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### **Update from EURASHE to the Bologna Follow-up Group meeting, 13-14 March 2008.**

This document gives an update of the activities of EURASHE since the Ministerial Conference in London (April 2007) and of our future engagements under the 2007-2009 working agenda of the Bologna Process.

#### **QA Symposium in Almaty (Kazakhstan, 22-24 October 2007)**

*“Promoting the External Dimension of the Bologna Process: Quality Assurance in a National and Transnational Context”*

EURASHE, in cooperation with the Kazakh-British Technical University (Kazakhstan) and the Robert Gordon University (Scotland), organised a Eurasian Symposium on “Quality Assurance in Higher Education” It was the culmination of a Tempus project with the specific objective of contributing to the rise of standards in the HEIs in the partner countries, using the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance for guidance. The Symposium took place in Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2007, and served as a platform for experts from Europe and from three states in the region (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) with the aim of cross-fertilisation of academic experiences.

During two days there were presentations and round table discussions on various topics and aspects of quality assurance, from the points of view of governments, enterprises and student bodies in Europe and Eurasia. The full Conference Report, containing Conclusions and Recommendations from the round table discussions is available on our website: [www.eurashe.eu](http://www.eurashe.eu)

## Participation in the Bologna Process Working Agenda

EURASHE is an active contributor to the working agenda of the BP 2007-2009, through our participation in a number of working and coordination groups and also in the organisation of seminars. These are the coordination groups on Lifelong Learning, Qualifications Frameworks and Social Dimension, and the working groups on Employability and the European Higher Education in a Global Setting. EURASHE also participated in the drafting group for the new ECTS guidelines and gave an input in the Bologna seminar on LLL, held in Edinburgh (UK), 21-22 February 2008.

In accordance with our engagement in the working agenda 2007-2009 EURASHE is co-organizing the following seminars:

- Development of a common understanding of Learning outcomes and ECTS, with the Portuguese Ministry of Education (Porto, PT, 19-20 June 2008).
- Assessment of Prior Learning (APL); quality assurance and implementation of procedures”, with the Netherlands and ESU (Amsterdam, NL, 11-12 December 2008).

On 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The **European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)** was officially launched in Brussels by the “E4 Group” (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE).

In his short intervention at the signing ceremony President LL Nielsen stressed the importance of this event for the professional HE, as the existence of a register listing trustworthy quality assurance agencies provides an additional guarantee for both HEIs (including the colleges) and their students.

He emphasized that next to institutional independence and accountability a prerequisite for quality in HE is the recognition that increasingly, in a lifelong learning context, all stakeholders in HE (such as employers, and also society at large) have a role to play

As part of our engagement in **promoting the attractiveness of European HE**, EURASHE is presently signing cooperation agreements with associations from Québec, federal Canada, the United States and Eurasian countries.

### **2008- EURASHE Conference in Malta**

*Qualifications in a Quality Assurance Culture: Moving Bologna and Copenhagen towards a lifelong and Europe-wide response to employability.*

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of EURASHE, will be taking place on the isle of Malta on 8 & 9 May next, and is co-organized with the Maltese Qualifications Council and member institutions of EURASHE in Malta, MCAST and the University of Malta.

The objectives of the Malta EURASHE Conference are to: present the Bologna and the Copenhagen processes as the two faces of the same coin – higher and vocational education; explore the short, medium and long term policies needed to transform these processes into policies and agents for change; create

opportunities for further interaction between vocational and higher education institutions so that learners can benefit from shared resources and expertise.

The EURASHE conference also aims at addressing the impact of qualifications on processes of recognition of qualifications by means of common quality assurance mechanisms.

The underlying theme is employability, namely 'how to prepare graduates more adequately for a job on the labour market which is in line with their expectations and qualifications'.

### **EURASHE lifelong Learning seminar in Prague (16-17 October 2008)**

In our series of seminars on Lifelong Learning, in the past held in Amsterdam, NL (2005), Blois, FR (2006) and Stuttgart, DE (2007) we are planning a next seminar-cum workshop in Prague on 16-17 October 2008. It will be an occasion to present the first preliminary results of our survey on LLL, and at the same time the programme will give a prominent role to students and other learners, thus completing the circle of stakeholders in the LLL process (after the institutions and the employers, respectively in the 2006 & 2007 seminars).

### **Post-Bologna event : EURASHE Conference in Budapest (HU) (likely dates March 8 – 9, 2010, Budapest Business School, HU)**

*State of the art of professional HE and a proposal for a strategy on lifelong learning, employability and attractiveness of HE*

The students and institutions, as major stakeholders in HE, with right and reason want to look back on the achievements of the Bologna Process, now that the present Bologna reform is coming to an end in 2009.

At the closing of the Bologna Process it is highly recommendable to have an insight into what has been the real effect of the Bologna process among the stakeholders, not just in a selected number of institutions, but especially in the *average HEI* in the countries of the EHEA. EURASHE, as the official voice of professional HE in the Bologna Process, and in cooperation with other stakeholders in professional HE is therefore planning to organise a Symposium on three key issues of the Bologna Process that were identified as priority areas' in the London Communiqué of Ministers: lifelong learning, employability and the attractiveness of European HE for students outside Europe.

These are precisely the themes on which the professionally oriented HEIs, may have a specific perspective and would like to share their expertise and different outlook with the other stakeholders in the Bologna Process. The outcome of this initiative will be complementary to the Trends reports of EUA and the Bologna with Student Eyes report, in that it will also want to reflect the opinion of the world of employment, who will be involved in the consultation. Through this initiative, we want to provide support to the planned independent assessment, by providing material based on data collection and research in different types of HEs, based on the broad range and variety of our membership.

The Conference could be a concluding event, where the results of a 'stocktaking exercise' would be presented, from the part of EURASHE on the three above issues, in consultation with our members and affiliated sectoral networks and organisations.

The input will bear on the three above themes, and will deal with questions like :

(On Lifelong learning): what is the implication of introducing the Charter for Lifelong Learning, in the individual colleges, and university colleges? How can this reflect the situation as to the validation of Acquired Prior Experiential Learning and Earlier Qualifications?

(On Employability): what makes a bachelor from a professional HEI directly employable and what are the transferable or generic skills that would enhance the employability of a bachelor with a more academic orientation?

(On the attractiveness of European HE): how can professional HE, with its regional embedding, and a focus on applied research and technology aim at international recognition, and attract foreign students from other regions of the world?

Our initiative is in response to the survey requested in the Global Dimension working group, to investigate the attractiveness of European HE from the perspective of HEIs. A further impetus comes from a wish to involve the world of employment, the professional bodies and other stakeholders in the modernisation agenda of HE, and finally our engagement towards new categories of learners, who are seeking to upgrade their skills through lifelong learning opportunities.