

Eurasian Inter-University Dialogues on Cooperation for Higher Education Development

Concept Note and Call for papers

The UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) and The Department UNESCO Chair on Inter-cultural and Inter-religious exchanges at the University of Bucharest have initiated a project to enhance cooperation and dialogue between Europe and Central Asia Higher Education Institutions. The project is organized in cooperation with the UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative-Romania, the School of Business Administration (HED-HSW Fribourg), and the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Contextual Background

Increasingly the borders between countries and regions of the world are becoming blurred and even meaningless as previous barriers to mobility, trade, communications and knowledge evaporate. Such a freedom generated by a mixture of political will, economic realities and, of course, modern technology has perhaps more than any time in history allowed more people of different cultures to learn from each other's individual cultural characteristics as well as previously unknown commonalities.

The growth in cross-border trade, the easing of travel for pleasure restrictions and the inter-university exchange and mobility of students, not to mention the free-market of knowledge the world wide web has facilitated, have all undoubtedly helped forge a more tolerant and peaceful coexistence between peoples in many parts of the world.

In the Europe region, the expansion, not least of the European Union both eastward and south-eastward, have also clearly helped mitigate many debilitating stereotypes and misperceptions leading to greater economic development and cultural understanding across the continent. Similarly, the opening up at the Central Asian Republics since the early 1990s and the boarder

states to the Black sea have revealed more commodities and shared challenges than might have been anticipated.

For its part, UNESCO, which has traditionally (for administrative purposes) divided its operations into five regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean) is now focused as much on generating inter-religious dialogue, as it is internal inter-sectoral ones – Education, Culture and Science.

UNESCO-CEPES, with its focus on higher education developments in the sub-region of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe also acknowledges the importance of sharing with and learning from the experiences of countries in the Central-Asian sub-region which are not only its neighbours in geographical terms, but also in their respective reform agendas – economically, socially, culturally, and especially in higher education. South East Europe, the Balkan countries, the Black Sea states and the Central Asian republics are inextricably linked at the crossroads of the oriental and occidental traditions and have therefore a commonality in today's new open globalization order.

Call for Papers

By way of celebrating and promoting this emerging or re-discovered inter-regional commonality and tolerance, UNESCO-CEPES, together with the Department UNESCO Chair on Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Exchanges at the University of Bucharest, Romania, has launched an initiative entitled Eurasian Inter-University Dialogues on Cooperation for Higher Education development (2010-2011) with the express aim of bringing together voices and promoters of a new era of co-operation between South-East Europe and Central Asia, via inter-sectoral dialogues on the social sciences, cultural rapprochement and the role that higher education institutions in both regions must play in sustaining and promoting such a critical employ for tolerance in the second decade of the 21st century.

Covering the three main themes of intercultural understanding for peace building, cultural influences on political evolution and economics in the cultural framework under the overall umbrella of the role of HEIs in addressing these issues, the organizers invite paper submissions (via the Call for papers detailed below) to elicit perceptions and realities from a diverse geographical and disciplinary scope. The papers will be discussed at an international conference in

Bucharest by the end of May 2011, at which a set of Recommendations under each theme will be elaborated for trans-regional dissemination and which it is hoped will serve as a model for other such sub-regional commitments. The Recommendations and the papers will be published in the UNESCO-CEPES series “Higher Education for a Knowledge Society”, distributed to universities across the two sub-regions. Further details can be found at www.cepes.ro and <http://inter-cultural.org/chairs/bucharest.htm> or from c.preda@cepes.ro or l.clachir@interculturel.org.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Taking as reference the above Concept Note, the authors are expected to observe the following general requirements:

Each paper should:

- Tackle one or more of the themes listed below;
- Express the author’s views on the subject;
- Express the author’s views on how the respective issues should be approached by/in the context of higher education;
- Identify good practice examples and/or suggest solutions and make recommendations;

Theme I – The importance of Improved Intercultural Understanding

Both Europe and Central Asia are characterized by diversity and plurality of cultures which, over time, either led to understanding and sound cooperation or generated violent lasting conflicts within their borders and beyond.

- What are the roots and reasons for conflict?
- How can better intercultural understanding lead to beneficial cooperation? (Difficulties and constraints should also be briefly mentioned).
- How should HEIs address these issues?

Theme II – The Influence and Impact of Culture(s) on Politics

Political evolutions and decisions are definitely influenced by cultural and intercultural situations. This is the case in both Europe and in Central Asia, the effects being also sensed/experienced in Higher Education.

- What have been the connections between culture(s) and politics throughout history?
- When/where did connections between culture/s and politics lead to beneficial cooperation? (Difficulties and constraints should also be briefly mentioned).
- What are the means for achieving positive mutual influences between culture and politics and how can the benefits at all levels be best employed between the two regions?

(Difficulties and constraints should also be briefly mentioned).

- How should HEIs address these issues?

Theme III – The influence and Impact of Culture(s) on Economies and Economic Relationships

In the era of globalization and free markets, when the world has become much more interconnected and interdependent, borderlines are more and more fading. However, cultural borders may continue to play a major role in economic relationships. How should economic policies deal with these cultural borders in a given or projected economic development?

- What were the connections between culture(s) and economic developments throughout history?
- When/Where did connections between culture(s) and economic policies led to beneficial co-operation?
- What are the means for achieving positive mutual influences between culture and economic development and employ their benefits at all levels of relationships between the two regions?

(Difficulties and constraints should also be briefly mentioned).

- How should HEIs address these issues?

All papers should be submitted in English.

The overall length of a paper should not exceed 20 A4 pages (charts, notes, bibliography included). The paper should be accompanied by an English abstract (maximum 300 words) and a short presentation of the author(s) (150 words). (see submission form).

Only original, unpublished papers are accepted for publication.

Studies/papers already published may be accepted for the Poster Session of the May 2011 Conference.

TIMELINES:

- 30 November 2010:
Submission of abstracts and author(s) presentations (see form);
- 20 December 2010:
Notification of authors on papers' acceptance; provision of technical details;
- 15 April 2011:
Submission of final draft papers
- 30 April 2011:
Submission of conference presentations (based on accepted papers);
- 30 June 2011:
Submission of final revised versions of papers for publication.

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

All papers should be submitted in English. The overall length of a paper should not exceed 20 A4 pages (charts, notes, bibliography included).

The paper should be accompanied by an English abstract (maximum ½ A4 page) and a short (200 words) presentation of the author(s).

The manuscripts should be submitted as Word (.doc) files, edited without styles (simple text), with graphics, illustrations, etc. sent separately as .jpeg or .png files, with an indication as to where they should appear in the text. Sub-quality images will not be included.

- Font: Ariel, size 12; Line spacing: 1,5
- Tables should be numbered and labeled, including a brief description: Table 1, Table 2....
- Charts, maps and other illustrations should be numbered and labeled, including a brief description: Figure 1...., Figure 2....
- References should be cited in the text according to the Harvard style. Please follow the referencing details included in the Citing & Referencing Guide of the Imperial College, London.

Only original, unpublished papers are accepted for publication.

Studies/papers already published may be accepted for the Poster Session of the June 2011 Conference.

Final requirements

In order to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of higher education in successfully crossing cultural borders, participants are kindly asked to identify institutions and persons/experts in their respective countries able to take further the message of the projects and willing to associate in building up an inter-university network meant to create, at the level of Higher education, real intercultural bridges between Europe and Central Asia.