EU HIGHER EDUCATION MODERNISATION AGENDA – an update

EURASHE Annual Conference, Tallinn, 14-15 October 2010
Simon Roy – Policy Officer, DG EAC (Unit C1)
1. Strategic context: Europe 2020 and ET2020
2. Youth on the Move
3. Higher Education in Youth on the Move
4. Key issues for updated modernisation agenda
Strategic policy context (1)

- **Education & Training 2020** (adopted May 2009) defines priorities for cooperation among EU Member States in education and training, with benchmarks to achieve by 2020.

- **Europe 2020** (adopted June 2010) defines the general political agenda for the EU to achieve “smart, sustainable and inclusive” growth in the next decade, including headline targets.

- **Youth on the Move** (adopted September 2010) - one of 7 Europe 2020 flagship initiatives - focused on education and training and youth employment.
Europe 2020 targets in Education and training

Early School Leaving (Age 18-24 without upper secondary qualification)

- 2009: 14.4%
- 2020: 10% at most

Higher Education Attainment (Age 30-34 with HE qualification)

- 2009: 32.3%
- 2020: 40% at least
Why Youth on the Move?

• An EU “flagship initiative” to help achieve Europe 2020 targets by “responding to the challenges young people face and to help them succeed in the knowledge economy”

• **Youth unemployment** in the EU = over 20%
  
  – Partly *skills-related*: high school drop outs / low higher education attainment etc. affect employability

  – Partly *labour market-related*: need for reform of rules and better support to get started in a job
Youth on the Move actions

• Four lines of action:

1. Lifelong learning (schools, VET, non/informal)

2. Higher education

3. Learning and employment mobility

4. A European youth employment framework

• All to be implemented through Open Method of Coordination, with support from EU funding programmes
Higher education in Youth on the Move

- A new Communication on modernisation of higher education – to be adopted 3rd Quarter 2011
- Updates 2006 Modernisation Communication – highlighting progress and new priority areas
- Supports Bologna process (intergovernmental), but more wide ranging
- Consultation and preparatory work beginning now
- Ongoing work on a global multi-dimensional ranking for higher education institutions
Likely key issues for EU higher education reform agenda

1. Ongoing curriculum, governance and funding reform
2. Employability of graduates
3. Innovation
4. Strengthening mobility
5. Widening access / social dimension
6. Reinforcing the global dimension
7. Tools to improve transparency
1. Ongoing curriculum, governance & funding reform

- Basic Bologna reforms (focusing on curriculum) have been implemented, but progress needed (notably NQFs and Quality Assurance).
- Staff and students need to be involved more in design and implementation of reform.
- Governance and funding reform key part of 2006 modernisation agenda – progress to be made (diversity / autonomy / innovation), taking into account national traditions.
2. Employability

- **Key element** in Youth on the Move (September 2010) / New Skills and Jobs (November 2010)
- Labour markets increasingly rely on higher skill levels and “transversal” competences
- Raising *initial qualification levels* and maintaining and *renewing* a skilled workforce (LLL)
- Encourage *work placements* embedded in study programmes as well as on-the-job learning
- **Balance** between employability and other personal development goals
3. Mobility

- Mobility target: **20 by 2020**. 20% of graduates to have had study or training abroad
- COM asked by Council to propose benchmark by end of 2010, reflecting Bologna objective
- September 2009 – **Council Recommendation on learning mobility** – part of Youth on the Move
- Feasibility study on **EU student lending facility** for mobility (with EIB)
4. R&D and Innovation

- Higher education will make an important contribution to **Europe 2020 targets** on R&D
- "**Innovation Union**" = main flagship initiative in this area
- Modernisation Communication with **DG RTD**
- **DG EAC**: people + institutional perspectives: **higher education-business cooperation** + European Institute of Technology (EIT)
5. Widening access

- Bologna countries have agreed to set **measurable targets for widening participation** in higher education and increasing participation of underrepresented groups by 2020
- Important theme under **Spanish presidency**
- **Principle**: no one should be excluded from higher education for economic reasons
- **Limited progress** to date: much to be done
6. Global dimension

- **International attractiveness** of European higher education is vital for quality and competitiveness
- **EU programmes** (Erasmus Mundus, bilateral agreements etc.) support this
- A new EU **internationalisation strategy** will form part of the modernisation Communication in 2011
7. Transparency

- **Transparency tools** = classifications / rankings = necessary in context of diversity
- Need to go **beyond research focus** of existing rankings to provide **better information** for students and employers
- Enables **institutions** to better benchmark and position themselves
- COM has supported a study on classification of European HEI and a feasibility study for a **multi-dimensional ranking** is ongoing – results expected in Spring 2011
Next steps

• Preparation of Communication now beginning
• Consultation with stakeholders later this year, early next
• Drafting Spring 2011
• Adoption Autumn 2011

• Your input welcome!
Thank you!

Questions?