

E-EMCOSU

Emerging modes of cooperation between private sector organisations and universities

Main activities

One of the main project activities also includes a comparative survey on the modes of cooperation between employers and higher education institutions in selected countries: over 500 employers will be included in the valorization survey in 5 EU countries and 100 employers organisations on the level of EU.

Project's Timeline

The project has officially started in October 2012 and will finish in March 2015.

About the project

As stated in the latest Agenda on Modernisation of Europe's HE systems, enhancing short and long term employability potential of young people has become one of the central developmental priorities in European Higher Education Area developments. Current major national and international mechanisms providing indications to contribute to this aim are closely related to cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises which represents the main focus of this project which addresses three general questions:

- a) Which are the most relevant modes of cooperation between universities and enterprises and why?
- b) What are current characteristics of cooperation modes and their future developmental needs?; and
- c) Which are key developmental drivers and motives on cooperation on the side of universities and enterprises?



The coordinator of the project is dr. Samo Pavlin of University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Project's goals

The general goals of the EMCOSU project relate to surveys and projects which identify professional competencies and misalignment between formal qualifications, acquired knowledge and employers' requirements by providing answers to the following key questions:

1. What are the characteristics, particularities and developmental needs of the following modes of cooperation between HEIs and employers in partner countries and in the EU?
2. How can these modes be logically systemised according to stakeholders' particular needs, countries, study fields and sectors? What are differences and similarities in these areas?
3. Which recommendations, guidelines and tools can be developed on these bases?
4. What potential do identified improvements hold vis-à-vis established policy tools: credit points and HE sector-specific qualification frameworks? Which sectors and jobs in the selected partner countries and the EU have the greatest potential in the future to absorb HE graduates?

The EMCOSU programme reinforces the link between education activities and HE graduates' employability needs and the promotion of cooperation with HE tools in particular.

Main objectives and anticipated results

- A comparative survey on the modes of cooperation between employers and HEIs in selected countries: over 500 employers will be included in the valorisation survey in 5 EU countries. This report will also include the feedback evaluation of results based on a qualitative assessment of the findings among HEIs and employers;
- Survey among 100 Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other employers organisations on the EU level (in EU countries which are not members of consortium);
- Analysis of results, national and integrative reports on cooperation between employers and HEIs;
- Short reports on the most relevant jobs and sectors for HE graduates in 5 EU countries and on the EU level;
- Guidelines and tools for developing cooperation between key stakeholders in higher education. This also includes pilot testing in the TUNING Network;
- Development of policy recommendations on national and on the EU level. This includes organisation of an expert workshop of TUNING networks, EU policymakers, HE institutions and enterprises.

Project partners



The main building of the University of Ljubljana

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Project Coordinator: Samo Pavlin

University of Deusto, Spain
National Coordinator: Julia Maria Gonzalez Ferrera

University of Groningen, The Netherlands
National Coordinator: Robert Wagenaar

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Slovenia
National Coordinator: Mojca Osojnik

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of County Zala, Hungary
National Coordinator: Renata Fullerne Verger

Business Foundation for Education, Bulgaria
National Coordinator: Nevena Rakovska

Polish Chamber of Commerce, Poland
National Coordinator: Mieczyslaw Bak

High Council of Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation, Spain
National Coordinator: Juan de Lucio

Key national and EU strategies and best practices on cooperation between private sector organisations and universities

The first phase of the project provided an in-depth study on national economic strategies and a detailed sector elaboration in the partners' countries and in the EU.

As national reports presented, there is a substantial number of university-business cooperation best practices and modes. Most of them are similar (career centres, internship programmes, joint curriculum development, quality standards of practical placement in enterprises, entrepreneurial courses in the university study programmes, collaborative research, support to start-up enterprises, project consortia; alumni centres and job fairs) and relevant not only to all project partners but also for the EU as a whole.

There has been a selection made of the most relevant, most efficient and most attractive modes of cooperation, based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to HE – Companies collaboration
- Topics discussed (focus on RTD policy, HE policy, enterprise)
- The interpreted results of the cooperation

The following modes of cooperation were identified as the most relevant:

- collaborative research, including project consortia (all partners, EU level)
- technology transfer and support to start-ups (all partners, EU level)
- internship programmes, including practical placements in enterprises (skilled workforce, capable of contributing and adjusting to technological change and new patterns of work organisation)
- career centres (university and enterprises), including tracking graduates' career program" (Hungarian good practice).

These modes of cooperation show concrete and often quick results; a fact well accepted by enterprises. Nevertheless, the need for implementation other measures (like curriculum development, entrepreneurial courses, appropriate HE and RTD policy and its' implementation) are "condicio sine qua non".

The partners should focus on measures, aiming at better functioning of labour market (flexicurity policies, tailoring learning to needs of and abilities of individual learners is particularly beneficial for those who require additional support, easing the transition of young people from education and training to the labour market, including tracking the students after graduation), better job quality and working condition (improving quality of workplaces, transition options between various employment relationships; job satisfaction etc.), strong policies to promote job preservation and creation and increase of demand for labour.

The methodology for preparing first project report on economic strategies and sector elaboration mainly included a review and analysis of key European and national strategic plans.

Project partners also prepared a selection of 100 organisations in their region/country of most relevance to higher education graduates. Later in the project those 500 national employers and 100 employers on EU level will be approached through a large-scale survey.

The main outcome of the current project phase will be a qualitative report based on literature review and joint comparative qualitative assessment among employers and professional organisations.

Further actions

The project is currently in the phase of assessment on cooperation among employers and higher education institutions and development of research instrument.

The first step of this phase and work package includes the literature review on the modes of cooperation among employers and professional organisation. Special focus is given to the previous researches which were dealing with this topic.

The main part of this phase is devoted to comparative qualitative assessment on existing modes of cooperation among employers and higher education institutions. The assessment will be done through in-depth interviews conducted by project partners in each participating country. Each project partner will approach approximately 8-10 employers', HE and professional organisations in own country and also representatives from EU level will be approached.

The interview questions follow the questionnaire set up upon the common agreement among project partners and includes also some the following questions:

- Does your institution have a specific policy regarding university – enterprise cooperation?
- Which models of university-enterprise cooperation have developed in the last 10 years in your institution?
- Can you describe cases of University-Business Cooperation that had the strongest impact to your university?
- What is the impact on your HE institution from university-enterprise cooperation?
- Which are the key areas of university – enterprise cooperation your institution should focus on in the next years, and why?
- Which are the key challenges/ impediments for university – enterprise cooperation, and why?
- Which are the key changes universities have to implement in order to enhance the university – enterprise cooperation, and why?
- Which are the key factors/ drivers of fruitful and long-lasting university – enterprise, according to you, and why?

Contact

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