



EADTU-EU Summit 2016

**“Enhancing European HE;
Opportunities and impact of new
modes of teaching”**

15 April 2016

SUMMIT Conclusions

EADTU, representatives of the EU and members states and other stakeholders have discussed current issues in higher education policy at the yearly EADTU-EU Summit. This has led to following observations and conclusions:

The Changing Pedagogical Landscape

In European universities, three complementary educational areas supported by digital technology are emerging: (1) blended teaching and learning in mainstream degree education; (2) blended and online continuous education and continuous professional development through short learning programs and non-degree education for off campus students, enhancing new competences and skills; and (3) online open education through OERs and MOOCs. The three areas are led by different, but complimentary business models.

All this will change the face of universities in the future.

However, in view of the needs in society and developments in some other parts of the world, this process should be accelerated as pointed out in the Modernisation Agenda of the European Commission, the report of the High level Group for the Modernisation of Higher Education and [the study on the Changing Pedagogical Landscape](#).

Each university has to develop a vision and strategy to position itself with regard to the delivery of education in these three areas. Governments should develop policies and strategies to implement all three areas.

Governments have to support institutional leadership in these three areas, guarantee the professional development of teaching staff especially with regard to new pedagogies for online course design and delivery, stimulate the use of appropriate technological services, and organize evaluation, research and monitoring in digital teaching and learning. Governments might also support platforms for exchanging good practices and for sharing courses material. Funding regimes should stimulate innovation and a large scale modernisation of universities by the increased use of technology in the teaching and learning process.

EMPOWERing universities

EADTU has conceived the action programme EMPOWER to contribute to European-wide change of the pedagogical landscape and to support European higher education institutions in their transition to new modes of teaching and learning in:

- *Blended education* or the combination of e-learning and face to face teaching and learning in mainstream degree programmes on campus.

- *Online and flexible education for 25 + students*, in short or degree programmes or in continuing education schemes (incl. CPD).
- *Open education*, which is freely available in the public domains (e.g. open educational resources, MOOCs).

EMPOWER supports collaboration and sharing of expertise between European universities and anticipates on the opportunities of latest developments in online, open and flexible education.

EMPOWER is:

- Consisting of twelve expert pools (120 experts) covering facets of online, open and flexible education (i.e. course design, student support, assessment and learning analytics, staff support services, institutional policies and strategies, access to knowledge resources, blended learning, online continuous professional development, quality assurance, online off campus education, OERs and MOOCs) and online/blended transnational education.
- Collecting and integrating expertise and experience on digital teaching and learning and disseminate this between them and to European universities
- Enhancing individual universities in the uptake of new modes of teaching by in situ seminars and pilots, starting from their own needs analysis and capitalizing on their expertise and experience
- Offering expertise online by webpages and webinars for all experts and for a broader audience of institutional experts European-wide
- Organising a Leadership Academy for university executives in order to develop appropriate institutional policies, aiming at continuous institutional innovation and transformation through ICT-based modes of teaching and learning

EMPOWER is ready for bringing added value to universities and university systems. It is collaborating with other university networks on new modes of teaching and learning and institutional change processes to enhance the quality of higher education.

Short Learning Programmes and Virtual Erasmus

SLPs respond to the needs for flexible higher education in Europe, especially with regard to continuous professional development. Flexible education is a way forward to meet sustainably the EU 2020 objectives and to improve skills and employability all over Europe.

SLPs also respond to the demand of large categories of students for a short study period in order to obtain an award, a certificate or a diploma at diversified qualification levels (foundation, bachelor, master and doctoral level). After studying a SLP, students should have the possibility to integrate credits obtained by SLP modules and courses as building blocks in broader degree programmes.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the European open and distance teaching universities confirms their intent to promote short learning programmes (SLPs) in their provisions, to recognize mutually modules and courses belonging to these programmes, and to develop joint short learning programmes with related mobility schemes.

The objectives of this Memorandum are:

- to provide a common framework for the development of SLPs at European open and distance teaching universities;
- to promote the development of flexible SLPs as a response to the diversity of needs in society and as an opportunity for students to study fit to their profile and to the study-time available to them;
- to activate collaboration and (virtual) mobility between European open and distance teaching universities in order to enrich the content of SLPs, to improve their educational quality and to raise their European outreach, scale and cost-effectiveness.

SLPs will contribute to the further development of continuing education. MOOCs, prior learning and work experience can be recognized as part of SLPs.

Flexible education and the refugee crisis

There is a need for specific arrangements for higher education for refugees and migrants within Europe and outside of Europe in the Middle-East. Solving this issue is a condition for long lasting peace in Europe and the Middle-East and a moral duty for the EU. Countries cannot be rebuild without appropriate access of young people which had to break up their studies or careers. There is danger of lost generations.

These policies and strategies should capitalize on refugees who have already the necessary entry qualifications for higher education. They should also take into account that many of these students move from country to country (no fixed home address or not yet) and that many even will go back to their country. They have lost opportunities to study.

Open and flexible distance education is particularly suitable for this type of students. For many, it is the only immediate and sustainable solution. They have now time available to study and prepare themselves either to contribute to our societies or to rebuild their societies of origin. They can continue their study wherever they move.

European distance teaching universities are willing to organise appropriate provisions for these students, including consultancy and guidance, wherever the students are. Open and flexible programmes are available in most European languages. Students can follow them even when moving to another country or returning to their home country.

There is a need for a specific long term cohesive and cross sectoral European strategy to develop higher education for refugees and displaced persons which:

- Provides access to free courses for higher education preparation, such as OERS, MOOCs, BOCs
- Provides access to European language courses
- Provides short, accredited conversion courses to meet European qualification equivalences
- Provides short learning programmes which can be used as stepping stones into higher education or as building blocks for qualifications
- Provides vocational study programmes to support transition into employment in areas of skills gaps
- Provides access to flexible degree and higher level study options

All this should be done through flexible study modes, using mobile technologies, study centres in camps and trained support workers.

EADTU and the members are prepared to collaborate with the European Commission and national governments in order to build a European and national framework for higher education for migrants and refugees.