



Level 5, the missing link: L5Missing

Final Report - Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

All European countries are working at the development and/or implementation of a national qualifications framework in the light of the EQF, the European Qualifications Framework, to enhance transparency, mobility, portability of degrees and quality assurance in higher education. One of the levels that is still a concern to many European countries is level 5 or what is sometimes called the Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE) or even the sub-degree higher education level. The main objective of the “L5, the missing link” project was to map the European landscape as to this link between the secondary and higher education in a variety of countries, with as a final outcome a publication presented at LLL seminar in Budapest under the Hungarian presidency.

The Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE) as a recognised and accredited programme ‘within’ or ‘linked to’ the Bachelor as first cycle in the EHEA - and as level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) - will and can be the bridge between secondary education (general and vocational education and training) and higher education with a professional and/or academic orientation. Therefore more information was needed on how level 5 higher education is structured and integrated or linked to level 6 in higher education as to make a valuable and consistent part of the continuum of higher education. Level 5 higher education makes major contribution to encouraging young people with no higher education aspiration to try a first step in higher education which may lead them forward to further higher education studies.

The general objective of the comparative study was to make a detailed analysis of existing Short Cycle Higher Education as an intermediate level of the first level of higher education (or at level 5 of the EQF) in **32 of the Bologna signatory countries: the 27 member states of the European Union, the EFTA countries and Turkey**. One of the specific objectives was to find out what changes had taken place in the short cycle higher education landscape since 2003 when the former EURASHE study on SCHE was made. Another objective was to see to what extent the development and implementation of SCHE is contributing to the implementation of the strategic framework Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) of the European Union and the objectives outlined in the Leuven Communiqué of 2010 after the meeting of the ministers of higher education. Overall, the comparative study attempts to highlight the major developments in SCHE over the past 7 years, focusing on similarities and differences across Europe.

Some of the key questions addressed in the project were: have more countries developed SCHE? Is it always seen as an intermediate level within the first level of higher education? Is it always situated at level 5 of the EQF? What is the profile of the students and the lecturers in SCHE? What is the contribution of SCHE to lifelong learning? Is SCHE seen as a means of progression towards further degree studies? How are SCHE institutions cooperating with industry and other social partners? What about student and teacher mobility and internationalisation in SCHE? What about QA in SCHE? What about employability, multilingualism, active citizenship and social commitment in SCHE?

The study concludes with recommendations that can be useful to individual institutions, policy makers at regional and national level and to the European Union. The study can be used as a strategic policy document by ministries of education and institutions of higher education in the implementation of the NQF. The study is largely disseminated to policy-makers in all the ministries of education of the Bologna signatory countries, to the Bologna Follow-up Group, to the Bologna promoters of the HE institutions in all European countries and beyond, to organisations dealing with or representing HE, such as national organisations representing rectors' or presidents' conferences of HEIs or organisations such as EUA and EURASHE itself. The study will also be disseminated and made available to the social partners and especially towards industry and business organisations at national and European level.

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1. Project Objectives

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the project is **to assess the impact on short cycle higher education of its inclusion - on a voluntary basis - into the EHEA-QF, and also the impact on SCHE of the alignment of the NQF with the EQF for LLL.**

All European countries are working at the development and/or implementation of a national qualifications framework in the light of the EQF, the European Qualifications Framework, to enhance transparency, mobility, portability of degrees and quality assurance in higher education. One of the levels that is still a concern to many European countries is level 5 or what is sometimes called the Short Cycle Higher Education or even the sub-degree higher education level. More information is needed on how level 5 higher education is structured and integrated or linked to level 6 in higher education as to make a valuable and consistent part of the continuum of higher education.

This objective has been achieved by preparing a comparative study, a detailed analysis of existing Short Cycle Higher Education provisions (at level 5 of the EQF) **in 33 of the Bologna signatory countries**. Indeed, the current study is an update of the previous 2003 EURASHE study on SCHE that has proven to have a major impact especially at the political level. Possibly one of the major elements of impact was that the principle was accepted by the European ministers of education that, "within the country contexts" level 5 could be accepted as an intermediate level within the first cycle of higher education and that in such cases the students were to be considered as students of higher education and that the institutions offering this level were to be considered as full partners in all projects and programmes concerning higher education.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES of this project, with regard to its theme, were:

- To find out what the main developments concerning short cycle education at level 5 were in Europe;
- To explore which countries that did not provide SCHE in the past have adapted their legislation, have developed SCHE and consider SCHE as a part of their higher education system now;
- To investigate which countries are planning to implement SCHE in the future and what other developments are taking place concerning short cycle higher education in Europe;
- To focus on the link between the implementation of an NQF and the occurrence of SCHE;

- To attach more importance to lifelong learning, the needs of the labour market, the collaboration of employers with institutions providing SCHE and to the employability of the students;
- To assess whether and how SCHE can contribute in general to achieving the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020');
- To assess whether and how SCHE can contribute in general to achieving the objectives of the Leuven Communiqué 'Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come' in particular;
- To conceive an independent research and networking initiative, with an aim to increase access to information concerning SCHE and Level 5 in general for the policy makers to make informed decisions. It is also the objective that the study can be used as a strategic policy document by ministries of education and institutions of higher education in the implementation of the NQF;
- To provide arguments demonstrating the valuable contribution of intermediate qualifications to lifelong learning;
- To promote SCHE in Europe (as the valuable contribution lifelong learning).

2. Project Approach

The study builds upon a similar study made by EURASHE in 2002-2003 (“Tertiary Short Cycle education”) that was mapping both the post secondary (Level 4) and SCHE (Level 5 of EQF) in 33 countries and served as a preparatory document for the Berlin Ministerial conference. This first publication set the groundwork for a common discussion and exchange among the different stakeholders in European Higher Education. Indeed, the Berlin Ministerial Conference has been a turnaround for SCHE in the Bologna Process. As a result of the study on TSC Ministers invited the Follow-up Group *‘to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area’*.

In order to monitor progress that has been made in the field of short cycle higher education in Europe, EURASHE has decided to carry out a follow-up report. The study was made by Yves Beernaert and Magda Kirsch (EDUCONSULT), two of the researchers who also carried out the first EURASHE Tertiary Short Cycle study in 2003. Contrary to the previous study the present comparative study concentrates on short cycle higher education at level 5 of the EQF for LLL and does not include developments at post-secondary level that are not considered to be higher education.

This complete study produced during the project called **SCHE in Europe – Level 5 - the missing link** is available for download at www.eqlevel5.eu. The executive summary of the study is enclosed in annex 3 of this report. Another main outcome of the project is a seminar with the focus on SCHE organised by EURASHE in Budapest, of which the programme is enclosed as well in Annex 2. All the seminar papers and conclusions are available for download on the EURASHE website: www.EURASHE.eu.

PROJECT DURATION

The project was planned for duration of 12 months starting in November 2009 and ending in October 2010. Nevertheless due to the difficulties in data collection, the project time life had to be extended by 3 months in order to allow a thorough completion of all project activities and to increase the quality of collected information. Therefore the final project duration increased to 15 months with an ending in January 2011. To maximise the outcomes of the publication a dissemination seminar was organised in Budapest, under the Hungarian presidency as an official Bologna event.

The projected timeframe ran as follows:

November 2009	Start of the project Project Kick off meeting
January 2010	Questionnaires drafting, ministry informing, Website launch
February 2010	Launch of survey (FR, EN) and of data collection
April 2010	1 st Working Group Lifelong Learning (project scientific committee)
June 2010	Request for the project duration amendment due the lack of collected data
September 2009	2 nd Working Group Lifelong Learning (project scientific committee) Re-launch of missing data collection

October 2010	Monitoring meeting, start of data confrontation with Ministries and report drafting
November 2010	Finalising of data collection
December 2010	Finalisation of the report drafting, report commenting
January 2011	Editing of the publication, Printing and dissemination of publication Dissemination Seminar in Budapest

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project activities include survey preparation, collection of data, drafting of the study and dissemination activities including a final dissemination seminar in Budapest.

Survey Preparation

In order to collect the right information from the different ministries and institutions a set of questionnaires was developed jointly by project partners, researchers and scientific committee: one very short one (questionnaire A) was intended for all countries covered by the study and its main aim was to find out which countries are offering SCHE or intend to introduce it in the future.

Online questionnaire A	Filled out by all countries – ministries – associations-institutions
Online questionnaire B	Filled out by ministries – associations and institutions in countries providing SCHE
Online questionnaire C Institutional questionnaire (Similar to but shorter than questionnaire B)	Filled out by institutions providing SCHE

The second one (questionnaire B) was to be filled out only by countries having SCHE. The questionnaires were sent out by four regional coordinators to the ministries of education. The questionnaires were also forwarded to the members of the Council of EURASHE (consisting of country representatives- Councils of General Directors, etc.) and to a number of institutions or organisations such as ADIUT (Association des Directeurs des IUT in France), IOTI (Institutes of Technology Ireland), the Association of Slovene higher vocational colleges etc.

To facilitate the task of the respondents the English questionnaires were translated into French, thus giving the opportunity to a maximum number of people to read and fill in the questionnaires in their own language or a foreign language they know. Later, a shorter institutional version of the English questionnaire (questionnaire C), mainly intended for institutions was also posted on the EURASHE website.

Data collection

The role of the regional coordinators consisted mainly in assuring the collection of data for their assigned countries by taking the necessary steps (informing the respondents about the survey, identifying of the respondents, making the follow up calls, survey promoting and explaining the necessity of the survey). Nevertheless, the response rate was lower than expected and especially the reactivity of some respondents was limited. Thus the data

collection had to be prolonged, combined with interviews and desktop research requiring higher engagement from all project involved members.

Report drafting

As explained above, due to the lack of responsiveness, the data collection was still in the final stage when the drafting of the report had started, depending on the already available data. The report drafting was based on desk-top research (inter alia Eurybase, CEDEFOP reports, legislation of countries concerned) and on the results of the questionnaires. These were submitted for approval to the respective ministries or education departments. For the countries that did not fill out the questionnaire a report was drafted based on desktop research, legislation of the countries concerned and, where possible, interviews. The country chapters were then submitted for approval to the ministry representatives of the respective countries. When approved the texts were finalised. The draft text was submitted for comments to a number of experts on SCHE amongst others the Quality Manager, the regional coordinators, representatives from ETF and some ministry representatives.

Budapest Seminar

The main dissemination activity of the project was the organisation of a dissemination seminar at the very end of the project 20-21 January 2011. The seminar was organised by EURASHE under the Hungarian presidency of the European Union, jointly with the Budapest Business School and the Ministry of National Resources of Hungary (MNR), as an official Bologna event. In this way, there was for the organisation of this official Bologna seminar, a strong cooperation between 'stakeholders' involved in processes on a national and international level, concerning the development and implementation of (professional) SCHE programmes in the national higher education area.

Location of the venue

The venue was situated in the centre of Pest, on the east side of the Danube, in the main building of the Budapest Business School (the Markó utca Building) at Markó utca 2931, Budapest.

Participants

The seminar was attended by a whole range of experts on the SCHE, staff members of organisations involved in the way this degree is embedded in the system, and members of EURASHE. [Attendants were for example](#) –Members of the BFUG (the Bologna countries), Partners in the L5 project of EURASHE, EURASHE members, interested in SCHE developments and involved in the implementation of the underlying programmes, Representatives of HEIs, Employers' Organisations, Quality Assurance Agencies, Representatives of Hungarian HEIs, Colleges, Governmental institutions, Businesses, etc.

Objectives

The seminar had a focus on the actual implementation of the (Professional) SCHE in the European Higher Education Area and of the occurrence of level 5 in the European Qualifications Framework, taking into account various aspects including:

- mission and position within HE systems;
- links to the labour market and employers;
- links to other sectors of higher education, as well as vocational education & training and
- general education (where relevant);
- links to National Qualifications Frameworks, profile and characteristics of graduates and
- their employability;

- methods of teaching/learning including the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL);
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education;
- regional role of HEIs and Community Colleges (and other Colleges offering SCHE programmes) in a changing social and economical environment, in the context of lifelong learning;
- role of national bodies, regional and local authorities in steering and (co)funding SCHE.

The seminar provided a platform for sharing experiences and best practices among the participants from different countries (within the E.U. and the Bologna process), helped to identify perspectives and priorities of further development of the higher education sector and its role within the Bologna process and especially presented findings of the SCHE study as the great part of the presentations and workshops was reserved for its outcomes highlighting the current position and practices at the SCHE sector throughout Europe.

Dissemination and exploitations of results

Aside from the main dissemination event of the project- the Budapest Seminar, the dissemination and exploitation of the project are mainly based on the use of partners' networks, and benefited of partner organisations' usual communication tools with their members and partners (newsletters, database used for mailing, advertisement and dissemination of the Budapest Seminar outcomes and Publication during partners' conferences. Nevertheless, provided the course of activities within the lifetime of the project, the main exploitations of the results of the project – findings of the study- are still to be further continued to maximise the impact and benefit from this brand new and the most up to date information on the SCHE in Europe.

Even so, since the study had been expected for a long time, there was a great interest in the preliminary findings throughout the entire lifetime of the project.

Dissemination and valorisation has been a JOINT and COMMON responsibility of all the partners of this project. The comparative SCHE study should not only be disseminated as largely as possible but it should be subject to valorisation and exploitation. This means that it should be used in policy development at regional or national level in ministries of education or at local level in institutions of higher education. The national descriptions and the case studies should be apt to be used to improve legislation and the practical organisation and activities in level 5 professional higher education.

The whole dissemination and valorisation has been strengthened by the activities of each partner: through EURASHE and its many contacts at European international level, through the contacts between the regional coordinators and the ministries of education and the institutions of higher education and through the work of the Quality Manager. A key element in dissemination and valorisation has been the creation of the website related to the project that has been integrated to the EURASHE website.

L5 Project Dissemination Instruments

1. Partners' Websites

The L5 project uses the 5 partners' communication platforms (websites) and as one of the main channels for international communication, e.g. sharing documents, interim reports, calendar items, etc.

2. L5 public website

The L5 public website, www.eqlevel5.eu was delivered according to the plan in January 2010. The website was actively used for dissemination purposes and continuously improved during the project life cycle.

3. **Corporate Newsletters** of the project partners that bi-monthly updated people on the progress made, future events and activities.
4. **Publications:** Full versions of all the publications are provided to the public on the partners' websites.
5. **Photo album and Power Point Presentations** of the main Project Event – LLL Seminar in Budapest are provided on the EURASHE website.
6. **Workshops, Conferences, Presentations, and Meetings:** Each workshop, meeting, conference return a report that has information on the participants, the conclusions and the outcomes of the event.

Examples of the dissemination activities with presentation of the project during the lifetime of the project:

- POLICY SEMINAR ON POST-SECONDARY VET IN TURKEY organised by ETF
- Briefing with ETF in Torino, Italy
- EUCIS-LLL conference and General Assembly in Barcelona, Spain
- International conference: Role of Short Cycle Higher Education in Life Long Learning (Atlantis project) in Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ETF conference on L5 in partner countries in Torino, Italy
- Meeting on VET and the Bruges Communiqué – presentation of conclusions from the report on SCHE in Alicante, Spain

Another, just a very recent event where the findings of the study were introduced was a **LLL-week of EUCIS-LLL – 14-18 March 2011 – in the European Parliament** (information sessions / round table discussion). Finally, the study as well as the outcomes of the seminar were presented to **Bologna Follow-Up Group Meeting in Gödöllő (Hungary), March 17-18, 2011.**

Project Quality Management

During the entire life time of the project the quality of the project work was monitored by the Quality Manager. He attended most of the project meetings as well as the scientific committee meetings and was in regular contact with the two Educonsult experts to follow the progress made and the quality of the work produced. The Quality Manager has also been in contact with the regional coordinators to support them during the process of collecting information and disseminating the study. A key task of the Quality Manager, a key expert in level 5 professional higher education, was to read the texts produced and advise on their contents and quality. He suggested improvements and recommendations of texts produced. At the end of the project he produced a small Project quality report that may be useful for the drafting of similar studies by EURASHE and others towards the future.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The following outcomes and results have been reached:

Budapest Seminar (Organisation, Programme and content)

Budapest, Hungary (20-21 January 2011) – 104 leaders from 18 countries gathered at the Bologna Seminar hosted by the Budapest Business School, with the support from the Hungarian Ministry for National Resources (MNR). The event centred upon the question, “Embedding Professional Short-Cycle Higher Education in the (Higher) Education System”. The event drew leaders from 90 organizations from across Europe, US and Canada who are actively engaged in the Bologna Process issues. The discussions in the Seminar were based on 9 keynote speeches from experts and 8 focused workshops that took place during the conference. The programme of the conference is enclosed in the annex 2 in this report. All of the presentations and papers from the conference are available at EURASHE website: www.EURASHE.eu - Activities/ Budapest Seminar 2011.

Publication

32 European countries
1,7 million students in SCHE-programmes

Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE) as first level in Higher Education (HE) and as level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has become more and more important in the last decade. As a ‘missing link between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and HE’ a growing number of countries involved in the Bologna Process are giving the underlying programmes a formal position in its education system, linked to a national qualifications framework.

This is the main conclusion of the project by EURASHE, including a study in 32 countries on SCHE after the decision which was made in 2005 within the Bologna Process to accept this degree as the intermediate level in the European Higher Education Area. The project report provides for all 32 countries an overview of the recent situation on SCHE and can give a very useful input for debates on a national and also an international level about Lifelong learning, creating flexible learning pathways and the European 2020 strategy.

The publication **Short Cycle Higher Education in Europe – Level 5: The missing link** is available for download on the EURASHE website: www.eqlevel5.eu and also a printed version can be sent on request. In fact the publication has been adjusted into several different versions based on the target groups.

- **Short Cycle Higher Education in Europe – Level 5: The missing link** - summative report; MAGDA KIRSCH AND YVES BEERNAERT (115 pages)
- **Short Cycle Higher Education in Europe – Level 5: The missing link** - full report; MAGDA KIRSCH AND YVES BEERNAERT (259 pages)
- **Country chapters**

4. Partnerships

The consortium includes organisations and experts with great expertise in level 5 professional higher education. The consortium is composed of EURASHE itself, of the national member associations, of the two key experts of Educonsult and of a Quality Manager. All partners have been actively involved in all project activities and carried out the project work programme in joint efforts.

Project coordinator

EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), Belgium

www.eurashe.eu

EURASHE is the (international) association of European Higher Education Institutions – Polytechnics, Colleges, University Colleges, etc. – devoted to Professional Higher Education and related research within the Bachelor-Masters structure. EURASHE has an affiliation with 1294 higher education institutions and is represented in 47 countries in and outside of the European Higher Education Area (also known as ‘Bologna countries’), mostly by National Associations of (University) Colleges and Universities of Applied Sciences, but also through individual higher education institutions or other professional associations and stakeholder organizations active in the field of higher education.

EURASHE has been active in and representative for professional higher education institutions. It is largely recognised as the only European organisation representing this kind of institutions of higher education. It has worked over the past two decades in close cooperation with the Commission of the EU, mainly with DG EAC, but also with several ministries of education across Europe. It also has contacts and close links with several other European organisations. It is a member of the Bologna Follow-up Group and follows closely all developments in higher education. Its major objective is to represent its national member organisations and their individual institutions and to contribute to quality professional higher education in Europe. The EURASHE secretariat has the necessary technical and administrative expertise to support the implementation of the study at all levels and at all stage as it has supported several similar studies over the past years.

Regional coordinators

The national member associations all have very close links on the one hand with their ministries of education and on the other hand with their individual member institutions of professional higher education. They all have large expertise in European projects and have been involved in drafting national studies focusing on developments of professional higher education. During the project the regional coordinators have been mainly responsible for liaising with the respondents (ministries and institutions) and general involvement in the study drafting.

Lithuanian' Colleges' Directors' Conference (LKDK), Lithuania

<http://www.kolegijos.lt/>

Lithuanian Colleges' Directors' Conference is a Lithuanian association of Colleges in Higher Education. The association has 26 members (which represents 96% of all such institutions in the country) and brings together 15 government funded and 11 private institutions in HE, representing over 60000 students. The association was founded in 2002 and it has the status of a non-profit association according to Lithuanian law. The LKDK focuses on representing the interests of the professionally oriented HEIs in policy discussions and legislative activities, enhancing the importance and the quality of professional HE in Lithuania, promoting the

sector, strengthening the quality issues. LKDK also seeks to promote national and international co-operation within HE and among the institutions of HE, other associations and organisations sharing the same aims.

Institutes of Technology Ireland (I.O.T.I.), Ireland

<http://www.ioti.ie/>

IOTI is the umbrella organisation for 13 of the fourteen Institutes of Technology in Ireland. The IOTs provide higher education that has a specific focus on the needs of students and in entering the workplace. The IOTs educate students from craft/apprentice level to PhD level and many award their own degrees - up to and including PhDs. The IOTs constitute roughly half of the higher education provision in Ireland and have considerable independence to operate. The IOTs have recently initiated a significant project in the area of flexible learning and lifelong learning. The project aims to significantly scale up the capacity of the IOTs to deliver such education and also intends to establish a national entity to market such learning opportunities.

Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges (ASHVC), Slovenia

www.skupnost-vss.si

ASHVC is a partner of the Ministry of HE, defined by the Law of higher professional intermediate education and financed from the budget. It represents institutions that provide intermediate higher professional education (120 credits ECTS) in Slovenia, co-ordinates their development, programmes accreditations, enrolment processes, quality assessment and external evaluations. The main purpose of the ASHVC is to promote SCHE in Slovenia as a crucial element of LLL and support co-operation between the member institutions and with the competent professional councils, accreditation committees, ministries, economy and employers, other HPs and international associations, such as EURASHE. The member institutions operate either as organisational units within public school centres of different size or as independent private or public institutions - altogether 62 institutions representing 1/3 of all study placements within HE in Slovenia in the study year 2009/10.

Association of University Institutes of Technology Directors (ADIUT), France

<http://www.iut-fr.net/>

ADIUT is a national association of the 116 University Institutes of Technology which are autonomous structures inside the university. The IUT network is a tight-knit fabric throughout the country. Initial education and lifelong learning are proposed in secondary and service sectors (24 specialities). Research and technological transfer are carried out by 163 research laboratories. ADIUT is in direct relation with his socio-economic environment (the French Ministry of Higher Education, national companies' organizations, other university groups). Concerning international activities, ADIUT propose pedagogical engineering in higher technological and professional education and collaborative working for a European High Technological Education System based on competencies.

Researchers

The study has been drafted by expert researchers on SCHE - Yves Beernaert and Magda Kirsch (EDUCONSULT), the two same researchers who in 2003 carried out the first EURASHE, the Europe-wide survey of "existing tertiary short cycle (TSC) education in Europe".

The two experts of Educonsult supported the regional coordinators in collecting the information and drafting the descriptions and comparative chapter. They have been also involved in dissemination and in valorisation all through the project life and they will continue to do so as they will act as speakers at regional, national or European events.

Quality Manager

Hans Daale, acting as a Quality Manager during the project has been actively involved in all project activities and by his input ensured the smooth project implementation as well as scientific relevance of the outcomes.

5. Plans for the Future

The exploitation of the project's results and outcomes goes beyond the lifetime of the project. This is mainly due to the fact that the publication, being the main project outcome was released at the very end of the project. And a further dissemination of the publication outcomes is very essential for its proper exploitation and for the objectives of pushing forward the SCHE agenda.

In addition, the results of publication are continuously advertised by the partner organisations, through dissemination of the publication in their events and mention of the results when appropriate in any relevant platform at regional, national or European level.

Ministries of education and institutions of higher education are using the study as a strategic policy document of the implementation of the NQF. Next to that, several activities have been planned so far by project consortium members, to take place after the end of the eligibility period of the project, in order to increase its impact, and to promote SCHE in Europe as a valuable contribution to lifelong learning

The following initiatives can be mentioned:

- Workshop session on LLL – Businet – 10/11 March 2011 – Copenhagen – STUDY PRESENTED
- Participation in the LLL-week of EUCIS-LLL – 14-18 March 2011 – in the European Parliament (information sessions / round table discussion) – on behalf of the WG on Employability and LLL of EURASHE – **PUBLICATIONS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED**
- The study as well the outcomes of the seminar were presented to **Bologna Follow-Up Group Meeting in Gödöllő (Hungary), March 17-18, 2011.**
- Initiative by a Flemish organisation for adult education (Belgium) for a Grundtvig Project: SCHE as instrument in adult education – partners from: Ireland, England, Hungary, Portugal and the Netherlands – **DIRECT RESULT/IMPACT OF THE STUDY**
- Survey focused on possibilities to have an international network for short higher education, with SCHE organisations in European countries, Japan, USA, Canada and other parts of the world
- Working Group LLL EURASHE – meeting – 29 March – Nice, France

UPCOMING

- Presentation on SCHE – Patras, Greece, 12 April – during a study visit (European Platform on LLL)
- Implementum Conference May 26th 2011 in Murska Sobota (Slovenia)
- Conference in Leira (Portugal) on 17th June 2011

Moreover during the entire lifetime of the project the **following initiatives** have developed and are **to be continued**:

- Co-operation with EUCIS-LLL – for some initiatives like the creation of a **European Institute for LLL**
- Co-operation with the Hungarian Government for the seminar we have held. After the seminar some Hungarian organisations showed their interest to continue cooperation.
- CEDEFOP is interested in more cooperation with EURASHE, thinking of the permeability for VET and HE. SCHE can be a bridge between those sectors.

- Organisations in the USA, Canada and Japan have shown an interest in SCHE, based on the outcomes of the report. EURASHE will use its WG LLL for planning activities with those organisations, on a certain basis.

Concrete plans:

- ÷ Meeting planned with academic authorities in Kyoto (Japan) in April 2011
 - ÷ Executive summary of the study has been translated into Japanese
 - ÷ Report as study material in 'the Short Higher Education Leadership Academy' – a PhD programme by the University of Toledo (USA) – June 2011
 - ÷ International seminar on LLL and SCHE in Quebec, Canada – October 2012 – organised by CEGEP, Canada
- The European Training Foundation (ETF) – with a lot of activities in countries in the neighbouring and partner countries asked several times the experts in the project for dissemination activities and is interested in a similar study for the partner countries.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The main aim of the project was to conceive an independent research and networking initiative, with an aim to increase access to information concerning SCHE and Level 5 in general for the policy makers to make informed decisions. It is also the objective that the study can be used as a strategic policy document by ministries of education and institutions of higher education in the implementation of the NQF. The project also intended to provide arguments demonstrating the valuable contribution of intermediate qualifications to lifelong learning and to promote SCHE in Europe as a valuable contribution to lifelong learning.

We believe that the above objectives have been met. As proven in the study SCHE contributes to reaching most of the **objectives of the 2020 ET strategy and of the Leuven Communiqué ‘Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come’**.

Legislation governing SCHE is very recent and has been enacted over the last five years or is still in preparation, so we can say that the sector is on the move. A lot of the recent changes have to do with access to courses, changing curricula in professional education, but also with QA, accreditation, ECTS, qualification frameworks and more transparency of these programmes.

The study is closely linked to all of the priorities of HE and LLL in Europe and even at world level at the moment. It fully contributes to the development of the EHEA and will strengthen the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks in the light of the EQF. The study will be particularly relevant to all European countries or regions that are in the process of developing, adopting or upgrading level 5 HE to fit into their NQF. It will be relevant to policy people, as it contains practical information on the steps the different countries are taking for the implementation of quality level 5 HE. The study is relevant to institutions of HE and national associations of such institutions, as it contains examples of good practice focusing on key issues of this (and other) HE. By clarifying the organisation and contents of this level of HE, the study contributes to enhancing its attractiveness, which may lead to more students going into this level and possibly more students moving later on to level 6 HE. By attracting more students - especially from socially disadvantaged backgrounds - into HE, the study makes a major contribution to the European policy agenda as to education and training. The study also addresses many of the objectives and sub-objectives of the Detailed work plan in education and training agreed by the Ministries of Education - the so called Lisbon 2010 strategy. It also focuses already on the new agenda set for 2020, by helping to meet its challenges through describing how LLL strategies are implemented through national and/or regional policies in European countries and how they take concrete shape at level 5 in HEIs.

The main conclusions about SCHE policy-wise as taken from the publication:

- SCHE meets the demands of the labour market
- SCHE develops strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees, trade unions, chambers of commerce
- SCHE enhances employability and the employment rate of the students
- SCHE makes lifelong learning a reality
- SCHE promotes equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- SCHE enhances creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship
- SCHE contributes to the implementation of the EQF and the NQFs
- SCHE makes mobility and internationalisation a limited reality
- SCHE contributes to improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

7. Extra Heading/Section

Annex 1: L-5 key persons involved in the project

PROJECT MANAGER

Iva Voldánová, EURASHE

EURASHE (EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION)

Stefan Delplace, Secretary General

Michal Karpíšek, Vice President

Anja Matthys, Office Manager

ASHVC (ASSOCIATION OF SLOVENE HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES) – REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Alicia-Leonor Sauli-Miklavčič, Secretary General

Zdenka Steblovník Župan, President

IOTI (INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY IRELAND) – REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Richard Thorn, Director, Flexible Learning

Ann Stokes, Researcher

ADIUT (ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORS) – REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Guillen Ronald, Director of an IUT (Nantes); member of Board of ADIUT

LKDK (LITHUANIAN' COLLEGES' DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE) – REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Ana Aleknaviciene, Executive Director

Gintautas Braziunas, President

EDUCONSULT

Magda Kirsch, Senior expert

Yves Beernaert, Senior expert

LEIDO

Hans Daale, Executive Director (acting in the project as Quality Manager)

WORKING GROUP ON LIFELONG LEARNING (SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE)

Hans Daale, LEIDO

Stefan Delplace, EURASHE

Michal Karpíšek, EURASHE

Stefan Schenke, BUSINET

Sylvie Bonichon, Independent Bologna expert on SCHE

Klaas Vansteenhuyse, KH LEUVEN

Richard Thorn, IOTI

Alicia-Leonor Sauli-Miklavčič, ASHVC

Dugald Craig, WOSCOP

Audrey Frith, EUCIS-LLL

Annex 2: Seminar programme



Embedding Professional Short-Cycle Higher Education in the (Higher) Education System

Official Bologna seminar

20-21 January 2011

Budapest Business School

Markó utca, 29-31
Budapest, Hungary

Programme

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Thursday, January 20, 2011	
12.30 – 13.30	Registration of participants, lunch buffet
13.30 – 13.50	<p>Chair: Ernő Keszei, President Hungarian National Bologna Board, Co-chair of the BFUG</p> <p>Welcome and opening session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungarian Ministry for National Resources (MNR) - <i>László Dux, Deputy State Secretary for HE</i> • Hungarian Rectors' Conference / Budapest Business School - <i>Eva Sándor-Kriszt, Chair Hungarian Rectors' Conference, Rector Budapest Business School</i> • EURASHE - <i>Michal Karpisek, Vice-president EURASHE</i>
13.50 – 15.30	<p>Plenary presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position SCHE in the EHEA: European and National Policy Level, Findings from the EURASHE survey 'L5 - Missing Link in the Bologna countries' Part 1: National Qualifications Frameworks and the SCHE - <i>Magda Kirsch, Educonsult, Belgium</i> • The Hungarian situation in the Higher Education Area - <i>László Dux, Deputy State Secretary for HE</i> • Approaches to Quality Assurance in SCHE (Associate degree) - <i>Henri Ponds, NVAO (Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation)</i> • SCHE in Higher Education: the opinion of the Hungarian employer - <i>Akos Niklai, Vice-President of MGYOSZ (Business Hungary), former president of the Hotel Association of Hungary and of the Hungarian National Tourist Office</i> <p>Panel Discussion (all presenters) / Questions</p>

15.30 – 15.50	Coffee break
15.50 – 17.10	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission and role of SCHE on a national level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sylvie Bonichon, France, Bologna promoter / expert SCHE</i> - <i>Magda Kirsch, Educonsult, Belgium</i> - <i>Henri Ponds, NVAO, the Netherlands</i> B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of SCHE, other HE-awards and 'instruments' promoting LLL. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of embedded awards at SCHE in the Irish Qualifications Framework to promote LLL <i>Richard Thorn, IoTI, Ireland</i> - SCHE and other 'instruments' promoting LLL <i>Ad Vermeulen, Fontys University of Applied Science, member of the LLL-network in the Netherlands</i> - <i>Erzsébet Szlamka, Ministry for National Resources, Hungary</i> C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCHE and its target groups - specifics of students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Janneke Korf, manager SCHE, Hanzehogeschool, University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands</i> - <i>Balázs Heidrich, Dean, College of Finance and Accountancy, Budapest Business School</i> - <i>Dániel Kóvári, The National Union of Students in Hungary (HÖÖK)</i> D <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQF: Links of SCHE with HE and VET <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hans Daale, EURASHE, Chair WG on LLL</i> - <i>Nick Davy, Higher Education Policy Officer, Association of Colleges, UK / partner in EUproVET, European Network of National VET Associations</i> - <i>József Roóz, President, Representative Association for Higher Level Vocational Training, Hungary, rector emeritus, BBS</i>
17.10 – 17.20	Short break
17.20 – 17.45	Summary of the workshops and plenary discussion
19.30	Official seminar dinner in Restaurant Alma Mater
Friday, January 21, 2011	
09.00 – 10.50	Chair: Michal Karpisek, Vice-President EURASHE Plenary presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short summary of the outcomes of the first day of the seminar • Position of the SCHE in the EHEA - Findings from the EURASHE survey 'L5 – Missing Link in the Bologna countries' Part 2: SCHE and HEIs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Magda Kirsch, Educonsult, Belgium</i> • The Community College Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Michael Allen, Associate Vice President for International Programmes & Services, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)</i> • SCHE in the U.S.A and Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Snejana Slantcheva-Durst, Asst. Prof. Higher Education, University of Toledo / manager of the international ATLANTIS project 'SHE-programs in the U.S.A. and in Europe'</i> • Partnership and progression – the role of vocational short-cycle HE in lifelong learning and employment in Scotland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>John Lewis, manager Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scotland</i>

	Panel Discussion (all presenters) / Questions
10.50 – 11.10	Coffee break
11.10 – 12.30	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability: SCHE and the Labour Market, need for specialised qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Snejana Slantcheva-Durst, Asst. Prof. Higher Education, University of Toledo, Ohio</i> - <i>Csaba_FERENCZ, Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</i> F <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student centred learning in Higher Education – paradigm shift, methodology & implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Zdenka Steblovnik Župan, Association of Slovene HVC & Wood Technology School Maribor, Siovenia</i> - <i>Jan Nienhuis, project manager, Leido, the Netherlands</i> G <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian and American Experience: Community Colleges and HE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hervé Pilon, President, Cégep international, Community Colleges, Quebec, Canada</i> - <i>Michael Allen, Associate Vice President for International Programmes & Services, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)</i> H <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifics of SCHE: Characteristics and Requirements in a HE context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>John Lewis, SQA, Scotland</i> - <i>Eva Sándor-Kriszt, Chair Hungarian Rectors' Conference, Rector Budapest Business School</i>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch buffet in Restaurant Alma Mater
14.00 – 15.00	Summary of the workshops and plenary discussion
15.00 – 15.40	Conclusions of the seminar by the general rapporteur <i>Jiri Nantl, director HE Department, Czech Ministry of Education –</i>
15.40 – 16.00	Closing of the seminar

Annex 3: Executive Summary –SCHE in Europe – Level 5 – The missing link

Executive Summary

▪ Objectives of the study

The general objective of the present comparative study was to make a detailed analysis of existing Short Cycle Higher Education as an intermediate level of the first level of higher education (or at level 5 of the EQF) in 32 of the Bologna signatory countries: the 27 member states of the European Union, the EFTA countries and Turkey. One of the specific objectives was to find out what changes had taken place in the short cycle higher education landscape since 2003 when the former EURASHE study on SCHE was made. Another objective was to see to what extent the development and implementation of SCHE is contributing to the implementation of the strategic framework Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) of the European Union and the objectives outlined in the Leuven Communiqué of 2010 after the meeting of the ministers of higher education. Overall, the comparative study attempts to highlight the major developments in SCHE over the past 7 years, focusing on similarities and differences across Europe.

Some of the key questions addressed are: have more countries developed SCHE? Is it always seen as an intermediate level within the first level of higher education? Is it always situated at level 5 of the EQF? What is the profile of the students and the lecturers in SCHE? What is the contribution of SCHE to lifelong learning? Is SCHE seen as a means of progression towards further degree studies? How are SCHE institutions cooperating with industry and other social partners? What about student and teacher mobility and internationalisation in SCHE? What about QA in SCHE? What about employability, multilingualism, active citizenship and social commitment in SCHE? The authors have tried to address these key questions in the present study.

▪ SCHE is gaining ground in Europe

SCHE - level 5 studies are definitely gaining ground compared to the situation in 2003. At the moment 19 of the European countries (or regions) studied do have SCHE – level 5. A few of those countries have just started up SCHE - level 5 studies and others intend to do so in the near future. **1,694,080 students at least** are studying in SCHE-programmes. **Especially non-traditional and mature students are increasingly participating in SCHE.**

However, **although in most countries studies at level 5 are also SCHE, this is not always the case.** Indeed in some countries there are level 5 studies or training of a professional nature which are not considered to be SCHE as they are not an intermediate level within the first level of higher education. In yet other countries two parallel systems exist with on the one hand SCHE – level 5 studies (within HE) and on the other level 5 professional higher education which is not considered to be part of higher education. All together qualifications at level 5 remain quite blurred in some countries. We are thus even going in some countries towards a **new binary system at level 5** with on the one hand SCHE and on the other qualifications at level 5 that are mainly focusing the labour market.

▪ SCHE has found its rightful place in higher education

SCHE can be considered to be the missing link between secondary and higher education. The fact that the Bologna process has led to the introduction of the Qualifications Framework for the EHEA (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications) has definitely enhanced the status of SCHE. **SCHE enables students to climb the ladder of higher education step by step.**

In the majority of countries surveyed students can use most of the credits earned in SCHE to progress to degree courses. In some countries students can even use all the credits earned to progress to a bachelor's award. The minimum students can transfer is 30 ECTS. Sometimes the number of credits depends on the articulation between programmes.

In all countries providing SCHE there is specific legislation either as part of HE legislation in general or as a separate legislation for SCHE level 5 studies.

- **SCHE is provided in a wide variety of settings**

In most cases SCHE level 5 is organised by the State and provided by various public education providers but in some cases it is organised by private providers. In both cases it may sometimes be organised in cooperation with sectoral or professional organisations, with chambers of commerce, with individual companies, with trade unions etc.

SCHE level 5 is provided by various public education providers such as universities, university colleges, universities of applied sciences, regional technical institutes, further education or adult education organisations or even upper secondary schools. In all countries surveyed SCHE is subsidised by the State or other authorities. In some cases there may be some (indirect) funding by companies.

The fact that SCHE is provided in such a wide variety of settings enhances the opportunities of non-traditional learners to participate in higher education. However, it is also to be noted that although SCHE is offered in a wide variety of settings, HEI are very often the awarding or responsible organisation or body.

- **SCHE meets the demands of the labour market**

The main objective of level 5 SCHE studies is professional specialization focusing on employment. It must be stressed that SCHE level 5 studies always clearly lead to a vocational HE qualification; this means that every student who has obtained a SCHE level 5-certificate or diploma has a qualification that enables him or her to apply for a job at that level on the labour market.

Although the bulk of the study programmes offered in SCHE are in the area of business studies, administration, building, catering and hospitality, engineering and mechanics, it is interesting to point out that new programmes are being developed in areas such as logistics, ecology, forestry, security, entrepreneurship, wine sales, aquaculture, driving instructor, aircraft mechanics etc. This indicates that SCHE is a thriving sector which quickly responds to the needs and demands of industry.

It is therefore not surprising that in most countries the employability rate of students is good and therefore SCHE could contribute to reducing youth unemployment.

- **SCHE develops strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees, trade unions, chambers of commerce**

In all countries SCHE level 5 HE has a very strong focus on cooperation with industry and other economic and social partners. In some cases cooperation with companies is

compulsory. The key argument to do so is the need to have more highly educated and trained technicians that are required by industry and who respond to the explicit needs of industry.

As SCHE studies try to respond swiftly to demands of industry and as SCHE studies are employment-oriented it is obvious that collaboration with industry and business in designing the programmes and curricula and in defining the learning outcomes is very strongly targeted. This collaboration with industry takes different forms: representatives of industry sit on management boards of institutions or in regional programme committees, they are involved in external QA panels or they sit on examination boards for final exams and last but not least industry offers placements or internships.

Many lecturers in SCHE also have strong links with industry as the majority of institutions have representatives of industry teaching at their institution.

- **SCHE enhances employability and the employment rate of the students**

There is a genuine need for students with a SCHE diploma or certificate and most of them find a job fairly easily within a reasonable period after their studies. This study also reveals that students are employed at their level as highly skilled technicians in various kinds of jobs. The fact that SCHE focuses on immediate and concrete employment results in industry being closely involved in outlining the contents of level 5 SCHE studies. It also results in the fact that SCHE-courses put considerable emphasis on employability in various ways.

Employability is focused upon especially by stressing vocational competences, by taking industry needs into account while setting up programmes and drafting curricula, by regularly adapting curricula to the needs of industry, by using a modular approach, by placements or internships and by using innovative pedagogical methods (such as projects in cooperation with industry) etc.

Employability is definitely also enhanced by the fact that in most countries SCHE institutions have a mixture of lecturers with an academic and a professional profile. In some countries legislation states that a certain percentage of lecturers have to have a professional profile appropriate to the professions for which training is provided. This also means that the teachers with a professional profile very often combine education with work in a company, which means they are very well aware of the latest developments in the profession concerned.

Although it is generally believed that multilingualism helps to enhance the employability of graduates the attention given to multilingualism in SCHE is minimal. Placements abroad and foreign guest lecturers are appreciated to promote multilingualism but a minority of SCHE institutions and ministries consider offering language courses to be useful. Multilingualism is definitely not an issue in English-speaking countries.

- **SCHE makes lifelong learning a reality**

It should be stressed that the development and the implementation of SCHE contributed greatly to the implementation of this key objective. As has been demonstrated in the study, many of the students in SCHE are **non-traditional and mature students who return to education at a later stage in life**, thus enabling them to make lifelong learning a reality. An important number of these mature students combine work with education and training.

Although entry requirements in most countries are similar to those for other levels of higher education (a secondary school certificate) access requirements for SCHE programmes usually also provide more flexibility either through recognition of prior learning or through testing of adult or mature students.

Provision of SCHE is also quite flexible through part-time learning, dual learning and blended learning systems including ODL, time-tables meeting the needs of the learners etc. This proves that most countries see SCHE- level 5 in a lifelong learning perspective focusing on flexible access and flexible learning pathways. Notwithstanding the fact that many countries offer flexible learning pathways the majority of the students are still full-time students. However in a few countries the majority or a considerable percentage of students are part-time students. Those who study part-time are in most cases adult or mature students who may already be working. In those cases they combine work and learning.

SCHE is not only seen as an opportunity to widen access to higher education but also to stimulate their progress towards a bachelor's degree at a later stage. Legislative frameworks are provided in most countries to enable this. The credits students get recognized when pursuing their studies differ according to the country.

- **SCHE promotes equity, social cohesion and active citizenship**

Europe needs more highly educated and trained people and SCHE can make a major contribution to this. It should be highlighted very strongly that SCHE is a unique opportunity to attract more students (and especially students of a socially disadvantaged background) and widen access to higher education. Although there are more women participating in SCHE, men seem to participate more in SCHE programmes than they do in other higher education programmes. Thus SCHE could contribute to **reducing growing gender inequity in higher education**.

SCHE is definitely contributing to **widening participation in higher education** and to enhancing social cohesion and equity as more disadvantaged students and more mature students are involved in SCHE. Although hardly any data are available the majority of ministries and institutions think that compared to other levels of education there are **more disadvantaged students in SCHE**. The majority of respondent institutions providing SCHE even think that disadvantaged students are over-represented in SCHE. The lack of data as to underprivileged students shows that efforts still have to be made to improve and enhance data collection in certain areas. Finally the lack of information as to concrete diversity policies implemented within HEI in many countries also needs to be addressed.

Active citizenship and social commitment is promoted by several institutions in various ways: by engaging students in local social projects, by teaching corporate social responsibility, by implementing a sustainable development policy or by collaborating with NGOs. However, only a small number of institutions have a diversity charter promoting the involvement of disadvantaged students.

- **SCHE enhances creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship**

SCHE-institutions are open to new technologies and innovation. As shown in the list of recently introduced programmes it is clear many programmes are state-of the art and responding to new trends (e.g. green jobs) and new technologies. Moreover several institutions provide programmes that enhance entrepreneurship and many of them teach entrepreneurship as a subject.

Without any doubt, the fact that many lecturers are entrepreneurs themselves and that creative pedagogical methods are used (e.g. projects in companies) enhances creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship among the students.

- **SCHE contributes to the implementation of the EQF and the NQFs**

The introduction of the QF-EHEA and the EQF have led to countries restructuring their higher education structure and in some countries this has led to the introduction of SCHE and in others to upgrading vocational programmes in higher education to bachelor programmes.

Most, if not all, of the countries concerned, are reflecting on level 5 of the EQF while implementing their NQF. In some cases they are wondering how to fill in level 5 of the EQF in their NQF.

Virtually all countries have developed or are developing their NQF but the referencing in most cases has not yet been finalized. This results in some countries still not having decided where to position certain professional higher education / training courses. In some cases it is still undecided whether to put these studies at level 5 or level 6 of the EQF. In other cases it is not yet clear whether some post-secondary vocational programmes should be considered as level 4 or level 5 SCHE programmes.

- **SCHE makes mobility and internationalisation a limited reality**

It is quite remarkable that the majority of the countries that have SCHE still express the workload in years. Typically the programmes cover two-year full-time study. Only a few countries express the workload in ECTS credits ranging from 90 to 150 ECTS credits. Exceptions as to the length and the workload of programmes concern mainly nursing programmes.

In the majority of countries having SCHE the curriculum is a mixture of theory, practice (within the HEI) and a work placement.

The Diploma Supplement is only generally used in 13 of the 20 countries that have SCHE. This is the case because they are legally obliged to do so. In a few cases they are invited to use it. The majority believe that the Diploma Supplement facilitates transition to degree studies or access to the labour market or internationalisation.

The majority of SCHE institutions stress that SCHE lecturers participate in various mobility programmes such as Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig or regional programmes (e.g. Nordplus for Scandinavian countries). SCHE students participate mainly in the Erasmus and Leonardo mobility but have difficulties to do so, mainly as the SCHE studies are short which makes it difficult to integrate mobility periods into the programmes.

Mobility tools such as the learning agreement and the transcript of records under Erasmus and the training agreement under Leonardo are used by an important number of SCHE institutions but more information is still needed to have them more widely used. Europass mobility documents are only used by a small group as most SCHE lecturers and students are involved in Erasmus mobility.

SCHE institutions are mainly involved in Erasmus and Leonardo projects. Some are involved in Comenius and some adult education or further education institutions organising SCHE are involved in Grundtvig projects. An important group of SCHE institutions is still involved in no cooperation at all. This is very often due to the fact that they are small and have little time and HR to invest in internationalisation. The staff also lacks language skills and sometimes motivation to get involved. SCHE students from a disadvantaged background have no or little financial means to get involved. Working students can also not participate in long-term mobility.

- **SCHE contributes to improving the quality and efficiency of education and training**

Half of the respondent SCHE institutions carry out internal quality assurance (self-) evaluations and mostly because they are obliged to do so. Furthermore in all countries (except one) there is always some kind of external quality assurance. However in several countries it is still the case that the external quality assurance agencies are yet to be the independent agencies as defined by ENQA.

Most of the countries have accreditation but in three of those the accreditation is ex ante which means the SCHE programmes have to be accredited before being introduced. Also here accreditation is not always carried out by independent agencies.

Although already a lot of efforts are being made this is an area where there is still room for improvement especially as far as internal quality assurance and independent bodies for external quality assurance and accreditation are concerned.

SCHE is contributing to **efficiency in higher education** as it may help **reduce drop-out rates** of students at other levels of higher education as in most countries there is articulation between secondary VET-courses and SCHE.

- **The awards granted still vary greatly across Europe**

The titles, degrees, certificates or diplomas awarded are quite different in nature and in terminology. The great variety of terms used fails to enhance the transparency and readability or user friendliness of the awards granted.

- **SCHE contributes to reaching the objectives of the 2020 ET strategy and of the Leuven Communiqué**

For all the reasons given above it can be stated that SCHE contributes to reaching most of the **objectives of the 2020 ET strategy and of the Leuven Communiqué ‘Learning for the future: higher education priorities for the decade to come’**.

- **The situation concerning SCHE is changing continuously**

As a number of countries have not introduced their NQF some of them are still in doubt whether some of the post-secondary vocational courses and programmes organised in their country will be positioned at level 5 or at level 6 of the EQF. Others hesitate whether their level 5 training programmes will also be SCHE. Moreover, some countries that do not organise SCHE at the moment might do so in the near future. This means that the present report can only be seen as a state of affairs at the end of 2010 and that the situation might change considerably in the near future.