

PRESS RELEASE. Only a Month Left Until the International Conference „European Higher Education in the World“.

9th August, 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania

The International Conference „European Higher Education in the World“ will be held on the 5-6th September in Vilnius, Lithuania. It will be one of the biggest events dedicated to Higher Education questions during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013.

The international dimension of higher education has become a central topic of the European higher education policy agenda. Globalisation and technological development are radically changing the landscape of higher education. International student mobility will grow rapidly to an expected 7 million by 2020 in the context of an exponential growth in the demand for higher education: over the next twenty years, the number of higher education students is expected to increase fourfold, from 99 million to 414 million. The thirst for knowledge and social mobility of the expanding middle classes in emerging economies will put higher education within the reach of hundreds of millions of citizens of the world.

European higher education institutions have a positive record of internationalisation notably via their participation in EU and national academic cooperation programmes. They have a rich and diverse experience in developing international curricula, fostering international education, research and innovation projects and exchanging students, researchers, staff and knowledge. Since 1987, the Erasmus programme has played a key role in stimulating mobility: almost 3 million students have participated in the programme, as well as over 300,000 higher education teachers and other staff. Beyond mobility, Erasmus has transformed the way in which higher education institutions relate to and cooperate with one another. The Programme has proven to be an important catalyst in the reform and internationalisation of higher education systems. It put to the fore the need for the convergence introduced through the Bologna Process and its tools. From 2004, the Erasmus Mundus programme, building on the successes of Erasmus, has contributed to enhance internationalisation by funding the development of excellent joint Masters and doctoral programmes between higher education institutions in Europe and further afield, stimulating the process of accreditation of international joint degrees.

The chief purpose of internationalisation is to improve the quality of higher education, to better prepare learners in Europe to live in a global world and work in a global economy. There is no single approach to internationalisation. It involves all levels of university life and has to be adapted to each institution's specific profile. Higher education institutions are encouraged to develop comprehensive internationalisation strategies encompassing all their competitive and cooperative activities. While mobility is one key component, internationalisation strategies need to reach well beyond mobility and prioritise the need to internationalise curricula and the teaching process, in order to cater for the needs of the vast majority of learners who are not internationally mobile.

The need for more global cooperation and strategic partnerships involving European and non-European higher education institutions is particularly urgent, in order to tackle global challenges. If

Europe is to remain a highly attractive destination for internationally mobile students, and a valued partner for international academic cooperation, against the rising backdrop of new regional higher education hubs, it must reinforce its efforts to promote the global awareness of the high quality and the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of its universities as well as its competitive advantages. Those include a strong experience in developing joint and double degrees, participation in international research projects, networks, developing doctoral schools, industrial doctorates or in implementing a common qualification framework and quality assessment tools.

Following the European Commission Communication on the internationalisation of higher education, the conference will bring together over 150 higher education stakeholders from the EU and beyond, and offer them an opportunity for dialogue on the different tools available to further internationalisation processes, and on the future place of Europe in the global higher education landscape.

The Conference will be broadcasted live on the European Commission Webcast Portal.

Latest news about the Conference: <https://twitter.com/IHE2013>

More information:

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