



## XX. ENTEP Conference in Paris

### I.

**The ENTEP Meeting in Paris, November 12 to 15, took place during the French Presidency of the European Union and the conference on “International comparison of education systems: a European model?”, November 13 & 14.**

#### 1. “International comparison of education systems: a European model?”

Marilyne Remer is giving a brief summary:  
The two days conference were a success. We had plenary session during the morning on November 13<sup>th</sup>, introduced by the French minister of higher education and research, Valérie Pécresse, who insisted on the European dimension, welcoming a “Brussels ranking” besides the current Shanghai ranking.  
The afternoon and the morning of November 14<sup>th</sup> was devoted to simultaneous workshops divided between compulsory education and higher education. The subjects were:

##### Compulsory education : international comparison

- Assessment of students’ skills in compulsory education
- Teachers and the organization of the education system
- International comparisons as regards equity
- Equity-efficacy: which comparison?

##### Higher education : Type and ranking of higher education institutions

- Main questions-main issues
- State of the art
- Roundtable: references for action
- Recommendations –which project for Europe?

##### Which indicators for education and vocational training?

- Policy aims that the indicators might measure
- The state of the art of European comparisons
- How to improve our measure of quality?
- Medium-term outlook

The morning of November 14<sup>th</sup> was introduced by the minister of national education, Xavier Darcos and followed by workshops.

During the plenary session of November 14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon, reports from the workshops were delivered, then a roundtable was offered about a European approach of international comparisons. A synthesis and recommendations were proposed by Christian Forestier, Director of CNAM (Conservatoire national des arts et métiers – National academy for arts and crafts) in Paris. The general conclusion was expressed by Jean-Marc Monteil, from the private office of the prime minister.

This is the official report of the Conference:

#### **French Presidency of the European Union Conference of Paris “International comparison of education systems: a European model?” 13-14 November 2008**

#### **Presidency Conclusions on Typology and Ranking of the Higher Education Institutions: the European Approach**

#### ***The need for stakeholder-oriented European quantitative and qualitative comparisons***

In a world where people and ideas are circulating at an ever increasing pace, it is a major challenge for Europe to make its high degree of linguistic, educational and cultural diversity, a unique source of open-mindedness and cross-fertilization. Only by pointing out its diversity and combining its



forces will Europe be able to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) and become the leading actor in the new, knowledge-based, international landscape, as stated in the Lisbon strategy.

Following these goals, the Bologna Process and the emergence of the European Higher Education Area will enhance mobility of students and staff throughout Europe as well as co-operation and competition among European HEIs.

The Paris Conference has confirmed that, despite various shortcomings, the phenomenon of ranking has become increasingly an accepted method of evaluation as well as an expression of the performance of higher education institutions or/and their activities. Over the last decade, several attempts to rank HEIs have been made in several European countries at national or international scale. Most of them produced league tables for whole institutions which might cause high interest in media but are of little use to most stakeholders in higher education. Others, like the German ranking of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE), provide adequate transparency and stakeholder-orientation but include only few countries. The adequate form of transparency depends on the needs, and different groups of stakeholders:

- For students and academic staff in HEIs and research institutes information about the profiles and the performance of study programmes in Europe on Bachelor, Master, and PhD levels is important to promote mobility throughout Europe; by means of multiple, customized rankings students and staff are able to find HEIs and research institutes corresponding with their individual preferences,
- For European HEIs and research institutes instruments are necessary that allow them to compare to similar institutions in Europe both to find partners for co-operation and to identify their competitive position,
- For policy-makers, the data they need to analyze and the challenges they have to face are required, both at national and European levels.
- For European citizens and employers, transparency about the European higher education system in the world and on the

diversity of HEI orientations and performances within Europe should be created.

There is no one-size-fits all approach with regard to quantitative and qualitative information and ranking. Ranking especially must be carefully designed in order to answer the specific goals and target groups while respecting the variety of the HEIs. Then, Europe has to create the appropriate instruments to meet the diversity in higher education and research

### ***Standards for European ranking***

Ranking in Europe should avoid simplistic league tables and should be based instead on comparative approach leading to the mapping of excellence in higher education and research.

European ranking should follow several principles:

- 1 – multi-dimensional approach avoiding the simplification of aggregate composite indicators.
- 2 – field based approach that is producing information about fields/disciplines and programmes as these are the levels of analysis useful both for students and academics.
- 3 – data on the local-regional integration of each HEI. Included are relevant partnerships with other HEIs (site policies), socio-economic environment, facilities, such as major public libraries or large technological platforms belonging to other institutions or national agencies.
- 4 – data collected and their processing accessible for further analysis and studies.
- 5 – independence – not steered by governments or universities but by an independent body or consortium.
- 6 – International outlook – inclusion of HEIs from other relevant world regions.

Hence, the Paris meeting fully reaffirms the 2006 Berlin IREG meeting conclusions, emphasising the following statement of the Berlin Principles:

«Specify the linguistic, cultural, economic, and historical contexts of the educational systems being ranked. International rankings in particular should be aware of possible biases and be precise about their objective. Not all nations or systems share the same values and beliefs about what constitutes “quality” in systems should not be devised to force such comparisons».



It could be useful for the stakeholders to have in parallel a typology or classification, as for example the EU supported pilot project “Mapping Diversity” coordinated by the Dutch research centre CHEPS, which aims at classifying (mapping) higher education institutions according to their respective missions: first cycle, second cycle, third cycle, more or less research intensiveness, community services, degree of internationalisation etc.

### **Mapping of Excellences in Europe – next steps**

The French presidency calls for the mapping the different dimensions of excellence of the Higher Education and Research in Europe in an international context

It would be implemented through a independent **Consortium for Assessment of Higher Education and Research in Europe** which would cooperate with a network of national partners through which national data will be processed using shared methodologies.

The Consortium should take advantage of existing know-how and practices and develop a methodology of multidimensional mapping of the strength and excellence in education and research at the institutional level and in respective fields of study, which was developed by the Center for Higher Education Development in Germany. The mapping would cover all three levels of study – Bachelor, and (in particular) Master and PhD. The mapping should be carried out on voluntary basis. The analysis should include HEIs and research institutes.

Consequently, the French presidency invites the European Commission to launch a call for tender to explore and test the feasibility of a multi-dimensional mapping of Higher Education and Research in Europe in comparison with other relevant world regions and to provide the first results in 2010.

In addition to the need to assess research performance (notwithstanding problems in collecting internationally comparable data) there is also a need for collaborative efforts to establish valid and reliable European measures in the field of information for students on teaching and learning, as well as on other aspects of the missions of the European HEIs that deserve consideration. The Consortium selected should deal with these issues, building on the experience

gathered throughout the past years in several EU supported pilot projects and benefit as far as possible from the new university data collection project of Eurostat.

The Consortium should observe the standards of integrity in line with the *Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions* and rely in its work on expertise of various national and international expert groups, representatives of higher education institutions, policy-makers as well as users.

## **II. The ENTEPE meeting**

The ENTEPE meeting has also been hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and on November 12, the Ministry welcomed all members in Paris.

The coordinator reminded those countries who had not hosted an ENTEPE meeting yet to possibly think about offers for 2009 and 2010, as planning ahead is very important and essential for the future work. Belgium, Sweden and Spain offered to host meetings next year, Sweden approximately in autumn 2009.

As in the last meeting in Ljubljana detailed information on latest news from the Commission were presented by the Coordinator, Paul Holdsworth from the EU Commission additionally mentioned that the Communication on “Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” should be disseminated on different levels in each country and possible responses might be discussed during the next ENTEPE meeting.

Members then discussed the prepared homeworks on “Quality assurance of ITE” and planned the agenda for the Saturday working morning. Current trends in the educational systems of member states were shared, like assessment in Luxemburg, new curricula in TE in Spain, towards European standards in Denmark, differences between the 16 Länder in Germany due to the federal system when implementing the Bologna structure and the specific problems of the second phase of teacher education in this context.



National effects of the Council's Conclusions on Improving the Quality of Teacher Education were shared among the members and it was decided to bring this topic up again at the next meeting and to possibly refer to it in the context of the Conference activities in Romania.

During the second day, Romita Iucu gave a short report about the ongoing planning process for the next ENTEP meeting in Bucharest in May 2009. His offer to publish an ENTEP book in connection with this occasion was highly welcomed and appreciated by all members. Romita outlined the preliminary programme and the focus of the Conference on "Quality Assurance in CPD" and gave some further information on organisational aspects.

It was decided that at least a whole day of the internal ENTEP work in Bucharest should be dedicated to this endeavour of the "Bucharest ENTEP Book". Members discussed the editing process and the next steps to be taken in choosing the topics for the different chapters including contents ENTEP had just worked on. Bartolo Campos should take a leading role in the editing team (5 ENTEP members) and prepare a timeframe for all members involved in the editing process as well as the authors. Instead of preparing homeworks for the next ENTEP Conference all members should become involved in the preparation of the book with various supporting contributions. This schedule should be sent around to all members as a guideline for the coming months and the Coordination Group should meet in spring 2009 to discuss the detailed work in Bucharest and the specific involvement of the members in this project. Further discussions about the anticipated topic "quality assurance in CPD" and national or regional commitments in the members' countries followed.

Then Eve Eisenschmidt, from Estonia, shortly presented the well developed model of induction in Estonia as an impulse for future work on the internal ENTEP agenda, and proposed some key elements that could be future topics.

It was decided that Eve should send around a template to members to receive some more detailed information on obviously ongoing efforts in each country in the field of induction, as currently more than half of the EU Member States have no induction phase at all. Yet there is strong consensus about a necessary access to this bridging phase connecting ITE with CPD for beginning teachers and the responsibility of policy makers to design structured early career programmes offered to all enabling the novices to benefit from this professionalising phase for further development of their personal skills as well as expecting positive impacts on schools as learning communities creating a culture of collective learning for the best of all participants.

Ursula Uzerli

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