

Highlights from EURASHE
since the BFUG meeting in Bucharest on 4-5 April 2019 to
present

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

Higher education institutions face a wide range of challenges and opportunities, most significant associated with shifting perspectives of knowledge itself and the changing role and responsibility of the universities in the society. At the same time a series of worrying phenomena like anti-refugees movements, increasing power of far-right parties, widely spread fake news remind the importance of education in preparing citizens of the future. On 29 April 2019 EURASHE gathered together the higher education community at the Afternoon Debate “Higher Education in Europe: Play to Win” to discuss these emerging issues and search for the possible answers of what should be a future role of higher education in Europe.

Keynote speakers of the event were Mr Stéphane Lauwick and Prof. Dr. Ulf-Daniel Ehlers, respectively President and Vice-President of EURASHE. While Mr. Lauwick underlined the essential role that higher education plays in the promotion of the core values of the European Union, such as democratic participation, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, Prof. Dr. Ehlers addressed the technological changes that our society is currently experiencing and advocated for the need of a higher education strategy that creates democratic and inclusive society and embraces digitalization at the same time. The keynote speeches were followed by a debate on the future of higher education in Europe, during which students’, businesses’ and higher education institutions’ representatives were invited to elaborate on what are the skills needed in future and how to organize higher education better.

The debate was organized in collaboration with European Parliament Campaign #ThisTimeImVoting and gathered together 70 participants among students, officials and representatives of European higher education institutions and businesses.

The event was vastly covered by the European press, with the article [“Better learners can become active citizens, education professionals insist”](#) and the [interview with EURASHE President Stéphane Lauwick](#), both published by the online media network EURACTIV.

EURASHE 29th Annual Conference “Future Students. Future Universities. Future Jobs. Professional Higher Education in the changing world”, 16-17 May 2019, Budapest, Hungary

The world’s global problems demand more cooperation, mutual understanding and new skillsets. How can Higher Education Institutions prepare graduates to stay ahead of global change? Are we definitely moving away from knowledge-oriented curricula and coherent qualifications into an age of transferable skills? How do we re-invent learning and teaching to remain relevant in a world of uncertainty?

Against this background, 29th EURASHE Annual Conference brought together more than one hundred representatives of the professional higher education community, the European institutions, researchers, entrepreneurs and students to take stock of what has been achieved until now and to gain an insight into the future of the Professional Higher Education in Europe and the way in which it will shape our lives and jobs in the coming years.

The Conference was organised in collaboration with the Hungarian Rectors’ Conference, and supported by the Ministry of Human Capacities and the Ministry for Innovation and Technology of Hungary.

29th EURASHE Annual Conference provided inspiring speeches, enriching discussions, fruitful interactive sessions, networking and exchange of good practices. On the basis of this intensive work, we have drawn the following conclusions:

- The speed and the scope of the on-going planetary transformation, shaped by unprecedented scientific and technological breakthroughs, require a radical change in our teaching, learning and research methods;
- The universities of the future will be institutions for long-life learning, strongly linked with world of work, challenges-driven and capable to respond to the specific needs of each student;
- Building inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies will depend on our capacity to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty in a creative and innovative ways;
- Learn how to learn, lose the fear of the unknown and be able to transform complex challenges into new opportunities will be decisive for the personal and professional success of our students;
- Inclusive and high quality education and training are essential for creating and maintaining the European identity in all its diversity;
- Europe has a unique chance to lead the profound transformation in education be completed and consolidating the European Education Area by 2025

See a video of the Conference [here](#).

The 30th EURASHE Annual Conference will take place in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) on 20-21 May 2020. It will be devoted to the Higher Education and Sustainable Development.

EURASHE Summer Cocktail and Workshop “Professional Higher Education Institutions and Businesses: stronger interaction for greater impact in Europe”, 13 June 2019, Brussels, Belgium

On the 13th of June EURASHE organised a Workshop which gathered higher education and businesses communities to discuss how to optimise the interaction between PHEIs and businesses (industry and SMEs), in terms of research and innovation activities and learning provisions, including work-based learning and up-skilling, in a way that both parties are mutually taking full advantage of the existing and forthcoming EU funding opportunities. The event took place at the Erasmushogeschool in Brussels.

EURASHE Workshop “Professional Higher Education institutions and businesses: stronger interaction for greater impact in Europe” marks the end of the series of events on the Future of education which took place in the last quarter of this year. Stephane Lauwick, President of EURASHE in his welcome speech shared with participants the findings from the 29th Annual Conference which took the last month in Budapest. The conclusions of the two days Conference suggest that the Professional Higher Education institutions blur the frontiers between education and research and develop holistic approaches, interacting with a large spectrum of institutions and private stakeholders. By doing so, they become not only more efficient at teaching and fostering innovation, but also allowing the future young professionals to better understand the world around them. This is particularly relevant considering the rapidly-changing labour markets whereby new jobs demanding new skills appear every month.

Businesses seek better conditions for creating more jobs

The introduction was followed by the keynote speeches of representatives from the European Commission and businesses. Mrs Victoria Petrova presented European Commission’s ongoing economic policies in relation to future skills development and employment, she also addressed a need to create suitable legal and economic conditions which would help businesses to generate new job opportunities in Europe. The presentation was followed by the voices of the private sector – Altran and AquaFilSlo which introduced their businesses models, current interactions and future expectations from the professional higher education institutions. Brussels based association Feani provided the views and challenges of the engineering sector.

More openness for better PHEIs and businesses collaboration

As a natural follow up of sectors’ expectations from each other, EURASHE announced its willingness to open its structures-the Committee for a Strategic Advice and Working groups – to businesses and its representatives. From now on all the private sector representatives can apply to attend EURASHE meetings and, therefore, receive the most updated findings in the field of Lifelong learning, Quality assurance, Research and Innovation.

The event was followed by the annual EURASHE Summer networking cocktail.

See the photos of the event [here](#).

EURASHE Quality Assurance Community of Practice, 12 September 2019, The Hague,
The Netherlands

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 2nd EURASHE Quality Assurance Community of Practice focused on the development of high-quality culture, the role of leaders and people engagement. Mr Joep C. de Jong, founder of training and consultancy company JLS International BV (JLS), opened the day with a keynote speech emphasizing how the aspects of the value chain should be taken into account when undergoing institutional change – data, information, knowledge, experience, wisdom, wholeness. His presentation was followed by the second keynote speaker EURASHE QA expert Mr Lucien Bollaert who shared his vision and reflections on the themes of quality assurance, new leadership and quality culture. Both keynote speeches facilitated to set the context for the workshop sessions, which also drew input from the case study presented by Hotelschool The Hague.

The event, organized together with EURASHE member Hotelschool The Hague, gathered together 30 participants among QA practitioners and leaders from PHE institutions.

According to the evaluation survey disseminated after the event, the majority of participants assessed the 2nd EURASHE Quality Assurance Community of Practice as “very good” and “satisfactory”, with 70% of them saying that they would recommend the event to a friend or a colleague.

If your institution would be interested in hosting our next Quality Assurance Community of Practice event, please contact us [here](#).

Peer Learning Activity on Short-Cycle Higher Education (SCHE), 19-20 September 2019,
Porto, Portugal

A reversed peer-learning approach allows EURASHE to support its members' discussion on the role and various aspects of the mission of PHE, on the Bologna process and on 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 Peer Learning Activity on Short-Cycle Higher Education (SCHE), co-organised together with the Council of Portuguese Polytechnics, with the support of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto and the Portugal Ministry of Higher Education and Science, focused on various aspects of short-cycle higher education, with emphasis on the following issues:

- Mission, role and objectives of SCHE, reflecting the world of work and specific learners' groups need;
- Quality assurance in SCHE, approach, tools and impact on recognition within higher education;
- Pedagogy with emphasis on practical aspects, work-based learning and cooperation with the world of work.

The two-day event was opened by the speech of Secretary of State of Science, Technology and Higher Education of Portugal João Sobrinho Teixeira who emphasised the importance of short-cycle education and its relevance to the people. The speech was followed by the presentation of EURASHE Secretary General Michal Karpíšek and an overview of this type of education in Portugal and in Europe presented by João Queiroz, the Director-General for Higher Education in Portugal and Jean-Philippe Restoueix, the expert of Council of Europe.

The main conclusions addressed the dynamics of the development of this segment of education at various countries, yet also challenges resulting from a variety of provisions – specific objectives, position, legal regulations – at different countries. There should be more attention paid to the full adoption of EHEA tools and instruments within the sector, especially as regards quality assurance should it be respected as a full, integral part of higher education. A thorough, complex analysis of this sector would help to harmonise the concept, features, tools, yet also terminology. Such study covering EU or even EHEA situation might be initiated by the European Commission. Peer learning and exchange of experience is highly appreciated, as well.

According to the evaluation survey disseminated after the event, participants were very satisfied with the Peer Learning Activity on SCHE, appreciating, in particular, the mutual exchange of views and experience and the networking opportunity for HE professional. The majority of participants (78%) also found the event to be useful for their work, saying that they would recommend it to a friend or a colleague (71%).

Workshop “Enhancing Work-Based Learning and Entrepreneurship in Higher Education”, 9 October 2019, Brussels, Belgium

EURASHE together with its **WEXHE project** partners European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the University Industry Innovation Network (UIIN), and University of Groningen organised a one day workshop ‘Enhancing Work-based Learning and Entrepreneurship in

Higher Education’ on 9 October in Brussels, Belgium. The goal of the workshop was to share and discuss key issues related to further development and support of work-based learning and development of entrepreneurial competences within higher education – the concept, role of various stakeholders, key principles, role of leaders, active role of students and world of work.

The first presenter Robert Wagenaar from the University of Groningen gave an overview of the WEXHE project, and how it addresses a need to develop relevant skills and competences of students in order to make them to be prepared for the labour market and society. EURASHE Secretary General Michal Karpíšek, emphasised organisation’s role in addressing policy development of work-based learning and our activities in paying a crucial role in opening flexible learning provisions within the higher education. His presentation was followed by Dr Thomas Baaken practical example from the FH Munster University of Applied Sciences on developing hands-on entrepreneurial skills of students by offering an opportunity to solve companies’ problems and, therefore, to apply academic knowledge in real professional situations.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to the small-scale discussions on the work based learning policy, quality assurance and entrepreneurship.

The event gathered around 45 participants representing higher education, businesses sectors and students.

6th UAS Leadership Forum on civic and democratic values and competencies in disruptive times, 10 October 2019, Brussels Belgium

On 10 October EURASHE invited Universities of Applied Sciences (hereafter UAS) leaders to gather for the 6th UAS Leadership Forum on “Social inclusion and civic and democratic values and competences in disruptive times” in Brussels, Belgium.

The 6th UAS Leadership Forum was devoted to the specific role and challenges for UAS in the promotion of civic and democratic values and social inclusion, within and outside the universities. Special attention was paid to the institutional capacities and constraints, the specific competencies needed for the teachers and the personnel of the universities, the necessary adaptations of the curricula in the light of the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, and the students’ participation.

Guest speakers of the Forum were Dr. Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary General of the International Association of Universities, Sebastian Berger, Vice President of the European Students’ Union, Klaas Vansteenhuyse, Head Education and Student services of UC Leuven-Limburg, and Manûshân Nesari, Team lead of Student Services, UC Leuven-Limburg.

The videos of the Forum are [here](#).

The next UAS Leadership Forum will take place 20 May 2019 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria and will be devoted to the higher education and sustainable development.

About the UAS Leadership Forum

The UAS Leadership Forum brings together Presidents, Rectors, Vice-Rectors, General Directors of European universities and colleges, and high-level members and representatives of other institutional and non-institutional organisations. Launched two years ago, this initiative has already proved to be very successful and largely appreciated by our community. Restricted to 25-30 participants, it provides for a more informal exchange of views and ideas following the Chatham House’s rules.

Workshop “European Universities Initiative and Universities of Applied Sciences: reflections for future success”, 11 October, Brussels, Belgium

On 11 October EURASHE invited more than fifty participants, Universities of Applied Sciences (hereafter – UAS) representatives and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges for UAS in view of the second European Universities’ call. The workshop was hosted by the Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU.

The workshop was launched with the welcome speech by the Ambassador-at-Large Simonas Šatūnas which emphasised the importance for Lithuanian UAS to actively participate at the European Universities initiative. His welcome was followed by Vanessa Debiais-Sainton, Head of Unit in the European Commission, who strongly encouraged all participants to apply, highlighting the openness of the European Universities’ initiative to all kinds of higher education institutions and the strong political support it benefits from, beyond the current EU budget. She invited UAS to be creative and ambitious in their proposals and ensured that their specificities will be taken into account during the evaluation process.

Elena Tegovska, Team leader in the European Commission, presented the results from the first call, which led to the selection of 17 European Universities’ alliances, with the participation of 114 universities from 24 Member States. She pointed out the main success factors, namely, the relevance and level of ambition of the Alliance’s common long-term vision, the transformational impact of the proposals, their contribution to the achievement of the European Education Area (geographical balance), the consistency between strategy and work plan activities, and high involvement of students and staff at all level.

Thomas Feige, Edinburg Napier University coordinator for the Urban Research Education and Knowledge Alliance (U!REKA), provided valuable information and practical tips and tricks for the preparation of the proposals. He viewed that, even when the proposal is not selected, the time and resources devoted to its preparation are largely compensated by the enriching professional and personal experience for all partners involved.

Michal Karpíšek, EURASHE Secretary General, presented EURASHE activities and role, as a facilitator for the European Universities initiative. He reiterated EURASHE support to UAS and other professional Higher Education Institutions for the constitution of new European Universities alliances.

The outcome of the workshop will be brought to the attention of the European Commission on the occasion of the forthcoming European Universities Initiative event “Building the Universities of the future”, which will be held in Brussels on 7 November 2019.

Read the EURASHE Statement on the European Universities [here](#).