

EURASHE 14th Annual Conference

In Co-operation with Cyprus College

“Networking in the Open European Higher Education Area”

Theme: *“Associations and Partnerships between Institutions of Professional Higher Education and Universities”*

Speaker: - **Mr. Philippe Mouraux**, European Commission, DG-EAC

European universities and institutions of Higher Education will need to go through a series of profound changes in order to address the requirements set out in the Bologna process and subsequently meet the Lisbon agenda of Europe becoming the most competitive and knowledge based economy in the world by 2010.

Still, the European Higher Education System is calling for a far more coherent and consistent European Education landscape which is bound to enhance its attractiveness and competitiveness. Our results in this particular field will largely depend on our ability to generate a better networking between a variety of today’s university branches spread all over Europe.

Universities and Institutions of Professional Higher Education should be entitled to maintain their own identity and profile. However, they should endeavour to pool their resources in attempting to achieve a greater degree of excellence.

The institutions should be challenged to create new opportunities and new programmes for the students. At first, these programmes may just entitle students to take up courses in partner universities though guaranteeing by the same token that results will be taken into account for the final degree. Later on, joint curricula leading to a common degree could be established between universities and institutions of higher education; to start with at a regional, later at a national and/or international level.

Our main objective will be to reflect on the types of projects most likely to ensure successful partnerships or associations between these two Higher Education systems and to analyse how these new study programmes may be fully recognised and implemented in each of the partner institutions involved.

The focus is primarily on examining how students, staff, researchers may benefit from these new challenges, further on analysing whether the contact with and the access to other teaching methods and/or more practical or theoretically orientated courses and various student profiles may generate a positive impact on final skills, competence and achieved qualifications.

Finally, reflection is needed to assess whether adequate bridges have been built between systems allowing our students to go for a genuine choice or a genuine switch suiting his/her capabilities and talents We can reasonably assume that this type of networking may reduce the high rates of students dropout in the European Higher Education.

Moreover, we will have to verify and control whether the elaboration of a more varied framework of qualifications can meet the needs of the labour market and the society in general, reduce the mismatches often existing between the qualifications offered and those requested by the labour market and enhance the lasting employability of those involved in the project.