, strategies must be different from the traditional HE – same rules can not be applied for full-time and e-students – different requirements should be acknowledged for DE;

Guidelines for the implementation of copyright in Open and Distance Education should be created.

***Employability (Workpackage 12) “HE Reform, teaching and learning, change and quality: student diversity, distance learning and guidance”***

The key points reviewed at the seminar, which were at the same time the main topics of the workshops were as follows:

“Guidance for lifelong learning” focused on the concept of “guidance”. Particular intentions was given to conceptualization of guidance provision that is driven by the learners’ needs (i.e. is supportive of future, and unpredictable, lifelong development rather than reactive to historical labour market trends)

“Student diversity, distance learning and labour market” with focus on the ‘methods of delivery’ – particularly how to deliver guidance services at a time and place that meets the learner’s needs, both within and beyond the academy.

“Guidance for enhanced employment prospects” with focus on ‘labour market dynamics’ – especially how to prepare graduates within an academic environment for the challenge of an unpredictable career path within employments that may be unrelated to the subject studied.

The content of contributions presented at the seminar on “Guidance for employment and inclusion: the development of new competencies”, interesting and life discussion on the initiated questions and opened problems, three workshops and their outcomes as well as the number of informal debates among all participants of the seminar during their stay in Prague resulted in the three main recommendations for the European Commission:

*Guidance and counselling*

Ideal form of guidance and counselling should be comprehensive and should provide clients with information on possible professional orientation and job career as well as on all opportunities of higher education/lifelong learning including the relevant quality. All guidance services should take into consideration both national and international levels.

To fill such role the guidance and counselling centres should find the access to the reliable and updated information about national and international study offer, to the valid statistical data about higher education and lifelong learning systems and to the concrete knowledge about possible recognition of studies and obtained diplomas. The academic information centres relatively well developed in many countries (established in accordance with the Lisbon Convention) and usually closely connected with the information networks ENICs/NARICs would be useful and reliable sources of needed data.

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The education market has been quickly and extensively developed; it is composed not only by public institutions but also by the number of various private establishments and by the increasing trans-national education services. The situation is convenient as regards the variety of possible study choices and promising for diversified group of applicants for studies. On the other side it is not easy to be aware about quality of the offered education and there is an urgent need that guidance services are able to gain valid information for their clients. The collaboration with the networks of quality assurance agencies would enable to fill this task.

It is necessary to mention the Bologna process, its important priority in building the joint European higher education area – quality assurance, the ENQA established with the aim of the broad collaboration in the field of quality and the other recent initiatives (JQI, ECA) complementing this idea. Proper networking of guidance and counselling centres with networks of quality assurance agencies would help significantly to improve services in the field of quality. Useful and reliable information in the field of job career may come from collaboration with different networks of employers, professional chambers and other professional bodies and related organisations. All information is to a great extent interrelated and so the networking of existing networks may support economical and effective guidance provision. Thus the recommendation builds on identifying and mapping of guidance networks and their gradual networking with the already established networks (for example. agencies dedicated to QA, the provision of information and statistics, labour market agencies and professional associations).

The first recommendation, therefore, is to establish a network of already existing Networks and encourage a bottom-up approach of networking at both national and international levels with the emphasis on bringing together (and where necessary creating):

Guidance network/networks (need of mapping, identifying)

Quality assurance networks (ENQA - European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), CEE - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, INQAAHE - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, JQI - Joint Quality Initiative, ECA - European Consortium for Accreditation, networks of agencies for professional accreditation etc.

Networks providing information services (NARIC – Network of Academic Recognition and Information Centres, ENIC – European Network of Information Centres)

Networks of employers, professional chambers, etc., with possibility to involve useful databases (for example PLOTEUS)

*Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling System*

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The idea of the development of comprehensive guidance and counselling systems would be built on the number of important results of various projects supported at the national levels as well as at the European level (projects funded in the framework of programmes of the EU). It should be worthwhile to take into consideration also those projects currently running and to use their intermediate outcomes. This would be considered as the top-down activity co-ordinated from the international level.

The activity needs first of all a detailed stocktaking of as many projects and their results and ideas as possible. The main aim of the next phase would be the share of the good practice and the exchange of good experience. The further step would be the development of useful reference points, which may indicate for particular countries their "state of art". As the final step it would be advisable to create an International agency, to develop the use of reference points for international benchmarking and co-ordinate information collection and dissemination Europe-wide, supported by a website based database which would integrate the data available in all EU countries and facilitate dissemination and comparability.

The top-down approach may help to overcome the problem of excessive and non-systematic information and to reach the certain extent of harmonisation. It is important, however, that this should preserve the uniqueness of the cultural and historical context of participating countries. It is recommended, therefore, that developments should be based on existing systems wherever possible, building the results of current and past national and in international programmes such as:

NL – dual studies programme

EC programmes

CZ - Co-operation of Czech HEIs with industry

GER - Career Preparation at the Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich

Others on the basis of monitoring the situation in this field

Secondly it should be a primary aim to involve all the key bodies working in the field of guidance and counselling so as to build on their fund of expertise, activities and projects. These organisations would include all key guidance and counselling bodies, for example:

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services

Association of Careers Advisers in Colleges offering Higher Education

International Association of Career Management Professionals

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance

Institute of Career Guidance

National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers

National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults

National Association for Managers of Student Services

*Action research.*

The debates initiated by the seminar contributions and questions surveyed at the workshops discovered that there is neither enough knowledge about the problems related guidance and counselling, students' diversity and their needs nor available data and their interpretation. The large number of various types of students' diversity (gender, ethnicity, age, social, cultural, religious, health diversity) was discussed at the seminar and the need for complex research leading to "soft" definitions of various student groups was identified. Special attention should be paid to the qualitative data (expressed in simplified ways) as to student's wants and needs. It is necessary to consider not only students in formal learning processes, but also those already working (and those who may have been working for a considerable number of years) and those who are involved in other types of learning (non-formal, informal, distance lifelong, adult etc).

The new methodologies used in guidance and counselling should be invented and its use for diverse student groups assessed. Social interactions and impacts of new technologies should be tested; the need of interpersonal contacts should be taken into consideration. The aim to enhance prospects for students from diverse backgrounds would need to analyse Concepts of guidance, Methods of guidance delivery and Labour market dynamics. In general, mapping of various guidance systems with respect to students' situation and their real needs would support significantly the further guidance and counselling development.

There is a need to facilitate research in the field of guidance and counselling in higher education, lifelong learning, distance learning and in other learning environments, both non-formal and informal. It is recommended that this comprise:

- Research on careers guidance systems, structures and paradigms.
- Research into students' diversity and connected consequences,
- Research on students' situation and relevant needs,

Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative in all the relevant areas.

***Governance (Workpackage 7) Past and present systems, values and challenges for governance and change in the context of European enlargement***

*Introduction*

Higher education has been one of the most dynamic and challenging spheres in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe in the last 14 years. If we look at the educational systems of the countries of this region of Europe, we will see that changes in higher education have been much more expressive and meaningful than changes in primary or secondary education. East-Central Europe provides typical examples of how people in countries in economic and social crisis decide

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that higher education is one of the most reliable financial and intellectual investments.

Looking at the past 14 years in Eastern and Central Europe it would be said that two main approaches to higher education governance have been applied. The first one can be called “forestall-approach”. That is when a higher education policy appears before the new practice.

The second one can be called “go-after-approach”. That is when a higher education policy appears after the new practice in the field. This is the Bulgarian model of higher education reform: the State first leaves all higher schools to do everything they want and can and then legalises the established situation.

### *Functions of the State in higher education governance*

General role of the State. The role of the State generally comprises the following functions:

Developing and implementing the national policy for the promotion of higher education and safeguarding academic autonomy of higher schools.

Taking care of the quality of the training process and research, and specifying the conditions for the state recognition of the diplomas issued by higher schools in the home country and abroad.

Financing the training of students and postgraduates in public higher schools and providing, under certain conditions, scholarships, places at hostels, food, transport and accommodation.

Providing, under certain conditions, loans and social benefits to students.

Providing property to the public higher schools and ensuring tax and other concessions for the performance of the schools' activities.

Financing higher schools by funds of the state budget.

Enlargement of the access of the native born citizens to higher education.

Providing tax preferences to higher schools as well to those organizations which invest funds for development of higher education.

Establishing conditions for equal access to higher education.

The State exercises its functions in managing higher education through: Parliament, Government, and Ministry of Education.

Functions of Parliaments. The superior function of Parliament is adopting national higher education acts and making changes and amendments. Parliaments of some East-Central European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, etc.) have two other main functions: to establish, transform and close higher schools (state and non-state); and to adopt the state budget for higher education and to

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allocate (in some cases) the state subsidies for each higher school. Parliaments of other East-European countries (for instance, Russia) do not make decisions to establish, transform or close higher schools but delegate the function to other authorities.

Functions of Governments. The review of this function shows that the Governments of Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia etc. have got a wide range of functions in the management of higher education. Their governments usually approve general guidelines for national policy in the higher education sphere; propose the establishment, transformation or closing of institutions and set the amount of the annual state subsidy. The government may also approve educational qualifications in certain professions or specialties as well as approving the number of students and post-graduates whose training shall be funded by the state together with sundry other functions related to tuition fees and scholarships and have the power to recognize foreign higher education qualifications. In Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, for example, Government delegates almost all these functions to their Ministries of Education. In Romania, the government only determines the annual enrolment quota for free public higher education and decides on the length of full-time programs in long-term university education.

Functions of Ministries of Education. Ministries of Education are the state authorities for the implementation of the national policies in the higher education sphere and, according to the scale and powers they have, can be divided into three groups. Those with limited functions in managing higher education (such as Bulgaria). Ministries with "soft" functions only (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia) and ministries with "hard" functions (Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Russia).

Functions of other state authorities. "Other state authorities" mean those cases when the President, Prime Minister, or some other state councils have functions specified by law. For example, in Hungary the President of the Republic appoints (and dismisses) university professors as well as mandating (and dismissing) university rectors while the Prime Minister of Hungary has the power to appointing and dismissing college professors and mandate and dismissing college director-generals, or, in non-state colleges, confirm college director-generals; as well as mandating and dismissing the chairman and members of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. In Poland the President of the Republic grants the title of professor. While two councils in Hungary and Poland play very important roles in managing higher education. In Hungary this is the Higher Education and Research Council, and in Poland it is the Central Council of Higher Education. These councils act as advisory and policy-making bodies of the Ministers of Education.

Structures of the higher education systems. The higher education systems in most countries of East-Central Europe consist of university and non-university sectors. The university sector usually comprises: "classical" universities with many faculties; new founded universities with two to three faculties; specialised

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universities (technical, medical, etc.); religious universities; higher schools with various profiles (technical, pedagogical, economic, etc.); academies; conservatories. In most countries of East-Central Europe the university sector has got the dominant role. The admission procedures, systems of exams and requirements to applicants give an elitist character to the systems. Although many attempts have been made, especially in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia and Poland, the higher education systems have so far continued to be elitist.

### *Academic autonomy*

There are two main approaches to academic autonomy. The first one can be called “passive” approach. The autonomy is considered as a very important but constant matter that must be described, explained and put on with a legal framework of rules. Then these rules must be followed in any case despite of new realities and circumstances which may appear. In Bulgaria, Romania and Russia this approach is used.

The second one can be called “active” approach. The autonomy is considered as a dynamic matter of permanent development and improvement. Rules are obligatory needed but they may be amended with many new things according to the changing social realities and academic requirements. This approach is used in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland.

For example, in Bulgaria academic autonomy gives expression to the intellectual freedom of the academic community and the creative nature of research and education while recognizing them as highest human values. Academic freedom finds expression in: freedom of teaching, freedom of research, freedom of creativity, and freedom of training while Academic self-management finds expression in, among other things, the electivity of all bodies with fixed terms of office; the right of higher schools to arrange their structures and activities through their own regulations; the freedom to choose academic and teaching staff, admission procedures and forms of training students and postgraduates; and the independent development and implementation of curricula and research projects.

Poland is an example of connecting the extent of academic autonomy with the number of academic teachers at higher schools. As a rule, higher schools have a significant degree of autonomy. It is not, however, equal for all schools. Those of them, which employ on the terms of nomination at least 60 academic teachers with the title of professor and where at least one half of organizational units have the right to grant the doctor habilitated degree, have a greater degree of autonomy. These schools take more decisions independently than the others which do not meet these conditions and therefore have a narrower degree of autonomy, a number of their projects needing to be accepted by the Minister of Education.

In Romania autonomy is the right of the academic community to manage itself, exercise its academic freedoms in the absence of ideological, political or religious

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constraints, and assume such competencies and obligations as conform with the national strategic options and lines for the development of higher education provided by the law. Autonomy links up with personal and public accountability for the overall quality of the teaching and research activity of a higher school.

### *Organization of higher schools*

Managing bodies of higher schools. The managing bodies of higher schools in Bulgaria are the General Assembly, the Academic Council and the Rector. The managing bodies of higher schools serve for a four-year term of office. The managing bodies of Hungarian higher schools are the Institution Council (University or College Council) and the University Rector/College Director-General. The members of an institution council are elected for a period of one to three years. The mandate of university rectors and college director-generals is usually four years. In Poland the managing bodies of higher schools are the Senate and the Rector. They are elected for a three-year term of office. The managing bodies of Romanian higher schools are the University Senate, the Senate Board and the Rector, and they are elected for a four-year term. In Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia the managing bodies of higher schools are more or less the same as in Bulgaria but they are in most cases elected for a five-year term of office. These collective and single bodies serve at the highest (university) level of management. Under the university level are faculty and department levels. They are managed by Faculty Boards and Deans, and Department Committees and Heads. In many cases colleges and institutes are organised at the faculty level, as well. In contrast, Russia is a country where all kind of higher schools are independent to form their structures. Russian higher schools are the freest in forming their structural units among the five countries. After all, the university-faculty-department structure is most often used. In Bulgaria the higher school General Assembly consists of professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and researchers, administrative staff, students and postgraduates from all units of the higher school. High ranking academic staff shall account for not less than 70 per cent, while student representatives shall account for at least 15 per cent of the membership of the General Assembly. The situations in Romanian and Russian higher schools are very similar.

### *Accreditation of higher schools*

Reasons for accreditation. Accreditation has come into force in Eastern and Central Europe since 1993. The three main reasons for accreditation have been the establishment of private universities and colleges and the necessity of assessment of their education activities; the opening new faculties, departments and programs at state universities and the need for the equalization of the quality and standards of higher education in East and Central European countries with those of the member-countries of the European Union. There are not any serious differences in the content, subject and functions of the accreditation process in the different countries. In Bulgaria the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency at

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the Council of Ministers is the specialized governmental authority responsible for quality assessment and accreditation of higher school activities. Accreditation ensures compliance between the activities of a higher school, its main structural unit or specialty thereof and the state requirements. The accreditation shall be valid for five years. Higher schools which shall not have participated in an accreditation or evaluation procedure for five years shall not be entitled to state subsidies or any other funding by the state. In Hungary the Hungarian Accreditation Committee is mandated by the Prime Minister for three years. The committee, inter alia, assents to doctoral programs, and decide as to the areas and branches of knowledge in which a university may conduct doctoral education and adjudicate doctoral degrees; may express an opinion concerning the establishment or recognition of a higher education institution or higher education association; decide on the establishment or recognition of a faculty; give permission to start a major in graduate or specialised postgraduate education and, at least every eight years, shall assess the standard of education and scientific activity in higher education institutions.

### *Finance of higher education*

Sources of finance are defined in various ways but the three main sources are directly from the state budget; secondly from tuition fees, research, services, products, and other revenue earning activities and thirdly from donations, inheritance and sponsorship. The state budget is the main source for state higher schools. The share of the above mentioned sources in the case of private higher schools vary in accordance with their schemes of finance. Common principles of finance of higher schools are that:

Public higher schools draw up, implement, strike a balance and report their own budgets.

The Academic Council (Senate) approves the budgets of the higher school main units within the framework of the general budget.

Budget expenditures are drawn up in accordance with the classification of expenditures in the state budget.

The surplus revenues at the end of the year are transferred as cash availability in the higher school budget for the following year.

The basis for the calculus of allocations to each unit and school is the state budget percentage per student in respect of level and specifics of training, and of other indicators specific for education, especially those concerning the quality of education.

Higher education is allocated a distinct research fund from the aggregate research budget. Funding for research is allocated on competitive criteria and depends on national priorities, and past or expected performance. The competition for research finance is open to all accredited higher schools.

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Financially, academic autonomy is the right to manage budget allocations or funds from other sources, including revenue in fees denominated in foreign exchange charged on foreign students on criteria determined jointly with the Ministry of Education.

### *Prognoses, challenges, recommendations*

Attempts to reducing the number of higher schools through transforming some of them are expected in almost all CEE countries. In some countries (typically in Bulgaria) colleges will gradually disappear from the system of higher education. In other countries (Hungary, Baltic countries) colleges will increase their role and prestige. Some prognoses by countries

#### 1. Bulgaria:

- Increasing the functions of the Government in the management of higher education.
- Reducing the state funding of higher education and at the same time increasing the state financial control. (It seems that the current Bulgarian government follows the principle: more management powers over higher schools and less funding to them.)

#### 2. Hungary:

- Increasing the functions of the Government in the management of higher education but not to such an extent as in Bulgaria.
- Improving the links between research at higher schools, policy-making and financing.

#### 3. Poland:

- Reducing the fragmentation of higher schools and making their internal structures more flexible.
- Moulding the collection of higher schools into a coordinated system composed of interacting elements.

#### 4. Romania:

- Changing the relationships between the Government and universities, emphasising academic freedom and university autonomy, decentralised management, and taking the advice of the academic community.
- Stimulating competition between higher schools.

#### 5. Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia:

- Decreasing the role of the Government in the management of higher education.
- Overcoming the negative influences of the financial crisis on higher schools.

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### *Some challenges to the countries of East-Central Europe*

1. Improving the funding of higher education and more cost-effective spending.
2. Professionalisation of higher schools' administration.
3. Introducing new principles for creating programs of studies permitting a comparison of the knowledge acquired and the continuation of studies in different departments or different schools without losing a year (so-called credit system). This will make easier the foreign exchange of students.
4. Reformation of complex research on the problems of higher education.
5. Enhancing the prestige of academic teaching work at higher schools.
6. Increasing the effectiveness of research at higher schools.
7. Preparing sets of legislation intended to prescribe the future of national higher education, including the most significant provisions reflecting and then setting into motion the innovative ideas of the further development.
8. Further aiming at the title of "learning societies".
9. Proving in practice that the countries of Eastern or Central Europe can achieve the quality of West European higher education disposing of much less finance and worse conditions than the West European countries.

### *Some recommendations*

- States and institutions will have to think deeper of employment/unemployment of HE graduates - but this is directly connected with the trends mentioned above.
- Understanding of HE as a life-long learning process to be accepted in all CEE countries.
- Because of the large variety of schools and programs more efficient systems of monitoring and assessment of quality and effectiveness of HE will be tested and implemented.
- The e-learning development approach will be used more actively and its functions will be enlarged.
- "The Knowledge Society" is still just a title and idea in most of CEE countries. However, the competition with the West European countries will require this idea to be put into practice and to be fulfilled with concrete acts.

### ***Governance (Workpackage 9) Guide to policy 'Relations with the State and quality in HE'***

#### *Importance of QA in the context of the Bologna process*

Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies is mentioned in the Bologna Declaration

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as one of the main objectives to be attained on the way to the European Higher Education Area. Quality assurance in higher education has become one of three cornerstones of the Bologna Process (so-called 'golden triangle': QA, ECTS and a 2-level system of studies) and its role is constantly increasing. The Berlin Communiqué (2003) states explicitly that the "...quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Ministers commit themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance."

They also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework. Therefore, they agree that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.

A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.

International participation, co-operation and networking.

At the European level, Ministers call upon ENQA through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account will be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks."

### *Previous and present QA initiatives at the European level*

In the last decade there have been several large-scale European QA initiatives. The European Pilot Project for Evaluating Quality in Higher Education, initiated in November 1994 by the European Commission, Directorate General XXII: Education, Training and Youth and finished in December 1995, gave a general overview of existing national QA systems and a comparative analysis of QA for several study areas. The methodological framework in the form of the guidelines for the project was tested and received general support, the relevance and intensity of collaboration made possible during the project was recognized by all participants and support for further cooperation was expressed. It has been also concluded that

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- the interpretation of the various elements of the methodology must necessarily be adapted to the educational structures and national institutional and academic cultures in the different countries
- the evaluation methodology must reflect the context in which it is being used.

In 2000 the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was launched by the European Commission to co-ordinate activities of European QA and accreditation agencies. It is now perceived as the main body responsible for European QA policy. A series of reports concerning inter alia quality procedures in European higher education, benchmarking in higher education, quality assurance implications of new forms of higher education, institutional evaluations in Europe, has been prepared and disseminated. ENQA co-ordinates also projects dealing with specific QA issues, such as Trans-national European Evaluation Project (TEEP) testing a method for trans-national external evaluation in three disciplines (Physics, History, Veterinary Science). To assist countries of central and eastern Europe in their preparation for accession to the European Union, the project Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the framework of Phare Multi-Country Programme in Higher Education was realised in 1997-98. It promoted quality culture and offered guidebooks on QA for CEE countries.

### *Objectives and methodology of HERN analysis*

If so many quality-oriented initiatives have been already realised, what is the added value of research conducted by HERN? What HERN offers is a multi-dimensional approach and synergy with other issues. The network explored the four domains of Society (in terms of underpinning European values); Governance (in terms of institutional management); Teaching and learning (in terms of new developments) and Managing change in the context of European enlargement.

Quality issues are present in all four domains but perhaps the most significant is that "Quality" is the main driving force for change in all areas and all countries. HERN considered the issue of quality and accountability in its widest context, taking into account not only the main stakeholders (State and Academia), but also the 'hidden variables of QA' - the relationships of QA with gender issues, inclusion and access and the promotion of responsible citizenship.

### *Conclusions*

There is no Europe-wide general model or pattern of quality assurance and accreditation scheme in higher education. Recent developments show that in spite of policy declarations stressing the necessity of harmonisation of national QA systems there is still a lot of divergence in approaching quality issues by individual European countries. We are witnessing a variety of approaches – let us only compare German meta-accreditation with Polish experiences in academic accreditation or with the Czech example of state accreditation. There are also different groups of stakeholders:

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The European Parliament acting through the European Commission

National and Federal governments

Regional and Local governments

Higher education institutions and their associations and networks (CRE etc.)

Professional organisations, learned societies and other organisations and associations representing interests of particular professions/subject areas,

Organisations representing different groups of HEI staff and students (ESIB, EADS, HUMANE etc.)

Organisations and associations of employers of graduates and the users of HE services.

Trades Unions and other organisations representative of the wider workforce

Campaigning and pressure groups, charities, religious organisations, political parties and others who are involved with, or use the services of, higher education

Students (and, increasingly, their parents) and former students and Alumnus groups

Taxpayers

Etc...

Different groups of stakeholders often differ in their views concerning various aspects of the Bologna process, they are also interrelated in many ways. Let us look at the European quality space at its present shape. We can then distinguish at least three „quality dimensions” each of which determines a set of standards to be fulfilled by higher education institutions:

State dimension, including legal regulations, national needs (such as labour market pressures), relationships of academic institutions with the ‘outer world’. Weak points of State-driven QA systems: bureaucracy, attachment to standards and regulations (even if they are outdated). This dimension defines the basic **national standards** as set by national law (core curricula, regulations concerning organisation of teaching and learning etc.).

Academic dimension, including the community of students and academic staff. Academic community as such is interested in quality enhancement, but on its own terms (‘I am university professor and it means that I do know how to teach!’). Weak points of Academia-driven systems: too academic and often too ‘amateurish’, too much focused on internal matters (closed system) without contacts with the ‘external world’. This dimension defines the **Academic quality standards** set by academic community itself (both in formal and informal ways).

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European dimension, being a consequence of emerging European Higher Education Area and European labour market and driven by the Bologna process. The European dimension can become a platform for the dialogue between State and Academia (it is driven by the EC being a 'European Government', and the EUA, being an umbrella for European academic community). This, the newest, dimension defines the emerging **European standards**, elaborated e.g. in the framework of TUNING project or by international professional associations (FEANI, learned societies etc.).

The following **general recommendations** have been formulated on the basis of HERN analysis and the present "state of the art." of the European quality space. The basic premise of the successful implementation of these recommendations is the continuing dialogue between the State and Academia – a dialogue in which the European Commission shall play a key role, in close co-operation with the EUA.

The immediately following recommendations (a-e) can be also found in documents of EC, EUA etc. The discussion in the framework of HERN showed once more inadequacy of many of the actions undertaken so far where there has been no significant progress in QA –either in its perception or in the implementation of viable quality-enhancing mechanisms. Therefore the problem here is not "what to do" but "how to do":

- a. Evaluation and accreditation processes should not be too 'academic' nor too 'bureaucratic'. They should involve all actors, in particular students and employers. At the national level, they shall also include international components (to ensure harmonisation at the European level).
- b. The QA and evaluation methodology shall move towards a more outcome-oriented approach. Study programs shall be evaluated also from the point of view of potential employers.
- c. Accreditation and evaluation bodies should be independent (or at least autonomous) vs both State and Academia.
- d. The platform of the broad debate should be used (ENQA, CEEN). The examples of good practice should be widely distributed and the goal should be seen in mutual recognition of the national accreditation systems.
- e. In the system of external evaluation of quality different goals and tasks of individual higher education institutions shall be taken into account.

The recommendations which follow (f-h) usually do not appear explicitly in Bologna documents. Therefore we think that EC and other decision-making bodies shall take them into account as additional important factors influencing quality enhancement:

- f. There are 'hidden variables' of education quality, such as ensuring equal opportunities, stimulating development of positive attitudes etc. Most of the

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stakeholders are aware of them, but these quality aspects are very difficult to be quantified and evaluated. Future development of quality culture shall include taking into account broader spectrum of quality factors and performance indicators and thus support promotion of citizenship values and 'human face' of post-industrial knowledge society.

- g. Psychological aspects of evaluation and accreditation shall be taken into account.
- h. A thorough research on perception of Bologna ideas among various target groups across Europe shall be conducted. Most of statistical data published in various reports are superficial and do not correspond to real situation.

In addition to the foregoing, there is also a set of recommendations for university leaders and the academic community at large:

Awareness of importance of Bologna process among university staff shall be enhanced. In particular, research mentioned in point (h) shall be performed and serve as a basis for the realistic programme of Bologna promotion.

Quality assurance shall be seen as one of cornerstones of European house of education.

Accreditation/QA shall be seen as a mirror for self-control of academic community.

Academic institutions and academic community shall develop sense of ownership or at least participation with respect to QA processes.

At the institutional (university/faculty/department) level internal evaluation shall be correlated with external evaluation to optimise the work performed to such purpose.

### *Possible future developments*

As it has been mentioned in the previous section, the most important issue in promoting the quality culture is not "what to do" but "how to do". The level of understanding of key features of the Bologna process remains low. In spite of many declarations, also the co-operation between different target groups is not satisfactory. Therefore European initiatives and projects (such as HERN) shall support international networks and organisations dealing with quality assurance and accreditation through joint actions, in particular by setting up new projects based on past experiences and taking into account emerging needs. Recently several new ideas are being discussed with CEEN (Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies), such as

Preparation for mutual recognition of CEEN member agencies

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Repository of past and present QA-oriented projects realised in CEE (with stress on transferable good practice)

CEE 'pool of young researchers' working on EHEA

An example of the sort of supporting actions that might be taken is a research project just launched by the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools of Poland. Project that concerns investigation of dynamics of the Bologna process in Poland and research on the perception of Bologna ideas by Polish university staff and students. Possibilities for co-operation on QA with existing university networks, such as the Coimbra Group or the Compostela Group are also being explored. The range of possibilities for bottom-up action is very large.

### *Recommendations for the EC*

European decision makers shall support and correlate bottom-up and top-down ideas aiming at quality improvement. Real (and not wishful) picture of perception of Bologna ideas among different target groups shall be drawn and used in development of quality enhancement strategies. Quality improvement is a dynamic process, therefore newly emerging factors shall be taken into account as quickly as possible. More attention shall be paid to implementation of recommendations and promotion of good practice in QA. The specific recommendations for the EC are that the European Commission should:

Support/promote the determination and introduction of **European standards** in QA in HE

Conduct a rigorous **benchmarking exercise** that charts all national systems performance against these standard EC benchmarks

**Publish an annual "Quality Report"** of these findings in which there should be no EC comments (either positive or negative) but rather the data is let to stand by itself. (The EC has done this with employment statistics and it is a method of introducing objectivity without implying that any national system is better than any other).

### ***Gender (Workpackage 3) The role of tomorrow's HE in fostering gender equity and employment.***

#### *Lack of participation of women in higher education*

The lack of participation of women in higher education is a common problem in all partner countries and gives reason for serious concern. In Greece, based on the data of the National Statistics Office and the Examinations Department of the Ministry of Education, the participation of males is higher than that of females in the exact and technological sciences. In the departments of theoretical faculties the presence of females is equal to that of males, while it is observed that females are over-represented in the faculties leading up to the profession of teacher,

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kindergarten teacher, literature and language teacher, theologian and foreign language teacher. In general, females as compared to males, have a very small percentage in technical vocational education, whereas the majority of females follow social and economic specialties while avoiding the technical ones. Empirical studies show also that there is a great difference in the university departments and the professions chosen by male and females. There is an observed tendency on the part of females to choose traditionally female professions and studies.

The same situation has also been observed in the Netherlands. In the last two decades, the female participation in higher education increased considerably, although their level of education is still lower than that of men. Nowadays, 18% of the women have got a degree in professional or scientific education compared with 23% of the men. Women are – traditionally - well represented in the social and cultural subjects, and although some real catching up is done, they remain underrepresented in technical and economical courses. Few women consider taking up economical or technical subjects, because they are stimulated enough to choose other courses in secondary school. Furthermore, the presentation and acquisition of those subjects, the teaching ways of the staff and the atmosphere and culture at the colleges are highly “male” oriented. Also, females are influenced by “own” prejudices and they hardly have any example to relate to.

In Latvia, in general, women are more educated than men, but women choose to pursue the following fields of study: teacher training (84% from the total number), humanities (80%), health and social care (73%), social sciences (64%), natural sciences and mathematics (46%), agriculture (43%), and services (37%). The percentage of women professors at the present moment reflects the male hegemony in the academic world too. Therefore it is also interesting to compare the gender situation not only by students, but also by academic staff of the higher education institution. The density of women working in higher educational institutions is 36% from the total number. But also it is necessary to analyze the further division of these 36%. A percentage of 4% from the total academic staff is professors, 7% associated professors, 25% docents, 44% lecturers, 16% assistants, 4% researchers. If we analyze professors (women) by their field of study we can see, that the division is similar of that preferred study programs. The biggest percent is in humanities and the most popular fields of study are the fields of health and health care, natural sciences and social sciences.

Gender differences continue to exist in the Czech Republic; women are more likely to be enrolled in fields related to the health professions, education and the social and behavioural sciences, and less likely in the natural sciences or industrial engineering fields. A slight increase has been in the enrolment of women in first-degree tertiary education programmes in technical disciplines and in post-graduate and doctoral studies.

The HE system in Poland does not have any particular policy concerning gender equality in education; on the contrary, governing bodies have passed laws that

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reinforce stereotypes, supporting traditional family models, and discriminate against women in all fields of social life, including education. Although, there have been many discussions on the impact of education on the society, only few of them addressed the gender issue, either in education or in public life. Paradoxically, today, women in Poland are generally better educated than men. More young women complete secondary schools and pass final examinations, and more women enter universities and complete their studies (women account for 56% of university graduates; on the other hand, educated women constituted 3,8% of unemployed people). Interestingly, more women than men become students of business and management, a fact that provides hope that the future's more influential and lucrative positions will be filled by women.

### *The female employee*

The employment of female graduates and the inequality that describe their presentation in the work force, is another topic that engaged us in the Seminar. The recent changes in the work and jobs environment place higher demands especially on women for greater flexibility and adaptability. This means that women will have greater difficulty in planning and combining work and family life. Women feel more anxious than men about the changes in the labour market that will affect them. A look at total employment for women indicates they have a more insecure situation on the labour market. Women have temporary jobs to a greater degree than men. And to a much greater extent, they feel that they must adapt their working life to their family despite the fact that exactly opposite demands are placed on them by work.. Young women between 25 and 35 years are more afraid of losing their jobs than other age group.

Women in Greece represent, both in quantity and quality, a rising power in the scientific work-force. However, in the labour market, their percentages in higher posts are insignificant. Greece is found at the penultimate place together with Spain (12%) among 26 countries, while France and Luxembourg (9%) are ranked last, as to the number of women working as government officials, executives and business managers, even though women produce the 55% of the world wealth according to the United Nations development programme estimates. The situation is the same when it comes to academic hierarchy. The percentage of women at higher levels varies from 5% in Holland to 18% the highest one, in Finland, while in Greece it is 9,5%. Obvious differences also exist in the vocational aspirations of the two genders, through which the existing professional gender discrimination is reproduced in the labour market. Girls tend to prefer the Faculties of Theology, Medicine, Philosophy, Sociology, Foreign Languages and Law, while their presence in traditionally "male-dominated" scientific field is limited. An aspect of the inequality in labour market is also new technologies. The introduction of information technology in secondary education, has created a new field in which males have an advantage in relation to access, familiarization use and performance in new technologies.

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Women earn less money than men. There is no way around that fact. When average hourly salaries are compared, women earnings are approximately 77% of men. When we say that women earn far less than men, we are stating this in comparison of men and women in the same occupation with the same education and experiences, and the same amount of time put into work. Different career and occupational choices can explain some of the differences between men and women's earnings, as can differences in the amount of time men and women spend in the labour market, and the relatively high incidence of part-time work among women. Contrary to popular myth this is not due to the fact that women get pregnant and have to leave the work force, neither that women leave the work force to spend time at home with the children or that they work part-time and less hours than men. This is due to the historical burden and/or differences and disparities between men's and women's roles in society. However when we try to answer to question: *why there are so great differences between salaries of men and women* we must take under consideration that some differences in salary are due to *differences in length of service*, regardless of gender, rank or discipline; and some disciplines have higher salaries due to market demands for professionals in those disciplines.

### *Initiatives to promote the entrance of women into science*

The female higher education initiatives nowadays are highly interconnected with labour market policies. The relations of the university with the labour market and especially the connection with the promotion of female-student population in employment is admittedly one of the most important issues. In an era of fast changes and under the fear of unemployment the university has placed its relation to the labour market in a different perspective. Marketisation and deregulation are the key concepts nowadays. Of course, Higher Education Institutions neither were nor can (or should) be mere mechanisms of vocational training. Higher Education has been and always will be institutions of education, research, social service and free interchange of ideas. This does not mean that the university is indifferent to the professional situation of its graduates.

The technical colleges in *Netherlands* have initiated a high school project called *Prima Donna* to inform girls about career prospects. Another program, *Technika 10+* is meant to improve working conditions in technical jobs in order to attract more women in the near future. In the late nineties, the *Aspasia* project was launched, encouraging women to move on to higher ranks and positions in the scientific community. Additionally, in 1997 the Ministry of Education instituted the "Higher Education Award" and in 2001 the attention was focused on enhancing the position of female workers in higher education and preventing them from leaving the institutions. Finally, student exchange programmes promote internationalization. In European Erasmus Programme both foreign visitors and students from *Netherlands* have the opportunity to choose between a modern specialized orientation and an academic one. The students find this project very interesting and stimulating

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In *Greece*, the study programmes of the University of Athens have two main objectives:

1. Provide guidance to the new female students towards the knowledge of applied notions and the knowledge of the specialty itself so that they can develop skills such as, analytical way of thinking, broadness of mind, inventiveness, and handling of options.
2. Cultivate in new students values and behaviors – acceptance of difference, acceptance of cooperation, undertaking of initiatives – and reinforce new skills, such as decision-making, adaptability, quick reaction to challenge.

Additionally, the female graduates of the Athens University Departments are in a position to attend modern postgraduate programs and to participate in inter-European programmes through student exchanges. At this point, it is worth mentioning the role of Career Offices in linking the universities with the labour market and facilitating the graduates' incorporation into jobs. Finally, the "entrepreneurship" programme, according to the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training II focuses to reinforce the role of Career Offices, with a view to expanding their services towards specific population groups, such as female students. Great emphasis will be laid on: a) the provision of individualized guidance to the students, in order to help them understand the particular characteristics of various types of business, b) the organizing of special entrepreneurship events, c) the creation and publication of periodical informative newsletters and constant information of the students about the labour market.

In *Poland*, a postgraduate programme on gender studies promote the establishment of gender studies as a part of academic structure. The final activities of the project are:

1. Meetings of students interested in gendered studies with future lecturers who introduce concept and ideas
2. Advertising gender studies in gender-focused publications, feminist periodicals and among academics and students
3. Popularising information about gender studies in Internet

### *Strategies and priorities*

The strategies to enhance female participation in higher education must be an important objective. Methods and tools must be developed in order to increase the numbers of women working in the fields of science, engineering, technology and ICT. The University could be of further assistance to the major issue of gender equality by:

Changing the view of female students against engineering and technology;

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Increasing the number of women in leading positions as well within the higher education system and in industry;

Developing and implementing models for a gendered leadership;

Developing a gendered pedagogy within higher education in order to attract more women;

Developing support programmes for women during their university or postgraduate studies, especially in male dominated faculties;

Developing postgraduate courses on gender and gender equality issues;

Integrating a gendered perspective on lifelong learning;

In particular, within the higher education domain, universities should seek to enhance academic career opportunities for women by:

Each Faculty/ Institute should devise formalized written career policies, procedures, and processes whereby compensation is awarded or improvement is possible;

The Faculty, acting through its Administration and its Deans and department heads, should actively seek, hire, and retain female faculty, especially senior women faculty;

Greater emphasis must be given to women's contribution to the world and national history, especially to the "non formal" history, literature, art, politics, as well as the gender role in relation to social class, nationality, race, cultural differences and gender-based social inequalities. The implementation of such strategies could help the improvement of the female student's position regarding their equal access to the labour market and the society.

### ***Gender (Workpackage 8) Internal management, gender and staff development in the context of reform and EU enlargement***

This policy guide addresses the questions of internal management and staff development from the point of view of gender inequalities in institutional decision-making procedures in higher education. These topics fall into the general area of equal opportunity and gender equity but focus on a particularly critical point, the participation of an underrepresented gender, nearly always women, in institutional decision-making procedures. The precise understanding and concrete interpretation of 'equal opportunity' and 'gender equity' will vary from one academic subject area to another, from institution to institution, and from one country or society to another. Progress towards gender equity will thus vary from institution to institution and in these guidelines it is envisaged that it will take place as an internal and collective learning and development process within each institution. Progress towards gender equality in decision procedures at any particular institution of higher education will thus depend on a range of factors which include

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staff development at the institutional level and the impact of simultaneous reform and enlargement of the European Union at the national level. In this context it is worth noting that the situation in which these guidelines have been formulated is a university of technology in Sweden, *i.e.* in a particularly masculine academic subject area in a country which can be said to lie in or near the forefront of the European Union's efforts towards equal opportunity and gender equity.

In a broad long-term perspective higher education has been developed 'by men for men'. This point is stressed by, *e.g.*, Noble but can be said to be an unavoidable conclusion of any simple historical analysis which includes the aspect of gender. The present-day consequences of the gendered history of higher education cannot be ignored. Masculine patterns of learning, knowing, leadership and social interaction in general are built into the culture and practices of higher education. The preservation of this masculine culture in higher education is closely intertwined with the preservation of 'academic quality' and is manifested in general by the proportion of women at decision-making levels in the academic hierarchy being significantly lower than the proportions of women at intermediate level and in undergraduate studies. In Sweden, for example, ca 12% of professors are women while twice as many, 25%, of lecturers are women and more than half, 60%, of undergraduate students are women. A very similar situation in the United Kingdom is described by Kettle (1996), ETAN (2000) and Morley (2003). McAuley (1987) pays particular attention to the underrepresentation of women in decision-making categories of staff at one particular institution in the U.K. At the fifth HERN seminar similar situations in the Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia and Poland were described by Novacek (2003), Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou & Katsi (2003), Rivza (2003), and Radkiewicz (2003). The exact proportion of women among 'professors' depends strongly on the precise definition of the category and ranges from 4% in Latvia to 25% in Poland. There are proportionately fewer women amongst 'full' professors than there are amongst assistant or associate professors. (See the comment on categories of staff in connection with statistical surveys below.) The proportion of women among undergraduate students lies between 50% and 60% in the countries considered at the fifth HERN seminar. Before enlargement of the European Union the proportion of women amongst 'full' professors ranged from 5% to 18% and the proportion of women amongst undergraduates ranged from 40% to 65% (ETAN, 2000). It is worth noting that enlargement appears to consolidate the middle ground without significantly extending the ranges.

Policy needs to be aimed at (1) making gender 'visible' and (2) changing not only formal procedures but also attitudes and culture. Increased awareness of the significance of gender is thus generally preferable as a long-term strategy to changes in formal procedures and may even be a necessary prerequisite. All formal decision-making procedures should be transparent and open. A concise summary of these guidelines is provided by the 'bulleted' lists in the following sections.

*Institutional commitment*

Institutional commitment is essential for the effective implementation of policy aimed at true gender equality in decision-making procedures since the mechanisms which obstruct gender equity in higher education consist of much more than overt or deliberate discrimination. Policy needs to be aimed at changing not only formal procedures but also attitudes and culture. Effective implementation may furthermore be perceived to be in conflict with the institution's principles of 'objectiveness', 'academic excellence' or 'fairness'. Such perceived conflicts should ideally be made the subject for systematic enquiry following the institution's own culture of research (though including a gender perspective).

Depending on the degree of gender awareness at the institution as a whole the following concrete measures can be adopted at institutional level:

- a statistical survey of the proportions of men and women in all categories of staff
- adoption of a policy and a plan for its implementation
- various forms of positive action

The first point is minimal and could be required by an external authority such as a national Ministry of Education or a source of funds within the European Union. The third point is on the verge of what could be considered to be acceptable at this point in time in many countries in the European Union.

The statistical survey should document the proportions of men and women in all categories of staff. The survey should distinguish between lecturers and professors; between short-term appointments and appointments with tenure; and between externally financed and internally financed research positions. The details of the categories will necessarily vary from institution to institution but the survey should enable a discussion of gender participation in decision-making procedures. The survey should achieve the basic purpose of 'making gender visible'. General progress towards equal opportunity and gender equity in the European Union as a whole would benefit from the development and adoption of a common system for categories of academic staff.

The statistical survey should be updated regularly, e.g. annually, and careful attention should be paid to the academic progression from undergraduate student to postgraduate student, to post-doctoral researcher, to lecturer, to professor (as appropriate). The details of this progression will vary from institution to institution but the survey should enable a discussion of possible 'hidden mechanisms' or gender-differentiating checkpoints in an academic career. In the Natural Sciences, for example, ETAN's Working Party for Women and Science has identified a 'leaky

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pipeline'; "the lack of women at top levels cannot be explained by a lack of women in the corresponding undergraduate classes".

Each institution should adopt a policy for gender equity and develop a plan for its implementation. The policy and plan should be based on a statistical survey and the implementation of the policy should be regularly evaluated. Ideally the implementation of the policy should be developed by departments upwards as an integral part of institutional self-evaluation and quality assessment. The policy and its implementation should address imbalances in the statistics, particularly in the progression from one form of appointment to the next, and it should discuss staff development and the potential advantages and viability of various forms of positive action.

The viability of positive action depends on the degree of gender awareness at the particular institution as well as on the details of the national laws which regulate discrimination. Supportive positive action can consist of mentor programmes, child care on campus, extended maternity/paternity leave *etc.* and can be expected to be non-discriminating in a legal sense. Apart from internal mentor programmes the institution could also support national and international networks such as WHEN in the United Kingdom and WIPAN in engineering. In general it is important to support both women and men in their attempts to combine academic work with family life in the progression from Ph.D. degree to tenure.

With reference to the section on 'gender participation in decision making' below, it is likely that the few women who take part in decision making will be overloaded by committee work to the detriment of their research activities, which in turn will be to the detriment of progress towards gender equity in general. It is reasonable for the institution to provide compensatory support for their research groups and it should be possible to construct this support in a gender-neutral fashion. More exclusive positive action may contravene the letter of the law but can range from appointments which are only open to women applicants, as has been the case in Germany and Sweden to partial support from the institution's central budget for departments which, for example, appoint a woman as post-doctoral researcher in engineering.

### *Staff development*

Just as in society as a whole the masculine culture of higher education is preserved by both men and women both subconsciously and by consciously maintaining that the culture is gender-neutral. Gender is made invisible or 'silenced'. As an undergraduate student has expressed it, "...*We want to end up at a place where women and men are the same — except for whatever is inherently different. And so a lot of people sort of assume that we're already there. They ignore whatever factors have happened in the first 20 years of your life and say, 'Well, we all ought to be equal, so we'll just assume that we are.'* But it doesn't work like that..."

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Increased awareness of the significance of gender has to be included in staff development. Possible measures that can be taken include;

- gender perspective included in internal teacher training for tutors and lecturers

- gender perspective included in staff development for managers and committees responsible for recruitment, tenure and quality assessment.

- support for gender studies within the institution's subject area(s)

Morley (2003) points out that a gender perspective is often lacking in present-day efforts towards pedagogical development in higher education, despite, or perhaps due to, a strong focus on the individual's learning. In contrast, Novacek (2003) provides some examples of the importance of gender in teaching and learning. A gender perspective on teaching and learning should be included in internal teacher training for tutors, lecturers and professors, as well as in internal staff development courses for tutors of research students. See Nightingale & Sohler (1994) for a guide produced by a professional association of academic staff.

A gender perspective on leadership and management should be included in internal staff development courses for individuals in leading positions, such as, e.g., deans and managers. See Holgersson (2003). This can be particularly important for managers and committees who are responsible for institutional self-evaluation and quality assessment.

Recruitment, new appointments, promotion and tenure are critical for the progress towards equal opportunity and gender equity. A gender perspective is essential in internal staff development courses for individuals and committees responsible for appointments and promotion.

Ideally the institution should provide particular support for gender studies within its own subject area or areas since such studies can be expected to provide a knowledge base for staff development and progress towards gender equity in general. Overt institutional support for gender studies also serves the significant purpose of validating gender as an area of knowledge and field of research.

### *Participation in decision making*

For an individual member of staff, participation in decision making is closely connected to progression through the academic hierarchy. Progress towards gender equity in decision making is thus closely connected to progress towards equal opportunities to pursue academic careers and the measures in the list below can be said to be aimed at both goals.

- sub-committees, rather than individuals, should make short-term appointments.

- both men and women should sit on committees responsible for appointments and promotion.

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a survey of potential candidates should be carried out before the subject areas of new appointments are decided.

discussion of the significance of gender for evaluation of formal merits

In these guidelines it has been assumed that all formal decision-making procedures are transparent and open, e.g. 'made public' in the Swedish tradition. Lack of openness is an excellent tool for those who wish to ignore or obstruct progress towards gender equity.

In general increased awareness of the significance of gender is preferable as a strategy to changes in formal procedures and may even be a necessary prerequisite. Changes in formal procedures do however provide a clear indication of institutional commitment and may stimulate a discussion of the significance of gender and initiate a process of change and development.

The progression from undergraduate student to tenure usually consists of a number of short-term research appointments with the result that these appointments play a significant rôle in the 'leaky pipeline'. An individual researcher who receives an external research grant, which enables him or her to appoint a postgraduate research student or postdoctoral researcher, can be expected to choose an individual who to some extent resembles him- or herself. This may be an advantage for the success of the research project but will also tend to maintain the phenomenon 'men choose men'. In order to limit the effect of this on the progress towards equal opportunity sub-committees should make the formal decision to appoint postgraduate research students and postdoctoral researchers.

For similar reasons ('men choose men'), a survey of potential candidates, paying particular attention to the underrepresented gender, should be carried out before the academic subject areas of new appointments such as chairs, *i.e.* professorships, or other posts with tenure or management responsibilities are formally decided in detail.

Both men and women should sit on committees responsible for recruitment, new appointments, promotion and tenure. This somewhat heavy-handed measure appears to simplify the rôle of gender to the point where one woman can be assumed to represent the whole problem but the measure is unavoidable while the general awareness of the significance of gender is in its initial stage of development at the particular institution. A further disadvantage is the workload it implies for the few women who are considered more or less eligible to sit on the committees. See the discussion towards the end of the previous section.

The institution should stimulate and maintain an active and continuing discussion of the significance of gender for the definition and evaluation of formal merits. This is a fairly open question but there are a number of concrete examples. The relative values of teaching and research merits may be significant from the point of view of gender. An individual's research merits may be undervalued due to being based on a paradigm other than the dominant paradigm and gender may be significant

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for the choice of paradigm. Research merits usually depend strongly on success in applications for research grants and the decisions of funding agencies may contain significant gender bias. There may also be significant differences in the ways men and women choose to conduct 'careers' and thus accumulate merit.

### ***Disability Research group (Workpackages 4 & 5) Report on strategies for supporting print disabled students in Higher Education***

The partner countries involved in Workpackage 4/5 are Sweden, Poland, Greece, Latvia, United Kingdom and Austria. The aim is to compare the different situations in the partner's countries and to find parallels and differences between them.

#### *The target group – students with disabilities*

**Sweden:** The apparent numbers of students with disabilities in the partner countries varies quite considerably. In Sweden the number of people with disabilities enrolling in higher education has increased in the past few years. The term disability is used to refer to a permanent physical, mental or intellectual limitation of functional capacity as a consequence of an injury or an illness that existed at birth, has arisen thereafter or which may be expected to arise. The numbers are based on those students who were admitted on the grounds of medical priority and those receiving any form of support. In 2002 the situation was:

Specific learning difficulties, dyslexia	1076
Visual impairment	153
Mobility impairment	294
Auditory impairment	247
Other disabilities	320
Students who have been in contact with the disability co-ordinator for help with planning their studies, but without applying for other forms of support	918
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3008</b>

**Poland:** The number of people with disabilities participating in higher education has increased in recent years and there are now about 3,000 students with disabilities in higher education in Poland. This number is based on those students who receive any form of assistance or who are registered with the disability support services provided by some schools - the number of such students at The Warsaw University is 300, at the Jagiellonian University it is 200 and at Silesia University also 200. About 40% of these students have various visual impairments. This suggests that there are about 1,200 students with visual impairments, or about 1.2% of the estimated 100,000 visually impaired persons in Poland (data from Polish Union of the Blind). Unfortunately these numbers are not very exact, because membership in Polish Union of The Blind is not mandatory and not all students receive financial support, so are not officially registered.

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**Greece:** There is not any current census of the disabled students due to the fact that the University Administrative Service does not report student's personal data. The numbers of disabled students at the University of Athens in 1993 was:

Thalassaemia	289
Blindness	37
Motor disabilities	10
Deafness	37
Other cases	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>387</b>

**Latvia:** According to the data from Ministry of Welfare, 5% of the population has special needs (over 120,000 people). About 25% of this group (approx 30,000 people) are aged 16-39 years and might be the potential students of higher education establishments. In fact there are 28 (0.8% of total) students with special needs at 9 higher education institutions in Latvia.

**Austria:** In Austria there are estimated to be 616 students with disabilities in Higher Education in Austria but the figure is not exactly known because it is not registered in the Austrian Higher Education Statistic. The percentage of blind and visually impaired students is calculated as 14,4% - meaning that in Austria there are about 88 blind and partially sighted students. However, Bruno Sperl (Karl-Franzens University of Graz) estimates that the number of blind and partially sighted students in Austria is actually about 150. These estimations show that the number of students with disabilities in Austria is not exactly known. The Austrian "Sozialerhebung 2002" includes an extra part in order to evaluate the extent of students with disabilities in Higher Education. The students have to answer questions in form of self- assessment if they are affected by disability, chronic illness or an impairment of health. The findings from this are that 1% of all students in Austria characterise themselves as disabled, 7,6% call themselves chronically ill and 3,3% say that they have other impairments of health.

	% of total disabled students	% all students
Disability	8,3%	1,0%
Chronic illness	63,8%	7,6%
Other impairments of health	27,9%	3,3%
No impairments of health	---	88,1%

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**England and Scotland:** These statistics were drawn from enrolments registered with the Higher Education Statistics Agency in 1999. It should be noted that only students who indicate a disability on their enrolment forms are counted.

	Numbers in England & Scotland	% of total disabled students	% all students
Dyslexia	17,205	31.62%	1.43%
Blind, Partially sighted	1,795	3.30%	0.15%
Deaf, hard of hearing	2,960	5.44%	0.25%
Wheelchair user, mobility difficulties	2,119	3.89%	0.18%
Personal Care support	107	0.20%	0.01%
Mental Health Difficulties	1,057	1.94%	0.09%
Unseen eg diabetes, epilepsy, asthma	21,159	38.89%	1.76%
Multiple disabilities	1,948	3.58%	0.16%
Other Disability	6,060	11.14%	0.50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54,410</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>4.52%</b>

### Conclusion

The number of students with disabilities and the forms of disabilities varies between countries. The highest number of students with disabilities can be found in UK where there are 54,410 (4,5%) disabled students. In Austria the percentage of students with disability is also high at 11,9% while the number of students with disabilities in higher education in Poland is 3,000 and in Sweden it was 3,008 in 2002. In Greece there are no reliable figures. The lowest number of students with disabilities was reported in Latvia – 28 students with disabilities, which is only 0,8% of the total number of students. Blind and partially sighted students comprise 3.3% of all disabled students in England and Scotland while, in Poland, blind and partially sighted students comprise 40% of all disabled students. All these statistical data are produced against the background of the fact that only registered students or students who receive assistance or students who are in contact with the disability coordinator can be counted. In most of the partner's countries the number of students with disabilities tends to increase.

### *Legal framework concerning students with disabilities in higher education*

All the partner countries recognise international legislation on Human rights including "The Declaration of Disabled Rights" (UN- December 9, 1975) as well as being signatories to the programme of actions of the Copenhagen treaty (signed by 117 countries, March, 12, 1995). In all countries equal access and treatment and support services for people with disabilities is guaranteed by legislation: this also

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extends to students in higher education, with the exception of Poland where there is no legal requirement for HEIs to provide support for students with disabilities (where it is provided it is the initiative of individual university Rectors). An attempt has been made to change the main Polish act, the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act, but it was unsuccessful and higher education is not mentioned as a right and opportunity for persons with disabilities.

In Austria in 1997 an attachment to the Federal Constitution stated that: *"Nobody may be discriminated because of his/her disability. The republic (federation, federal countries, and communities) confesses to ensuring equal treatment of people with disabilities in all areas of daily life."* Although all universities have included statements in favour of the integration of students with disabilities in their declarations of principles, the way they enact these principles, or whether they do so at all, is left to their own judgement.

In the Greece the legal framework is not explicit, but there is an assumption that a legal framework for students with disabilities does exist. In Latvia the "Law on Education of the Republic of Latvia"-1998, determines that learners with special needs can get an education at all education establishments, including higher education institutions (if they have passed the examinations from secondary education). In Sweden the objective of the Equal Treatment of Students in Universities Act is to give students with disabilities the same opportunities to pursue their studies as all other students have in higher education while the Swedish Assistance Benefit Act, the Act provides support and service for persons with certain functional impairments. In the United Kingdom the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in the workplace or in the access to goods and services. In 2001 the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) made it unlawful for the body responsible for an educational institute to discriminate against a disabled student in their admission policies; in the student services it provides, or offers to provide or to exclude a student from the institution, whether permanently or temporarily.

### *Support*

Support for students with disabilities varies from country to country. Studying in Latvia for disabled students is very difficult and problematical, because there are no services or support like preparing materials for people with special needs or counselling. There are not any designated advisers for disabled students in Greek higher education institutes where attending classes is very difficult for students with disabilities because of the lack of suitable study methods and adequate counselling services.. Students with disabilities are advised to contact their university department to discuss the necessary special arrangements in advance. In Poland 11 universities do have disability support teams or a contact person for disability; but this is an initiative of the universities themselves and is not supported by the government.

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In Sweden universities have to reserve resources for the special support of disabled students and universities must be accessible. There are also special co-ordinators for students with disabilities. There is also the possibility to modify courses and to obtain talking books and books and materials in braille. In the United Kingdom most higher education institutions have a disability officers or disability coordinator. In addition to that several forms of funding for students with disabilities is arranged. A central feature of UK is the Quality Assurance Agency, which has issued codes of practice to be observed by institutions in delivering education to students with disabilities. Universities in Austria have representatives for disabled and chronically ill students, students` assistants and Social Departments, which meet the needs of disabled students. One of the most important offers of assistance to disabled students is the support at institute level. This particular kind of support is offered by the “*Interuniversitäres Institut für Informationssysteme - Integriert Studieren*” (i<sup>3</sup>s<sup>3</sup>) at the University of Linz, together with its partner universities of Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck and the *Technische Universität* Vienna. The i<sup>3</sup>s<sup>3</sup> Institute is an Austria-wide Institute for Information Systems Supporting Print Disabled Students. It was established in October 1991 as a model project to support blind and visually handicapped students in their studies. The main part of the support activities is the digital preparation of all studying materials such as books, lecture notes, overhead sheets, exercises, contents of the blackboard and so forth for print disabled students all over Austria. Research and teaching is also mainly directed towards this field. In 1995 the model project was established as the Department Computer Science for the Blind and in 2000 the Austria-wide institute was established.

### *Other Problems - Transitions from School to University and from Higher Education to the Labour Market*

In general, preparation for the transition from high school to university is poor in Greece. Disabled students face additional problems. Firstly, their teachers are unable to adjust the techniques and activities of careers guidance to the special needs of these students. Secondly, there are not enough research findings about the suitable jobs for the disabled in relation to the labour market needs as well as to the specific disability. On the other hand, services for integrating graduates with disabilities into the labour market are offered – Career offices, career guidance and the Workable Centre Network (presently not operating owing to funding problem).

The situation in Poland is quite bad. As a consequence of the restriction to higher education and the focus on separate education only a very small percentage is able to achieve higher education. In addition, there is a lack of encouragement of employers to employ a person with disabilities on the open labour market where competition is very keen. To support employers, the National Fund reimburses funds spent by employers on adjusting work places to specific needs of persons with disabilities and social insurance of every person with disability being

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employed can be reimbursed: but, it takes a lot of time to take advantage of these existing incentives.

Everyone who has a secondary education and who has passed the examinations is allowed to study at Latvian higher education institutions. But, in practice, the possibility for disabled persons to study is influenced by a lack of secondary education. In addition to that higher education institutions are located in a big cities and often disabled people have no possibilities to travel. In respect of access to the labour market, support is provided by the State Employment Agency and in 2000 an EU Phare programme, promoting the supported job system development in Latvia was started.

There are, of course, many examples of good practice which show that it can be made possible to integrate people with disabilities into both higher education and the labour market. Sweden, for example, can provide many examples of best practice as can Austria with its models of preparation and models of integration of disabled graduates like Arbeitsassistentz, ABAK and UP2. The UK's SENDA legislation and supporting funding is another model worth further examination. There are many, many more across all the European states and many of these are well known to professionals who work in this area.

Equally, the situation of disabled persons is not comparable or equivalent in European states. Definitions of what qualifies as a disability vary from country to country as does the availability of funding, practical support, study methods and study aids, the provision of interpreters for the deaf students, transcribed books and adapted libraries for the blind students, adequate careers and counselling services. Consequently, there is no all-encompassing, exemplary model of good practice. There are, however, many clear pointers as to how the various models of good practice might be integrated into a comprehensive framework for the support of disabled students in higher education.

### ***Disability Research group (Workpackages 4 & 5) Conditions Which Affect Un/Employment for Graduates with Disabilities***

#### *Attitudes and Values*

Concepts such as equality of opportunity, access and participation now encompass disabled groups and the adaptation of the physical environment to the needs of people with disabilities is increasingly seen as an important and necessary measure. Access to higher education for people with disabilities is less extensive than for other groups in society even though, in the last few years, the situation has improved and there has been a steady increase in the number of students with disabilities at universities and colleges.

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In one official disability report from Sweden a number of quality criteria to improve conditions for people with disabilities were proposed. These so called leading principles comprise: self-determination and influence, accessibility, participation, a comprehensive perspective and continuity.

Self-determination and influence means “to have one’s wishes for support and service respected and to be able to decide for one’s self when help is required”

Accessibility is an umbrella term implying that people with disabilities should not come up against physio-technical, social, psychological, financial, or organisational obstacles in their efforts to participate equally and fully. To achieve this level of accessibility, the general public’s perception and attitudes to disabilities and to people with disabilities must be changed.

Participation may be seen as expressing active participation in the life of the community, a token of the fact that people with disabilities have the same rights and duties as all other citizens.

To use a comprehensive perspective is to plan and implement support measures so that all parts of the recipient’s life works – and to show respect for one’s personality and integrity whilst doing it.

Experts in the disability field in higher education have noted that teachers, among others, are rationalising a view as to whether it is possible to educate students with disabilities based on doubtful assumptions that “the disabled” take resources away from other groups; that their disabilities make them unable to fulfil a future professional role; that to protect their feelings they should not be encouraged to study a subject that they will not manage to apply in a career.

These assumptions are doubtful because they build on a misconception of the facts. The information needed to disapprove these incorrect assumptions are close at hand, but have not reached the teachers. Why is this? Time is bound to be one important reason - quite simply, teachers do not have the time to look at the situation from a wider perspective, and in particular, examine their own attitudes towards various issues and in consequence the effects these might have on groups like students with disabilities. Another reason may be that the flow of information today is too fast and complex for us to take note and engage with it. But it is impossible to overlook the fact that this is, above all, a manifestation of negative attitudes.

European society is built on democratic ideals of everybody’s equal worth, of equality, of everybody’s right to participate fully in the life of society. In order to fully realise this potential, it is important to create an environment in which these ideals can be exercised. This can be helped by the development and implementation of national and European wide policies and guidelines coupled with a central support network for national compliance.

### *Questionnaire results*

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In order to gather data on the problems facing disabled students a questionnaire was sent to a number of experts in the field of higher education, integration and disability. In the questionnaire the experts were asked to develop strategies of supporting visually challenged and blind graduates in higher education and to evolve measures for equal access to the open labour market.

One significant point disability experts mentioned is the preparation of accessible study materials. Study literature like books, lecture notes, overhead sheets, exercises, blackboard - contents and so forth should be available digitally or in large print, Braille and as study information brochures. Schools or universities should make accessible equipment and information available to all people needing it. One more way to support visually challenged and blind students is to provide adequate technical aids, which should be developed further. The provision of special computer workstations for visually challenged and blind persons together with appropriate personal support was also thought to be important. A very significant measure in order to support visually challenged and blind students is to initiate special regulations such as oral examinations or extended time for students with disabilities. It was also suggested that support might be improved with closer co-operation with students' organisations.

Another important issue was "mobility". In part that involved training for increased mobility but also included ensuring the suitable portability of equipment. The disability experts used the term "support" itself in some respects. One statement is that visually challenged and blind students should get special support if they are in need. In addition to that, their self esteem, their motivation and their own engagement and independence should be increased. In order to provide integration into higher education and the open labour market it is necessary to establish an infrastructure in all areas of life for students with disabilities. Improving physical accessibility of higher education and of the work place should be ensured by improving access to public transport and disposing of architectural barriers as well as ensuring that appropriate equipment, such as screen readers should be provided.

The importance of looking at the whole of the education system was judged to be essential since the promotion of integration had to be started in primary school in order to develop a foundation of social competences. This would require a commitment to providing more, and better qualified, qualified teachers together with the necessary pedagogical improvements, technical equipment and learning and testing conditions. It was acknowledged that all of these changes needed much more resources as well as commitment.

### *Survey*

A survey was conducted among the HERN partner countries to identify the main areas of concern in relation to the integration of disabled people into society and employment. The results of the study emphasise the barriers and problems related to social inclusion. While it is clear that there is already a huge amount of

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work done in the field of integrating people with disabilities into society, education and workforce the transfer of the results into real life or legislation is lacking in most cases, because the information and reporting of results stays within a very narrow context (scientists, universities, agencies, etc). Another problem is that regulations which oblige employers to make an effort for disabled employees are difficult to enforce, despite sanctions. Most regulations contain wording that is open to interpretation, and it has to be determined from case to case what constitutes undue hardship on the employer or whether it is impossible to accommodate a person's disabling condition in the company: Fines are often so low that employers may find it easier to pay than to make an effort. Legislation should not only be a paper exercise but should also be useful in practice.

Analysing the most significant aspects delaying integration into the open labour market, the most frequently mentioned barriers in all partner countries are attitudes of potential employers. These attitudes characterised by prejudices and discrimination have a negative impact on the employment situation of graduates with disabilities. There are still on-going stereotypes held by employers. Often, a clear understanding of the qualifications and capacities of people with disabilities is missing. In addition to that the wide public and potential employers underestimate (or overestimate) the abilities of people with disabilities to take up competitive paid employment. One more relevant point is that potential employers are afraid of organisational problems and disadvantages that may arise from employing persons with disabilities. The striking feature of all partner countries is the attitude of potential firms. All partner countries mentioned this aspect as very influential in a negative way. The most significant point is to reducing prejudices and changing the attitudes of firms in all partner countries. The transition from university into adult working life which means becoming economically active is a significant step for the full and long lasting social integration of people with disabilities.

One aspect which emerged from the questionnaires was that there was a definite common response from all the countries in the „macro-sociological area“. All those values were considerably high, which means that they were evaluated as influencing to highly influencing. One possible interpretation of these findings could be that the situation and the framework for people with disabilities is determined only by factors which cannot be influenced by the individuals themselves. Another, rather controversial interpretation can be that it is easier to „blame it on society“ instead of leaving well known paths and traditions, thinking laterally and trying to find new perspectives as well as new arguments for discussing the situation of people with disabilities. The identification of the key aspects and key areas of problems influencing the integration of graduates with disabilities into the open labour market is very important in terms of changing these critical aspects. The outcomes should help to formulate strategies and methods for reducing and eliminating the barriers delaying and prohibiting social and economical integration of people with disabilities. Exactly these factors are the starting points for the enhancement of integration.

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Seeking to achieve the economical and social integration of people with disabilities requires not just the change of attitudes of society at large but especially the attitudes of potential employers. This is clearly not an easy task since, even for persons without disabilities, it is often hard to find a well fitting job in the labour market because of high unemployment rates, competition or other forms of prejudice. There is a need for positive public relations and marketing for the abilities of people with disabilities as well as an greater degree of contacts and co-operation between disability organisations and companies/potential employers. Other aspects concern improvements to the physical accessibility of all forms of transport as well as buildings. There is too, a need for much enhanced provision of appropriate assistive technologies and attendant support.

A very significant obstacle to progress is the latent image held by the general populace with regard to people with disabilities which is compounded by the limited availability of information on their actual abilities. Society still underestimates the abilities and skills of people with disabilities. The attitude of the wider public concentrates to a large extent on the dysfunctional aspects, their dis-abilities instead of on the functional aspects - their abilities and skills. A great deal of work has to be done in the field of sensitisation of the whole society in order to change this negative emphasis on the “dis-“ abilities of people. In this respect policy makers have a leading and crucial role in the formation of opinion in society.

In addition to the general problems identified above there are differences, often quite large, between different countries. Legislation varies from country to country, both in the extent of the protection it offers and the degree to which it affects all the key areas. There also appears to be quite significant differences in the definition of disability itself. A “lack of guidance and counselling services” for graduates with disabilities is identified in Greece, Poland and Latvia. In contrast, experts from Sweden, United Kingdom and Austria seem to be satisfied with existing guidance and counselling services. The lack of technological support, assistive technologies and assistance is seen as more of a problem area in Latvia and in Greece than elsewhere. In most partner countries, except Poland, the results for “Qualification and education of graduates with disabilities do not fit the demands of potential employers” indicate that qualifications and education have less of a negative influence on the employment situation of graduates with disabilities. They are well educated and so an assumed lack of qualification, education and skills can not be made responsible for problems during the integration of graduates into the open labour market.

The analysis shows that the attitudes of society in general and above all the attitudes of employers are main barriers concerning the entrance and integration of graduates with disabilities into the labour market.

### *Conclusions*

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The whole issue of the rights and equality of opportunity of disabled persons is very much larger than just that part concerned with higher education. But this work has shown that very little of substance can be achieved for disabled students in higher education unless there is concerted, Europe wide action to address the deficiencies and disparities that exist within and between countries in regard to the treatment of and provision for persons with a functional impairment. For that reason this project concludes that the most urgent need is for the EC to take action in respect of the following:

**Europe-wide definition of Disability.** Our research showed very clear that there are enormous differences throughout Europe in defining disability, in assessing the costs and impact of disability and in evaluating potential measures for inclusion in the society as a whole and in (higher) education and labour market. Harmonising European definitions of disability and recognising the different forms of disability, including their medical and social implications, and the impact on social and economic inclusion is a fundamental precursor to any programme of coherent action for all European countries. The need is for a definition of the needs and abilities, the situational meaning and the consequences of disability that draws on world-wide best practice taking account of, *inter alia*, WHO's schemes ICD10 or ICF, and draws on existing examples of legislative, political and practical good practice that already exists in any, European or other, country. Such a definition must then form the basis for all future actions in respect of disability, whether at European, national, organisational or even individual levels.

**European Disability Act.** Europe needs a Europe-wide Disability Act which would provide a standard code of practice upon which every state could build its own legislation and action. Recent OECD Studies showed that in the near future Europe will need high qualified people in an amount that people with disabilities must not be excluded anymore from education or labour market. Other studies show up very clearly that the number of people with disabilities increases. On one hand medical research comes up with more detailed insights for known conditions and so the number of possible disabilities grows. On the other hand the likelihood of being affected by disability is increasing. Already these two arguments show the importance of an harmonized set of knowledge (form, description and impact), rules and definitions in dealing with different forms of conditions which affect the equal participation in society (disabilities).

**The Development of a European Action Plan.** Our research showed very clearly that a huge amount of work has been done in the field of integrating people with disabilities in society, education and the workforce. In most cases, though, the transfer of the results of this work into real life or legislation is lacking, because the information and reporting of results stays in a the very narrow context (scientists, universities, institutions, etc) in which it was developed. Such an action plan is likely to be enormously complex (and therefore needs the umbrella of a Europe-wide definition and policy framework) but should focus, at least, on the following key areas:

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Implementation of existing legislation. Most regulations contain wording that is open to interpretation, that has to be determined from case to case and often employers may find it easier to pay a fine than to make the effort to comply. It is essential to recognise that employers (and universities and other affected organisations) need help to fulfil their obligations.

Direct Assistance. Assistance may need to be financial but, more critically still, technical assistance and guidance needs to be readily available. An example of one type of assistance might be „Workable” which was installed to open up employment opportunities for students, graduates and others currently denied that basic choice because of their disability - or, more accurately, because of other peoples perception of their disability. Since its beginnings in 1990, Workable has been steadily working to achieve its vision to set up an organisation which brings together employers with disabled people.

Benchmarking. Progress towards targets cannot be evaluated without properly funded and impartial research to identify the rate of progress towards targets. **A** framework of benchmarks is therefore needed both to monitor Europe-wide progress and to assist the development of national programmes. Such a research programme should be supported by a Europe-wide communications structure and database to facilitate the discussion of problems and their possible solutions, as well as for networking and the exchange of information and best practice.

Network of experts - Europe-wide database of expert. Our difficulties in gathering information suggests that an accessible database of experts at European level in the subject area of disability and inclusion in Higher Education and the labour market would be an essential adjunct to the research effort. Persons with disabilities have to be seen as experts and should therefore be involved. There is already a network of institutions facilitating integration, HEAG, upon which such a network might be built so that research and development could be better organized and coordinated.

**Appointment of a European Ombudsperson.** The role of a European Disability Ombudsperson would be to oversee the process of implementation of the European Disability Act and Action Plan, to promote the principles of “self advocacy” and to act as a mediator in the event of disagreements or disputes

**Communication & awareness raising.** It has been said above that the biggest task in improving the educational and employment opportunities of persons with a functional impairment is the attitudes of the society in which they live. This also conditions their own view of themselves and may constrain their willingness to ‘go against the flow’. Clearly a major part of any action programme will be the effort to change the attitudes of society in general and employers in particular:

**Transforming Disability into Ability – Changing attitudes.** The term “disabled” should no longer be automatically equated with “unable to work”. Disability should be recognised as a condition but it should be distinct from eligibility for and receipt

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of benefits, just as it should not automatically mean an obstacle to work. The disability status, i.e. the medical condition and the resulting work capacity, should be re-assessed at regular intervals. (Disability Programmes in need of reform – OECD policy brief) – The status of disability should be recognized independently from employment or income status.

**Information campaign for employers.** General information on disability in the workplace should be provided to all employers, along with specific information about the enterprise strategies, and about any adaptations which may be needed in a working environment, workstation and work schedules to enable collaborators with disabilities to optimise their effectiveness. This could form part of the general induction to employment for supervisors and staff or of a disability awareness session. In conjunction, an opportunity should be given to all employees to raise any questions which they may have about the prospect of working with persons with disabilities.

**European Job database / Job Analysis.** All parties would benefit from access to a data base in which help with making choices (literature research) is available to students and Job analysis, in the form of a detailed list of duties that a particular job involves and the skills it requires, is available to indicate what the worker has to do, how he or she has to do it, why he or she has to do it and what skills are required for doing it.

### 3.4 Reviewing the policy recommendation papers

The HERN project was concerned with change in the field of higher education in the context of an enlarging Europe. The dynamics are complex and there are no simple vectors to be drawn. Ultimately, though, the European strategic objective for Europe's becoming the world-leading Knowledge Society by 2010 is providing a stimulus for changes which share many common features. HERN was concerned, broadly, with governance and quality assurance issues that meet the increasingly rigorous demands for equitable access and inclusion and it was within this framework that HERN's discussions were primarily located.

Across the ten countries in which the HERN partners worked there was a shared understanding of what higher education was but a variety of views as to what it should be. Similarly, when we discussed any issue, there was a broad consensus at the strategic level but a rapidly increasing diversity of views as the discussions examined the subject in detail. Were this just an academic investigation, this would be the fuel for many long and interesting debates: but HERN's ultimate task was to make recommendations that European policy-makers might act upon. How, then, to make clear recommendations that would retain the richness of the subject?

Each of the project's twelve research-based work-packages was supported by papers, seminars and discussions which together produced a large volume of material. From this the lead partner for each of the work-packages distilled a policy

paper. Taken together the policy papers alone amount to a substantial volume. It was decided that a final seminar was needed to distil further this large body of work into something more sharply focused on policy-makers. This meeting was held at Johannes Kepler University in Linz in early September and the results are presented here

***Considering the changing role of HE: contexts, histories and the development of lifelong learning through Continuing Education. (WP 2)***

In this work-package there appeared to be two main concerns. The first is the diversity of HE across the states of Europe and the second is a fundamental concern with HE's role in social processes. The role of HE was thought to be too narrowly defined with the focus too often on teaching and research in conventional academic areas: HE has a much more central role and through its programmes of professional and vocational development and continuing education influences learning at all stages and is therefore central to the development of lifelong learning. Despite the importance of HE's role it was felt that diversity – of scale, of function, of organisation and of control – was by far the more important factor. It was suggested that talking of a European HE Area might be just too grand to be meaningful and that it might be better to consider socio-geographic groups, such as a Nordic-Baltic HE Group. Indeed, it was observed that this process may have its precursor in the various associations of European Rectors (especially in Central and Eastern Europe), of groupings of universities (such as the Coimbra Group). The primary issue arising from this concerned how to manage such diversity: whether to allow HE to do it itself in an *ad hoc* manner or whether to create specific groupings or structures, for example by formally subdividing the EHEA?

***Considering the role of Citizenship***

*European enlargement and citizenship: the role of HE. (WP 6)*

Citizenship in a growing Europe is a complex topic and this work-package considered only the role HE has to play in relation to it. Key to this is mobility: in principle it should be possible to work or study anywhere in Europe but fewer than 0.1% of those who can, actually do go and live, work or study in another European country. The major obstacles to this mobility are the portability of qualifications and linguistic competence. Europe has very considerable linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity but Europe also exists within the wider global environment that adds further elements of complexity through refugees from oppression or conflict and economic or student migration who tend to concentrate in certain areas while economic development in the enlarged Europe is also likely to create flows of people from poorer to richer areas. Thus Europe's cultural mosaic is complex and dynamic and is often attended by 'fears of the other' and it is in this broad context that HE's role is located. The broad recommendations of this work-package

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concerned an active concept of citizenship in a Europe of diverse communities where the regional level is possibly the most important in defining economic conditions. Access to language provides cultural insight as well as enhanced mobility. HE's task in relation to citizenship is largely to counter the 'fear of the other' and a key strategy in this would be to build the concept of linguistic capital through individual competence in at least two European languages in addition to the mother tongue. Clearly this has implications for the nature of current HE provision if linguistic competence is to be added to the range of key skills but just as importantly it has implications for HE's role in regional development, in developing learning regions and in supporting life-long learning, since citizenship, especially active citizenship, is dynamic and lifelong.

### ***Considering the role of teaching and learning***

#### *Key features of teaching and learning in the university of tomorrow. (WP 10)*

The knowledge society requires its members to possess a much more diverse set of tools and to be able to use them more flexibly than has previously been the case. Higher education, especially as the participation rate climbs towards the target 50%, must facilitate the acquisition and development of many of these tools in undergraduate programmes, during postgraduate studies, through continuing education and professional development courses in face-to-face teaching as well as technology enabled distance education. It was noted that as the demands on teachers become ever more varied, control over their own pedagogic practice is becoming lost to them as it becomes ever more a matter for curriculum design and institutional, and even national, policy. The work-package discussions were based around the ACCAEL model (Active, Collaborative, Customised, Accessible, Excellent, Lifestyle-fitted) which it was felt allowed individual teachers pedagogic freedom within the external constraints. It was felt that among the main drivers of change was the need to internationalise the acceptability of national HE qualifications, especially through access to credit accumulation and transfer schemes such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). National accreditation and quality assurance schemes also set up pedagogic constraints while the emerging demands of lifelong learning, improving access and inclusivity and the need to cater for a growing international market also added further factors. Ultimately, though, pedagogic practice was largely influenced by national concerns and was an area in which there remained wide variation at a European level.

#### *Distance education and the use of technology for tomorrow's knowledge society. (WP 11)*

This work-package reached the broad conclusion that learning should not be bounded by how or where it takes place but rather by what it achieves. This outcome-oriented approach was partly a pragmatic reaction to increasing student numbers and declining financial support, partly a matter of state policy to extend

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the 'reach' of higher education into areas not previously accessible, whether for geographical, economic or social reasons and partly because communications technology made possible a much richer distance learning experience. It was, however, recognised that change would be limited by an equally broad range of factors, such as the limited knowledge, experience or willingness of many teachers to adopt new methods or new technologies. Another factor was the commitment of institutions to change their modes of delivery, to invest in training and equipment or even to accept that their role was changing. A further factor was access to technology: just because something could be done did not mean that everyone automatically had the ability to use it – for example not everyone has the latest hardware or software, computer ownership is higher in some countries than others and broad-band internet connection rates vary as do costs of connection. Yet another complicating factor was that the state's role, so strategically crucial, took a much broader view of education and training than did HE; even more importantly it did not always match strategic aspirations with the requisite financial support. There was also the difficult question of how to assess the quality of distance education if comparability with more conventional forms was to be maintained. The discussions took note of all these constraints but concluded that the direction of change was towards convergence and that learning should not be defined by where it is located but by the outcomes achieved. During the discussions it was agreed that the term 'open and distance learning' was preferable to 'distance education' but that neither really described the nature of the opportunities now available. The term 'blended learning' was preferred because it recognises that learning goals can be achieved via a mixture of pathways that have to blend to form a single outcome. This was strongly supported by the experience of the Open University in the UK which has always adopted multi-modal learning pathways.

### ***Considering employability***

*Guidance for employment and inclusion: the development of new competencies.  
(WP 12)*

The ideal form of guidance and counselling should be comprehensive and provide clients with information on all relevant national and international opportunities for employment, further education or training. Academic information centres are relatively well developed in many countries (established in accordance with the Lisbon Convention) and usually closely connected with information networks such as ENICs/NARICs while useful and reliable information in the field of employment is available at the national level from a variety of information providers, employers, professional bodies etc., though it rarely extends to international opportunities beyond those provided by multi-national businesses. The challenge is to make sure that all students are better informed about their opportunities by bringing all of the knowledge and expertise which is available at the European level directly to them at the local level. The only way to achieve this cost effectively is to identify and

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network already existing networks rather than create a new set of structures. The development of such comprehensive guidance and counselling systems could be built on the outcomes of the many projects in this area that are or have been concerned with improving guidance and counselling provision in HE. This would require a detailed stocktaking of the project outcomes followed by the dissemination and exchange of experience and good practice. A further step would be the development of useful reference points, which may indicate for particular countries their "state of art". A final step would be to create an international database which would integrate the data available in all EU countries and facilitate international benchmarking. The discussions during this work-package concluded that there was insufficient knowledge about the problems related to guidance and counselling; about student diversity nor about their needs. It was necessary to consider not only students in formal learning situations, but also those undertaking continuing professional development, in the process of changing careers as well as those engaged in open and distance learning, especially in the context of lifelong learning. To support this it is necessary to undertake more research, particularly in relation to developing the concepts of guidance and methods of guidance delivery but also to better understand labour market dynamics, especially in relation to transnational occupational mobility, while 'mapping' of the various guidance systems with respect to students' situations and their real needs would support significantly the further development of guidance and counselling.

### ***Considering the role of Governance***

#### *Governance challenges for different nation institutions in managing change. (WP 7)*

The state's role in the governance of HE is extensive, if not all-embracing. In all cases HE falls within the responsibility of government but varies widely in the detail of how this responsibility is exercised, and also each system is changing in slightly different ways and directions. HE structures also show broad similarities, but differ in detail. For example, in some countries subject structures are closely controlled but in others barely at all. The detail is important because even in states with legal frameworks that look identical on the surface there can be a plethora of difference in the detail. There are broader differences with academic autonomy firmly protected within the legal framework in some states and less so in others; with the membership of governing councils more explicitly democratic in some than in others. While some of these differences are more a matter of local concern, some, such as the accreditation of qualifications and the acceptability of different methods of quality assurance, have wider implications for the inter-operability of higher education that is envisaged in the concept of the European Higher Education Area. If the EC's goals of increasing participation and supporting lifelong learning are to be carried into practice across the whole of Europe then resolving differences in HE governance will be a core task. In all countries HE is underfunded, albeit to varying degrees, but in some countries HE is free to its

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beneficiaries and in others they have to pay some proportion of the cost. The challenge for HE governance at a European level will be the management of diversity. At present there are no objective Europe-wide standards by which different HE systems can be compared across the whole spectrum of HE provision. It seems unlikely that the EC can fairly or accurately target its change strategies unless all HE systems are referenced to common bench-marks.

### *Legitimacy, quality and accountability for lifelong learning and higher education. (WP 9)*

The EC established the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) in 2000 and the Berlin Communiqué of 2003 calls on ENQA to establish an agreed set of standards, procedures and guide-lines for quality assurance in HE by 2005. There is, presently, no Europe-wide model or pattern of quality assurance yet every country has in place some sort of quality assurance mechanism, so the issue is not 'what?' but 'how?'. The problem is in achieving comparability. While each country may have established its own concept of quality and defined it in terms of a comprehensive criteria this does not mean that either the concept or the criteria are universal, or even universally applicable. This implies that quality is relative and that it is relative to national concepts and concerns. Universality may be more closely approached in an area such as measures of academic excellence within narrowly defined disciplinary boundaries; less so, perhaps, in relation to defining the quality of a learning experience or the provision of learning support services: and in relation to such hidden variables as 'gender' the variance is likely to be very great indeed. Implicit in ENQA's task is an assumption that there is, somewhere, a set of standards in all the areas that it must consider: this work-package argued that that was very far from being the case and that the first task of any attempt to establish pan-European quality standards for HE would be to define those standards upon which it would be based. Such a set of standards should be independent and may be concerned only with such quality matters as are 'European' (or even supra-national), that are allied to Europe-wide strategies (such as the portability of qualifications, the mobility of labour, facilitating inclusion and increasing participation, supporting lifelong learning and developing the knowledge society) and that can be measured clearly and unambiguously. In order to achieve objectivity, benchmarking should be independent of national concerns and open and accessible to public inspection.

### ***Considering the role of Gender.***

#### *The role of tomorrow's HE in fostering gender equity and employment. (WP 3)*

While the overall gender ratio of students tends to mirror the wider society this is not the case in particular disciplines like Engineering or Nursing and most emphatically not in the hierarchy of employment in HE. Gender representation is

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skewed by subject, by institution and by country. It was strongly felt that positive action had to be taken to increase female representation, particularly at the more senior levels, in HE. There needed, too, to be a better theoretical understanding of the role of gender in education and employment. Ultimately, though, it needed political support to achieve change: political at every level from changing European legislation to changing work-place custom. The key issue was to define gender equity but would this be a relative or an absolute definition? This work-package presented statistics that showed the situation to be gravely imbalanced – in other words, that there was a serious problem. None of the statistics presented could be easily compared, though, since different countries categorised the levels of employment differently, grouped subjects differently and, not unimportantly, had fundamentally different political approaches to gender. It was felt that the situation would be better understood if information properly comparable and based on common standards. It would then be possible to monitor progress across the whole spectrum of European HE.

### *Addressing inequalities of gender participation in institutional decision making systems. (WP 8)*

European enlargement has not significantly changed the general situation of the under-representation of women – rather it has ‘consolidated the middle-ground’. Partly this may follow from the lack of a universally accepted definition of ‘gender equity’ or even ‘equal opportunities’ both of which are cultural context specific. What is common, in HE at least, is the ideological construct that HE was created by men, for men and that its interactions follow a masculine pattern. This has resulted in the massive under-representation of women at each succeeding higher level of the academic hierarchy. It was proposed that any policy intended to improve gender equity must make gender visible, change attitudes and cultures and utilise transparent and open processes. It was acknowledged that in so doing there would be a conflict between policy implementation and principles such as ‘objectivity’, ‘academic excellence’ or ‘fairness’ so it followed that the underlying reasons for any such conflict should be plainly apparent through open examinations of institutional and even departmental and subject cultures, particularly to render visible the ‘hidden mechanisms’. It was not enough simply to identify a problem, such as the ‘leaky pipeline’ that runs from undergraduate to the highest academic levels, but to attempt to understand its causation and apply positive action to its resolution. In matters of gender there were many specific actions, such as maternity/paternity leave, improved institutional provision of child-care, mentoring programmes and networking, which would be helpful but there needed to be more positive action in respect of gender participation in decision making. Since this would clearly place a disproportionate burden on the under-represented gender a key part of any positive action would be the support measures to ensure that representation did not compromise other areas of academic responsibility. Specific measures were targeted at reducing gender biases – such as requiring all appointments to be made by a gender-balanced

committee, that a survey of candidates should be carried out before subject areas of new appointments were decided, that the significance of gender should be included in the evaluation for formal merits and, most importantly, that all decision making should be open, transparent and public.

### ***Considering the impact of disability***

#### *Disability Research Group (WPs 4 & 5)*

Education is a crucial factor in enabling persons with disabilities to enter the labour market. Disabled persons are seriously under-represented in the HE system and at a time of generally increasing participation it can no longer be acceptable to exclude, on the grounds of physical, physiological or sensory impairment, anyone who is capable of obtaining benefit from a higher education. Societal attitudes to disability are not concordant with the ideals of an inclusive, egalitarian and democratic society. In surveys carried out as part of this work-package across several countries the most consistently negative feature was the attitude of employers to persons with a disability. These attitudes were universally derived from stereotypical views of disability and took no account of the individual's qualifications and competence at the job. The situation is complicated by the fact that there is not a single definition of disability and within higher education this results in each country treating disabled students differently: for example Dyslexia is considered disabling in the UK and Sweden, and significant support is offered, while in other countries it is not recognised and no support is given. Even the legal situation of disabled students varies from country to country with the UK's SENDA legislation providing one example of a comprehensive approach – but one that is not emulated elsewhere in Europe, though some other countries are clearly moving in the same direction. Disability is not just an issue for higher education – it is one for the whole of society to face – and though this project did not specifically address this wider view it concludes that this is one issue that must be addressed at the highest level. There is a need to establish a common framework of definitions and understanding across, at least, the European community. From this should be developed a strategy for action that, at least, mirrors the inclusive aspirations of other varieties of equal opportunities legislation. It is the conclusion of this work-package that without such an overarching legislative framework it is difficult to see how higher education alone can do much more than it already does. The matter is urgent because otherwise capable persons are being excluded from opportunities that would benefit not only them but the whole of a knowledge-based society and it is doubly urgent because the inequity is compounded by the wildly varying situations of disabled persons in the member states with the result that equality of opportunity is reduced to the level of a lottery. And it is possibly most inequitable because there exists already tried and tested examples of good practice in every aspect of equitable provision. HE has shown that it can deliver what is required of it: it now requires political will to ensure that the best provision is extended to all across Europe.

### **3.5 Discussion**

The short synopses above do not do justice to the richness of the original work-packages. Each of the policy documents from which these synopses were derived were themselves based on the wealth of discussion and documentation produced during the life of the work-package together with the considerable experience of all the participants. The sparseness of the synopses compared with the richness and variety of the material from which it is drawn is also a metaphor for the way that we risk looking at European higher education when trying to frame policy advice concerning its future development.

European higher education is as ancient and resilient as it is vibrant and diverse. It is appropriate that the principle of subsidiarity should protect it from further centralisation of control but only because, as in any ecology, maintaining species diversity is a strength. That is not to suggest that all are the same. For some countries, higher education is about skills and employability and economic growth while for others it is part of the struggle to reassert a sense of national independence. In some countries higher education is fully a function of the state, in others it is only regulated by the state. Some students have all their fees paid and others have to contribute to the cost. The list of variables is long. But such diversity is wrapped around, and to a large extent masks, the real issue of underfunding. As participation rates increase the problem will grow, as it already has in those countries that started earlier on their expansion of higher education. Though this project was not directly concerned with funding it seems inevitable that for many countries the rate of progress towards full participation in the knowledge society will be determined by the ingenuity with which they solve the problem of providing a higher education for up to a half of their population.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that quality follows hard on the heels of diversity as a seminal issue. Quality and accreditation are both, presently, primarily national responsibilities. The EC has acknowledged that this must change in the creation of ENQA and through various initiatives to improve the portability of certain professional qualifications. The task though is much larger than a few sets of guidelines and it is urgent if existing knowledge society goals are to be met. During our discussions we repeatedly came across examples of how small differences in nomenclature or definition could confound accurate comparability. From the titles of academics to the naming degrees there was potential confusion. When is a professor a full professor, or a master a magister? What is the difference between a doctorate with and without habilitation? While we often “knew” what these differences were, we lacked the academic equivalent of a Plimsol line to describe them clearly and objectively. Often, though, our experience was insufficient to understand fully the cultural nuances being discovered. These were often what we termed the ‘hidden variables’ of quality such as gender, disability and inclusion. Clearly there is no simple answer because these are not just facets of higher education but of the character of national cultures. Nevertheless, without a dependable Plimsol line approach to relating one

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country's quality regime objectively to another's, it is difficult to see how the grand strategies of labour and qualifications mobility can be effected.

The third major issue concerned governance. Though the state is the ultimate authority in relation to higher education the extent to which it exercises this varies both in general and in particular. The key elements of state control involve the definition of the legal framework within which HE operates, the nature of its funding regime and the accreditation and quality assurance procedures that circumscribe its operations and no one national system is exactly like another. This certainly contributes to diversity but is also a crucial factor in any attempt to establish equivalence because many aspects of this diversity are enshrined in legislation rather than custom. Whether legislation is easier to change than custom may make for an interesting debate but the practical consequence is that much of what may appear to be custom actually has a firm legal foundation. One example of this is representation on the governing councils of institutions. In some countries there are very explicit legal requirements that all stakeholders, from students through ancillary workers to members of the professoriat, should be represented with even the quotas for each being prescribed: such clear expectations of democratic governance are not universal. Similarly the principal of the institution may be elected or may be appointed, in some cases directly by the state and in others by the governing body. The degree of state control over institutional governance has to be considered if we intend to expect facilitate change. By any model of the change process the most effective tactics involve the pincer movement of grass-roots activists supported by managerial visionaries. If Europe wide change is intended then, in some countries, the EC may find it more fruitful to activate the grass roots while in others it might be simpler to envision management: an understanding of the cultural nuances of governance would make appropriate targeting easier.

Diversity, quality and governance are, essentially, internal structural issues of higher education. The external environment contains many factors that impinge on the processes of change in higher education and the three that were felt to have the most significant impact, and over which there might be some degree of political control, were identified as 'employability', 'learning' and 'inclusivity'.

Higher education sees the larger proportion of its students enter employment outside higher education. Increasingly such employment is with the smaller enterprises that have been identified as providing much future economic growth. Economic activity is unevenly distributed across Europe and mobility of labour at the European level is seen to be a necessity if sufficient skilled workers are to be available in the areas of high economic growth. The mobility of labour is enhanced by the portability of qualifications and by appropriate language skills and is underpinned by well informed and easily accessible guidance systems. While central authorities can do much to ensure that qualifications earned in one country are acceptable in another the task of fostering linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity falls upon the educational system, including higher education. Higher education has had similar demands made of it before; to improve students'

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understanding of business or their mathematical or interpersonal skills for example. For academics this is not treated as core business and, since it often demands competences they do not feel they can offer, is farmed out to non-academic specialists. Where this is done well students are presented with a programme within which the academic and other skills content is blended coherently by a team of tutors each skilled in their own areas. If it is not done well the result may well be to devalue the non-academic content and render it almost useless. This multi-disciplinary approach is also applicable to careers guidance since guidance obtained early in a course or programme can help a student make more useful or appropriate module choices than if careers guidance is only sought (if at all) at the end.

There are parallels between employability and learning in that both are concerned with the concepts of transferability. It is not just that the skills developed in higher education should be transferable to the workplace but that learning itself should be transferable to other contexts. This may be through mixed modes of study during a programme or it might be to transfer learning from formal to non-formal and lifelong learning contexts. Higher education is perhaps becoming better characterised as a stage of the educational process rather than a place in which higher education is undertaken. The portability of learning is important for the development of lifelong learning and the knowledge society not only within one country or educational system but, potentially, right across Europe. The physical mobility of learners means that they may need to combine elements of study from two or more different HE institutions and systems into a single coherent programme. The virtual mobility of learners increases the potential opportunity for learners to combine elements of study from many different sources while the same communications technology allows institutions to collaborate and disseminate their programmes independent of physical proximity and geographical location. These developments are not new but the advance of technology and the impetus of globalisation is creating the environmental conditions in which facilitating the portability of learning opportunities may need to become one of the more important strategic priorities for European higher education at every level from individual academic to EC policy maker. Allied to this is the changes in the modality of learning which lead towards the concept of 'blended learning'. Blended learning frees the learner from many of the constraints of place and time and this has clear parallels with changes in the nature of employment where responsibility for career management is lifelong because few people will have a job for life that takes them from the end of formal education to retirement. Most people will have to revisit education and training many times during their working lives, sometimes to maintain the currency of existing skills, sometimes to learn new ones and sometimes to prepare for the major career changes that they will have to face. It is not that HE has not taken these opportunities but rather that the number and scale of opportunity is increasing and this raises concerns about the maintenance of standards, particularly in transnational collaborations. Also, the expansion of opportunity needs to be

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matched by adequate and well informed guidance and counselling services – at all stages of life. Guidance is presently mainly targeted at the young, often low-skilled, and on getting them into employment: in the future Guidance will need to cover a much broader range of age and needs.

The third of the environmental issues was 'inclusivity' and it was an instructive feature of the project to discover how compartmentalised this concept could be. The basic premise, that everyone who can benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so, is already well established as a guiding principle in every HE system we looked at. The parameters that described this 'benefit' varied from country to country and generally limited access to this opportunity through the application of some sort of entrance qualification, most typically one based on academic performance. HERN looked specifically at disability and found that HE is almost never an inclusive learning opportunity for people with a disability. Some countries had already made great efforts to level the playing field while others had barely begun to address the problem. More generally, when we looked at citizenship, it was proposed that Europe's cultural and ethnic diversity was not always reproduced in its higher education institutions. It was suggested the HE could do more to encourage participation by those marginalised by their difference from the prevailing norms. Even in the field of gender, where it was reported that gender participation at undergraduate level broadly reflects society at large, there were inconsistencies: too few females in engineering and too few males in the caring professions were the typical cases. Within the academic profession there was a marked decline in relative female participation at each succeeding step up the academic hierarchy which, it was concluded, could only be changed by a fundamental change in philosophy backed up by positive action. Higher education may be taking an increasing proportion of the population but that alone does not guarantee inclusivity; rather, the indications are that dominant groups find ways to assert their preferences unless positive action is taken to safeguard the rights of minorities.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS.**

### **4.1 Context**

Across the world institutions are being encouraged to widen participation to learning and increase access to higher education for up to half the workforce. There is also pressure on higher education to provide portable, economically relevant qualifications in a system that is fully accountable. Within the European Union there is a need to accommodate a diversity of cultural and economic influences whilst moving towards a compatible qualifications system.

UNESCO and the OECD are presently drafting guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education (third and final draft meeting, OECD HQ, Paris, 17/18 January 2005) that envisages a voluntary code of practice. Their deliberations are concerned with a structure that is truly global and it is at the very least a pragmatic decision to seek a voluntary code. In "Realising the European Higher Education Area" (Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003), the Ministers called upon ENQA through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in at their next meeting in Bergen in May 2005.

The major European policy initiatives relating to the knowledge society affect all European countries and, because they arise from the same global processes and pressures the broad policy may be seen to follow logically from these wider environmental conditions. The broad mechanism for promoting and steering change that HERN proposes comprises a framework of common definitions and legal safeguards, standards that are accepted by all partners and open, transparent and public inspection of the processes of regulation. Since there are models of good practice in operation in every area under discussion somewhere in one or more countries of the EHEA there is little need to do anything truly novel but rather to promote the wider adoption of such good practice. But, because the EC cannot dictate national HE policy, the change process must be facilitative.

HERN was tasked to provide policy developers with a better understanding of changes in higher education governance, teaching and learning and quality assurance with particular respect to a number of specific areas in the context of a growing European community. The problem for policy makers working at the European level is that HE is a national responsibility and therefore any policy is necessarily limited to areas that properly require supranational regulation. This, in our view, is the opportunity which policy makers should exploit: to ensure that the accreditation of national qualifications in other European states should be

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regulated by a single European agency responsible for the trans-national and inter-national aspects of HE accreditation and quality assurance.

The outcome for many students attending HE is a qualification that allows them to take up their chosen employment. In the current economic climate the richer regions of Europe have a need of more skilled labour than they can themselves produce and there is therefore a de facto market in graduate skills with considerable mobility between the poorer and richer regions in the same country and to a lesser extent between such regions in different countries. HERN has argued that HE must maximise the potential of every learner to play a full part in the knowledge society. Certainly this means that disability or gender or ethnic background should not limit an individual's capability; but equality of opportunity can also have a socio-geographic component and so enhancing mobility through positive action can also be an inclusive strategy.

The first task for any change strategy is to have some means of benchmarking progress. To that end, HERN suggests that the EC should develop a comprehensive and objective set of European quality indicators for all aspects of HE. There are many national and international systems of assessing and ranking higher education institutions. Some, such as the world ranking compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, are based on detailed but narrowly based criteria. Others, such as the UK Times newspaper's league tables are comprehensive but fail to correlate with anything similar published in any other country. The EC should base their indicators on those aspects of HE that have a pan-European dimension, such as might affect the portability of a credit or qualification. There is probably little need to invent a new set of indicators, rather to choose the most relevant and robust methodologies wherever they may be found, apply them universally and rigorously, and to ensure that both the processes and the outcomes are open to public scrutiny.

The second task of a change strategy is how to facilitate the pincer movement of enthusiasts working at the grass-roots and visionaries mapping out the future. In some cases, such as with disability, it may be necessary for the EC to consider something as broad as a European Disability Act as the foundation for subsequent positive action programmes. In all areas there is a need for accurate and objective information, which should be available from the quality benchmarking procedure above, upon which to base positive action. Positive action should be targeted very carefully to create small changes in strategically important areas. Positive action costs money and so the EC should be willing to support it financially: but that may not always fund yet more projects. It could, for example be a condition of receiving any European funding that certain basic conditions should be met – which might range from a requirement that all selection panels are gender balanced to compliance with quite specific requirements for the modification of accreditation procedures.

The third task concerns the transparency of the change process. In between the grass-roots activists and the senior visionaries are the many who need a very

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good reason to even consider changing their customs and habits. Publication and dissemination keeps the issue in the public eye; open and public processes allow the inquisitive sceptics the chance to explore the situation for themselves; recognising and rewarding the activists and publicising their achievements also helps; providing funds to support staff training and development for tyro activists increases the chances of moving change into the mainstream and, by no means least, providing funds to support demonstration projects in key strategic areas is often necessary to overcome institutional inertia.

### 4.2 Conclusions

As the Berlin Communiqué and the developing UNESCO/OECD guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education show, the principal element of any change strategy for European-level higher education is to enhance the portability of credit and qualifications. To do that requires co-ordination at the supra-national level, and ENQA has already been given the task of developing this within the EHEA. HERN agrees with Van Damme (2002) that there is room for a body to undertake the direct international accreditation of the outputs of higher education. However, at present, Europe is at the first level of Van Damme's six strategic levels leading to real international accreditation. Therefore, the project's principal conclusion was:

***There is a need to address international accreditation of the outputs of European higher education in order to develop a robust, Europe-wide quality assurance and accreditation framework that is also compatible with emerging international standards.***

Other broad conclusions were: -

European higher education is very far from being a single, homogeneous system; however diversity is important for the vitality of higher education.

For some countries, higher education is about skills and employability and economic growth. Whilst, for others, it is part of the struggle to re-assert a sense of national independence.

Possibly, the only common feature of all European higher education systems, in respect of Knowledge Society goals, is that they are under-funded.

All countries should improve the "inclusivity" of higher education and increase the support given in areas fundamental to the development of a vibrant knowledge society.

Other specific conclusions: -

The diversity of the many national higher education systems is the keystone of the strength of a European higher education area. While all systems are changing, they are changing in different ways and at different rates, but diversity should still be encouraged.

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Although quality and accreditation are still national responsibilities, it is acknowledged that this must change with the creation of a pan-European Qualification and Accreditation structure and through various initiatives to improve the portability of certain professional qualifications.

There is a need for a rigorous objective benchmarked approach, relating each country's quality regime to other countries. Presently, differences in nomenclature or definition confound accurate comparability of qualifications and reduce the portability of qualifications and the mobility of labour.

Each country's higher education system operates under a different legal framework, has its own funding regime, accreditation and quality assurance procedures that determine how it functions. As no one national system is exactly like any other, this contributes to diversity. However, this is also a crucial factor in any attempt to establish equivalence because many aspects of this diversity are enshrined in legislation rather than custom.

"Employability", "learning" and "inclusivity" are three environmental factors most likely to have a significant impact on the processes of change in higher education, and over which there might be some degree of political control: -

*Employability* - Economic activity is unevenly distributed across Europe and mobility of labour at the European level is seen to be a necessity if sufficient skilled workers are to be available in the areas of high economic growth. Open, portable qualifications structures should be supported by a multi-disciplinary approach to skills and careers education in higher education.

*Learning* - Higher education is becoming increasingly just a stage in the lifelong educational process. The portability of learning necessitates "blended learning" which frees the learner from constraints of place and time and blends physical virtual mobility. Increasing the portability of learning opportunities must become one of the most important strategic priorities for European higher education at every level.

*Inclusivity* - The basic premise, that everyone who can benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so, is already well established as a guiding principle in every higher education system. But it was identified that : -

Higher education is almost never an inclusive learning opportunity for people with a disability.

Higher education needs to encourage the participation of those that have been marginalized.

Gender participation in higher education varies, especially with regard to seniority in the academic hierarchy. Improving equality of opportunity requires a fundamental change in attitudes reinforced by positive action.

Higher education may be taken by an increasing proportion of the population, but that alone does not guarantee inclusivity. There is a need to facilitate positive action to redress these imbalances.

### 4.3 Recommendations

The project's principal recommendation is the need to: -

***Create a European higher education quality and accreditation body, building on the foundations laid by the Bologna process and related work.***

To facilitate the development of such a body, there is a need specifically to address:

**Research** - Such a body needs to be given the resources and direction to review and compare existing research into the international aspects of existing quality and accreditation systems, particularly that undertaken by the OECD and other organisations.

**Benchmarking** - Based on the progress made both by UNESCO and OECD at the global level such a body needs to develop a comprehensive and objective set of European quality indicators for all aspects of higher education that consider the: -

Portability of a credit or qualification at a pan-European level.

Choosing of indicators from existing, relevant and robust methodologies as identified through research and tested in co-operation with national agencies.

Process that should be universal and rigorous and open to public scrutiny.

The communication systems employed should facilitate access to the process as well as to its products.

**Positive action** - is needed to redress the wide variations in the equality of opportunity in and between national higher education systems. In order to encourage progress and allow comparability, it is recommended that benchmarking indicators include: -

**Disability** - All Member states need to recognise disability in the same broad terms as the current UK SENDA legislation so that access to higher education by disabled students may be compared with due statistical rigour. In order to achieve this:

- Access to higher education by disabled persons should be a primary benchmark indicator.
- The categories of disability reported should be the same in all Member States.
- There is a need to provide resources that “pump-prime” such development across Member States in order to reach parity.

**Gender** – Participation in higher education becomes increasingly unequal as seniority increases. So, it is recommended that: -

Benchmarking of higher education includes accurate, comparable reporting of gender participation by standardised descriptors of institution type, subject area and by level or grade of employment.

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The European Commission review its criteria for funding higher education Institution initiatives so as to include a requirement that an institution demonstrates compliance in the equality of opportunity of higher education staff in relation to gender.

**Citizenship** - Higher education quality benchmarks should include a category to reflect the degree to which individual higher education systems underpin the values of active citizenship. Indicators should include a measure of the: -

Representation of economic and cultural minority groups in higher education in relation to the norms for higher education as a whole and those of the wider society.

Degree to which students in higher education achieve competence in the “key skills” essential to full participation in lifelong learning and the knowledge society.

Degree to which students acquire competence in foreign languages.

Degree to which students participate in study exchange programmes.

Provision of comprehensive guidance and counselling services to all learners in higher education.

Scope that higher education out-reach services provide opportunities for non-traditional learners to access formal and informal lifelong learning.

In summary, the project support’s Van Damme’s assertion (Van Damme, 2002; p14) that: -

*“...[d]espite the resistance in some countries against international accreditation, I do believe that such an initiative, given that it can secure its academic status, legitimacy, credibility, and reputation, would be able to realize an important position in the global higher education field...”*

The foregoing recommendations are intended to move this process forward. But, they are not its end point.

## **5. DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS.**

### **5.1 Dissemination Strategy**

With 10 languages (in 7 variants of the Latin alphabet plus Cyrillic and Greek), a key consideration from the outset concerned overcoming potential barriers to accessibility resulting from the project's use of English as its operating language.

The project's dissemination strategy was to use the partners' own networks and relationships to provide a wide spread of communication channels reaching into, and beyond, the countries involved.

Partners actively promoted HERN within their own organisations and countries using web-pages, presentations, conference papers and a variety of briefings including supporting national Bologna awareness.

The Co-ordinator produced regular quarterly briefing papers for International Newsletter of the the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), which has a world-wide distribution.

The SRHE maintained a web-site ([www.HEreform.Net](http://www.HEreform.Net)) linked to the home page of its own site ([www.SRHE.ac.uk](http://www.SRHE.ac.uk)). SRHE also managed the eForum web-based discussion network that followed each of the seminars and was intended to open up discussions to the wider academic community.

The strategy was further supported by the EC sponsored series of project briefing papers, which included HERN.

The strategy has worked as planned with all partners having reported (in their annual progress reports ) involvement in a wide variety of dissemination activities over the three years of the project.

### **5.2 Follow-up of results**

The table that follows lists the dissemination and follow-up activities notified by the HERN partners:

Action/Title	Partner	Exploitation intention
Communication	BES-BG	Informing national debate - discussion on changes and amendments in secondary and higher education in 2005
Communication	CEDeF-LV	Results of the HERN project have been disseminated to all higher education institutions in Latvia by participation in seminars and conferences
Communication	JU-PL	Presentations drawing on HERN work to national and international conferences on HE
Communication	RU-UK	Publishing of articles, papers and conference presentations drawing on the experience of HERN
Communication	SRHE-UK	HERN articles in International news and via the SRHE web-site

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Conferences, papers and workshops	JKU-AT	Eg, International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs, Summer 2005
Development of new project proposals	VMU-LT	Structural funds, measure 2.5 Development of Human resources: "Establishment of Inter-university Consortia in a process of developing Interdisciplinary Programme for PhD students in Education Science"
Development of new project proposals	VMU-LT	Grundtvig 1: "TEACH" Teaching adult educators in continuing and higher education" that takes into consideration HERN experiences
HERN archive of materials	BES-BG	Students from Sofia University use the HERN papers presented at seminars for their preparation on comparative education.
Information dissemination	CHES-CZ	Dissemination of project results via CHES web site
Information publishing	CEDeF-LV	HERN CD-ROM produced with presentations, reports and policy documents from all HERN work packages.
Information publishing	CEDeF-LV	HERN reports and conference papers have been disseminated, by access to the HERN web page
Information publishing	CHES-CZ	Publishing HERN information in CHES review AULA (Journal in the CR devoted to higher education and research).
Information publishing	VMU-LT	WWW project's home page was enriched - it is available in En and Lt Languages; address: <a href="http://www.vdu.lt">http://www.vdu.lt</a> .
Information publishing	VMU-LT	Information about progress and activities was provided for the compendium, compiled by IIZ/DVV office in Warsaw, Poland
Networking	JKU-AT	New contacts and co-operations, Enriched expert network, Experts database. New research approaches / methodology (eg, enhanced sociological questionnaire)
Networking	JU-PL	Further development of role as Polish Bologna Promoter, adviser to Polish Rectors' Council and activist both in Polish HE and Regionally
Networking	VMU-LT	Visits to Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry to Foreign Affairs, Central Project Management Agency; Agency for International Science and Technology Development Programme in Lithuania and other organizations working in the field initiating and managing change in education
Networking and co-operation	ESREA-NL	Both the (UNESCO) International Institute for Educational Planning and CEDEFOP have recently made requests for further contributions with regard to HE and lifelong learning.
Networking at national and regional level.	CEDeF-LV	The following organizations have been involved: University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Most schools of higher education of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science, Higher Education Council of Latvia, Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre, Latvian Adult Education Association, Academic Programmes Agency, Distance Education Centre of Latvia

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Policy development	CEDeF-LV	It has to be mentioned that work on the Policy document, with emphasis on Baltic states and Latvia in particular, has enabled the stakeholders in Latvia to repeatedly view the processes in Latvian higher education in a wider European context.
Presentations	CEDeF-LV	The results of the HERN project have been presented to the Department of Higher Education and Science and to the Higher Education Council of Latvia.
Presentations for conferences etc	CHES-CZ	CHES researchers participate in international conferences (eg, CHER, EAIR, OECD, UNESCO)
Project development	ESREA-NL	We have received invitations to participate in new international and in particular European projects.
Project development	JU-PL	Further projects developing themes from HERN in development to build on existing initiatives in areas of disability, quality and distance education.
Project development	RU-UK	Development of further HERN collaboration with new FP6 bid TRIPOD2 planned for 2005
Projects	CHES-CZ	CHES task in support of Bologna process, implementation & Bologna promoters group helped by discussion of similar activities in the HERN countries
Projects	NCUA-GR	Advising the active role of University Career Centers in Greece using reliable and valid instruments to help students develop professionally.
Projects	NCUA-GR	Emphasising the role of Career Offices in linking the universities with the labour market
Projects	NCUA-GR	Developing postgraduate courses on gender equality issues.
Publications	BES-BG	"The Contemporary Education System in Bulgaria" (Popov, N., published March 2004) using results of BES-BG participation in HERN project
Research	ESREA-NL	At the national level our research has recently attracted the interest of a number of members of the Dutch parliament, and we are currently investigating sources of funding for the continuation of our research on the transitional learning trajectories of political refugees in Dutch higher education.
Research	NCUA-GR	Supporting the research on gender developing support programmes for women during their university or postgraduate studies
Research communication	ESREA-NL	ESREA contribution to the HERN project has been made available to the international, European and national academic fora in the form of dedicated articles.
Research communication	KTH-SE	The main channel for dissemination and exploitation of results will be through the publication of articles and conference papers.
Research communication	VMU-LT	Journal articles and papers for conference presentations based on HERN outcomes

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Research projects	CHES-CZ	Investigation of Czech students affairs using HERN findings in the field of gender studies, civic society and social cohesion as well as institutional management.
Research projects	CHES-CZ	CHES task: preparation of national HE strategic documents is helped by the network, outcomes and possibility of personal debate
Research projects	JKU-AT	New indicators measuring the impact and relevance of disability in a culture
Research publications	ESREA-NL	We are able to report that our HERN-related publications are now leading to further requests to contribute to edited volumes

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

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### 6.2 Internet resources

Aspiration raising and transition of disabled students from Further Education to Higher education. (Report from Skill and NDT)

[http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk/documents/Aspiration%20raising%20report%20\(final\)%2021%20july.pdf](http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk/documents/Aspiration%20raising%20report%20(final)%2021%20july.pdf)

Blair, K. and Lewis, S. [Prior learning assessment: A web-based model for adult learners.](#) Dostupné z:

[http://www.olin.org/conferences/OLN2003/papers/Prior\\_Learning.pdf](http://www.olin.org/conferences/OLN2003/papers/Prior_Learning.pdf)

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Department for Education in Northern Ireland -

<http://www.nics.gov.uk/deni/index.htm>

Description of higher education in European countries

[http://www.eurydice.org/Doc\\_intermediaires/descriptions](http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/descriptions)

Disability Discrimination Act <http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda/index.html>

Disability Discrimination Bill (draft)

[http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/disabilitydiscrimination/dd\\_bill.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/disabilitydiscrimination/dd_bill.pdf)

Disability Rights Commission <http://www.drc-gb.org/>

Disability Rights Commission <http://www.drc-gb.org/>

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) - <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales -

<http://www.wfc.ac.uk/hefcw/index.html>

Integration firms in Upper Austria. <http://www.integrationsfirmen.at>

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Research institute on higher education in Sweden <http://www.sister.nu>

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Scottish Higher Education Funding Council - <http://www.shefc.ac.uk/>

Self-advocacy movement <http://inclusion-europe.org>

Skill - National Bureau for Students with Disabilities <http://www.skill.org.uk>

Swedish National Agency for Higher Education [www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se)

UK Government Website on Disability <http://www.disability.gov.uk>

Universities UK - Higher Education in the UK [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)

Vocabulary terms in higher education

<http://www.hsv.se/sv/CollectionServlet/38/347.html>

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World declaration for higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
[http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration\\_eng.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm)

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### **7. ANNEXES.**

<b>7.1 Publications resulting from the project.....</b>	<b>Annex A</b>
<b>7.2 List of Deliverables .....</b>	<b>Annex B</b>
<b>7.3 Deliverables submitted with the report.....</b>	<b>Annex C</b>
<b>7.4 Partners' reports.....</b>	<b>Annex D</b>