

Coimbra Group High-Level Seminar
"Horizons 2015: First Experiences, Emerging Expectations"
29-30 October 2014, San Servolo, Venice, Italy

Summary of findings

After a successful first seminar on *Horizon2020* in April 2013, the Coimbra Group has organized a second seminar on the first experiences of university networks regarding the first stage of implementation of the new frame program. Two other university networks contributed to the seminar: the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA).

The timing of the seminar is topical: the first calls of *Horizon2020* (H2020) have shown that initial success rates are low, member states are not giving full financial and legal support to both the H2020 and the European Research Area (ERA) initiatives and the economic and financial crisis has had a major impact on the financial positions of universities, especially in Southern Europe. The ambitious growth agenda of the European Commission asks for serious investment in R&D and innovation, for support of open science, for support of capacity building in new member states and for serious perspectives for young researchers. Cooperation between member states is absolutely required: "We need more instead of less Europe". The seminar included sessions on innovations and entrepreneurship, on open research, on university research strategies related to H2020, on cohesion and regional innovation, and on the prospects for early stage researchers.

In his keynote address **Prendergast**, Provost of Trinity College Dublin, advocated the use of the triangle education, research, and innovation/entrepreneurship. All students and staff members across all disciplines can benefit from an entrepreneurial attitude. And since innovation takes a long time it must be planned for. Education in entrepreneurship is a key instrument and it requires the input of many stakeholders. Universities have a responsibility to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation, certainly in their regional settings. In order to 'export' and 'exchange' innovations the European Institute of Technology has initiated up to now 5 KICs that could be extremely helpful.

Without any doubt Science 2.0, implying full openness of all that universities do, is the future of the academic world. Open Access (OA) to publications is an extremely important component of Science 2.0. It reduces barriers for institutes in lower income countries and allows universities to share the knowledge they create. And it might also have a serious impact on research assessment procedures. Universities can take up the responsibilities to publish or disseminate research products like monographs (relevant to the humanities and to a lesser extent to the social sciences) in order to measure their impact better

than is done to date. If research outlets become more open to readers also alternative ways to measure research impact (like post publication peer review) can be developed, but these methods currently have too much cons.

In her keynote lecture **Weigelin-Schwiedrzik**, Vice-Rector of the University of Vienna, presented a typology of research strategies. The first strategy is probably the classical one, with a strong focus on the key research areas and on the research output. The second one relates to the profile and points at research outcomes of societal impact. The H2020 program has strong elements of a profile strategy and for universities it is a big challenge to adjust their future research policies to the hybrid H2020 agenda. Different stakeholders, inventors, applicants, and referees do have different interests. Universities better prioritize which of the options of H2020 fits best. They need to define incentive structures for their researchers and be active in consultation procedures of H2020.

Concerning cohesion policies, it is clear that in recent times research infrastructures in new member states have improved. Although the new investment financing might be balanced better with support for maintenance costs, the new infrastructure has led to more successful framework applications. Again, prioritization and bringing focus are keys to further success. At the same time these smart specialization and thematic concentration policies might also lead to dangerously limiting the scope, especially for comprehensive universities. At the same time universities do have a responsibility within its spatial proximity with respect to innovation. Bringing companies and their demands physically together with researchers and their ideas is a basic success model.

Due to the recent growth of European doctoral education (50% more graduations than 10 years ago) the employability issue of PhD-graduates becomes a more acute problem. Only a minority of the PhD-graduates is able to find academic employment: this implies that non-academic skills and competences need to be trained for. And if PhD-graduates start a university career as early stage researchers they clearly need support by their employer. With the ambitious European growth agenda it is also clear that early stage researchers are needed in European industries.

Knowing this, what can university networks do? Basically, networks can both share and use information internally and act as external lobbyists. Concerning the first role, exchanging experiences in entrepreneurship/innovation and the roles of member universities in the KICs, sharing experiences with research strategies, best practices in linking companies and researchers, and enabling employability of both doctoral students and early stage researchers are extremely valuable. Lobbying for a fully-fledged introduction of Open Access, Science 2.0 in general and a fair assessment of SSH-research could fit in the second class.