EADTU

Message Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2014
New technologies and the future of teaching and learning
Krakow, AGH, 24 October 2014

Introduction

The future priorities of national governments and the European Union should promote excellence, innovation and inclusiveness in higher education.

Excellence in higher education

Excellence in higher education is based on a combination of quality in teaching and learning, research and innovation (the knowledge triangle). Quality across these areas will enable us all to lead innovation and to support our learners.

New modes of teaching and learning based on ICT enable new pedagogies, higher completion rates and timely progression. Investigations are essential to raise efficiency.

Staff training and institutional development programmes for blended and online education in all Euroepan countries should be the foundation for innovation in higher education.

Education for innovation

Education for innovation leads to professionals and entrepreneurs, who are harnessed to create the economy and the society of tomorrow. It is based on knowledge, skills and attitudes, acquired in bachelor, master programmes and new forms of learning. Learning is a lifelong and lifewide learning journey. At the basis of education for innovation are personal development and creativity.

Science is developing very fast in all domains. Careers stretch upwards towards older retirement ages (e,g, 67 or no retirement age). The needs for education and training in society across successive life stages are very diverse. To sustain innovation in society, these needs must be met and EADTU members can play a role in developing solutions, ranging from single courses, new types of short diploma programmes and degree programmes. These programmes should support continuous professional development and broader education/training to enable a career upgrade or a career switch.

Education for innovation is also connecting with professional knowledge networks, bringing together recent research and professional experience.

European universities are making progress in developing research and innovation, e.g. by contract research with the public sector and the industry, and by European research and innovation projects in different sectors (supported by Horizon 2020and by the EIT-KICs). Education and training to initiate and sustain innovation processes on the workfloor are still under-developed. Public investments in this area would promote employability and entrepreneurship and lead to a significant economic return[1].

Inclusive education

Higher education should also be *inclusive*. Currently, this is expressed by the 40% participation benchmark (ET 2020). Inclusiveness means that higher education institutions and systems bring and keep students on board by making education relevant to them, by facilitating the learning process achieving the academic and professional competences and transversal skills required, by offering them enough structure to organise their study, by stimulating them for academic and professional reflection and by activating them to take personal responsability over the learning process.

By 2020, 20% more jobs will require higher level competences. Education needs to drive up both standards and levels of achievement to match this demand, as well as encourage the transversal skills needed to ensure people are able to be entrepreneurial and adapt to the increasingly inevitable changes in the labour market during their career.

Research and innovation in education

The intregration of new modes of teaching and learning in higher education, going hand in hand with new system developments, requires research and innovation in higher education. National research and innovation agendas in these areas should be strenghtend and synergies between the major European research and innovation institutes areas should be activated.

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[1] Valencia study

Governmental policy

In the framework of the ET2020 strategy, governments have to make sure that higher education systems, as part of their mission, provide:

- open and flexible education for working students
- online and flexible continuous professional development, short and intermediate degree programmes for 25+ citizens and demand driven training for the corporate and public sector
- open education (MOOCs, OER)

International education with a structural impact on educational provisions should be supported, such as collaborative curricula, international classrooms and related (blended) mobility.

Governments, professional organizations and universities should work together to develop new innovative courses to support ongoing lifelong learning. Governments and employers should recognize not only degree programmes, but new types of programmes. Universities need to be entrepreneurial, be able to innovate, be creative and prepared to take risks without fear of failure. They should be thought leaders for society.

In the future, completion rates on degree programmes cannot be the only output or measurement of universities performance. Universities should serve a diversity of programmes and a diversity of learners.

To be successful, governments should collaborate with higher education institutions and other stakeholders for developing a policy for online, open and flexible education. For advice, they should rely on R&I institutes and on expert organizations. EADTU is in a unique position to provide guidance and advice based on its reach across many excellent and high quality research centres, extensive experience in blended, distance and online learning. The EMPOWER programme is the start of what we have to offer. We need you all to continue the great work you do. Be the best thought leaders.

EU policy

EADTU is a partner for the EU to formulate recommendations for the Council of Ministers, the European Commission and the European Parliament, especially with regard to online, open and flexible education and its role to achieve excellence, innovation and inclusiveness. Our focus is:

- **excellence in teaching and learning:** professionalizing staff and the management of universities; the development of institutional frameworks for continuous improvement of teaching and learning.
- **innovation:** professional knowledge networks; university-business collaborations; the recognition of new types of educational programmes (short programmes, intermediate programmes and open learning (e.g. MOOCs); recognition and valuing of already acquired skills and competences.
- **inclusiveness**: the development of EU flagship initiatives to address inequality by open and flexible education; multilingual OER and MOOCs provisions.
- **research and and innovation** in these areas.

EU policy