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News //

p. 2-5

Studies //

p. 6

◇ Harvard Graduate School of Education: **PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY**

◇ World Economic Forum: **THE RUSSIA COMPETITIVENESS REPORT 2011**

◇ CIHE: **POWERING UP BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITIES COLLABORATING FOR MANUFACTURING COMPETITIVENESS**

◇ EUA: **BUILDING BRIDGES MAKING SENSE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Books //

p. 7

◇ David Watson et al.: **THE ENGAGED UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

◇ Bassett / Maldonado-Maldonado (eds.): **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

◇ Eva Hartmann: **THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TOWARDS A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA IN CRITICAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES**

◇ McBurnie / Ziguras: **TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS IN OFFSHORE HIGHER EDUCATION**

p. 2 Short News of The Week

An overview of the breaking news on European Higher Education

INTERNATIONAL: UNETHICAL UNIVERSITY INVESTMENTS IN AFRICA
Harvard and other institutions profit in African land grabs

EU: RESEARCH FUNDING MAFIA
50 million euros theft by criminal transnational network

CROATIA: EDUCATION LAW DRAFT HAS NO ACADEMIC SUPPORT
The academic society goes on strike while Ministry warns of 'deception'

CZECH REPUBLIC: PROTESTS AGAINST HIGHER EDUCATION LAW
Citizens stand up against the commodification of universities

DENMARK: MODERATE STUDENT MOBILITY
Is the LEGO companies critique of low student mobility adequate?

IRELAND: POOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS
Recent surveys show, Irish students don't speak European languages

NETHERLANDS: WE NEED UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Greedy managers of vocational schools get away unpunished

RUSSIA: UNIVERSITY CORRUPTION REACHES RECORD HIGH
Next to healthcare, the higher education sector takes the most bribes

TURKEY: DOUBLE-EDGED LIBERALISATION
YÖK criticizes high fees in private universities

UK: FEAR AND HOPE FOLLOWS UPCOMING WHITE PAPER
British government on the verge of boosting private higher education

Events //

p. 8

Calls For Poposals //

p. 9

ESNA's news section provides an easy-to-use format to learn about the latest developments in European Higher Education. The news are selected by our team from thousands of sources and drafted to provide you with the most comprehensive overview of events.

“Higher Education Policy Matters”

short news of the week

UK: SECRET TALKS WITH BANKS ON FUNDING OF STUDENT LOANS

With more universities than expected charging the maximum of £9,000 a year for tuition, universities minister David Willetts is seeking a way to reduce the liabilities of the government-backed Student Loans Company by turning to the UK's major banks to provide loans at preferable rates.
25-06-2011
- guardian.co.uk/

theguardian

AUSTRIA: LAND OF PART-TIME STUDENTS

About one third (32 %) of students in Austria devotes on average less than 21 hours per week to study, making it the leading land of part-time students in Europe, falling only behind Slovakia (35%) as shown by the latest survey by “Eurostudent”.
27-06-2011
- diepresse.com/

Die Presse

DENMARK: MORE CHEATS IN EXAMS

The amount of cheats in written exams is growing, academics are worried about the development.
20-06-2011 - b.dk/

FRANCE: WILL SMARTPHONES BE BANNED FROM EXAMS?

Valérie Pécresse, Minister of Higher Education, announced that a ban on smartphones in high school examining rooms would be possible, given the increase in fraud cases in recent years. The use of such phones has indeed caused the cancellation of an exam Val-de-Marne.
27-06-2011 - lepost.fr/

Le Post

CZECH REPUBLIC: END OF THE FACULTY OF LAW IN PILSEN?

To the controversial Faculty of Law in Pilsen is ringing the proverbial last bell. The number of lecturers who are intending to leave is growing, 16 has signed a notice, further strengthening the intention of the Accreditation Commission to remove its accreditation for doctoral program.
23-06-2011 - tyden.cz/

INTERNATIONAL: FOREIGN STUDENTS FACE 'INDOCTRINATION CAMP' IN CHINA

The Chinese government is notoriously suspicious towards its students. Systematic surveillance is commonplace and criticism is not tolerated.
26-06-2011
- universityworldnews.com/

University World News

GERMANY: THOUSANDS OF STUDENT SPOTS REMAIN VACANT

Due to a new system of admittance to universities – the central office was abolished, the universities manage on their own – last year up to 20.000 study posts have not been assigned. As the situation remains unresolved, experts fear that this will happen again in autumn this year.
23-06-2011 - tagesspiegel.de/

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

ESTONIA: STATE WON'T FINE UNIVERSITIES OVER LOW GRADUATION NUMBERS

The Ministry of Education said it won't be requiring that universities return any of the millions they received for producing specialists in designated fields - a process that has spectacularly failed to meet targets.
27-06-2011 - news.err.ee/

ERR | News

SERBIA: MINISTER OF EDUCATION BLOCKS RISE OF TUITION FEES

Minister of education Zeljko Obradovic said in a public statement that tuition fees increase is simply not possible: “Essentially, the economic situation is such that this year there is no reason for higher tuition fees”. State colleges that had announced higher tuition fees have begun to return prices to the levels of last year.
23-06-2011
- pressonline.rs/

ESNA's news section provides an easy-to-use format to learn about the latest developments in European Higher Education. The news are selected by our team from thousands of sources and drafted to provide you with the most comprehensive overview of events.



Anuradha Mittal
(Photo: Katie Whitman)

CNN News video WITH Anuradha Mittal, 11-06-2011
edition.cnn.com/video/
"Understanding Land Investment Deals in Africa", Oakland Institute, June 2011
media.oaklandinstitute.org/

INTERNATIONAL: UNETHICAL UNIVERSITY INVESTMENTS IN AFRICA

The American think-tank the Oakland Institute has revealed that hedge funds have been exponentially buying and leasing African land at the cost of local communities. The report called 'Understanding Land investment Deals in Africa' explains how farmers are driven off their land in questionable sales deals to make way for industrial farming projects that mainly serve to make profit and lower food prices for foreign countries. Nearly 60 million hectares of land, 70% or more in Africa, were purchased or leased in 2009 according to the World Bank. Researchers fear this could cause global destabilisation of the food market to the detriment of the world's poorest.

However, the report also highlights the amoral practice of major universities such as Harvard, Vanderbilt and Spelman, who actively invest in these schemes. The promise of high returns has attracted the investment power of these institutions and Harvard University has been singled out as the cornerstone investor for the London-based Emergent Asset Management.

When asked about the alleged exploitation investments, a spokesperson from the university told CNN that he was unable to find documentation for the claims. In the last decade, Harvard has been criticised for its morally questionable investment ventures in South Africa and the Sudan. [1312]

EU: RESEARCH FUNDING MAFIA

Italian authorities along with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) have uncovered a sophisticated network of people who have been conning their way to funding from the European Commission.

The criminal investigation was initiated by the Italian police in 2008 and revealed 22 projects which had received more than 53 million Euros in total. According to the investigation, the network was claiming reimbursements on non-existing expenses. It is believed that they fooled the scheme's control mechanisms by developing a organisational structure spanning over several countries and using methods similar to organised crime schemes.

The investigation was a relief to government bodies who praised the collaboration that led to the arrests. However, legitimate scientists now fear that the case will usher in new, tighter procedures for funding. "I'm worried that some will argue that what has happened proves that we need more rather than less control," says Herbert Reul, chair of the European Parliament's committee on industry, research and energy. [1050]

Press release of OLAF,
04-05-2011
ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/



Radovan Fuchs (Photo: Medora)

CROATIA: EDUCATION LAW DRAFT HAS NO ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Under the name Academic Solidarity, the national union of higher education and science in Croatia as well as several associates have published a statement revealing that no university in Croatia has publicly supported the new legislation proposed by the minister of education, science and sport, Radovan Fuchs.

According to a survey, 97% of faculties who have been outspoken about the law have rejected. This includes over half of universities in Croatia. The statement was meant to give the 'real picture' of the debate to the Croatian public before its conclusion in an organisational academic strike, announced on the same day the disputed law was submitted to the Parliament.

Academic Solidarity has asked the minister to keep in mind that his referral to 'opponents of the law' is to speak of the academic community of which he is legislating for. The minister has warned that the protestors should remember what is 'best for the students' and that they might not realise they are fighting against the right to free studying. [1030]



Protesters with statue of Milan Kindl, Prague 15-06-2011

Press release of ProAlt,
15-06-2011 (in Czech)
proalt.cz/

CZECH REPUBLIC: PROTESTS AGAINST HIGHER EDUCATION LAW

Student protests in Prague have brought back into public mind the forthcoming introduction of tuition fees. Organized by the citizens' initiative ProAlt on Wednesday, 50 students demonstrated outside the Ministry of Education against the reforms proposed by the pending amendment of the Higher Education Act: tuition fees, a shortened duration of study, and the narrowing of academic autonomy through the introduction of corporate governance structures in the universities.

As a symbol of the protest, a statue of Milan Kindl was unveiled at the demonstration. Mr Milan Kindl was the dean of the Law Faculty in Pilsen when the country's largest scandal ever regarding academic fraud and defree trade broke out "Kindl is a symbol of the introduction of market logic into higher education," said Alice Červinková, the organiser of the protest.

The Act is expected to come into force in 2014. Its approval by university leaders is still pending. They demand a functioning student loan system to be in place before the introduction of fees.

DENMARK: MODERATE STUDENT MOBILITY

Figures show that the number of Danish students who go abroad have only increased moderately since 2000. Director of LEGO, Christian Iversen, has used this to highlight to what he sees as a bad trend in study decisions. "The international perspective is not as important as it should be to students in the Danish system," he said. It would be crucial "that young people travel abroad to study and start thinking globally."

The Minister of Education Charlotte Sahl-Madsen was quick to declare her agreement, but Magnus Pedersen, chairman of the student union DSF, is baffled by the critique considering the recent reports that Danish students are among the most mobile in Europe.

The comment section on business.dk features 'Oscar' who went abroad but arrived home to a market that doesn't necessarily recognise his achievement. He also points out that the union for academics (AAK) explicitly states that study abroad often doesn't count in the evaluation of candidates for job positions. [988]

IRELAND: POOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

Irish college students are some of the worst in Europe in knowledge of the foreign languages. In Europe one fifth of third-level students claim to be proficient in at least two foreign languages, while in Ireland it is only 5% according to the new Eurostudent report on the Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe.

Ireland is at the same level of Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia where four in five of students have never lived or studied in a foreign country. However, besides the Netherlands and Switzerland, Eurostudent classifies Ireland as one of socially most inclusive countries in higher education, where a greater mix of students from different social backgrounds can be found in college.

In respond to the report, Gerry O'Sullivan, of the Higher Education Authority emphasized the importance of language skills for Irish graduates: "It makes them more attractive to employers, but also sensitive to cultural issues and different methods of learning."

In a recent GradIreland survey, carried out by the careers services in the higher education colleges of Ireland, one-third of employers expressed concern about a shortage of foreign language skills, up from one in five last year.

NETHERLANDS: WE NEED UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

The scandal of academic mismanagement at national vocational schools has prompted new policies but critics are claiming the government may have overreacted.

eurostudent.eu

Eurostudent IV, Synopsis of indicators, 15-06-2011

[Download](#)

Graduate recruitment trends in Ireland and Northern Ireland, GradIreland, May 2011

[Download](#)

By the end of May, a series of measures were presented to tackle problems in Dutch higher education. Institutions will be fined for abuse of subsidies and some illegitimate diplomas have been withdrawn from graduates while others have the option to validate theirs with free additional courses.

The accreditation organisation NVOA from now on will monitor the internal organisation closely and nation-wide examinations have been suggested to make courses more comparable.

Despite broad agreement on reform, some believe that diversity will suffer. Koen Geven of the Veerman Commission has stated: "Politicians want to show the public that they taken action but in the process representatives of the institutions are becoming mouth-pieces and categorised as 'bad rulers' (...) we need a sincere debate on structural improvement in higher education. Society needs universities of applied sciences, not degraded vocational schools." [1085]

RUSSIA: UNIVERSITY CORRUPTION REACHES RECORD HIGH

A new report reveals that day-to-day bribery in Russia is rampant and according to figures, higher education takes a bulk of the blame for the high level of corruption.

The opinion among respondents to the report indicates that 21% believe corruption has increased while 43% think levels are the same. For higher education, bribes are taken for admission, exams, degrees and so on. It has been shown that at a corruption rate of 55%, professors and administrators in Russian universities are increasingly finding bribes a convenient form of extra revenue. The average bribe amount is set at 1290 rubles (32 Euros) while the annual sum of bribes at universities is estimated at 20,8 billion rubles (500 million Euros).

Overall, the public sector received in 2010 an amount of 164 billion rubles (4 billion Euros) in bribes. According to Transparency International, education ranks nine of the eleven most corrupt sectors worldwide, while in Russia, it is corrupt teachers who pocket the largest bribes. [1001]



Report on Domestic Corruption,
FOM/INDEM,
15-06-2011 (in Russian)
fom.ru/



Yusuf Ziya Özcan
(Photo: GANTEP)

TURKEY: DOUBLE-EDGED LIBERALISATION

A critique of private higher education came from Yusuf Özcan, president of the Turkish Higher Education Council YÖK, who also admitted that that power of the Council over universities could diminish in the future.

"The laws do not permit us to dictate their prices. I hope they cut their tuition fees down", Özcan said in a statement in the paper Radical. And referring to the approval of 62 private universities in recent years he added: "There are a lot of foundation universities today. The competition between them will hopefully drag the fees down."

In view of the new charter of the YÖK, presently under preparation, Özcan said that he shares the opinion with president Abdullah Gül on cutting down the influence of the Council in the future. "YÖK must transform [itself] into a liberal institution which does not get involved in the appointment of the rectors, leaves university administrations be, and solely provides opportunities to boost universities' academic success," he clarified. [995]

UK: FEAR AND HOPE FOLLOWS UPCOMING WHITE PAPER

AC Grayling's New College of the Humanities has received great media attention for marketing the beginning of a new era in Britain: university privatisation. An upcoming white paper on the matter will determine how far the British government is willing to drive market economy into the academic field and voices from both sides of the fence have given their predictions.

From the critics' side, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has warned of a cost-gain scenario that will leave public universities struggling to manage high-cost, but necessary, science and technology subjects while the private sector will choose to provide only cost-effective courses. HEFCE predicts a destabilisation of the existing sector. On the other hand, AC Grayling's new university was motivated by Grayling's own fear that "government cuts to university humanities and arts courses could leave 'the fabric of society poorer as a result,'" according to the Guardian. Meanwhile, the University and College Union has called for demonstrations against further privatisation by the end of the month. [1074]

„Diverse provision in higher
education: options and
challenges“, HEFCE, July 2010
hefce.ac.uk/
Press release and study,
UCU, 16-06-2011
ucu.org.uk/

STUDIES // Each copy of your ESNA bulletin will provide information on studies which have captured our attention as pieces that may contribute to our common understanding of higher education. Our priority is to keep ESNA readers at the forefront of the knowledge pool on higher education and provide an arena for the issues raised in these studies to be heard.

up to date in higher ed research



Harvard
Graduate
School
of Education
English | April
2011

[Download](#)

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF PREPARING YOUNG AMERICANS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The report contends that the national strategy for education and youth development has been too narrowly focused on an academic, classroom-based approach. It is now clear that this strategy has produced only incremental gains in achievement and attainment, even as many other nations are leapfrogging the United States. In response, the report advocates development of a comprehensive pathways network to serve youth in high school and beyond.



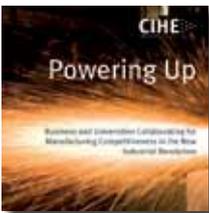
Margareta
D. Hanouz,
Alexey Prazdnichnykh (eds.)
World Economic Forum
English | 2011

[Download](#)

THE RUSSIA COMPETITIVENESS REPORT 2011 LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

The Report analyses the competitiveness performance of the country with a special focus on innovation. Although some initiatives are already under-way, efforts must be accelerated to ensure that Russia can take better advantage of its educated workforce, its abundant natural resources, and its favorable geographical location.

Going forward, the country will have to address among others the improvement of some key challenges to raise productivity, which includes: Improving the quality of education and more intense competition and the fostering of entrepreneurship.



CIHE
March 2011 | Englisch

[Download](#)

POWERING UP BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITIES COLLABORATING FOR MANUFACTURING COMPETITIVENESS IN THE NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

This report urges UK universities to open their knowledge banks and to give more of their ideas away free of charge. It claims that in spite of many successes, universities are spending more than £50m a year patenting ideas, many of which are commercially worthless.

CIHE has launched an Engineering and Manufacturing Task Force bringing together representatives from industry with those from HE institutions. The Task Force is led by co-chairs Nigel Thrift (University of Warwick) and Richard Greenhalgh (CIHE) and driven by a membership made up of leading business and higher education executives.



Andrea Blättler et al. (eds.)
EUA
24 March 2011 | English

[Download](#)

BUILDING BRIDGES MAKING SENSE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EUROPEAN, NATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The publication assembles a selection of keynote presentations discussing how quality assurance tools and processes implemented at institutional and agency level relate to European and national level policy discussions, and interact with and support institutional QA frameworks and the development of a quality culture in European higher education institutions. In addition, this publication marks the 5th anniversary of EQAF by including a short historical account and further reflection on the discussions that have taken place over the years and in particular during the 2010 Forum.

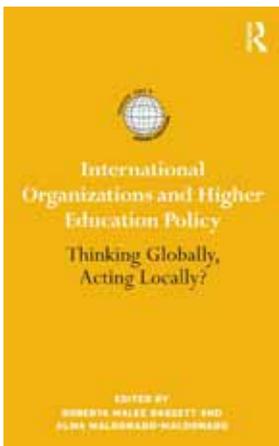
Contributions to this Bulletin N°104 - June 29, 2011 by:

Stefanie Battisti, Tino Brömme (editor-in-chief), Anna Csonka, Lenka Jakoubkova (studies & books), Morgan Rothwell, Fabio Santelli, Claudia Sondergaard (news editor), Tijana Topalovic-Best (events), Frank Vanaerschot

BOOKS // Books, books and more books! In the book review section of your Bulletin, the ESNA newsroom will share with you its reviews and announcements of the latest publications on higher education. Our subscribers are also invited to contribute requests or reviews on our website to build an information pool for the community.

new books

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HE POLICY THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY?



This book expands the analysis to include the global drivers behind higher education policy, including a full array of influential organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, WTO, bilateral aid agencies and major private foundations. This writing critically analyses the impact that these influential organizations have at different levels of policy development and implementation around the world. It examines their role in higher education institutions, examines the strength of these relationships, and exposes both the positive and negative implications.

Roberta Malee Bassett, Alma Maldonado-Maldonado (eds.)
Routledge | Feb 2011
ISBN 978-0-415-89083-0
316 pages £30,99

Order

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TOWARDS A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA IN CRITICAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

The chapters in this volume shed light on the role of higher education and its internationalisation in the context of a current fundamental transformation of the global order, focusing on the different regions of the world. The new role of international organisations like UNESCO is also examined. The empirical findings of these studies are part of a new research agenda in higher education studies, one that goes beyond a 'higher educationism' limiting itself to a simple description of institutional changes in this sphere in the light of internationalisation. The different case studies advance an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on accounts from critical and postcolonial theory, international relations and international political economy.

Eva Hartmann
Routledge | June 2011
ISBN 978-0-415-67227-6
152 pages hardback £80,00

Order

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS IN OFFSHORE HIGHER EDUCATION

While the international mobility of students is a well-established feature of higher education, the international mobility of institutions and courses on a large scale is a more novel phenomenon. Transnational education is at the leading-edge of the most fundamental changes taking place in higher education today. Topics discussed in this new volume range from topics, such as the extent and form of offshore activity to the new opportunities for students and institutions. This book presents a global perspective on the development of international online education, partner-supported transnational programs and international branch campuses. It provides a comprehensive and analytical account of the active role some universities are playing on the international stage and offers valuable guidance on future trends in the sector.

Grant McBurnie, Christopher Ziguas
Routledge | 30 Aug 2011 (Not Yet
Published)
ISBN 978-0-415-60359-1
£24,99

Order

THE ENGAGED UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This book is a comprehensive empirical account of the global civic engagement movement in higher education. In universities around the world, something extraordinary is underway. Mobilizing their human and intellectual resources, institutions of higher education are directly tackling community problems – combating poverty, improving public health, and restoring environmental quality. This book documents and analyzes this exciting trend through studies of civic engagement and social responsibility at twenty institutions worldwide.



David Watson et al.
Routledge | April 2011
ISBN 978-0-415-87465-6
282 pages hardback / eBook available £100,00

Order

EVENTS // Want to get involved? ESNA presents a selection of events in higher education that form the active core of the higher education community. Subscribers can consult our complete list of events as well as submit their own on the ESNA website.

All European Higher Ed Conferences

Highlights November 2011



Shanghai, China,
30 October-2 November 2011

4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITIES (WCU-4)

The term "world-class university" has become a catchphrase. It represents excellence in teaching and research, but more importantly it also signifies university's capacity to compete in the age of global higher education marketplace.

The theme of WCU-4 is "Different Approaches to a Shared Goal". The conference sessions will address the issues concerning World-Class Universities from national perspective, institutional perspective and ranking perspective.



Valencia,
14-18 November 2011

EAIE ACADEMY A WEEK LONG TRAINING EVENT FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

The Academy programme comprises over 10 training courses in the fields of credential evaluation, marketing and recruitment, intercultural communication, student support, management, and internationalisation strategies. Next to the course programme, additional sessions and social events are offered as well, for more opportunities for professional development as well as networking.



Izhevsk, Russia,
17-19 November 2011

"INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: INTEGRATION OF EDUCATIONAL AREAS"

The conference aims to increase effectiveness of international cooperation in the sciences and education, and to summarize the experiences of teachers and students in institutions of higher education within academic mobility programs during the transition to a multi-tier education system.

It should be of interest to institutional leaders, university researchers, professors, student unions and representatives of other bodies involved in educational policy.



Antwerp,
17-19 November 2011

6TH EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FORUM (EQAF)

The annual forum co-organised by EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and ESU brings together all of the key stakeholders in the field – HE institutions, quality assurance agencies and students. Its main purpose is to foster a dialogue on quality assurance that bridges national boundaries and leads to a truly European discussion on QA in HE.

This sixth Forum will also be the occasion for the organisers to renew the format of the event and increase networking opportunities, exchange of practices among colleagues, and possibilities of getting updated on new QA developments.

EMPOWER EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES SYMPOSIUM 2011

Empower European Universities (EEU), an NGO, wants to contribute to a better Europe by promoting the full empowerment of the European Universities. EEU's approach is to "grade" annually or bi-annually the universities policies in the EU and to "test" the vigour of the universities in each country, amongst others in terms of their attractiveness to foreign students, foreign researchers and for international research financing. Special attention is paid to the cross-border collaboration.

The framework is developed in strong interaction with the 27 members of the contact group. The framework will be finalized at a symposium in Maastricht on November 23, 2011 after which the implementation follows with a first report on the State of European Empowerment of Universities in April 2012.



Maastricht,
22-23 November, 2011

calls for proposals

Deadlines:

Links:



JEAN MONNET PROGRAMME, INFORMATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES FOR 'LEARNING EU AT SCHOOL'

This initiative is the EC specific response to a request by the European Parliament, which stipulates that the LLP "should include measures to promote civic education on European Democratic Citizenship including studies of Europe and the EU in the European Member States' secondary schools." Its general objective is to bring European Union facts and knowledge on its Institutions and its way of functioning to pupils and students.

Eligible applicants are higher education institutions, institutions and/or associations of professors and researchers specialising in European integration studies, of teachers and pedagogues.

15 Sept. 2011

EACEA/18/2011

EUROPEAN POLICY NETWORK ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY COMPETENCES IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The overall aim of this call is to establish a Europe-wide network of relevant organisations in countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The network is to develop policy advice for and stimulate high-level cooperation between Member States' policymakers and should bring together those organisations, researchers and stakeholder groups whose area of interest and expertise is on school curriculum development, teacher education, assessment and evaluation and learning support.

Eligible applicants are ministries of education and other public bodies, research centres and universities, foundations and associations. The framework agreement will last from 2012 until 2014. The total budget is €500,000 for 2012.

30 Sept. 2011

EAC/13/11

'YOUTH IN ACTION' PROGRAMME: YOUTH SUPPORT SYSTEMS - SUB-ACTION 4.3: ENHANCING YOUTH WORKERS' LEARNING MOBILITY AND YOUTH WORK SUPPORT TO UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE

The purpose of this call is to support youth workers' mobility and exchanges with a view to promoting the acquisition of new skills and competences in order to enrich their profile as professionals in the youth field.

Proposals must be submitted by non-profit organisations in one of the LLP countries. Projects must start between 1 January and 1 June 2012. The maximum grant will be €25,000. Deadline: 1 September 2011.

1 Sept. 2011

EACEA/17/11