

Recommendations Amsterdam EURASHE seminar on HESC

On the 24th of January EURASHE organised a seminar on the inclusion of HESC in the first cycle degree, in cooperation with DASHE (the Dutch Association of Shorter Higher Education). The purpose of the seminar was to make a state of the art of the progress made in the recognition of HESC in the Bologna-countries. This one-day seminar was held at the Amsterdam School of Business (HES), in Amsterdam (NL).

The seminar was part of a series of initiatives undertaken by EURASHE to secure a position for Higher Education Short Cycle in the EHEA, after the Ministers mandate to the BFUG, to explore “whether and how short higher Education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications network for the European higher Education Area”.

The seminar started with a plenary session during which a number of presentations were held on the concept of HESC in Europe and the integration of HESC in a European Qualifications framework.

The afternoon session was dedicated to a number of Work-Shops. Central themes were on the one hand the (trans)national cooperation with universities & the situation of HESC in the Bologna Member countries, and on the other hand the Qualifications Framework & Quality assurance.

11 nationalities were represented and this contributed to dynamic and intercultural working sessions. Examples of good practice, among others from France, Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK, Ireland, and Romania were introduced and discussed

Conclusions:

- The influx of students from Short Cycle Education is necessary to keep the student number in the 2 Cycles of HE on the same level.
- Every Bologna Country has its specific educational structure which brings about peculiar problems when it comes to integrating Short Cycle Education in the HE system. Although there is a National Qualifications Framework in place in some countries (Denmark), it does not necessarily mean that there is a seamless transition from Short Cycle Education to the Bachelor level. Whereas in other countries where there is no official legislation available yet, agreements exist between HEI’s organising Short Cycle Education and Universities (France). Finally, in still other countries where post-secondary education does exist (Romania), it is still not officially recognised as Higher Education.

Recommendations to the BFUG:

- Ensure the HE quality of all post-secondary and Short Cycle programmes.
- Urge governments to fully include HESC in the Bologna 3-Cycle structure.
- Remove all legislative obstacles to the unabated access for the HESC candidates to continue their studies to the highest obtainable level.
- Remove all financial barriers for underprivileged students.
- Provide means for counselling and information campaigns to reach the above target group.

- Encourage the creation of further HESC programmes in order to meet the rapidly changing demands of the labour market.
- Recognise the important role of HESC in the social and cultural integration process in Europe.
- Secure the actual implementation of the National Qualifications Framework legislation which has already been introduced in some countries.
- Create also extra opportunities for the mature student by accepting prior work experience as well as informal and non-formal abilities.
- Short Cycle Education in Europe should be seen as an opportunity to attract new groups of learners.