

NEWSLETTER February 2011

ASEM CONFERENCES

SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING (SOM) IN PREPARATION OF ASEMME3

Denmark, Copenhagen, 24 – 25 January 2011

In late January, the Senior Officials of the 48 ASEM members met in Copenhagen in order to agree on the topics for the 3rd Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME3). During the meeting the following four topics have been identified for the Ministers' agenda in Copenhagen on 9-10 May 2011:

- Balanced mobility
- Quality Assurance and Recognition
- Lifelong Learning and
- Involvement of Business and Industry in Education

For the discussion in the SOM the ASEM Education Secretariat had drafted a progress report on the development of the ASEM Education Process since the 1st ASEM Education Ministers Meeting in Berlin 2008. This report had been sent to all ASEM members together with a questionnaire. During the meeting in Copenhagen, Siegbert Wuttig, Director of the ASEM Education Secretariat presented an analysis of the responses received



Source: Danish Ministry of Education and Culture

The Senior Officials agreed on the four proposed topics. However, they pointed out that in order to expedite the ASEM Education Process, specific initiatives of the members are required. Since 2009 –

in the realm of ASEMME2 in Hanoi, a number of ASEM members (among others China, Cyprus, Germany, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam) had already volunteered to offer expert seminars on topics such as quality assurance, lifelong learning, vocational education, credits and learning outcomes and university-business cooperation. According to the Danish host, similar initiatives should be proposed by the ASEM members during ASEMME3 in order to keep the momentum of the ASEM Education Process. The Danish host will soon send out a second draft of possible recommendations to the ASEMME3 to the ASEM members in order to ask for further comments and additions. The process of feedback will last until mid-April. Furthermore, the ASEM Education Secretariat has sent out a first update of the draft progress report to the ASEM members who are invited to return their comments until 1st March 2011 latest. By April a second update will be available.

TECHNICAL and VOCATIONAL EDUCATION and TRAINING SYMPOSIUM

Qingdao, China, 11 – 12 January 2011

As already announced in our latest newsletter edition, the final version of the Qingdao Declaration is now available. You can download it under:

<http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/en/14600/index.html>

MULTI- AND UNI-LATERAL ACTIVITIES

ERASMUS Mundus

ASEM EDUCATION SECRETARIAT AND MENON NETWORK LAUNCH ERASMUS MUNDUS CLUSTER PROJECT

On 1 February 2011, the ASEM Education Secretariat and the MENON Network* have launched their EU-funded project "Clustering Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses and Attractiveness Projects (Lot 4, Regional Cluster/Asia)", as announced in the May 2010 edition of this newsletter.

The overall aim of this one-year project is to valorise and exploit the results

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of the Erasmus Mundus (EM) programme. It is intended to specifically "cluster" Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses (EMMC) as well as Attractiveness Projects (AP) with an Asian focus and produce an inventory of their activities. For this purpose, a survey is now being drafted to assess these EM activities and will be launched in April 2011. It will target the following groups:

- EMMC and EM doctoral programmes with Asian partners;
- All EMMC and doctoral programmes without Asian partners, but with high numbers of Asian students;
- Partnerships with Asian partners;
- AP (Action 3; previous Action 4) targeting Asia.

The target countries will be Asian countries involved in EM activities, amongst them all 16 Asian ASEM members.

In late September or early October, a workshop will be organised where representatives of the projects in question will present examples of good practice. Furthermore, a set of practical guidelines for EMMC and APs will be developed, as well as a dedicated thematic section on "Regional Clusters" on the "Erasmus Mundus Excellence" website.

As of now, the ASEM Education Secretariat will present a short status report of the Cluster Project in every second edition of this newsletter.

*MENON is a European innovation and research network, which has been working in the last 10 years to provide information, evaluation, consultancy and development support to policy makers, industry and society.

Vocational Education

ECVET

ECVET is the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. Similar to the European Credits Transfer System (ECTS) in higher education, this European instrument promotes mobility by enhancing comparability, transferability and recognition of competence and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels in vocational education. It improves transparency and strengthens the link between education and training and the labour market. By 2012, ECVET should create a technical framework to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes, and it includes assessment, transfer, accumulation and recognition

procedures. Currently ten EU funded projects are testing the implementation of the ECVET process.

More: <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/default.aspx>

Incentives

GERMANY

From summer semester 2011 onwards, German state universities will offer the so-called Deutschlandstipendium. The scholarship amounts to € 300 and is partly covered by the German government and partly by industry and private donors. In the first year it is expected that up to 10.000 students will benefit from this scholarship – the number of recipients is expected to increase continuously. Good grades and academic achievements are just as important as social responsibility to receive it. Selection of students is in the responsibility of the higher education institutions. According to an OECD study, in Germany about 14% of the higher education sector was financed by the private sector in 2007 – compared to 27,4% in USA, Japan or South Korea. The Deutschlandstipendium will contribute to closer link industry and education in Germany.

More (only available in German):

<http://www.deutschland-stipendium.de/de/1748.php>

Quality Assurance

INDIA

The Indian National Board of Accreditation (NBA) intends to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Washington Accord. As a result, programmes offered by accredited Indian institutes will be recognised by the members of the Accord. The Washington Accord, signed in 1989, is an international agreement among bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programs. Signatory ASEM countries are Australia, Hong Kong China, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom. If India becomes a member, mobility of Indian students will improve.

UPCOMING EVENTS

22-23 March 2011

EU UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS FORUM, Brussels, Belgium

PRESS REVIEW

Australia

The Australian, January 19, 2011

Transparency benefits international education

The strength of Australia's quality assurance regime and government transparency have seen it place second in a new index.

The index rates countries on their policies regarding the engagement and promotion of internationalisation in higher education. Germany heads the list of 11 nations. Australia scored the highest in quality assurance and recognition, second on openness, and third on access and equity in the index which was developed by the British Council. "It captures and measures the national system in how prepared it is to engage internationally," said Janet Ilieva, head of higher education intelligence and research for the British Council.

"It looks at various aspects of policy; how open it is, how it promotes its higher education system abroad, what are the policies in terms of mobility of teaching faculty, researchers and students. It looks at whether there are barriers to the movement of students and academics to and from other countries and the levels of support they are given. It looks at both inflows and outflows."

Online: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/transparency-benefits-international-education/story-e6frgcjx-1225990565221>

China

The New York Times, January 31, 2011

Hong Kong's universities decide bigger is better

Universities in Hong Kong are counting down toward one of the most significant transformations ever attempted in the territory's higher education sector, and the logistics are daunting: thousands of extra students, hundreds of new lecturers, realms of new curricula to write and hours of additional courses to fill. The universities must find space, in what is already one of the world's most densely populated cities, to accommodate all of the new classrooms,

laboratories, staff offices and dormitories that will be required. At a time when universities in many Western countries are pinching budgets, Hong Kong's are gearing up for a massive expansion of the undergraduate population: Starting in the 2012 academic year, all Hong Kong undergraduate degrees will be extended from three years to four.

Online:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/31/world/asia/31iht-eduLede31.html?_r=1

Denmark

University World News, February 6, 2011

Business demands drive degrees shake-up

Danish higher education minister Charlotte Sahl-Madsen is trying to make universities more responsive to the demands of business. She is also tackling the 'thesis swamp' that traps many Danish graduates so that they fail to complete their masters on time. Sahl-Madsen plans to encourage students to choose courses better suited to a job in the private sector and to limit the numbers taking degrees that are less in demand by employers. In Denmark, the majority of first degree candidates complete their studies in time, but the proportion falls below 50% at masters level.

Online:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20110204222502376>

India

University World News, January 30, 2011

Expanding private and vocational education

With a slew of parliamentary bills in the pipeline aimed at revolutionising the higher education sector, and increasing participation from international education providers, 2011 may well turn out to be a watershed year for higher education in India - in particular making the playing field clearer for private players and increasing vocational provision. Several bills pending in parliament are expected to be approved during the year,

including a bill on accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes to ensure quality education in both government-funded and private institutions. The bill would make it mandatory for institutions to go through a regular accreditation programme that would evaluate curriculum, faculty, infrastructure and student satisfaction.

Online:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20110128224241383>

The Hindustan Times, January 25, 2011

Sibal pitches for doubling higher education budget to start new institutes, meet old promises

The human resource development ministry is pitching for a near 100 per cent hike in higher education funding under the 2011-12 union budget to meet a slew of promises it is running out of time to implement. HRD minister Kapil Sibal has asked finance minister Pranab Mukherjee to increase budgetary

allocation for the higher education department from Rs. 16,690 crore in 2010-11 to over Rs. 30,000 crore in 2011-12, top government sources have told HT. If accepted, the hike would be the largest ever for higher education. Sibal has already raised the demands of the ministry – which heads India’s education policy and implementation – with Mukherjee in two pre-Budget meetings, the sources said. The Budget session of Parliament starts next month. The higher education hike is critical for the government to meet a number of commitments made by the government under the XIth Five Year Plan that remain on paper. The 2011-12 financial year will be the last under the XIth Plan, which ends in 2012.

Online:

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Sibal-pitches-for-doubling-higher-education-budget-to-start-new-institutes-meet-old-promises/Article1-654693.aspx>

Indonesia

The Jakarta Post, January 22, 2011

Resisting the Indonesian brain drain

Realizing that knowledge is important for economic

development, many countries in Asia are now implementing the idea of “educational protectionism”. China, South Korea and Saudi Arabia are now trying to improve their local universities to become world-class higher education institutions. Many doctoral degree graduates of top American and Europe universities work at those institutions to allow for a transfer of knowledge. On another level, one prestigious institute of technology in India has banned its undergraduates from receiving academic grants and business internships from overseas. These are examples of how some Asian countries do not want to be left behind in the brain race: they resist the “brain drain”.

In Indonesia, the situation is not similar. We lack bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree holders. Therefore we need to send our people to developed countries to gain knowledge. Many scholarships are offered to bright Indonesian students, both from foreign governments and industries. From a pragmatic viewpoint, this situation seems conducive: we need knowledge and they offer it.

Online:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/01/22/resisting-indonesian-brain-drain.html>

Italy

University World news, January 30, 2011

Drive to stamp out nepotism in universities

The Italian cabinet has ordered the roll-out of a national accreditation scheme for academics to stamp out nepotism. Under the new scheme, commissions of five senior academics appointed in each university will accredit applicants for associate or full professorships on the basis of the quality and quantity of their academic output. Commissions will be chosen by universities from shortlists of suitably qualified senior academics, which may include non-Italian staff. With the cabinet decree kick-starting the establishment of the system, the aim is to have it up and running by the end of this year. The criteria for certification will be determined by the country's new university quality agency, the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research (ANVUR), and the government's

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national university council (Consiglio Universitario Nazionale - CUN), for each discipline. The accreditation process will open every October for a period of five months and resulting certifications will be valid for no more than four years.

Online:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20110128224908463>

Japan

Times Higher Education, January 27, 2011

'Galapagos syndrome': Japan's gaze turns inward

The yen has never been mightier and their country never more tied to the global economy, but Japanese students increasingly are turning their backs on studying abroad.

Figures for the UK show that the number of Japanese students has fallen by more than a third in five years, from 6,800 in 2003-04 to 4,505 in 2008-09, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

In a country with a shrinking population - the number of children under 15 has declined for 28 consecutive years - some of the fall can be attributed to demographics, but analysts in Japan see the trend as part of what has been termed "Galapagos syndrome".

Originally said of the country's highly advanced mobile phones that failed to find buyers outside the domestic market, the term is now also applied to a country said to be isolating itself from the rest of the world.

Online:

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=414933&c=1>

The Chronicle, January 25, 2011

Japan's top industrial and academic leaders join in effort to stop global slide

Japan's top university and business leaders have announced they will come together for the first time to reverse a steady slide in the country's global standing.

The government-sponsored plan will focus on what corporate executives warn is a growing mismatch

between the needs of industry and academe, which is damaging Japan's ability to compete abroad.

Executives from Toyota, Itochu, and 14 other leading companies will meet with the presidents of Japan's 13 best research universities, including Tokyo, Waseda, and Keio, to kick-start the as-yet-unnamed project at a conference next month.

Sponsored by the ministries of education and industry, the project will draw on a government budget of 11.2-billion yen (about \$135-million) set aside this year to "globalize" the nation's universities.

Online: <http://chronicle.com/article/Japans-Top-Industrial-and/126053>

Korea

The Korea Herald, January 19, 2011

Korea to offer online lectures in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asian universities will introduce online real-time lectures on Korea's popular culture, automobile industry and other hallyu content, addressing the lack of professors despite growing global interest, according to the Korea Foundation on Wednesday. In celebration of its 20th year anniversary, the foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Indonesia, University of Malaya and six other universities from Thailand, Laos, Australia, Philippines and Cambodia to offer a Global e-School program. Top professors from seven distinguished Korean universities, including Seoul National University and Ehwa Womans University, are contributing to the lectures, which focus on Korean politics, economics, enterprises and hallyu, or the Korean Wave, rather than the Korean language. All lectures will be in real-time to an audience of students from both Korea and Southeast Asia. Each Southeast Asian university will offer two to four courses, primarily taught in English, although upper division courses may be offered in Korean. Courses such as "Hallyu and Asian pop culture" and "Globalization and Korean wealth," may start as early as this March.

Online: <http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20110119000744>

Malaysia

The Sun, January 25, 2011

The changing face of higher education

Our standards, brand reputation, and international linkages have to be enhanced to fend off competition from emerging global players

Like the rest of the world, in Malaysia, higher education has been redefined in light of globalisation and technology. The focus has long shifted from textbook-driven, classroom-centred curriculum to programmes that are designed to produce knowledge workers.

To remain competitive in the global higher education market that is expected to grow to 150 million students from the present 120-odd million in the next 10 years, players are developing their programmes in collaboration with industry to make the learning experience more relevant—whether it's at diploma, degree or postgraduate level. Flexibility is the order of the day as some institutions now allow students to design their own study programmes.

Dual degrees have also become a trend but the bottom line is clear whatever the case: the 21st century graduate is one who is able to constantly evolve to meet the needs of industry. And that means graduates who are global in outlook, and who can create and innovate.

Online.

<http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=56757>

The Star, January 23, 2011

Ministry's new resolve

IF THE new academic calendar indicated that 2011 would be full of surprises, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin's New Year's address did little to change the notion.

Instead, affirmation was the order of the day, and the minister's call for universities to establish students' parliaments highlighted the ministry's commitment to come good on last year's amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act.

It was quite remarkable.

Student activism is sometimes viewed negatively by the authorities, especially when things get out of

hand. However, instead of keeping "dissent" in check, the ministry is now legitimising an avenue for students to make themselves heard.

Online:

<http://thestar.com.my/education/story.asp?file=/2011/1/23/education/7836628&sec=education>

Netherlands

DutchNews.nl, January 22, 2011

Government firm on higher fees, university spending cuts

Prime minister Mark Rutte has no plan to amend the government's plans to cut spending on higher education, he said after the weekly cabinet meeting.

'I am not going to give the impression that the plans will change dramatically,' he is quoted as saying in the Telegraaf after a massive demonstration by students in The Hague.

The cabinet has decided to get the government finances in order and improve the quality of higher education. This makes the savings necessary, the prime minister said.

According to police estimates, 15,000 students gathered in the centre of The Hague in protest at the plans to make slow students pay higher fees and to stop giving grants for masters studies.

Online:

http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2011/01/government_firm_on_higher_fees.php

New Zealand

The Economic Times, January 31, 2011

Most international students in New Zealand are from India: Report

India has reportedly become the largest source of new international students in New Zealand. Nearly 9000 student permits have reportedly been issued to Indian students. First-time students accounted for more than half of all international students in New Zealand, the Department of Labour's migration trends and outlook 2009-10 report said. "India has

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become the largest source country of new international students to New Zealand, but China remains the single largest source country of international students," it added. An Indian student named Sandeep Singh studying at the National Technology Institute in Auckland said New Zealand was becoming a popular choice for Indian students because it was vied as a "peaceful" and "an ideal destination to study".

Online: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/services/travel/visa-power/most-international-students-in-new-zealand-are-from-india-report/articleshow/7396379.cms>

Sweden

The Local, January 18, 2011

Foreign applications to Swedish unis collapse

Applications from foreign students to Swedish universities have plummeted following the introduction of tuition fees, according to application statistics for the autumn term released on Tuesday. Monday marked the last day that foreign students could apply to study at Swedish higher education institutions for the autumn 2011 term, the first for which non-EEA and non-Swiss students will be required to pay tuition fees. According to the Swedish Agency for Higher Education Services (Verket för högskoleservice, VHS), which coordinates the admissions process for colleges and universities, the number of applicants for master's programmes fell sharply by 73 percent compared with 2010. Separately, the number of people who applied for international courses dropped by 86 percent compared with last year. "It is more or less what we had expected. We had expected a large drop because of the tuition fees in the autumn," Tuula Kuosmanen, VHS' director for admissions operation, told The Local on Tuesday.

Online: <http://www.thelocal.se/31504/20110118/>

Thailand

Bangkok Post, January 23, 2011

Call to merge universities

Mergers in the university and tertiary research sectors may be the key to increased efficiency in education, a seminar has been told. The proposal was introduced during a recent seminar organised by the Knowledge Network Institute of Thailand (Knit), a think-tank under the Office of the Higher Education Commission, to help spur the second decade of education reforms. Delegates heard about the experience of education reform in Denmark, where universities were merged and tertiary research institutes bundled together for increased efficiency. Pernille Meyn Milthers, special adviser to the Danish University and Property Agency, said Denmark started reforming its university system in 2003. Under the reforms, state-owned universities were turned into independent and self-governing entities. Some universities were amalgamated, and research and development institutions merged with them to improve efficiency and quality.

Online:

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/217659/c-all-to-merge-universities>

UK

eGov monitor, February 1, 2011

Thousands of students would miss out on university places as applications soar over 583,000

University applications soared to a record 583,501 for a place to start this autumn, UCAS has revealed yesterday. Most likely, tens of thousands of students would be left disappointed.

Despite the record surge the figures in January reveal a 5% increase or additional 28,000 applications from last year. The growth in applications is the lowest in recent years.

Interestingly for the government and its critics, the number of applications fell by 2% in December 2010 soon after the bill to increase tuition fees up to £9,000 was passed by the Parliament.

There would be intense competition for places this year as many students wanted to get in to University before the new fee structure comes into place. However, there has been varied levels of growth across the UK.

Online: <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/40539>

Times Higher Education, February 1, 2011

Visa plans could spell disaster for UK, MPs hear

The UK government risks causing a collapse in international demand for study in the country similar to that experienced in Australia if it mishandles its policy on visas, a cross-party group of MPs has been warned.

Members of the Home Affairs select committee heard that the Australian government recently had to backtrack on changes that made it more difficult for overseas students to enter the country after universities experienced a massive fall in applications.

Simeon Underwood, academic registrar at the London School of Economics, told the committee that Australia's Monash University had been forced to cut jobs because of the fall in international enrolments.

"In Australia, the government introduced a number of restrictions in 2009-10 that were designed to eliminate abuse and then as a result they affected the sector as a whole.

Online:

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.aspx?sectioncode=26&storycode=415050&c=1>

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