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Quality Culture and Excellence at Universities

A Coimbra Group Workshop by the Task Force on Eastern Neighbouring Countries

University of Iasi, 14-15 November 2008

“Quality and Excellence” is on the agenda of all universities. Internal and external quality assurance systems are in place in most institutions, but the concept of quality and excellence goes beyond technical systems and controlling mechanisms.

What is it that makes up Quality in our institutions? Which elements are at stake and how can we work with them? How important is internationalization for Excellence?

This workshop is of interest to all stakeholders and players and wants to investigate the state of the art at Coimbra Group Universities and their partner institutions in Eastern Neighbouring Countries. Keynote speeches and parallel sessions will focus on various approaches and related results. Is there one single concept of “Quality and Excellence” or can many paths lead to it?

Keynote speakers:

Guy Haug, European Expert on Higher Education

Norman Sharp, Director, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

Mart Buekers, Vice-President for Internationalisation Policies, University of Leuven

Riitta Pyykkö, Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, University of Turku

Preliminary Programme

(Thursday 13 November 2008: Arrival of participants at the University of Iasi)

Friday 14 November 2008

Morning session

9:00 – 09:30 Welcome by Rector Prof. Univ. Dr. Vasile Işan, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi

09:30 – 09:45 Presentation of the Eastern Neighbouring Countries (ENC) Task Force of the Coimbra Group, An Huts, University of Leuven and Chair of the ENC Task Force

Keynote speeches:

09:45 – 10:30 Guy Haug, European expert on higher education, followed by questions and discussion

10:30 – 10:45 *Coffee Break*

10:45 – 11:30 Norman Sharp, Director, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, followed by questions and discussion

11:30 – 12:15 Mart Buekers, Vice-President for Internationalisation Policies, University of Leuven, followed by questions and discussion

Afternoon session

14:00 – 15:30 Parallel session 1
Plenary: Brief introduction to the theme of Parallel Session 1 (15 min)

Theme: Why strive for a Quality Culture and for Excellence at universities and how to create it. (3 groups - 1 hour)

In this session participants will discuss the broad concept of Quality Culture: Quality Assurance Systems (internal and external mechanisms and tools and the relation between the two types), Stakeholders and Players within the academic world, Aspects of Excellence, Appearances and Activities. The session starts with a brief introduction (15 minutes) on the theme by an ENC Task Force Member. Afterwards discussions in the three parallel groups will take place (1 hour), followed by a brief report of the chairs of the parallel sessions in a plenary session. (15 minutes)

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:00 – 17:30 Parallel Session 2
Plenary: Brief introduction to the theme of Parallel Session 2 (15 min)

Theme: Identification Needs for Excellence and Output Control (3 groups - 1 hour)

Consensus about the need for Excellence and Quality at universities is often built on differing concepts of measures to be taken. Which elements within the university contribute to Excellence? Which elements should be measured and can all of them be measured in the same way? What is the role of alumni, employers and other stakeholders? The session starts with a brief introduction (15 minutes) on the theme by an ENC Task Force Member. Afterwards discussions in the three parallel groups will take place (1 hour), followed by a brief report of the chairs of the parallel sessions in a plenary session. (15 minutes).

Saturday 15 November 2008

Morning session

09:00 – 10:30 Parallel Session 3
Plenary: Brief introduction to the theme of Parallel Session 3 (15 min)

Theme: Joint international initiatives and Excellence (3 groups – 1 hour)

This session will focus on the internationalisation process at higher education institutions and its effect on Quality and Excellence. Good practices from East and West will be presented. The session starts with a brief introduction (15 minutes) on the theme by an ENC Task Force Member. Afterwards discussions in the three parallel groups will take place (1 hour), followed by a brief report of the chairs of the parallel sessions in a plenary session. (15 minutes).

10:30 – 11:15 *Coffee break*

11:15 – 12:00 Closing speech by Riitta Pyykkö, Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council

Afternoon session

Social Programme offered by the University of Iasi