

Highlights from EURASHE since the BFUG meeting in Vienna on 27 – 28 September 2018

EURASHE is the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education that offer professionally orientated programmes and are engaged in applied research within the Bologna cycles. EURASHE represents universities of applied sciences (UAS) and university colleges; other members of EURASHE are national and sectorial associations of higher education institutions, and other individual institutions, such as universities. EURASHE has been strongly supporting the Bologna Process and in the new period 2018 – 2020 has got involved in the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG), all three Peer Support Groups addressing implementation of key commitments and in co-chairing the Advisory group on learning and Teaching. www.eurashe.eu

PAST EVENTS

4th UAS Leadership Forum, October 11, 2018, Brussels, Belgium

In October 2018 EURASHE invited Universities of Applied Sciences (hereafter “UAS”) leaders to gather at the 4th UAS Leadership Forum in Brussels. Top UAS representatives had an opportunity to exchange views on various aspects on benchmarking higher education systems, mission and role of UAS and practical issues of translating these into the European universities network initiative.

The debate built upon the preliminary findings from the OECD project ‘Benchmarking higher education system’ which provided an exclusive opportunity to get first insights into the in-depth analysis of the HE systems performance with a focus on UAS role, its main strengths and challenges, conclusions how and why some higher education systems perform better in some areas than others. The Danish University college Absalon complemented with their conclusions on mapping a position and concept of UAS within the landscape of higher education in the Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The participants reflected on potential UAS engagement within the European university networks initiative based on the practical experience of Flemish UC Leuven Limburg in building a partnership for the upcoming European Commission’s ‘pilot’ call.

More at www.eurashe.eu/about/news/ and www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBenzXEi6Y0

Roundtable on Teaching and Learning, October 11, 2017, Brussels

The innovation in teaching and learning still remains very relevant, due to increased numbers of (non-traditional) students and their more and more diverse profiles, increasing impact of digital technology in education and the need to adopt to the age where lifelong learning is an imperative. Learning and teaching agenda has been attracting more attention within the European Higher Education Area and is one of the issues discussed within the working plan of the Bologna process between 2018 – 2020. Professional higher education institutions therefore need to rethink more and more the different ways of successful transmission of competences, knowledge and attitudes.

The input for the discussion on emerging challenges and possible systemic solutions focused on student success and drop-out risks. Šimon Stiburek, Higher Education Consultant and Researcher, provided an overview of the Czech study on the reasons and causes of drop-out rates and pointed to the need for revision of processes as well as content of teaching and learning as a central part of the response. Well-designed curriculum and teaching methods have the power to engage students, boost their academic and social integration, remediate inequalities and in general stimulate student success. However, although a lot has been done already, still we know rather little about what actually works and which methods are most effective. A range of possible measures was discussed, reflecting on the experience from across Europe and suggesting priorities for further endeavour.

EURASHE Quality Community of Practice, UAS Burgenland, Eisenstadt, Austria, November 2018

The **EURASHE Community of Practice** has been launched as a platform for quality management practitioners and leaders from (professional) higher education institutions with an objective to provide opportunity for mutual learning, exchange of views and experience regarding the driving principles, various approaches to quality assurance and building quality culture, as well as very concrete tools and instruments related to quality of various aspects of professional higher education.

The QA CoP focused on 3 separate, yet interlinked issues:

- QA of work-based learning elements of studies
- QA of students' engagement
- QA of external stakeholders' engagement (region, world of work)

Reversed peer learning activity on Learning & Teaching, Warsaw, Poland, March 2019

A reversed peer-learning approach allows EURASHE to support its members' discussions on role and various aspects of mission of PHE, on Bologna process and their reflection in national policies. The concept is based on a national background document indicating key issues within the specific area selected by the hosting organisation, their reflection from the view of international experts and workshop discussions among the local and international participants. The event co-organised together with the Conference of Rectors of State Schools of Higher Vocational Education in Poland (KRePUZ) and hosted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education focused on **learning and teaching agenda within professional higher education** with emphasis on the following issues:

- Future challenges of the labour market
- Digitalisation and digital transformation of PHE institutions
- Integration of academic and profession-oriented elements into programmes of PHE, learning outcomes and transversal skills and competences
- Learning methodology supporting professional character, work-based learning elements and links between students' learning and research activities

The event brought together about 30 participants from Poland and abroad with input from Polish and international experts on the given topics including students' representatives. The final conclusions calling for flexibility, a balanced and informed use of modern technologies with focus on individual students' needs and contact, attention to social aspects of PHE as access to higher qualifications and learning will be available soon.

SELECTED OVERVIEW OF KEY PROJECTS

A substantial capacity of EURASHE and its members has been over the past years devoted to better comprehension of work-based learning elements within higher education. The following overview selects some of those in advanced stages, as well as finishing projects on policy development of professional higher education and EURASHE engagement in promotion of EHEA developments at the global scene.



SAPS - Supporting Apprenticeships between Professional Higher Education & Small and Medium Enterprises.

SAPS project on Supporting Apprenticeships between Professional Higher Education & Small and Medium Enterprises (2016 – 2019) developed a toolkit for SMEs collaborating with PHE institutions, on-boarding apprentices and deriving value out of apprentice placements, and created quality guidelines for PHE institutions offering apprenticeships to SMEs, covering the areas of governance & strategy, teaching & learning as well as operations.

- Improving the perception of SMEs of the benefits of engaging apprentices from PHE institutions.
- Lowering the barriers for cooperation between PHE institutions and SMEs.

- Establishing more regular and structured cooperation between the umbrella organisations for PHE (EURASHE members) and organisations representing SMEs.

More at www.learntowork.eu



WEXHE - Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work Experience into Higher Education.

The project responds to the concerns expressed by stakeholders on the shortcomings in the labour market orientation of HE, focussing on the balance between practical and theoretical learning in HE and to mismatches between the skills sets of graduates and the skills they require during early careers. EU countries have experienced a substantial increase in graduate unemployment and a decrease of quality of their employment. European students and graduates report continuously that they are worried about their careers. At the same time employers and employers' organisations report they are having increasing difficulties in finding graduates with matching skills.

The project aims to:

- increase the capacity of staff in higher education institutions and enterprises to provide high quality work experience and entrepreneurship,
- support the accreditation of all kinds of work experience through ECTS and effective quality assurance,
- ensure that the skills needs of employers are understood and reflected.

More about the project and upcoming events: <https://wexhe.eu/>



PROCSEE - Strengthening Professional Higher Education in Central & South Eastern Europe.

PROCSEE promoted setting up within years 2016 – 2018 systemic national structures, PHE policy development and best-practice sharing in a range of countries from the region (CZ, HR, HU, RO, SI), focusing on four specific areas:

- PHE alignment and engagement in regional development strategies
- PHE response to skills shortages
- Student placements in the world of work
- Personalised Learning Environments enhancing flexibility

More about the project www.eurashe.eu/procsee



TACTIC - Through Academic Cooperation Towards Innovative Capacity.

The aim of the project was to increase management capacities of the universities in Mongolia, Cambodia and Vietnam. Developing tools and methods for professionalisation and professional development of the management and administrative staff, promote cooperation between the partners; promote voluntary convergence with EU developments in higher education; promote people-to-people contacts, intercultural awareness and understanding.

In December 2018 EURASHE hosted a study visit organised within the TACTIC project in Brussels. Participants from various universities in Cambodia, Mongolia and Vietnam had an opportunity to learn about the strategic management and activities' planning of universities. The agenda included the general overview of EHEA developments including the Paris Communiqué, engagement of stakeholders, especially students (ESU). The more concrete experiences on institutional strategies were shared during the training blocks and visits to Thomas More University College in Mechelen and UC Leuven Limburg in Leuven.

More information and reflections [here](#). More about the project www.eurashe.eu/tactic

FUTURE EVENTS

“Higher Education in Europe: Play to Win”, 29 April 2019, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium

EURASHE acknowledges the importance of civic and democratic engagement of European citizens and, therefore, supports the importance of voting in the upcoming **2019 European Parliament elections**. To carry out this mission, EURASHE teamed up with the #ThisTimeImVoting campaign to address the importance of voting and to discuss the role of Higher Education in today’s society. The Afternoon debate **“Higher Education in Europe: Play to Win”** will take place on the **29th of April 2019 from 14:30 to 18:00 at the European Parliament** and will discuss the future and the role of higher education.

Please register [here](#).

29th EURASHE Annual Conference, 16-17 May 2019, Budapest, Hungary

EURASHE will organise its 29th Annual Conference **‘Future Students. Future Universities. Future Jobs. Professional Higher Education in the changing world’** in Budapest (Hungary) on **16-17 May 2019** together with the **Hungarian Rectors’ Conference (MRK)** and the support of the **Ministry of Human Capacities** and the **Ministry for Innovation and Technology** of Hungary. We invite universities of applied sciences’ leaders, the entire community of professional higher education, European businesses and public institutions and European students’ representatives to attend the Annual Conference to share their experience and learn about trends, models and inspiring practices.

Register [here](#).

EURASHE Summer cocktail, 13 June, 2019, Brussels, Belgium

EURASHE invites members of higher education community to the ‘Summer cocktail event’ which will take place on the 13th of June, 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. EURASHE event will provide an overview of trends and developments in European (professional) higher education that should create a basis for further discussion on challenges, further priorities and initiatives.

Save the date. More information TBC.

Peer learning activity on Short Cycle Higher Education, September 20, 2019, Portugal

A preliminarily planned peer learning activity addressing the situation and challenges of short-cycle higher education within the new settings, based on the role of short cycle higher education in Portugal. Save the date. More information TBC.

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