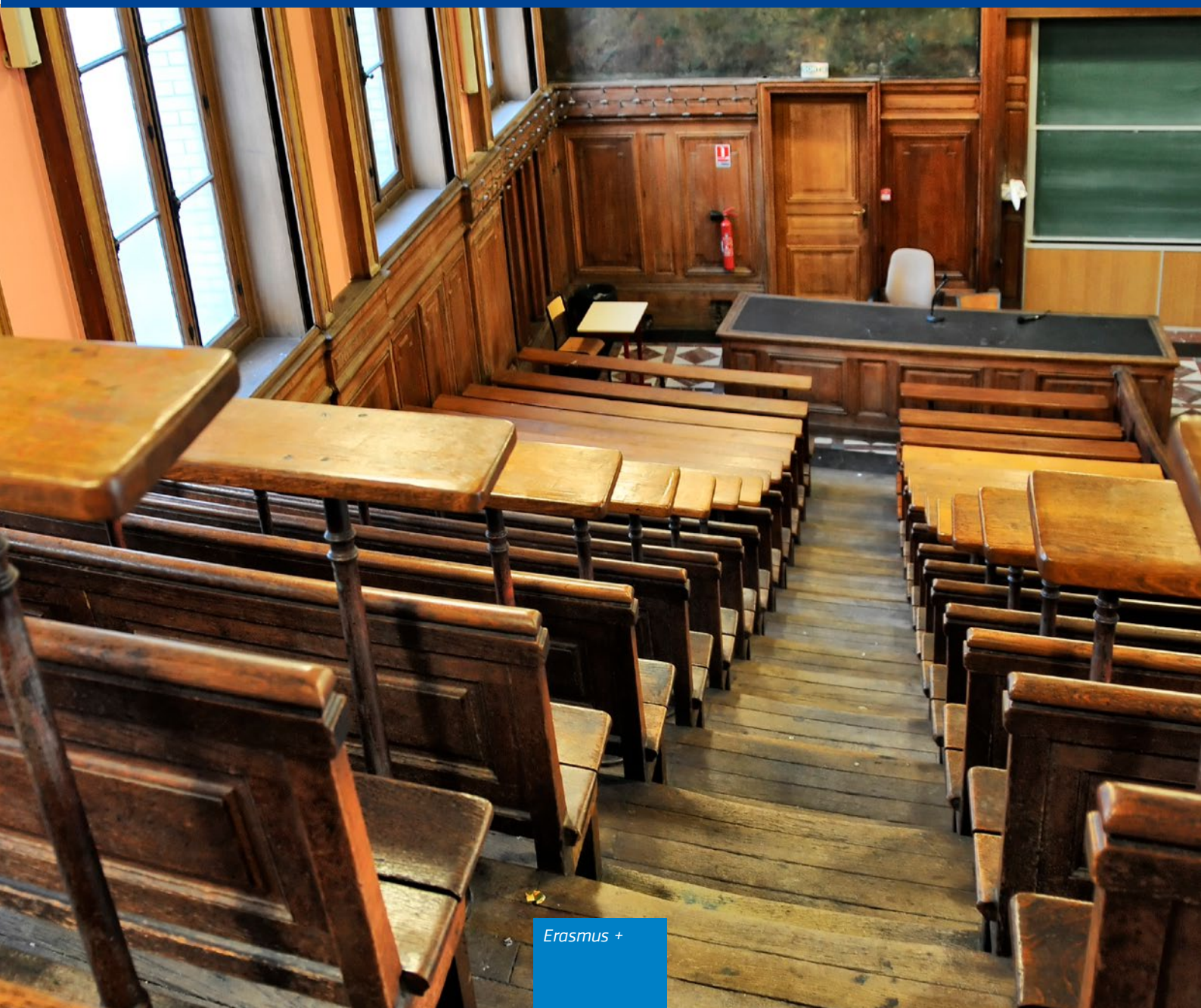




European
Commission

Higher Education Reform Experts

Activity report 2016



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HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM EXPERTS

Activity Report 2016

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ANNEX

Annex Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) - Terms of Reference

1 - Introduction

1.1 - Background

The network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) was established in 2007, in the beginning of the Tempus IV programme, in order to provide support to the modernisation of higher education in the Tempus Partner Countries. Individual higher education experts were identified by their national authorities in each of the Partner countries, to act as promoters of higher education reforms by organising events, writing articles, providing consultation, etc. In order to enhance the expertise of the network, regular training activities have been organised since the beginning of the scheme by the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), with the support of a service provider.

With a small financial investment, the HERE initiative proved to be successful, leading to concrete results in the Partner Countries concerned. Therefore, when launching the new Erasmus+ programme in 2014, the Commission decided to continue the initiative and to target the same group of ex-Tempus Partner Countries.

Having started as a group of approximately 100 experts, the HERE group has now almost 250 members. These have been nominated jointly by their national authorities and the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) in their countries, with the endorsement of the local EU Delegations. These 250 HEREs come mostly from Universities, Ministries and other governmental institutions, representing a wide range of expertise in different academic areas and different higher education reform topics. The profiles include rectors, vice-rectors, deans, professors, heads of study programmes, administrators, students and other experts of the higher education field. Depending on the country, the size of the group varies from 5 to 15 experts.

HEREs' local activities are coordinated by the NEOs, in cooperation with the Ministries

responsible for higher education. Funding is made available via the NEO budgets to cover costs of local activities and of HEREs' travel to international training events.

1.2 – HERE activities in 2016

The HERE activities under Erasmus+ were launched on a full scale from the start of 2015, following the designation of the individual experts for the period 2015-2017. In the same period, a service contract for supporting HERE activities was concluded with a consortium consisting of the University of Barcelona and the European University Association (EUA). This consortium (*the "SPHERE team" – Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts*) is responsible for organising international training events, providing experts for Technical Assistance Missions to the Partner Countries and maintaining a Virtual Community platform for communication, event organisation and dissemination of information among the HERE network.

The 2016 activities showed a positive continuation of the work started in 2015, with a strong contribution of the HEREs in both national and international activities. At national level, in the Partner Countries, the teams organised almost 200 events, produced more than 80 articles or publications and contributed to the preparation of a number of legislative reforms and the drafting of new higher education policies and strategies. While only 12 of the Partner Countries concerned are signatories of the Bologna process, the focus of the activities was very much on Bologna type reforms, indicating a trend of voluntary convergence even in the non-signatory countries.

During the same time, the SPHERE team organised 6 international training events, provided experts for a total of 42 Technical Assistance Missions and continued to maintain and develop the website hosting the HERE Virtual Community.

In order to collect feedback and ideas for the development of the HERE activities, a meeting was organised in May 2016 bringing together the EACEA, the SPHERE team, the NEOs and the chairs of the HERE teams from each country. The purpose of the meeting was to present some good practices from different countries, and to collect ideas for the development of the action. The suggestions from the participants were later analysed by the EACEA and the SPHERE team, and put into practice when possible.

This report has been produced on the basis of the 2016 HERE reports received from the 26 NEOs concerned¹, and of EACEA's monitoring of the NEO and HERE activities in 2016. The introductory part is followed by country specific sections, which have been produced by the NEOs to present higher education developments in their countries and highlight the main achievement of their teams. The aim of these country presentations is to give visibility to the activities carried out by HEREs and NEOs at the national level and to give inspiration to colleagues in other countries when planning their HERE activities for the coming years.

2 – Composition of the HERE group

At the time of drafting this report, the HERE group consisted of 243 experts acting in the Partner Countries concerned (ex-Tempus Partner Countries). The majority of them (73%) belong to academic or administrative university staff, 21% represent ministries and governmental agencies, while 6% are students or student representatives.²

Many of the HEREs have important positions in the academic and governmental institutions. The pool of experts concerned by this report includes, for example, one minister, one deputy minister, one assistant

deputy minister and several directors general responsible for higher education at Ministry level. Furthermore, 16 rectors serve as Higher Education Reform Experts in their countries, together with many vice-rectors and heads of department. In terms of gender balance, 48% of the HEREs are women.

3 - International HERE activities

The aim of the international HERE events is to train HEREs on different topics related to the modernisation of higher education, keeping them up to date on the latest developments and showcasing good practice examples from Europe and from Partner Countries. The topics are defined in cooperation between the European Commission, the Executive Agency and the SPHERE team, taking into account specific interests expressed by NEOs and HEREs (e.g. the Needs Assessment exercise carried out in the beginning of 2015).

In total 6 international events took place in 2016, including one conference, three seminars and two study visits. The conferences are the largest HERE events, dealing with core issues of higher education modernisation and involving around 100-120 participants. The seminars, on the other hand, go deeper into specific topics and are targeting smaller groups of participants (50-60). Finally the study visits are meant for discovering how specific reforms or policies are implemented at individual higher education institutions. Such visits are carried out in groups of 30-50 participants.

The programme of the events was prepared in cooperation between SPHERE, the Executive Agency and the European Commission. External experts were invited to each of the events, to make presentations on their special field of expertise. Many HEREs also contributed actively to the events, acting as speakers, workshop leaders or rapporteurs.

In total, the six events counted with 270 "HERE participations". As some HEREs attended more than one event, this represents almost 200 individual HEREs who

¹ Libya is not covered, as the NEO in Libya did not have a HERE contract for 2016.

² Current list of HERE available at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-3-support-for-policy-reform/higher-education-reform-experts-heres_en

participated in one or more events during the year (i.e. around 80% of the whole group of HEREs).

The six international HERE events are briefly presented hereafter in chronological order. More detailed information on each event can be found through the links to the SPHERE website.

3.1 Seminar "Joint programmes and degrees: Strategy, management, implementation" (at University of Novi Sad, Serbia, 17-18 March 2016)

The aim of the seminar was to reference and promote existing guidelines and good practices in designing, managing and promoting joint programmes and degrees. The participants got acquainted with different types of joint programmes, and looked at the implications in terms of resources, management, regulations, mobility etc. Internal and external quality assurance measures for joint programmes were also discussed, as well as different institutional approaches and strategic motivations.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/novisad2016>

3.2 Study visit: "Learning outcomes and student-centred learning" (at University of Tallinn, Estonia, 17-19 April 2016)

This study visit hosted by the University of Tallinn gave participants an insight into institutional practice in relation to learning outcomes and student-centred learning. The speakers presented their experience in development and implementation, the challenges they faced, and how they involved external stakeholders, such as employers or other institutions. The role of national authorities (including Ministry, National Quality Assurance Agency) was also addressed.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/tallinn2016>

3.3 Study visit: "Building capacity and quality assurance for doctoral studies" (at Malmö University, Sweden, 31 May – 1 June 2016)

Capacity building in doctoral education is a high priority topic in many of the Partner Countries. The study visit gave HEREs the opportunity to learn how a young Swedish institution, Malmö University, has built its doctoral education and research capacity over a relatively short time period. The visit gave an insight into building and structuring doctoral programmes and helped participants understand strategic motivations and resource implications linked to the launch of doctoral studies.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/malmo2016>

3.4 Seminar: "Qualifications Frameworks: What are they, how do they work, what is their impact" (at Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, 19-20 September 2016)

In 2015, qualifications frameworks were identified by HEREs and NEOs as one of the priority topics to be covered in the HERE events. The seminar in Warsaw gave them the opportunity to learn about European trends regarding national and regional qualifications frameworks, how and why they are developed and how the key stakeholders are involved in the process. The aim was also to showcase the implications of qualifications frameworks for recognition and mobility, transparency of systems, quality assurance and lifelong learning.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/warsaw-2016>

3.5 Seminar: "The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in practice: implications for HEIs and higher education systems" (at Lviv Polytechnic National University and Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine, 19-20 October 2016)

One of the main objectives of the seminar was to generate awareness among HEREs for the ESG revised in 2015 and in particular on the stronger focus that the standards put on the role of institutions in quality assurance. HEREs had the opportunity to discuss issues related to building capacity for institutional quality assurance and creating a "quality culture". The presentations also covered different other aspects of quality assurance, including the role of students, the role of external quality assurance and the role of regional / international cooperation in quality assurance.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/lviv2016>

3.6 Annual Conference: "HERE and their mission: Contributing to higher education reform" (at University of Barcelona, Spain, 12-13 December 2016)

While previous HERE events had targeted specific themes / aspects of higher education reform, the aim of this conference was to bring all these aspects together and look at how they related to each other. The aim was also to discuss the potential influence of HEREs in such processes, by informing and advising different higher education stakeholders and facilitating their contribution to reforms. The discussions were based on an analytical framework on the basis of which higher education reform can be evaluated and a set of instruments to be used in this context.

More information can be found on the SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/barcelona2016>

http://supporthere.org/sites/default/files/bcn_2016_report_sept_2017_final.pdf

(conference report)

4 - Local HERE activities organised in Partner Countries

While the international activities represent an important training element for the HEREs, the major part of the HERE activities take place at local level, in the Partner Countries. In 2016, almost 200 local HERE events took place in Partner Countries, focusing on different aspects of higher education reform and providing a forum for discussion for local stakeholders. These events, usually organised in cooperation between the NEOs, the national authorities and the HERE teams, gave the possibility to present different developments in the higher education sector, to identify challenges and to work on specific aspects of reforms relevant for the countries in question.

Examples of some of the local events and activities can be found in the country sections of this report. Typically, most local activities consisted of follow-up events of the international training seminars and of events facilitated by the so called "Technical Assistance Missions" (see section 4.2). The scope of activities varied, but most of the events gathered between 50 and 100 participants, while some of the larger events reached several hundreds of participants.

It should also be mentioned that, beyond the more formal events and activities, the HEREs in the different countries provided continuous advice, guidance and consultancy to higher education stakeholders, including higher education institutions and their staff, local and national authorities, and other relevant entities. HEREs were often consulted for contributions regarding the internationalization of higher education, the implementation of the Bologna process, accreditation and recognition issues, the development of National Qualifications Frameworks, etc.

An interesting initiative was launched by the HERE team in Ukraine, where each on-going Structural Project (financed by Tempus / Capacity Building for Higher Education) was assigned a "curator" from the HERE team, according to the expert's field of expertise. Considering that Structural Projects are expected to have impact at national level and contribute to reforms in higher education, the HEREs are perfect partners for supporting such projects in their activities.

4.1 Follow-up of international events

Upon return to their home countries, HEREs having attended international training events are expected to disseminate the gained information to stakeholders in their countries. The 2016 reports show that the HEREs carried out an array of such dissemination events, either at their home institutions or in the context of larger events organised by the NEOs. In these events, they shared the outcomes of the international sessions with diverse groups of stakeholders, stimulating reflection and debate at the local or national level.

These follow-up activities comprised seminars, workshops and round tables in which HEREs acted as speakers or moderators. Furthermore, many HEREs who took part in international events wrote articles for newspapers or journals on the topics that were presented during these events, and were also invited as speakers to national or local TV shows dealing with higher education topics. In some countries, reports drafted by HEREs following the international events are published on the NEO website.

4.2 - Technical Assistance Missions

The Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) are a very popular tool that allows NEOs to invite foreign experts to local events organised by HEREs. A call for TAM proposals is launched once a year by the Executive Agency, in cooperation with the SPHERE team. The applications are submitted by the NEOs, in agreement with the HEREs and the National Authorities.

A TAM application contains a description of the event for which expert input is requested. These can be large conferences or seminars, but also smaller workshops for a more targeted audience. If the application is approved, the SPHERE team engages an expert with a suitable profile to carry out the mission. The NEO and the HERE team take care of the practical arrangements.

In 2016, 42 Technical Assistance Missions took place, covering all ex-Tempus regions. The highest number of TAMs took place in Eastern Europe and in the South-Mediterranean countries. The most popular themes were doctoral studies, international mobility, e-learning, internationalisation and governance.

Overall, the 2016 TAMs reached an audience of more than 2.000 participants, with an average size of 50 participants per event. The duration was usually of one or two days, and the type of events ranged from small working groups to conferences with more than 100 participants.

The TAMs clearly respond to national needs in terms of modernising education programmes, preparing legislative changes or adapting international standards to local conditions. The involvement of representatives of the Ministry of Education in many of the events was essential for ensuring impact and follow-up.

According to the feedback received from NEOs, the quality of the experts proposed by the SPHERE team was high and the majority of them were evaluated as excellent by the participants. Short reports drafted by the experts following the events can be found at: <http://supporthere.org/page/tams-2016>.

4.3 - Other local activities

Other types of local activities were carried out by the HEREs, in accordance with the local needs and the initiatives of individual HEREs.

For example, many HEREs supported their NEO in the promotion of EU programmes.

HEREs having been involved in Tempus or Capacity Building projects could make use of their experience in proposal writing and their understanding of funding mechanisms and project management. Such HEREs were often asked to contribute to information sessions about the new Erasmus+ Programme, for instance at student fairs, Erasmus+ Info Days or upon request by particular higher education stakeholders.

5 – Dissemination and communication

5.1 – Publications produced by HERE teams

Dissemination and communication activities constitute an important part of the HERE activities, permitting to reach wider audiences and address issues relevant for national stakeholders. During 2016, most of the HERE teams produced or contributed to publications that were used as tools by ministries, governmental bodies and other higher education stakeholders for analysing current trends and challenges in higher education. They also wrote numerous articles published in the general or specialised press.

In some of the countries (e.g. Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan), HEREs publish annual publications with articles related to current issues in higher education reform. There are also good examples from several countries of surveys and studies produced by the HERE teams, such as:

- **"Student – Oriented learning: Modern approaches and instruments"** (publication produced in Kazakhstan based on a survey involving 513 students from 11 universities)
- **"The problem of plagiarism and its perception in Georgia"** (survey report published in Georgia, based on official documents, interviews and focus groups)
- **"National recommendations for universities and institutes in Serbia for the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities"**

(publication produced in Serbia, presenting the state of affairs at four universities as well as recommendations for future action)

- **"Recognition of foreign qualifications and implementation of Lisbon Recognition Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina"** (report produced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, containing an analysis of existing legislation and practices, as well as recommendations)
- **"University governance bodies after one year of functioning"** (survey and report produced in Moldova, pointing out challenges and achievements of the new dual university governance structure adopted in 2014)
- **"Financing higher education"** (study produced in Lebanon and published as reader for a TAM on the same topic)

Another good practice to be mentioned is the "HERE Newsletter" which has been launched in Jordan to give more visibility to the HERE activities.

5.2 - Use of NEO websites and social media

All National Erasmus+ Offices' websites contain a section dedicated to the HERE activities. However, the visibility of the HERE teams on the NEOs' websites varies from country to country. In some cases the information is rather limited, while on other NEO websites the sections describing the HEREs' mission, profiles and activities are very detailed. Some of the websites also include regularly updated information on the international and national HERE events.

The increased use of social media platforms for communication and dissemination has also had an impact on the communication on HERE activities. Currently at least five NEOs have a separate Facebook page for HERE activities, while some others present HERE activities on the general Facebook page of the NEO.

6 - HERE support to National Authorities

HEREs have a clear role to play in supporting their national authorities responsible for higher education. They can contribute to policy reform by making available their expertise, by providing updates on latest developments in other countries and by sharing the experience gained during their participation in international HERE events. Different examples of support to national authorities can be found in the country sections of this report.

Typically, HEREs collaborate directly with the ministries responsible for higher education and with other governmental bodies working in this field, contributing thereby to policy development and sharing their knowledge and expertise with these public authorities. Many of them are members of different national committees and task forces which contribute to the preparation of laws and national strategies in higher education.

Cooperation with the ministries of education has been facilitated by the fact that almost all HERE teams include Ministry (/public authority) officials. As mentioned earlier, 21% of the HEREs come from ministries and governmental bodies dealing with higher education.

Other forms of cooperation with ministries of education can also be identified, such as meetings with ministry representatives to plan the HERE activities, reports addressed by HEREs to ministry officials following the international training events, participation of ministry representatives in local HERE events, participation of HEREs in events (/workshops / roundtables / working groups) organised by the ministries, etc.

7 - Use of Virtual Community website

The "HERE Virtual Community" website (www.supportthere.org) contains public and password protected areas and serves as

communication space for HEREs, as event registration tool and as environment for sharing news related to higher education reform. The news and the sections related to HERE events are public, while the Virtual Community discussion forum is reserved for registered users. The registered users include all HEREs (who are obliged to register), together with the NEOs, Commission and EACEA representatives, as well as some other external users interested in the topic.

The most frequently used and most functional part of the website is the section dedicated to the training events organised by the SPHERE team. For each event, a separate page is created, which contains the programme, practical information for participants, background material on the topic and the registration form. After each event, the presentations are published on the same page, sometimes with pictures from the event.

The discussion forum, on the other hand, could be used more actively. Different discussion threads have been launched, mostly by the SPHERE team but sometimes also by individual HEREs. The reactions, however, remain limited.

Another feature of the website are the so called "country pages". The idea is to offer a space for each HERE group in which they can present current higher education reforms in their country and any other information related to higher education that could be interesting for the website users. For the moment, nineteen country pages have been created (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo³, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Palestine⁴, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), and others are under development. The country pages can be found here:

³ This designation is without prejudice to position on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁴ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

<http://supporthere.org/page/sphere-country-information>.

Finally, another feature that should be mentioned is the section of the website presenting the Technical Assistance missions carried out in each country (<http://supporthere.org/page/technical-assistance-missions-tam>).

This section includes the basic details on each event as well as a short report drafted by the expert having carried out the mission. In the future, it is foreseen to also publish the presentations made at each event.

8 – Conclusions

The main aim of the network of Higher Education Reform Experts is to promote the modernisation of higher education in Partner Countries surrounding the EU. Since its establishment in 2007, in the framework of the Tempus programme, the network has gained visibility and importance through the involvement of HEREs in policy development and their activities to promote modernisation through events, publications and media appearances.

As shown in the country sections of this report, HEREs in practically all countries are concretely involved in higher education reform through their participation in committees and working groups responsible for drafting laws and strategies. Only for 2016, there are numerous examples of HERE involvement in higher education development, by contributing to higher education laws and their amendments, and by preparing proposals linked to e.g. qualifications frameworks, education standards, doctoral education, quality assurance, or accreditation. These examples show that HEREs are an effective instrument in accompanying the education reform process.

In 2016, the SPHERE team continued to play an important role in supporting the HERE activities, in particular through the organisation of six international training events on topics identified as relevant by the HERE network. The participation of HEREs as speakers or rapporteurs in these events was reinforced, which increased their feeling of ownership and contribution. The SPHERE team also successfully supported the organisation of 42 Technical Assistance Missions in the partner countries, by identifying prominent experts to the full satisfaction of the NEOs and HEREs.

It can be concluded that in each of the Partner Countries concerned, HERE teams have established an important position as actors in higher education reform. The activities carried out with the support of the NEOs have benefited to thousands of higher education stakeholders across the countries, and have had a clear impact on legislation, strategies and processes at national level. This is a result of the high professionalism and dedication of the individual HEREs, who have been willing to invest their efforts in contributing to the development of higher education in their countries.

For the period 2018-2020, the aim is to continue working with the current well operating HERE teams, as well as to renew the contract with the SPHERE team. A stronger engagement of the HEREs in the planning of the international activities will be ensured by the establishment of an Advisory Group composed of eight HEREs, which will support the SPHERE team in the programming and follow-up of events. Moreover, further synergies will be sought with the Bologna experts, by trying to involve them in the HERE activities and inviting them to register as potential experts for Technical Assistance Missions. The 2017 HERE annual conference will be a first step in this direction, with a slot looking at synergies between the activities of the HEREs and the Bologna experts.

2016 HERE activities by country

Western Balkans

ALBANIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Albanian HERE team is composed of five women and two men. The members of the team are predominantly from academia, with six professors and one representative from the Ministry of Education and Sport. The team's expertise is diverse, covering different education fields, and complementary in addressing higher education reform issues. The Bologna fields of expertise of Albania HEREs comprise quality assurance, university curricula, accreditation, diploma recognition, integrated university studies, PhD studies, university governance, national qualification frameworks and higher education policies. The HERE team is selected from the four largest public universities in Albania, which represent more than 60 % of the total students share in the public higher education. The Albanian HERE team offers a good blend of senior and young researchers.

Key developments in higher education in Albania in 2016

After a thorough analysis of the current situation in Albania, the government launched reforms in higher education by extending the education offer in line with the country priorities and labour market needs, diversifying financial sources and improving HEI governance mechanisms through boosting public accountability and good governance, and focusing on excellence and quality in both teaching and research.

The current reform culminated with the approval at the end of 2015 of the new law "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania", in line with the main European and global trends in Higher Education. During 2016, the most urgent priority was acquiring the wide support of the HE community and finding agreement with the national authorities for the drafting of new bylaws. Different working groups were established and these were responsible for drafting the new bylaws. In addition, the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports invited various international partners (such as the British Council and the World Bank) to cooperate in this process. The HERE team was also asked to contribute.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The support to the implementation of Higher Education reform is given through the active involvement of Albanian HERE team members in the preparation of strategic policy papers linked to the new law on Higher Education and Scientific Research. Four of the Albanian HEREs were members of the National Commission for Higher Education Reform established by the Minister of Education and Sport, a task force in charge of the preparation of reform policy papers in the field of higher education and scientific research.

The main HERE contributions to the new law consisted of the proposal for a Higher Education Quality Code updated pursuant to the European standards and quality guidelines, the improvement of HEI's governance mechanisms conditioned only to the performance, the improvement of management quality and accountability, and the allocation of funds based on quality indicators for teaching, research, innovation, creative activities and development. Moreover, fully in line with HERE recommendations, the new law guarantees financial autonomy by granting the HEIs the right to generate legitimate incomes from teaching activities, scientific research activities and by other economic income, as well as the right to seek private funding and to receive loans for their institutional and infrastructure development. Last but not least, the same law grants to higher education institutions the right to define internal rules of funding distribution, and to administer real estates and other legal possessions.



Seminar on Albanian Qualifications Framework, 7 November 2016, University of Tirana

The HEREs tried as well to contribute to the discussions on a new draft law on Albanian Qualification Frameworks, by organising a national workshop “An Albanian Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning; what does this mean for Higher Education in Albania”. The results of this national workshop are expected to feed into the preparation of the new Law on AQF.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Organization of HERE Round Table on ‘How to boost the participation of Albanian Higher Education Institutions in Erasmus+’. The main goal of this event was to identify the challenges and to propose measures to increase the participation of Albanian Higher Education Institutions in the Erasmus+ programme. One of the most important results was the production of a recommendations’ paper addressed to both policy makers and higher education institutions (including HEI’s Management - Rectors, Deans and Heads of Department, IROs and academic staff). The document was considered important for feeding into the drafting process of the bylaws for the new law “On higher education and scientific research in higher education institutions in the Republic of Albania”.



Roundtable "How to boost the participation of Albanian HEIs in Erasmus+", 26 May 2016, Hotel Tirana International"

2. Organization of two regional seminars at the universities of Eqrem Cabej’ in Gjirokastra and ‘Aleksander Moisiu’ in Durres on the topic “Student centred teaching - a new challenge for Albanian HEIs”. The main aim of the seminars was to discuss with staff and students the relevant measures that could support the introduction of teaching and learning methods based on student – centred learning. The impact was visible mainly in terms of raising awareness among students and staff in regional HEIs about the importance of student- centred learning methods and strategies

for enhancing the quality of teaching & learning in Albanian universities.

3. Recommendations' paper aiming at influencing the drafting of the future bylaws. This paper was presented by the Albanian HEREs' team to the national authorities after the seminar on the theme ‘Innovation and information technology as a mean for improving and developing teaching methods’ at the University of Vlora on July 2016. The main result of the seminar was to recognize the benefits of using innovative methods and ICT for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This would help in moving towards a student-centred learning model and pave the way to policy changes and new bylaws in accordance with the best practices currently in use in European universities.



Seminar "Innovation and information technology as a means for improving and developing teaching methods", 8 July 2016, University "Ismael Qemali, Vlora"

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
http://erasmusplus.al/?page_id=593
- List of HEREs on NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Albanian-HERE-Team.pdf>
- HERE publications or articles: Recommendations of the Round Table on ‘How to boost the participation of Albanian Higher Education Institution in Erasmus + and Horizon 2020’
<http://erasmusplus.al/?p=1296>
- HERE event pages:
http://erasmusplus.al/?page_id=1034
- HERE Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/Albanian-HERE-for-Erasmus--1815269242080077/>

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The national team of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) in Bosnia and Herzegovina consist of 10 members, coming from relevant institutions responsible for higher education reform processes in the country. These include: 3 academic representatives from the three largest public universities (University of Sarajevo, University of Banja Luka, University of Mostar), 3 ministry representatives (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska), 2 agency representatives (Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance and Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education), and 2 students (representing the Student Union of Republika Srpska and the Student Parliament of the University of Sarajevo). The group geographically covers the whole country and includes an equal number of female and male members.

Key developments in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2016

The trends and major developments in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2016 included various activities related to the development of a National Qualification Framework, the recognition of qualifications, and the internationalization of higher education. The following developments have taken place during the year:

The Priorities for Development of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2016-2026 were created within a joint EU/Council of Europe Project “*Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards*” and adopted in March 2016 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The application for a membership in ENQA and inclusion in the European Register (EQAR) was submitted by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) on January 29, 2016. The contract with ENQA has been signed and the application for EQAR has been submitted. A Self-Assessment Report to the ENQA Secretariat was submitted in January 2017.

Some of the major legislative changes that took place in 2016 include the adoption of the *Law on Amendments to the Law on Higher Education of Republika Srpska*, which was adopted by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska in October 2016. In addition, the new *Law on Higher Education* in Tuzla Canton was adopted by the Assembly of Tuzla Kanton on 6 June 2016, followed by subsequent amendments to that law (Law on Amendments on the Law on Higher Education).

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The local HERE events organized in BiH in 2016 supported the above mentioned reforms through the organization of 2 annual HERE conferences and 3 Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs), focusing on themes such as short cycles in the qualifications framework, multidisciplinary PhD programmes, and the development of qualification standards and occupational standards. These events gathered more than 150 participants, including representatives of ministries, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders.



HERE annual dissemination workshop, 7 December 2016, University of East Sarajevo

The events encouraged active discussions among participants and provided an excellent opportunity for the key stakeholders to share relevant information about the reforms. Moreover, the international training events in which the HEREs participated provided them excellent opportunities to update their knowledge and skills on relevant issues related to the development of national qualification frameworks, quality assurance in doctoral education, etc. The reports and dissemination of information from these events were helpful for all HERE team members, as well as their institutions and other relevant stakeholders. In general, the implementation of HERE activities enhanced the cooperation between higher education institutions, ministries, and other relevant institutions in the country and abroad.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. **Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and Implementation of Lisbon Recognition Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The report which was developed by the HERE team in 2016 provided a detailed and systematic analysis of the existing legislation and practices regarding the recognition procedures and implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) in the country, and provided some useful recommendations. The document covers various aspects of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and presents the main challenges in achieving the recognition in line with the LRC.

2. **Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) and other local HERE activities.** The HEREs actively participated in the development and implementation of 3 TAMs, 2 annual HERE dissemination conferences, and the country page for the SPHERE website. These activities supported the higher education reform processes in the country and contributed to the visibility of the HERE group and its work.

3. **TAM "Development and running of (internationalized and multidisciplinary) PhD programmes"** organised at the University of Banja Luka in June 2016. This event was very useful for academic representatives in charge of PhD studies at their homes institutions. Information provided on organizing, licensing and accreditation of PhD studies was relevant for Ministry representatives as well.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:

<http://www.erasmusbih.com/index.php/here>

- List of HEREs on NEO website:

http://www.erasmusbih.com/documents/List_of_HEREs.pdf

- HERE publications:

http://www.erasmusbih.com/documents/Recognition_of_Foreign_Qualifications_and_implementation_of_Lisabon_Recognition_Convention_in_BiH.pdf

- Country page on SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-bosnia-and-herzegovina>

KOSOVO

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Kosovo HERE team is composed of eight Higher Education Reform Experts. Six of them are professors/lecturers at the public Higher Education Institutions (University of Pristina and University of Mitrovica), one of them is Rector at a private Higher Education Institution and the eighth one is employed as Director of the Higher Education Department at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). They all have a strong academic background and relevant experience in international cooperation with EU countries. The group consists of six women and two men, and multi-ethnic representation is secured. HERE represent different institutions from public and private Higher Education sector, and different backgrounds including specific expertise in higher education. The chair of the group has the overall responsibility for the organisation and management of the team, and for its work in defining objectives for the development and modernization of Higher Education in Kosovo. The overall planning and implementation of the HERE team's activities is supported by the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office.

Key developments in higher education in Kosovo in 2016

During 2016, the Kosovo Higher Education sector focused on enhancing the quality management of its Higher Education Institutions to deliver qualitative and all inclusive education to its students. Kosovo HEI continued to integrate and implemented the international quality assurance standards after having obtained membership in ENQA in 2014. During 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) monitored the implementation of the quality assurance standards and identified further steps to be undertaken in enhancing them. The development phase of a standardized and unified financial management system for all public HEIs in Kosovo was also supported by MEST. Significant results were achieved for a more efficient data management within the HE sector through the incorporation of new ICT tools. Moreover, a Students' Union was established following the necessary formalization procedures.

The legal framework governing HE sector in Kosovo was amended and the new statutes of the newly established public universities were adopted. A

New Law on Regulated Professions was adopted, and the new Draft Law on Higher Education was deposited to the Parliament to undergo parliamentary adoption procedures. Finally, the Kosovo Education Strategy Plan 2017-2021 was developed, encompassing the gap between HEIs, the labour market and the employability of the students.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) initiated the modernization of the Higher Education system in Kosovo and its harmonization with European HE standards. The Kosovo HERE team was actively engaged to support these reform processes by providing input to relevant draft laws and by organising different thematic events, seminars and round tables, with the aim to support the dialogue and public discussions. Each HERE event was followed by recommendations which were submitted to HE policy makers to support overall HE policy objectives.

The HERE team members have been active in the process of definition of the Kosovo Education Strategy Plan 2017-2021, together with other HE stakeholders. They contributed to curricular reforms for teachers' professional development and qualification and have been very active in public discussion aiming to design the recommendations for HE reform in Kosovo. The Kosovo HERE team also took part in international HERE events and in a regional round table on HE development in the Western Balkans. They also contributed to publications related to the digitalization and virtualization of HEIs, university-industry cooperation linking study programmes and labour market needs in Kosovo, the value of students' self-evaluation in HE, and the importance of Bologna for students. The Kosovo HERE team promoted its activities through the media and by being part of different working groups meeting with government representatives, members of the parliament, universities representatives and other HE stakeholders.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. A **HERE seminar on Centres for excellent teaching and their funding** was organised on 07 December 2016 at the premises of the MEST in Prishtina. This seminar was focused on institutional initiatives to foster quality teaching in Higher Education and how to find the way to improve

different initiatives for the professional development of the academic staff.



HERE seminar "Students as main stakeholders in HE development and reform", 24 March 2016, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

2. A HERE seminar "Students as main stakeholders in HE development and reform", was held on 24 March 2016 in the premises of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in Prishtina and on 29 March 2016 at the Conference Hall of the Rectorate Building of the University Mitrovica. The aim of this seminar was to discuss the role, importance and contribution of students

in the current reform process of Higher Education in Kosovo.

Links to further details

The Kosovo HERE team has its special tab at the Kosovo Erasmus+ Office's (KEO) web-site, with sub-tabs for its activities and publication. Their work is also advertised on the KEO Facebook page and on the SPHERE web-site:

- HERE section of KEO website:

<http://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org/here>

- List of HEREs on KEO website:

<http://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org/here-bio>

- HERE publications or articles:

<http://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org/publications>

- HERE event pages:

<http://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org/category/activities>

- Country page on SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-kosovo>

MONTENEGRO

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The HERE team in Montenegro is composed of 7 members, with diverse profiles and educational backgrounds. There are representatives from different areas of science, such as natural sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, as well as experts in higher education reform topics (quality assurance, knowledge triangle, 3-cycle system, recognition, ECTS, mobility, qualifications frameworks, etc). The Chair of the HERE team is the former vice-rector for international cooperation and current dean of the faculty of mechanical engineering of the University of Montenegro. One of the team members is member of the Council of Doctoral Studies at the University of Montenegro, while the HERE member from the Ministry of Education is the Head of the Higher Education Division. The student representative is the president of the Students Parliament. The expertise of the HEREs and their position in the academic community and the Ministry match the expected profiles, in order to be multipliers in the reform and internationalisation endeavours of the HE sector in the country.

Key developments in higher education in Montenegro in 2016

The Government of Montenegro adopted the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Montenegro (2016-2020) and the corresponding Action Plan. Key reforms are related to the change of the model of study and the financing model, which should improve not only teaching, but also the scientific and research component. Structural reform has targeted especially the second level of studies - former "Specialist studies" - as part of the Master cycle. This post-bachelor year, so called Specialist, which was not part of the Master studies as such, was recognized as the major obstacle to student mobility. Now the Specialist level does not exist any longer, but only Master level with the overall duration of 120 ECTS in comparison with 60 ECTS in the pre-reform period. (3+2+3 system).

For the first time ever, practical education of students is obligatory, as well as the study of foreign languages in each year of studies. An additional important change is the possibility for funding master students from the state budget. Furthermore the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law of

Recognition of Foreign Educational Certificates and Equalization of Qualifications, which precisely defines the competence of ministries, institutions, or schools in conducting the recognition proceedings. Moreover, a Strategy on Doctoral Studies has been drafted, and the draft version has already been presented to the Montenegrin academic community.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE team in Montenegro is composed of people having considerable experience in managing training, research and strategic issues. By deciding an annual framework programme at the beginning of the year, the HERE Team defines priority topics in line with the overall national strategic approach. The topics that were defined as the topics of interest for the wider academic public included: mobility and internationalization, fostering the capacities for recognition, and fostering capacities in doctoral studies. By organizing events and disseminating information, the HEREs also generated an overall positive opinion towards internationalization.



HERE seminar (TAM) on internationalization of HE, 8 December 2016, University of Montenegro

The topic of doctoral education was selected, as Montenegrin HE suffers from over-regulated doctoral education with underestimated research results, insufficient quality control, low promotion of doctoral training and low number of doctoral students (below 2% of student population). HEREs organised different events with the cooperation of national universities, to share experiences, promote the significance of centralized quality control, and to promote the need for a strategic approach towards the development of doctoral education. As a result, institutional strategies for doctoral education are under preparation and there are some indications for the financial support in research infrastructure.

Professor Sasa Milic, as a member of the Steering Board for Doctoral Studies, took active part in the development of the new Strategy on Doctoral Education in Montenegro. He also made a survey on research capacities at the University of Montenegro, presented at the meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training in Sarajevo, which resulted in the idea of a regional HERE seminar on doctoral education.

Some of the HERE members directly participated in the national working groups that prepared legislation in the field of regulation and financing of HE. Among others, HEREs were involved in the following Working Groups: Creation of the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Montenegro 2016-2020, Creation of the Strategy for Teachers' Training 2017-2021, and Creation of amendments and changes of the Law on Higher Education.

Finally, HERE members were also involved in the Coordination Team for the implementation of the Industrial policy of Montenegro by 2020, and the Team for delivering inputs from the Ministry of Education for the annual Action plan for the Strategy on Regional Development of Montenegro 2014-2020.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Contribution to the development of the draft Strategy on Doctoral Education. The focus on doctoral education started already in 2015, when a HERE seminar on this topic was organized for the first time in Montenegro. It gave impetus to more discussion and was followed by another event, inviting the same external expert. The conclusion was that a Strategy on Doctoral Studies would be a good starting point to improve doctoral studies in Montenegro, and could be promoted also in the rest of the region. The role of HERE members was important, as they could share the knowledge gained at international HERE events on this topic (e.g. Study visit in Malmö). Now, the draft Strategy on Doctoral Studies at the University of Montenegro is being prepared.

2. HERE seminar "Modularization of curriculum" is the topic that proved to be very important especially as modularization has found its way into the Law on HE for the first time. The seminar focused on a wider definition of modules, their integration into the study programmes, their accreditation etc.

3. HERE Seminar "Internationalization of Higher Education", raised awareness on various aspects of internationalization, not always perceived by the academic community and especially important for small countries and small education systems. The University of Montenegro is now planning an internationalization strategy.



HERE seminar (TAM) on modularization of curriculum, 26 April 2016, University of Montenegro

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website
<http://www.neomontenegro.ac.me/t.php?id=71&language=en>
- List of HEREs on NEO website
<http://www.neomontenegro.ac.me/t.php?id=72&language=en>
- HERE event pages
<http://www.neomontenegro.ac.me/t.php?id=86&language=en>

SERBIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The current Serbian HERE team consists of fifteen experts, representing HEIs from different scientific fields. Although the team underwent certain changes in 2016, the diversity of scientific fields and balanced gender ratio represented within the team remained. The team provides a pool of experts coming from four largest universities, covering the capital and the regions, and two colleges of applied sciences. A strong liaison between the Ministry and HERE team is constantly maintained due to the fact that one member of the team is always the current Assistant Minister in charge of HE. Thus the HERE's activities are constantly being tuned to the Ministry needs.

The Head (chairperson) of the Team and his/her deputy lead the team and initiate monthly meetings. The Head of the Team guides and facilitates discussions and concretizes the desired outputs in terms of planning events, publications or similar actions. At the meetings, members are given the opportunity to report on the preparation and organization of planned activities, as well as on the conclusions of those that were already implemented. Trello.com, a virtual task-board, introduced by the Deputy Head of the Team, is being used during all the meetings and all plans and/or activities agreed are being recorded on this virtual board.

Key developments in higher education in Serbia in 2016

Besides ongoing processes of quality assurance reform, work on the development of a National Qualifications Framework, and the reform of initial teacher training and Lifelong Learning (LLL), a great emphasis is put on linking HE to the labour market.

The Council for Vocational Education and Adult Education, as well as the National Council for Higher Education decided on the number and qualification level descriptions and the manner of categorizing old and current qualifications according to the NQF. The draft law on NQF is being prepared by the expert team of the Ministry and, for this purpose, an analysis of the institutional and financial framework for the implementation of NQF has been carried out.

The new draft Law on Higher Education is being prepared since 2015, when opinions of individuals and institutions of higher education in Serbia were initially collected. Throughout 2016, working groups drew up proposals for amending the Law in certain areas, such as: organizational and management issues, accreditation, funding, implementation of academic programmes and hiring of teachers.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Team members contributed to the drafting of the new Law on higher education by participating in five working groups (Financing of higher education, Human resources, Organisation and management of HEIs, Accreditation and quality of HE programmes, Students).

These groups were active until spring 2016 and their input was taken on board for the drafting of the new Law. The work on the Law was suspended for several months during 2016, due to the parliamentary elections and the appointment of a new Government. In autumn 2016, the work was re-launched.

In June 2016, the team organized a conference on "Organizational and Operational Aspects of Higher Education Applied Studies Programmes in Serbia". The main goal of the event was to discuss relevant issues for vocational HE offered by colleges of applied studies in Serbia, such as the structure of colleges and the possible creation of academies of applied studies, models of funding, cooperation with industry, accreditation standards, mobility of students, and recognition of prior learning. The event was an opportunity to discuss topics related to professional master study, linear financing, additional financing of certain educational profiles, horizontal and vertical mobility, general and vocational baccalaureate accreditation of artistic programs, etc.

Towards the end of 2016, the HERE team initiated discussion on the preparation of the new Bologna national report, requested for spring 2017. Two HEREs were appointed to be the Serbian representatives in the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG). Hence, HEREs are involved in the process of relevant data collection, methodology and planning.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. A conference "Strengthening the capacity of study programs in the field of environmental protection"



Expert meeting: "Strengthening the capacity of study programmes in the field of environmental protection", 24 November 2016, Arandjelovac

In November 2016, an expert meeting "Strengthening the capacity of study programs in the field of environmental protection" was held in Arandjelovac. The event was a good opportunity to provide insight into the structure, content, defined goals and outcomes of study programmes in the field of environmental protection in the Serbian system of higher education on the one hand, and the real needs of the economy on the other. Representatives of the industry were also invited and took an active part in the event.

- More information: [Strengthening the capacity of study programs in the field of environmental protection](#)

2. Publication and 5 info-days on "National Recommendation for HEI and Research Institutes on managing intellectual property in innovation transfer activities"

- In June 2016, four HERE team members organized a series of information days and public discussions to present the publication "National recommendations for universities and institutes in Serbia for the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities", which they had previously

developed. The publication represents a state of affairs at four universities in Serbia, as well as measures, recommendations and actions for a more successful management of intellectual property in the knowledge transfer process.

- To promote the publication, the HERE team, in collaboration with the rectorates of the Universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Nis and Novi Pazar, organized a series of info-days at which they presented the aforementioned recommendations.
- *HERE publication:* ["National recommendations for universities and institutes in Serbia for the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities"](#) (In Serbian)

Links to further details

HERE section of NEO website:

<http://erasmusplus.rs/european-networks/here-team/?langkl=lat>

List of HEREs on NEO website:

<http://erasmusplus.rs/european-networks/here-team/?langkl=lat>

HERE publication: ["National recommendations for universities and institutes in Serbia for the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities"](#) (In Serbian)

HERE event pages:

- [Info-days on "National Recommendation for HEI and Research Institutes on managing intellectual property in innovation transfer activities"](#)
- [Strengthening the capacity of study programs in the field of environmental protection](#)
- [Conference on "Organizational and Operational Aspects of Higher Education Applied Studies Programmes in Serbia"](#)

Country page on SPHERE website:

<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-serbia>

2016 HERE activities by country

Central Asia

KAZAKHSTAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The national HERE team in Kazakhstan is composed of 12 members (5 men and 7 women): 7 academic staff members from Almaty, one PhD student from Astana, 2 representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES, Astana), 1 representative of the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre under the MES, Astana, and 1 freelance expert (Almaty). The HERE team members represent 3 national leading universities and 1 autonomous institution (Nazarbayev University). The MES is represented by the Department of Higher and Post-Higher Education (DHPHE) and the Standard and Content Division within the DHPHE.

The areas of HEREs' specialisation correspond to the content of the reforms that are being implemented in the country: internationalisation of HE, academic mobility, HE system governance at national level, ECTS, innovations in education, academic policy of universities, e-learning, joint educational programmes, student self-governance, educational process governance, national and sectoral qualification frameworks, professional standards, strategic planning, development of competence based programmes, doctoral programmes, QA, accreditation, and HR policy of universities.



TAM Seminar on International Credit Mobility and ECTS, 14-15 April 2016, Narxoz University

Key developments in higher education in Kazakhstan in 2016

The major developments of the national education policies are reflected in the Law on Education and the State Programme for Education Development for 2011-2019. The latest developments are aiming

at developing university governance through the development of human potential, strengthening technological and management competences, enhancing autonomy of HE institutions, stimulating public-private partnerships and fostering closer links with the world of labour, and the provision of equal access to the best educational resources and technologies through implementing e-learning and promotion of student centred learning.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HEREs team initiates its activities in line with the higher education modernisation process in the country. The involvement of three new experts in the team helped to scale up the activities and improve the visibility of the team at the national level. The main focus is set on the development of legislative acts and by-laws along with training seminars, consultations, as well as presentations at national and international conferences and publications.

In 2016, the team members reassigned different fields of specialization between the individual experts, to ensure that the main areas of higher education reform are covered. At present the expertise of the team members is well recognized by the MES and the HEREs are consulted on specific topics. Four HERE are permanent members of governmental and ministerial working groups and made contributions to the development and adoption of the 2016–2019 State Programme on Education and Science Development. This was followed up by the development of a number of by-laws and amendments to the Law 'On Education' of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The majority of HEREs are also experts of the Independent Agency of Accreditation & Rating, the Republican Educational-Methodical Council and other national and international agencies, where they transfer their knowledge on HE modernisation in the form recommendations and guidance.

As a result of a TAM seminar on the topic of Double Degrees, a chapter on the procedure for the development of double degrees and joint educational programmes was introduced in the Rules of Organization of Educational Process by the MES.

The HEREs who attend international seminars or study visits, disseminate the learning content nationally through training seminars, conferences and publications. As a follow-up of the training

seminar 'Student-Centred Learning: Modern Approaches and Instruments', the 2016 HERE publication focused on the same theme.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

- Development of 10 strategic and normative documents defining the development of higher education for the next several years.
- Drafting of 10 amendments to the "Law of Education" that were essential for the efficient operation of HEIs.
- Assistance in the organisation of 10 training seminars for the academic community on QA, accreditation, strategic planning and university strategic development.
- Consultation on the implementation of a road map on introducing tri-lingualism for 2016-2020, in collaboration with the Academy of Education named after Y. Altynsarin.
- Survey on student-centred education involving 513 students from 11 universities in 4 regions, focused on how their universities meet the criteria of a student-centred approach and students' expectations. The results were presented at the TAM seminar "Student-Centred Learning: Modern Approaches and Instruments" in April 2016. As a follow-up of the TAM the HEREs prepared the 2016 publication "Student-Oriented Learning: Modern Approaches and Instruments".
- Three HEREs are active at the institutional level carrying out training activities and providing consultancy to their colleagues. In 2016, the HEREs organised 3 seminars in 3 different regions with the involvement of 276 participants on the themes "Academic policy of University" in Shymkent, "Development of competence based programmes" in Taraz and

"Strategic management in universities" in Atyrau.

- The HEREs were particularly active in preparing TAM proposals and in the organisation of the 4 TAM that were carried out in 2016.
- Together with the NEO and the Executive Agency, 5 HEREs contributed to prepare and conduct an Institutional Monitoring Visit and a Cluster Meeting which took place in October 2016: they mobilised the partner universities, prepared the exhibition of the project deliverables, assisted in the presentation of the projects and participated in the plenary and group work discussions.



7 HERE publications since 2009

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website
<http://www.erasmusplus.kz/index.php/en/here-en/about-nk-en>
- HERE publications or articles
<http://www.erasmusplus.kz/index.php/en/here-en/publications-2>
- HERE Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/HEREteam.kz/>

KYRGYZSTAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Kyrgyz HERE team consists of seven persons, two men and five women, who occupy different types of administrative / academic positions: two Rectors, one head of international relations department, a Vice-Rector, a Dean, an associate professor and a PhD student.

The composition of the team reflects various aspects of the on-going higher education reform process in the Kyrgyz Republic, and duties and responsibilities in the team are distributed accordingly. The experts are also members of working groups dealing with policy advice: the Public Expert Council for Education and Science under the President of Kyrgyz Republic, and the working groups of the Ministry of Education and Science. This allows the experts to actively participate in the development of strategic, regulatory and methodological documents aimed at creating a competitive national higher education system.



Meeting of the Kyrgyz HERE team

Key developments in higher education in Kyrgyzstan in 2016

The Higher education system in Kyrgyzstan is undergoing a transformation process in accordance with the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Kyrgyzstan until 2017 and the Education Development Strategy 2020.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyz Republic initiated a number of events aimed at adjusting the content and timing of reforms, as well as their interrelationships. One of central reforms in 2016 was the development of a draft Concept of the National Qualifications System with

the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Economy, as well as representatives of employers, professional lyceums, universities and the wider expert community. On 30 December 2016, the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science approved the concept of the National System of Qualifications and the draft concept is at present under consideration by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The second major reform is the development of the third cycle – PhD, doctoral programmes. 2016 is the third year of the implementation of PhD doctoral pilot programmes. As a result of the pilot, several amendments have been made to the Law “On Education” regarding the content, organization and financial support of PhD programs.

2016 was marked by a new stage in the implementation of the credit system based on ECTS. There was a transition from piloting credit system towards a large-scale use at the national level. A compilation of normative documents on the organization of educational process in universities with the use of a credit system was developed and approved by the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science on 30 December 2016.

2016 has also been important for the introduction of a quality assurance system for higher education and the development of a normative and methodological base for independent accreditation of HEIs. The minimum requirements for accredited educational organizations of primary, secondary and higher vocational education have been approved. Moreover, the national accreditation council has recognized two independent accreditation agencies that have a legal basis for conducting accreditation procedures.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The following support has been provided by the HERE team in 2016:

- Participation in expert discussions held by the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan on the development and amendments to the Law “On Education” regarding quality assurance and accreditation, e-learning, the national qualification

framework and the introduction of PhD degrees;

- Contribution to the development of amendments to the Law “On Science”: members of the HERE team made an evaluation of the activity of the Academy of Science and developed recommendations on the optimization of the reform, which was approved and covered also public funding for the development of science in the country;
- The guidelines on ECTS introduction in Kyrgyzstan were updated and submitted to the general meeting of experts under the Ministry of Education and Science. When the document will be approved, it will be published and disseminated by the NEO to all universities in the country;
- Development of the concept of National Qualification System in Kyrgyzstan; submitted to the Government for consideration and approval by all line ministries;
- Development of a profile for experts on programme and institutional accreditation in Kyrgyzstan;
- Based on the PhD pilot programme, the HERE team developed adjustments, recommendations and changes for the development and implementation of PhD programmes for the Education Council under the President of Kyrgyz Republic;
- Lobbying and promotion of documents produced by the Tempus UNIVIA project on the internationalisation of Kyrgyz universities;
- Development of a report on the implementation of national HE reforms and its presentation to members of the Education Council under the President of Kyrgyz Republic for further planning;
- Drafting of Guidelines on self-evaluation based on European Standards and Guidelines, which will be disseminated among all higher education institutions, and training on self –

evaluation as preparatory activity for independent accreditation planned in 2017.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The HERE experts have participated in several regional and international workshops on the **creation and development of the National qualification systems**, where the main areas of NQS in Kyrgyzstan were proposed. They were actively involved in the development of a draft National concept for the development of NQS with the participation of European experts. The final version of the document was approved on 30th of December 2016.



Presentation of HERE activities to Ambassador Peter Burian, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, 19 April 2016, Kyrgyz National University

2. The HERE experts actively participated in the development of regulatory documents on independent accreditation. On 4th of October 2016, the minimum requirements for accredited educational organizations of primary, secondary and higher vocational education have been approved. The experts developed methodical recommendations for self-assessment of HE educational programmes.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.kg/en/here-section/here-team/>

- HERE publications or articles -
<http://erasmusplus.kg/en/here-section/publications/>

TAJIKISTAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The HERE Team consists of 4 members, representing mainly universities and also the Ministry of Education and Sciences. The profiles of the experts include 2 vice-rectors, a professor and the head of the IR office of the Ministry of Education and Sciences. The involvement of the Ministry in the team brings an added value to the local activities and gives the opportunity to the Ministry to obtain important information on developments in higher education in the EU and the neighbouring countries.

Key developments in higher education in Tajikistan in 2016

Higher education reform is one of the key priorities in the country, therefore numerous steps have been taken by the government of Tajikistan to improve the education sector. The new National Strategy for Education Development 2020 places a greater emphasis on higher education for the accelerated socioeconomic development of the country, noting that “the availability of highly qualified specialists in science, production and management is a priority objective for the functioning of the education system.” The modernisation of the content of education, development and support of innovations, increase of the number of hours for self-study, change of the teacher's role in the educational process as well as the transfer to new pedagogical competence-based standards and module program with the engagement of the employers are the key objectives highlighted in the National education development strategy.

In 2016, the following legal and regulatory papers on Higher Education were developed and adopted:

- Governmental Decree on the "Approval of the State Standard of the Higher Education";
- Governmental Decree on the “State Standard of Doctoral studies in the specialty”;
- Ministerial Decree on the "Additional measures for the transition to a multi-level education system of the higher education and research institutions of the Republic of Tajikistan."

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE Team plays an active role in the higher education reform process, in particular through the

publication of articles in various national and university newspapers, the organization of round tables and seminars, and by taking part in various international projects. The seminars are aimed at promoting the best practices of European and Central Asian universities, e.g. on topics such as quality assurance in higher education and developing qualification frameworks. Some HEREs have initiated Erasmus+ projects, including bilateral mobility projects with European universities, which allow staff members to improve their skills in relation to building competences of students, developing learning outcomes etc. Furthermore, the HERE team provided support to the national authorities through their expertise and gained experience from the HERE seminars, by prioritizing the objectives and contributing to the development of proposals in the framework of the World Bank Higher Education Support Program.



Information seminar, 29 August 2016, Khorog State University

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The HERE Team has published 15 articles related to quality assurance, e-learning and teaching, joint diplomas and national qualifications frameworks.
2. The HERE Team provided expertise and support to the national authorities in the preparation of project proposals for the World Bank Higher Education Support Programme in order to prioritize the objectives relevant to higher education reform (the World Bank allocated 15 million \$ to support higher education). Universities were requested to prepare project proposals on various subjects for the organization of short term courses. The selected projects focused on capacity building and competence based training in tourism for students, migrants and other stakeholders.
3. Building on the “Qualifications frameworks: application and utility” seminar in Warsaw in September 2016, HEREs organized a training at a regional university on qualifications frameworks and on the development and implementation of

learning outcomes. The training covered aspects related to designing study programs based on learning outcomes and presented EU experience in the development of national and sectoral qualifications frameworks.



TAM Seminar on "Quality Assurance in Higher Education", 22 January 2016, Dushanbe Branch Moscow State University

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:

<http://erasmusplus.tj/?cat=16&lang=en>

- List of HEREs on NEO website:

<http://erasmusplus.tj/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/National-Team.pdf>

- HERE publications or articles: One of the HEREs prepared an article and an interview in the local media related to the Erasmus+ support to higher education reform process:

<http://www.news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20170113/nasha-tsel-povishenie-kachestva-vishego-obrazovaniya>

TURKMENISTAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The National Team of Higher Education Reform Experts in Turkmenistan has four members (one woman), including two university representatives (in the fields of botany and environment and linguistics), one national authority representative (expert in the policy and international relations), and one student studying economy and management. As to geographical coverage, it is limited to representatives from Ashgabat, due to the fact that the major part of higher education institutions is located in the capital.

Key developments in higher education in Turkmenistan in 2016

Turkmenistan continued reforms in the higher education sector in order to bring the HE system in line with international educational standards.

Turkmenistan is not a Bologna signatory country, but the increased interest to adopt the Bologna principles in the education system is reflected by the opening of the first Bachelor programmes in the country (in 2014), at the International University for Humanities and Development of Turkmenistan and in Oguzkhan University of Engineering and Technologies.

According to the Programme on the Development of Innovative Activity for 2015-2020, the Government assists the HEIs in expanding the application of innovative technologies and provides funding for the establishment of university science and technological parks, to develop such scientific areas as nano-, bio- and information technology, electronics, robotic engineering, genetics, molecular biology.

In 2016, Turkmenistan still faced the problems of labour market modifications in a fast growing economy. The education system is faced with the challenge of the high percentage of young people entering the labour market and the requirements of the local enterprises for qualified human resources

In the technical and engineering fields, many companies are being involved in collaboration with universities and institutes, where students in their last year of studies constitute a reserve of potential employees. These students are often given the opportunity to do practical placements in companies and defend their diploma projects. This helps to fill the gap between study and labour

marked which is typical of the modern higher education system.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

In 2016, the Turkmen HERE Team organized training events in the form of presentations and workshops on topics such as the impact of the Bologna process on reforms of HEIs, student-centred learning, and innovation technologies in higher education.



Presentation "Learning outcomes and student-centred learning", 2 May 2016, Turkmen National Institute of World Languages named after Azadi

The activities included events combining theory and practice, to reinforce the shared knowledge and skills. All meetings were addressed to the needs of the higher education institutions and helped teachers to have access to the information gained at the international HERE events.

The Turkmen team of HEREs also worked on counselling and advising HEIs' staff on the introduction and implementation of a Bologna Process strategy in their institution. There seems to be an increasing interest for the Bologna process, its principles, procedures and standards among HEIs' young personnel and students.

HEREs also published articles in newspapers and magazines on topics related to the modernization of university education.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. O. Nazarova, H. Haiyrov, Presentations of Petra and Tbilisi HERE seminar materials on E-Learning during the "round table" discussions organized by the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan, April 2016, Ashgabat.
2. B. Izmailov, Analytical article "Learning Outcomes and Student-Centred Learning". DIYAR (Overview of the Tallinn HERE study visit results). August, 2016 (in English):

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
<http://www.erasmusplus.org.tm/en/heres/>
- List of HEREs on NEO website:
<http://www.erasmusplus.org.tm/en/heres/higher-education-reform-teams/>
- HERE publications or articles:
<http://www.erasmusplus.org.tm/en/heres/publications>
- HERE event pages:
<http://www.erasmusplus.org.tm/en/heres/events>

UZBEKISTAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The national HERE team of Uzbekistan consists of 11 members, who represent different higher education institutions and regions of the country. The team includes two representatives of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education (MHSSE), a doctoral student, and the other members are mainly HEIs' staff of different levels and backgrounds (e.g. finance, politics, engineering, medicine, philology and journalism). The team membership is periodically updated, mainly due to team members' changing work positions. For instance, in 2016, three members left the team for this reason, and a representative of the Cabinet of Ministers (who is in charge of education) was included into the team.



TAM on "Best practices of English teaching methodology for non-linguistic educational programmes and teachers", 14-15 January 2016, Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies

Key developments in higher education in Uzbekistan in 2016

During 2016, several changes have occurred in the field of higher education. One of the considerable reforms is a full modernisation of Bachelor and Master curricula, on the basis of best practices of successful universities of the world. The modernisation includes new requirements for teaching staff, who should show good knowledge in foreign languages and IT skills, in addition to their professional competences. In the context of the reform, study programmes have been revised and updated, taking into account the increasing labour market requirements. Moreover, new study materials (mainly books) have been introduced and translated into Uzbek, to replace some of the old literature. It should be highlighted that achievements of Tempus and Erasmus+ CBHE projects in curriculum development are being

widely implemented into the higher education system.

Furthermore, in the second half of the year, discussions were launched on doctoral degree reforms, with the involvement of HEREs. The main objective of the reforms is a better integration of local doctoral students into the foreign scientific community and the education of Doctors with high potential and competences. It has been decided that, from July 2017, a two level doctoral degree (PhD and Doctor of science) will be introduced in the country.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HEREs' contribution to higher education development of the country can be seen for example in the organisation of Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) on topics which are highly relevant to the latest reforms in the sector. The TAM topics have been developed by HEREs according to the priorities of the country and approved by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education (MHSSE). Three TAMs were organised in 2016 on the following topics: Best practices of English teaching, Doctoral degree issues and E-learning perspectives. All TAMs were organised in cooperation with MHSSE and disseminated via national mass media (TV, radio and online publishing). Moreover, HEREs regularly reported to the MHSSE on latest developments within the Bologna Process, based on information acquired during their international study visits to European Universities. It should be underlined that the aim of joining the Bologna Declaration is included in the Strategy of Actions for Further Development of The Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. HEREs issued the fourth Annual publication "Perspectives of higher education development", with 16 articles. This publication is made available on the NEO website and distributed among the Uzbek HEIs. The content of the publication presents topics related to current issues in the country's higher education. The accepted articles provide information on HE reforms in the European countries and in Uzbekistan, based on reports and analytical materials produced by HEREs and other leading experts.
2. Three TAMs were organised in cooperation with the NEO and MHSSE. The TAM on "Introduction of the single 3rd cycle (doctorate level) in Uzbekistan:

research results, scientific papers and preparation of a thesis”, with the participation of prof. Michael Paul Fuller from Plymouth University, can be mentioned as a good practice example. The event was highly evaluated by the participants, and let them understand the main differences between the European and local system of doctoral studies. Moreover, participants learnt best practices of doctoral studies in EU, which can be applied to the local system with some revision. As a follow up of the TAM, another TAM on “Doctoral studies management” was organised in 2017.



TAM on “Perspectives of E-learning and ICT based education: applicability of best practices in Uzbek Higher Education Institutions”, 11-12 November 2016, Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

3. HEREs provided the MHSSE upon request with materials and briefings related to higher education. Apart reports on international HERE events and seminar materials, HEREs Igor Vikhrov, Zebo Isakova, Pulatkhon Lutfullayev, Nazokat Kasymova provided the Ministry with comprehensive materials and analytical briefs on European HE or Bologna process related issues (latest developments in the Bologna Process; European experience of hiring staff/teachers for HEI; qualification frameworks; doctoral education).

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.uz/heres/Goals-and-Objectives/index.htm>
- List of HEREs on NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.uz/heres/Team/index.htm>
- HERE publications or articles:
<http://erasmusplus.uz/publication/Publications-of-Experts/index.htm>
- HERE Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/uzheres/>
- Country page on SPHERE website:
<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-uzbekistan>

2016 HERE activities by country
Eastern Partnership countries

ARMENIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Armenian HERE Team consists of 8 experts - six women and two men, who represent different universities as well as the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility. The range of their professional profiles covers diverse academic fields, such as linguistics, medicine, social sciences, economics, mathematics, physics, and management. Regarding the distribution of functional duties within the team, each expert, based on his/her practical experience in the reform processes, leads several specific activities, aimed at addressing the issues of the national reform agenda. The expertise covers both traditional Bologna lines - mobility, internationalisation, three-cycle system, ECTS and recognition, qualification framework, quality assurance, lifelong learning, knowledge-triangle, student-centred learning, university governance - and also issues related to support to the academic community and responsible bodies to find solutions to the challenges arising during the implementation.

Key developments in higher education in Armenia in 2016

2016 witnessed a number of significant developments in higher education that were the result of the whole previous period of reforms. The provisions of the new draft law on higher education should also have a significant impact on the acceleration and deepening of the process of reforming the system of higher education in Armenia.

The most important change that will impact on compatibility and easier integration of the Armenian Higher Education system to the European Higher Education Area is the transformation of the traditional post-Soviet system of scientific degrees (Candidate of Sciences and Doctor of Sciences) to the common European system of three-cycle Higher Education, by introducing the PhD degree and further revoking the dual system of degrees.

The adoption of the National Qualifications Framework by the governmental decree ensured breakthrough changes in the reform processes. The development of five sectorial qualifications frameworks and the whole package of the related documents (such as strategy of implementation,

manual for stakeholders, guide for curriculum development, etc.) are an important contribution to the fostering of reforms.

Furthermore, changes took place in 2016 in the Government of the Republic of Armenia, including the appointment of a new Prime Minister. This gave a stimulus to redirect reforms in certain areas, including Higher Education.

The Ministry of Education and Science established several Working groups with university and labour market representatives in order to:

- develop a legal basis for establishing university endowment funds;
- create network Universities and educational-scientific clusters;
- improve the quality and effectiveness of Higher Education through new teaching and learning methods and integration of ICT tools into the learning process;

Key developments occurred also in the field of Research. For example, the Government of Armenia adopted new Procedures on access and learning at Doctoral level, to ensure the compatibility of Doctoral education with Bologna and Salzburg Principles.

The internationalisation of Higher Education remains as priority for the Government of Armenia. In line with this priority the Working groups created by the Ministry are concentrating on the revision of «Mobility Procedures of Higher Education Institutions», to bring them in line with the internationalisation tendencies of Higher Education in Armenia. An important contribution to the process comes from the Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects such as HARMONY and BOOST, that are focused on the institutional empowerment in the internationalisation area.

As a significant progress in 2016, 10 state Higher Education Institutions out of 16 changed their legal status to Foundation, which provides wider opportunities for autonomy. The process is continuing at other institutions.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE activities to contribute to the reform processes in the Armenian Higher Education system were closely fit to the set of the priorities identified and discussed with the Ministry of Education and Science and other stakeholders. Innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods were selected as the most urgent issues.

The members of the team made use of the tools provided by their mandate, such as the organisation of Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs), dissemination seminars and workshops, trying to find practical ways to impact on the specific areas.



Seminar "Higher Education development pathways in the frames of employment, research and innovation", 22 December 2016, Armenian State Pedagogical University

It is also worth mentioning the active involvement of the HEREs in discussions on the new draft law on education in different formats and platforms. It will not be an overstatement to say that many progressive provisions were included in the draft thanks to the expertise provided by the team.

Another important HERE activity is increasing public awareness about the current developments in Higher Education at both European and national levels. Series of interviews and media publications for public radio, electronic media and the most popular newspapers were initiated by the team members. The topics covered university governance and autonomy, changes in teaching and learning approaches, development of e-Learning systems, and modernisation and internationalisation of Armenian universities.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The workshop "Linking Intended Learning Outcomes to Teaching/Learning Activities and Assessment Forms" that took place on 18-19 February 2016 within a TAM mission. It was a practical event for selected university teachers from different Armenian Higher Education Institutions, which armed them with proper instruments and skills for redesigning their courses in terms of using proper teaching, learning and

assessment methods. It is an urgent issue of the agenda of reforms of the Armenian Higher Education sector.

2. The workshop "Teaching and Learning: Enhancement Tools" on 16-17 June 2016. This seminar dealt with the necessity to formulate a new vision of higher education in order to cope with the current challenges of the global economy. The experts helped the local trainees to learn how a vision can be turned into a corresponding mission and strategy as well as how to link it with the latest insights in quality assurance. After the successful TAMs designed jointly with the invited experts, the members of the HERE team proceeded to organise a series of workshops that were focused on the wider dissemination of the knowledge and skills gained during the cooperation.

3. The workshop for students "Innovating learning and teaching - Student-centred style of education" organised on May 28 aimed to underline the importance of innovations in studying process and discuss the differences between the teacher-centred and student-centred models of teaching and learning. Moreover, a seminar for students in two regional universities on "Quality assurance and student-centred learning and teaching" discussed the student-centred learning and teaching styles and the possibilities that students have to make their voices heard.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <https://erasmusplus.am/here/>
- List of HEREs on NEO website: <https://erasmusplus.am/here/>
- HERE publications or articles: <https://erasmusplus.am/here-publications/>
- Interviews in Armenian: https://soundcloud.com/armradio/22102016a-1?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook
- <http://www.aravot.am/2016/11/02/822204/>
- <http://www.aravot.am/2016/11/03/822904>
- <http://www.aravot.am/2016/10/31/821867>
- HERE event page: <https://erasmusplus.am/here-activities/>

AZERBAIJAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The HERE team in Azerbaijan includes three experts from the Ministry of Education, two experts from private universities and five from state universities. The profile of the represented HEIs varies from Pedagogy to Architecture, and provides a balanced picture of the HEIs in Azerbaijan. Most of the experts coming from the universities are either vice-rectors for international relations or heads of international relations offices.

The HERE team in Azerbaijan is rather gender balanced: six out of the ten experts are female and four male.

Key developments in higher education in Azerbaijan in 2016

The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 2012 the Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future" and in 2013 the Strategy for the Development of Education in Azerbaijan by 2025, which determines the purpose, objectives/goals, directions, instruments and mechanisms for the development of the education system in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Government influences the Higher Education through accreditation, internationalization and specific support:

- Accreditation Committee: the main Quality Assurance institution; the Ministry of Education can set only general rules;
- Internationalization: reflects also the quality of the education, e.g. via mobility or employability of graduates;
- Specific support: includes policy recommendations, action plans for improvement and advisory for HEIs.

At present, the students' knowledge is assessed by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan Republic, approved by the order on the "Exam subjects regulations on students studying under credit system" and "Regulation of students' knowledge studying under credit system". The above-mentioned temporary regulations are the first legislation that would require the scoring system to evaluate students' knowledge after joining of the Bologna Process in 2005.

One of the most important developments in 2016 includes the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 5 February "PhD, universities, secondary and primary vocational education institutions, students and pupils of the procedure for allocation and payment of scholarships".

The resolution aims:

- To improve the quality of education by creating a competitive environment among learners;
- To increase learners' activeness in the educational process;
- To stimulate interest in education;
- To ensure the appointment of a full scholarship.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Ministry of Education is actively collaborating with the HERE team. For instance, the recent Twinning project at the Ministry of Education under the title: "Support to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for further adherence of the higher education system to the European Higher Education Area" has included all HERE team members into their activities such as workshops, roundtable discussions and trainings. The experts were able to share their experience and contribute to the Ministry of Education initiative to promote HE reforms in the country.



HERE presentation at the event "Erasmus+ perspectives for HEIs and international cooperation", 10 March 2016, Khazar University

Moreover, several members of the HERE team contribute with their experience acquired via international HERE training activities to the following internal working groups of the Ministry of the Education:

- teaching process organization at the university;
- Higher Education textbooks;
- Disabled students' access to higher education;
- Vocational Education and HE.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Support to the work of the Ministry of Education in Azerbaijan.

Several HERE participate in working groups at the ministry. Experts have the possibility to contribute with their experience to the development of new quality standards and guidelines (e.g. on the accreditation process) in line with the Bologna process for further adherence of the higher education system to the European higher education area.

2. "Joint degrees in Azerbaijan. Where we are and what could be done?"

In this event, HEREs have shared with colleagues from Azerbaijani HEIs various aspects related to joint degrees. Around 60 participants from different universities attended the event, mainly

representatives of International Relations Offices who are dealing with the development of joint degrees. As a result, the participants had a possibility to get acquainted with the perspectives of the cooperation within joint degrees and also to better understand the value of mobility for the institution and the need for necessary resources to run quality programmes.

Links to further details

List of HEREs on NEO website

http://erasmusplus.org.az/?page_id=971

Country page on SPHERE website

<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-azerbaijan>

BELARUS

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) Team

During 2016 the Belarus national HERE team was composed of 10 experts. The team was chaired by the Head of the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education. Seven experts represent HEIs located in Minsk and two represent HEIs in the regions. The majority of experts represent state universities. All experts, except the student representative, hold positions of chiefs/heads of departments or vice rectors, which makes possible for them to have access to different stakeholders in higher education (academic staff, students, Ministry of Education, relevant international organizations) in their HERE capacity.



Meeting of the Belarussian HERE team

Key developments in higher education in Belarus in 2016

The existing model of higher education is undergoing system changes, which are caused both by the national needs and the participation of Belarus in the EHEA. The Belarus Roadmap for higher education reform, adopted at the Yerevan Conference in 2015, provides a number of specific objectives and commitments to reform higher education (such as bringing the HE degree structure in line with the agreed Bologna model, developing the national qualifications framework, establishing an independent quality assurance agency, adopting transparency instruments (European Diploma Supplement and ECTS), increasing internationalization of higher education and mobility, enhancing institutional autonomy, etc).

The main legal act in the field of education of Belarus (the Education Code) is currently under revision. Amendments regarding the above mentioned reform directions (developed with the

assistance of Belarussian HEREs) were included into the draft of the document.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Belarussian HEREs are represented in working groups at both international and national levels:

- BFUG Advisory Group “AG 2 – Support for the Belarus Roadmap”
- BFUG Working group “WG 2 – Implementation – Fostering implementation of agreed key commitments”
- Working group “Drafting amendments to the Education Code”
- Working group on NQF development

At national level, draft amendments to the legal acts concerning higher education were developed with the assistance and consultation of the HERE team. These amendments foresee the following:

- Introduction of three types of higher education programmes: Bachelor programmes (basic higher education, mostly 4 years), Master programmes (advanced higher education, mostly 2 years) and continuous programs (long cycle higher education, 5-6 years). The postgraduate programmes are kept within a separate type of research-based education.
- Introduction of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for higher education. In 2016, a special Working Group on the NQF for higher education was created. The Group produced the methodology of the NQF for higher education, prepared a draft NQF and an action plan for further development. The draft NQF describes in terms of competencies the levels and cycles of the national higher education system.
- Development of the concept of new national educational standards. The overall idea is to make the learning outcomes of existing study programmes competence-based and more flexible. A national platform for public discussion was created with the support of the HEREs: <http://www.edustandard.by>. Higher Education Institutions (HEI) will be able to independently develop and implement a variable component of the educational

standard content (so that up to 50% at 1st cycle and up to 70% at 2nd cycle will be defined by HEIs).

- National Diploma Supplements in line with the European Diploma Supplement are to be issued together with Bachelor's degree diplomas, Master's degree diplomas will be delivered in Russian, Belarusian and English once the new legislation comes into force.

At institutional level, the HEREs provided trainings and organized meetings at HEIs, presenting different aspects of reforming higher education systems, promoting the Erasmus+ programme and EHEA tools, disseminating best practices and international experience gained during their participation in international seminars.



HERE presentation at Erasmus+ information day, 1 November 2016, Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

- The main achievement of HEREs in 2016 is their constant active participation in the

implementation of the Bologna roadmap in Belarus.

- National seminar for HEIs' top management representatives: "Development of qualifications and educational programmes system", Minsk, 28.01.2016
- Information Day for students: "Belarus in the European Higher Education Area", Minsk, 31.05.2016
- National round-table discussion: "EHEA Tools Implementation in the National System of Higher Education", Minsk, 12.10.2016

Examples of events organised by HEREs at national level show that different stakeholders have been reached when promoting the reform of higher education. During the events, various aspects of higher education reform, in line with the EHEA model, were discussed. This helped in raising awareness within the academic community and contributed to the preparation of amendments to the national legislation (see section above).

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <http://erasmus-plus.belarus.unibel.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3611>

- List of HEREs on NEO website: <http://erasmus-plus.belarus.unibel.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3621>

- HERE publications or articles: <http://erasmus-plus.belarus.unibel.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3641>

- HERE event pages: <http://erasmus-plus.belarus.unibel.by/ru/main.aspx?guid=3631>

GEORGIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

HERE Georgia team involves ten experts, representing the universities from the capital (Tbilisi) and the regional cities (Kutaisi & Batumi), the Ministry of Education and Science, the national accreditation agency (National Center for Education Quality Enhancement) and the non-governmental sector.

HEREs in Georgia have the following professional profiles: university rector, two vice-rectors, professors, head of quality assurance department and accreditation expert, head of ministerial department for higher education and science, member of accreditation council, leading educational experts of NGOs and a student. Some experts also combine academic and administrative positions. The profiles of the experts ensure full coverage of all aspects and institutions relevant for the Higher Education reform in the country. And last but not least, this is a strongly female dominated team - only three out of ten experts are male.

Key developments in higher education in Georgia in 2016

Two main aspects of higher education reform in Georgia in 2016 are the enhancement of higher education quality (e.g. via the international dimension of quality assurance) and increased student activity, forcing legal changes regulating students' involvement in HEI governance.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Being a university rector, vice-rector, deputy minister, head of ministerial department and member of accreditation council does necessarily mean regular involvement in higher education reforms. But being a HERE team member gives additional power and credibility for reform implementation. Georgian HEREs have been initiating the following types of activities:

- research projects, providing data for the education policy development (in 2016 this was the plagiarism survey – please see below);
- developing original guidelines and recommendations, translating European documents (such as ESG and DFG tutorials – please see the point 2 below);

- organizing seminars, conferences, discussions in Tbilisi and in the regions in order to disseminate the information on modern trends in HE development in Europe and worldwide.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. “The Problem of Plagiarism and its Perception in Georgia” is a survey report, produced by HERE and NEO teams, highlighting the official policy, existing practice, and the attitudes regarding plagiarism in Georgian HEIs, as expressed in official documents, in interviews and in focus groups. A set of recommendations for universities and local authorities (Ministry of Education and Science, accreditation agency) was developed, in order to foster academic integrity and thus enhance the quality of education and research. Project findings were intensely discussed during regional seminars and a final conference in Tbilisi (22.09.2016), and served as a basis for developing a new national CBHE project proposal on preventing and fighting plagiarism at Georgian HEIs. Specific recommendations have also been reflected in changes in authorisation standards (see below).

The full text of the survey report is available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8EsOg5UNGftd2IzZkhYYVFLUFU/view>



Chair of the HERE team, Dr Ketevan Gurchiani presenting the report “Plagiarism and its Perception in Georgia” during a radio interview on 28 September 2016, Radio Liberty Georgia

2. The Georgian HERE team is traditionally providing translations of documents which are relevant for on-going HE reforms. Two documents were translated into Georgian in 2016:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) Georgian translation published also on ENQA website <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>

- Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice – the DFG recommendations for researchers, institutions and donor organizations.

E-versions were uploaded on the NEO website <http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications> and hard copies disseminated to all the relevant stakeholders.

3. Eight out of ten experts were directly involved in developing new authorisation standards and modifying existing ones. The final version presented on 6-7.12.2016 by the national accreditation agency and featuring specific recommendations provided by HEREs, focused on the following areas:

- improving international mobility recognition
- enhancing internationalisation of QA

- introduction of anti-plagiarism procedures into the institutional regulatory documents.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website, including list of HEREs <http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/experts>

- HERE publications
<http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications>

- HERE Facebook page (combined FB page for NEO & HERE)
<https://www.facebook.com/National-Erasmus-Office-Georgia-1401668916764629/>

MOLDOVA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The HERE team in Moldova is composed of seven members. The majority of them - five members - represent university staff, one member comes from the Ministry of Education of Moldova and one represents the Students Alliance of Moldova. The majority of university representatives of the HERE team have important positions in their higher education institutions - four out of five members are university rectors and vice-rectors. This structure allows the HERE team in Moldova to operate with a significant impact on the implementation of reforms at HEI level. The team has a good gender balance, as it consists of four women and three men.

Key developments in higher education in Moldova in 2016

Fundamental changes in the higher education system of Moldova have occurred starting from 2005, after joining the Bologna Process. Another round of changes started in 2014 with the adoption of the new Education Code. During 2016, profound changes have continued through the improvement of the legal framework and the development of policies on higher education. Thus, a new methodology was adopted at national level for external quality assessment and for accreditation of study programmes in higher education. The new legislative framework also includes since 2016 recommendations on student participation in the quality assessment process in higher education.

The activity of new doctoral schools and doctoral higher education programmes (third cycle) within HEIs, higher education consortia and international partnerships were authorised by a Government decision. A methodology was established for organising a national competition of doctoral schools' scientific projects in order to obtain grants from the state budget.

The new regulation framework for teaching and research positions in the field of higher education was elaborated and adopted by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The contribution of the Moldovan HERE team members has had an impact at different levels. Each HERE was involved in the organisation of national and international events. The activities performed at the individual level and in the frame of national working groups have contributed to the better adjustment of national legislation to European standards in higher education. The HEREs were actively involved in all Technical Assistance Missions (TAM), organised in Moldova, through the presentation of best practices and their university experiences in key issues.

The HERE representing the Students Alliance of Moldova organised several events at the national level for students and student's self-governance structures, especially in the universities situated outside of the capital – in Balti and in Cahul.

Having one HERE representing the Ministry of Education allowed to have a very close interaction with the national authorities. In 2016, the HERE in question (Nadejda Velisco) produced a survey and analytical report on University governance bodies after one year of functioning. This study points out the challenges and achievements of the new dual university governance structure (the University Senate and the Strategic Development Board with external members), adopted in 2014 by the new Education Code. The results of this study were presented in September 2016, during the TAM dedicated to this topic.



TAM on “University Governance Structures after one year of functioning: evaluating challenges and achievements”, 6 September 2016, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The HERE team members have contributed to important legislative amendments, such as the new national regulation regarding the activity and remuneration of members of the Institutional Strategic Development; the National Reference Framework for the University Curriculum, based on

the principle of student-centred learning; the national regulations regarding the organisation of post-doctoral programmes; the procedure of appointment in the teaching, scientific and research positions in higher education etc.

2. On the basis of the successful experience, the Moldovan HERE team continued with the second edition of the annual HEREs publication "Current trends in higher education in the Republic of Moldova". This publication has been distributed during the NEO events organised in Moldova and allows to ensure a better visibility of HERE activities.



TAM on "Internationalisation in Higher Education. Role of International Relations Offices in the Moldovan HEIs - support or leadership?", 25 April 2016, Free International University of Moldova

3. The HERE team contributed considerably to the successful development of all three Technical

Assistance Missions organised by the National Erasmus+ Office during 2016. The elaborated TAM topics raised great interest and discussion (the last two seminars were attended each by 100-150 participants). The HERE team members participated with personal presentations in each of the three TAMs.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website with the list of HEREs
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/article/heres-higher-education-reform-experts>
- HERE publications or articles
http://www.erasmusplus.md/sites/default/files/pdf/revista_tendintele_actuale_2016_2_web.pdf
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/publications>
- HERE event pages
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/evenimente>
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/news/frederik-de-decker-moldovan-universities-distinguish-yourself-others>
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/news/university-governance-structures-after-one-year-functioning-evaluating-challenges-and>
<http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/news/supervising-doctoral-students-good-practices>

UKRAINE

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Ukrainian team of Higher Education Reform Experts was renewed in 2017, with new members joining the team. Now the team consists of 15 members, including seven women and eight men. Experts represent all geographical regions of Ukraine – North-Central, Southern, Eastern and Western.

Representatives of public authorities, including Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and Parliament Committee for Science and Education, as well as Heads and Deputies of Universities and Research Institutions, Professors and a Bachelor Student are all relevant members in the context of higher education reform in Ukraine.

The experts' profiles are diverse and they cover the following fields: Education, Arts and Humanities, Business and Administration, Law, Health and Welfare, Social Sciences, Information and Communication Technology, Engineering, Transport services, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics. Their expertise also covers different aspects of the Bologna process, including quality assurance, Three-cycle Higher Education, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), National Qualification Framework, Recognition, Autonomy and Governance, "knowledge triangle", Integration of Higher Education and Research Areas, Internationalization and Mobility.

Key developments in higher education in Ukraine in 2016

Key changes in higher education have taken place in the framework of the implementation of the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (2014), which is compatible with the Bologna Process.

The Regulation on PhD education implementation and Regulations on National Qualification Framework Implementation Plan were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2016.

The National Quality Assurance Agency started its self-organisation activities in 2016-2017 (Secretariat was formed; Head and five Deputy Heads were elected; list of NQAA elected members and leadership was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for approval). An amendment to the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education"

concerning the competition procedure for the establishment of NQAA was prepared.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine formed Scientific and Methodical Commissions (SMCs) that have to develop 250 Higher Education Standards to the end of 2017. Each SMC consists of experts in the relevant subject area (detailed field) of education.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Experts are among the active members of the national working group on the development of Draft Law of Ukraine "On Education", in line with the European integration process. They also contributed to other relevant legislative and guiding documents (e.g. Guide for Higher Education Standards Development in line with new Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" and ESG 2015 – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; Draft Regulation on PhD education implementation in line with Bologna process etc).

The expert team also worked in constant consultation with the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine and the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education regarding issues related to the development of the Quality Assurance system.



Cluster Seminar for Tempus and Erasmus+ Structural Projects, 17 November 2016, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Based on findings of the Cluster Seminars on Outcomes of Tempus & Erasmus+ Structural Projects, recommendations were produced for reforming Higher Education (national and institutional levels) and for guiding the project teams on how to ensure a national impact of project outcomes. These recommendations were

provided to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and to Ukrainian Universities.

Moreover, the HERE team contributed to building the capacities of Ukrainian higher education institutions to implement reforms based on Bologna Tools by organising practical training events, including for Tempus and Erasmus+ project teams (trainings, workshops, seminars, conferences).

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The experts actively participated in the development of the draft Law of Ukraine "On Education", which passed first reading in the Parliament in 2016. They also provided expertise of 47 drafts of the Higher Education Standards.



HERE Seminar for Higher Education and Research Institutions on PhD Programme implementation, 4 April 2016, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

2. The Experts built capacities of Ukrainian universities to implement reforms in the field of higher education through a series of events:

- Series of 8 seminars for 430 members of Scientific and Methodical Commissions, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine, on the development of new standards in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area;
- International Conference on the Bologna Process;
- Seminar-round table on Higher education and research integration for enhancing quality of higher education;
- National round table on Development of Educational Programme using ECTS, Quality Assurance, learning outcomes and students-centred approach and implementation of PhD programmes;

- Workshop on the Development of the National Quality Assurance System in Ukraine in line with Bologna Process: University Quality Assurance internal systems and Quality Assurance Agency;
- Seminar-training for 330 participants on 3rd cycle programmes implementation and licencing, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

All materials and on-line recordings are available as a valuable resource-base to be used by universities.

3. The Experts prepared a useful resources database on key publications and translations of the documents to be used for the modernization of higher education (e.g. Ukrainian translation of "A Tuning Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles" (CoRe) to be used by the universities while modernizing their curricula; English language translation of The List of Fields of Study and Programmes Study Areas in the Field of Higher Education for university correct usage of UNESCO Education Fields names during the preparation of the Diploma Supplement.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/erasmus/ka3-support-to-policy-reforms/national-here-team.html>
- List of HEREs on NEO website:
<http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/erasmus/ka3-support-to-policy-reforms/national-here-team/178-national-team-of-higher-education-reform-experts-here.html>
- HERE presentations, publications:
<http://erasmusplus.org.ua/korysna-informatsiia/korysni-materialy/category/3-materialy-natsionalnoi-komandy-ekspertiv-shchodo-zaprovadzhennia-instrumentiv-bolonskoho-protsehu.html?start=40>
- HERE event pages:
<http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/erasmus/ka3-support-to-policy-reforms/national-here-team/events-and-materials.html>
- HERE Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/NEOinUkraine/?fref=pf&pnref=story>

2016 HERE activities by country

Russian Federation

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The HERE team comprises 15 members, five men and ten women (which reflects the overall gender situation in Russian higher education). The experts' profiles include one rector, four vice-rectors for international relations, three vice-rectors for quality assurance/research, five heads/directors of International relations units/international projects departments/units/centres, one head of academic mobility office and one department head. They represent the geographic diversity of HE institutions in the country (covering most Federal Regions, namely the Central, North-Western, Siberian, Urals, Southern and Volga Federal Regions). The HEREs work at leading universities in their regions, their institutions having an established reputation and traditions that are recognized by their peers, not only regionally but also on the national level.



TAM training "Development of competence-based PhD and Master Programmes", 23-24 March 2016, EU Delegation to Russia

Key developments in higher education in Russia in 2016

One of the reform priorities is moving towards quality enhancement in higher education by means of informing HE standards and programmes by occupational standards currently under development. These activities are coordinated by the National Qualifications Council established by Presidential Decree in April 2014. The focus is on enhancing labour market relevance and employability of university graduates for the benefit of the country's development based on innovations. The Ministry of Education and Science has approved the methodology of developing HE

standards and curricula based on occupational standards.

Another priority is the internationalisation of higher education. In this context, updated ministerial documents on the use of ECTS have been adopted and a new report on the Bologna process implementation in RF has been drafted. Aspects of internationalization are also included in the self-assessment of universities and in the annual monitoring of universities performed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE team has supported the above-mentioned reform priorities in different ways.

Certain HEREs contributed by being part of the ministerial group on the Bologna Process. They have been actively facilitating the implementation of the Yerevan decisions and the adopted materials across the HE system.

Others contributed by articles published in peer reviewed journals, by promoting EHEA ideas and practices at regional and national conferences, or by providing inputs to programmes of professional development of teachers and staff at their own universities as well as regionally.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Publications in peer reviewed journals (15), including the following:

"Occupational standards in teaching specialists for the modern labour market", Vasileva Elena, Gorbashko Elena, Pat Gray. Standards and Quality, №7 (949)2016
<http://www.ria-stk.ru/stq/adetail.php?ID=103270>

"Internationalization in the Perm region", Natalya Dobrynina. Perm local newspaper.
<http://zvzda.ru/interviews/6568db952873>

"Practice of the implementation of effective European tools of quality assurance in the Russian educational system" (in Russian), Kamynina N. Conference review in Izvestia newspaper, 18.11.2016, №216

2. Contributions to the development of the methodology of HE standards and curriculum development based on occupational standards (participation in the updating of the methodology). Example of contributions:

"Why we need a Qualification Framework and occupational standards for creative industry" - a presentation made by a HERE at the Convention Bureau, Saint Petersburg, to labour market and HEI stakeholders on the use of EU tools to enhance quality assurance in Higher Education and ways to involve labour market stakeholders in the process of qualifications development for new industries.

3. Promotion of Erasmus+ opportunities regionally and support to regional university teams to develop project proposals and seek partners for instance through project Idea Cafés moderated by the HEREs during the Info sessions on Erasmus+ events.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website

<http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/ru/eksperty>

- HERE section in English:

<http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/ru/info-eng/58-higher-education-reform-experts>

- List of HEREs on NEO website

<http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/ru/eksperty/26-sostav-komandy-ekspertov>

- HERE event pages

<http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/ru/eksperty/39-sobytiya-obzory-i-komentarii>

2016 HERE activities by country

South-Mediterranean countries

ALGERIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

Established in February 2016, the current Algerian HERE team consists of ten experts. Five of them are high officials of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS), the Director General of Training in the MESRS serving as Chairperson of the group. The President of the National Committee of Quality Assurance in MESRS and the Director of Pedagogy at MESRS are also among the team members, together with four professors and one vice-rector.

Gender balance is ensured as there are five women and five men among the HEREs. In terms of geographical coverage, there are five HEREs from the Ministry located in the capital, Algiers, three representing the West of Algeria, one HERE from the East and one from the South of the country.

Key developments in higher education in Algeria in 2016

A National Conference was held in January 2016, to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the LMD system ("licence – master – doctorat" i.e. Bachelor – Master - Doctorate) with all involved stakeholders. The domains evaluated were: the implementation of actions towards the execution of the reform, the assessment of the three cycles and the relationship with the socioeconomic sector. The workshops recommended a series of actions to be launched in the same year. They targeted a change in governance (management through digital support), training schemes (Masters of excellence, integrated BA-Master programs), international cooperation (training abroad, M.A in international cooperation) and curriculum content development (social sciences, tourism, new and renewable energies).

The same year saw the expansion of Institutes of Technology, offering professional degrees in civil engineering, milk industries, agro-food industry, and mechanical engineering. BA-Master integrated degree courses involve today universities, scientific research laboratories and the socioeconomic environment. Scientific advanced fields are thus proposed as subjects of study, namely petrochemical and mechanical engineering, pharmaceutical process engineering, aerospace propulsion, electronic industries and engineering of polymers.

This policy has been undertaken with a view to remedying to the identified malfunctions, whether structural or institutional. The reform is seen more than the mere implementation of new curricula. Pedagogy, educational support, and employability on the one hand, and modes of governance on the other, are being developed in order to bring in 'good practices'. University reform is rightly understood to be a systemic undertaking needing the participation of more stakeholders; something that is taking time.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The contribution of the HEREs in the actions previously mentioned were carried out through meetings with MESRS officials and other stakeholders, organised by the HEREs who had attended the international HERE study visits, seminars and conferences. They also participated in local dissemination sessions.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

Three Algerian HEREs organised three follow-up meetings to disseminate and share the knowledge and the best practices learnt from the international events organised by SPHERE. The three meetings were organised in different regions as part of the Erasmus+ local info days:

- in Batna (East of Algeria) on 3rd November 2016
- in Bouira (Centre) on 21st November 2016
- in Oran (West) on 30th November 2016.



Erasmus+ Info Day in Batna, 3 November 2016

The participants attending the dissemination events were rectors, vice-rectors, academics, heads of laboratories, professors, administrative staff, students, and representatives of local press agencies and radio stations.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website, including the list of HEREs: <http://erasmusplus.dz/heres-algerie/>

- HERE event pages: <http://erasmusplus.dz/heres-2/activites/nationales/>

<http://erasmusplus.dz/heres-2/activites/internationales/>

EGYPT

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team.

The composition of the Egyptian HERE team takes into consideration geographical distribution (current members of the HERE team are from universities covering most of the geographical regions in Egypt), gender (five out of 15 members are women) age groups (senior and Junior members), and profile (presidents/Vice Presidents of Universities, Professors, and Teaching Staff, as well as a member from the National Agency of Quality Assurance).



Members of the Egyptian HERE team

Members of the team are covering various disciplines and specialities in Higher Education, and are all well aware of the international developments in Higher Education and especially the European Higher Education Area.

Key developments in higher education in Egypt in 2016

The Current trends in Higher Education are:

1. Vocational and Technical education (at higher education level)

A number of short-term goals or priorities for development emerged out of the objectives:

- Developing tripartite management of training in individual industries;
- Establishing an integrated framework TVET including through its links to employment;
- Creating a qualifications framework for TVET;
- Reviewing relevant donor-supported initiatives with a view to preparing options for continuing worthwhile initiatives;

- Reforming the administration of government training centres by monitoring their performance and providing them with greater financial responsibility and accountability for their operations.

2. Licensing, quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and/or programmes

Improving the quality of higher education has received considerable governmental support in Egypt over the past few years. The internal quality assurance is implemented by the HEIs themselves, resulting in an obligatory annual report to be submitted by each institution, describing all quality components applied to all academic programs as well as for the institution itself. An external quality assessment and accreditation process organised by the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE), which is mandatory for each HEI and has to be implemented every five years. Also developing a National Qualification Framework (NQF) is in progress.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development.

The members of the Egyptian HERE team are high profile professionals in the field of higher education and play an essential role in HE development in Egypt. The following are examples of the contribution of the HERE team to the development of Higher Education in Egypt:

1. The development of the NQF in Egypt is underway, and members of the HERE team have participated actively in two HERE events, in Warsaw and Amman, on this topic. The exchange of experience during those events has directly contributed to the development of the Egyptian NQF.
2. Since 2002, Egypt has started a Higher Education Development process, and, despite the political instability in recent years, the Egyptian government is determined to proceed with the reform. The experiences from HERE meetings on issues such as student-centred learning or internationalization of Higher Education are injected into the process of development, and this is done mainly through the involvement of several members of the HERE team and the NEO in the development of Higher Education.
3. Another aspect is the involvement of some HEREs in the presidential Council on Education and

Research. Two HEREs are part of that council, which advises the president on issues related to Education and Research. EU Higher Education experience and feedbacks are fed into this advisory process.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The HERE team continued cooperation and arranged different round-table events with DAAD and the Egyptian-Japanese University in Egypt.

These meetings were mainly aimed to

- Exchange of information about Higher Education in Egypt and the different initiatives
- Deep investigation about vocational education in Germany in comparison to Egypt.

2. On-going assessment regarding the impact of EU Higher Education Programmes on the Higher Education System in Egypt.

The main goals of the impact assessment study are:

- Developing a roadmap for Egyptian HEIs to maximize the benefit from EU-funded Projects.
- Investigating the impact of the EU-funded projects on the Higher Education in Egypt
- Disseminating the outputs and impact of EU-funded projects in Egypt
- Identifying and acknowledging teams or groups which have built capacity based on EU-

funded projects in Egypt and documenting their success stories.

- Addressing the possibility of suggesting solutions for projects facing difficulties to increase their impact on Higher Education in Egypt

3. Local follow-up Event at the Alexandria University on "Student-centred Learning":

The main learning outcomes of the event were:

- Principles and Definition of SCL
- How the shift to SCL (Constructive Alignment in Course Design)
- Changing the learning culture through the impact of ICT and digitalization

Links to further details

HEREs on NEO website, including the list of HEREs

<http://www.erasmusplus-egypt.eu/index.php/heres/introdaction>

HEREs on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/235065283593062/>

ISRAEL

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The seven members of the Israeli HERE team include representatives from different HEIs, i.e. universities, academic colleges and teacher training colleges, as well as a representative of the national student union. The Team composition reflects the heterogeneous higher education landscape of Israel, not only in terms of the character of the HEIs the members belong to, but also in term of geographical coverage and mission of the institutions. In addition, the team members bring together different academic and administrative experience (the team includes, among others, Deans, a Vice director general, a Director of an Office of International Academic Affairs and a Head of Research Department) and diverse interests in the numerous fields of HE reform. However, internationalisation is a common theme and a major objective for the entire team. The team is balanced regarding gender.

Key developments in higher education in Israel in 2016

During the year 2016, the Council for Higher Education defined the major objectives and the respective initiatives and work plans for the new 6-year national plan for Higher education (2016-2022), which included in the field of social responsibility (increasing access to HE) a continuation of the former multi-year plan (2010-2015). In addition to these initiatives the CHE will focus on 1) Streamlining and Strengthening the HE System; 2) Increasing the correlation between HE and national needs / the labour market; 3) Innovation in teaching and Research infrastructure in the cloud era. Finally, a key objective in this initiative is the development of internationalization at institutional level, including the creation and implementation of institutional internationalization strategies. This multiyear plan will be implemented through the regulatory and budgetary instruments of the Council and the Planning and Budgeting Committee.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Israeli HERES' work plan focuses on three major topics that are in line with the objectives of the multiyear plan in the field of Higher Education: Internationalization, Teaching Excellence and Innovating Teaching and Learning. The HERE Team,

with the assistance of the NEO, collaborates with the Deputy General for Strategy and International Affairs of the Council for Higher Education in planning national HERE events, to ensure that they contribute to the national policies. The main contribution to the national reforms are the TAMs, which are organised jointly and which include meetings and roundtables with policy makers.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Workshop on Internationalisation (Beit Berl College, 12.1.2016). This workshop was planned and organized entirely by the HERE working group on internationalization, in cooperation with the Tempus project IRIS and the NEO. In the workshop, the participants received a comprehensive understanding of the Internationalisation in Higher Education in Israel, including aspects of research on the topic, the outcomes of the Erasmus Impact Study and the outcomes of the Tempus IRIS project. Dr. Stavi Baram gave a presentation on challenges and best practice of Student Mobility in Israel and Sibylle Heilbrunn and Ami Shalit participated in a panel on internationalization on campus.



Workshop on internationalisation, 12 January 2016, Beit Berl College,

2. Roundtable on National Internationalization Policy: facilitating the development of internationalization in Higher Education at national level, (The Council for Higher Education, 13.04.2016). This Roundtable (TAM) was organized by the NEO, the Deputy General for Strategy and International Affairs (CHE) and the HERE working group on internationalization. The discussions in the framework of the TAM contributed to the better understanding of the trends and challenges of national internationalisation policies, and the importance of a clear definition of aims and goals that the Council wishes to promote in this way. The contribution of the invited expert clarified the issues to be considered in the Israeli national policy in regard to the character of the programmes to be

offered to incoming international students. The discussion was also very fruitful regarding the question of how to incentivise the development on internationalisation in a very heterogeneous higher education landscape like Israel.

3. National Conference on Building a national platform for Open Digital Courses: Implementation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance (Tel Aviv Area, 21-23. 06.2016). This national conference (TAM) included a meeting between the expert Terry Maguire and the senior management of the CHE/PBC, to discuss best practices in digital learning and teaching excellence, as well as the Irish experience; a presentation by the expert at a conference held by the Inter-Institutional Computing Center; and a round table with the head of the FUN national digital learning platform in France, Catherine Mongenet. The conclusions from the event were taken into account in the development of policy on digital learning and teaching excellence in Israel. An additional major take-away from the conference was the understanding of the need to

place emphasis on staff development when developing digital capacities. Prof. Mongenet presented how a national platform can be used to improve teaching and learning in study programs in HEIs and to foster Lifelong Learning. The main learning outcomes of this event were understanding the quality assurance mechanisms of the French national platform (Quality Code) and the understanding of budgetary models for the national platform, including the use of SPOCs (Short Private Open Courses) to train employees in private companies.

Links to further details

HERE section on NEO website:

<http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/here>

List of HEREs on NEO website:

<http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/the-experts-2015-2017>

HERE event page:

<http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/heres-events>

JORDAN

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Jordanian team of Higher Education Reform Experts comprises ten academics, who have extensive experience in higher education as well as in international cooperation. The team includes the Minister of Health, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education, two University Presidents, one Vice-President, one Dean, one Assistant Dean, two professors and one student. The team has 4 female members, which represents 40% of the team. The team is characterized to be diverse, the experts coming from different educational backgrounds, such as engineering, health sciences, natural sciences, humanities, arts, and educational sciences. They also come from different public and private universities located all around Jordan, e.g. Amman, Irbid, Karak, and Maan. This diversity results in providing a suitable balance between the various profiles and fields of competence.

Key developments in higher education in Jordan in 2016

The higher education system in Jordan has given more attention in 2016 (as compared to the past years) to the vocational and applied disciplines, relevance of graduates to the job market, employability, and to the guidelines for admission in order to attract more students in the vocational specialities. A national strategy for human resources development (including higher education) was established and adopted by the government for the period 2016-2025.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has developed an action plan to implement the national strategy components focusing on the above issues. A national committee was formed by the Cabinet to develop a National Qualifications Framework. This committee is chaired by the President of the Higher Education Accreditation Commission and includes members from relevant Ministries and other organizations.

Recently, the Ministry and higher education institutions have been encouraging the process of external accreditation, including for e-learning and smart education. Some courses are now being taught through this methodology, and responsible organizations are revisiting the quality and accreditation guidelines to address this matter.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The team of Higher Education Reform Experts is quite involved in the higher education reform process in Jordan. Most of the presentations delivered by members of the HERE team in 2016 were in areas of relevance to the main themes of reform. Moreover, Jordan hosted in 2016 three Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs), and they were all related to the reform process. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research hosted two of these TAMs.



Technical Assistance Mission "Leadership Management Benchmarking for Quality Leadership in Jordanian Universities", 15 March 2016, Princess Sumaya University for Technology

Additionally, several members of the HEREs are members of national committees on "recognition of degrees obtained from other countries", "research and international collaboration", "development of eLearning in Jordanian higher education", and "national strategy of early childhood". All these committees were formed by the relevant Ministers. There were other HERE activities in 2016, which had good impact on higher education reform. Examples include a presentation delivered by the HERE Chairman about the HERE activities in Jordan and a presentation delivered by the student HERE about the "experience of a Jordanian Student in International Mobility". Both presentations were delivered at the Erasmus+ information day, which was attended by more than 250 persons. Examples also include a presentation entitled "Higher Education: Where To? ", delivered by the HERE Chairman at the Arab Thought Forum, which was attended by Members of Parliament and other decision makers.

HEREs contribute to the reform process directly and indirectly (within their normal functions at their organizations), by implementing best practices they have learnt from different seminars

and international activities they have participated in. HEREs were also involved indirectly in serving the community, as people from the public society attended the HEREs seminars and activities conducted in several regions in Jordan.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016



HERE seminar, "National Qualifications Framework, the Diploma Supplement and Degree Profile", 20 November 2016, German-Jordanian University

1. During 2016, the HERE team conducted 19 seminars and workshops, covering universities located all around Jordan. These activities focused on several higher education reform aspects. Seminars about Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes, the National Qualifications Framework, the Diploma Supplement and the Degree Profile were delivered by the HERE Chairman at 10 public and private universities. Another seminar on "Modernization of Institutional Management of Internationalization" was delivered by another HERE at 5 universities. One workshop was conducted at the University of Jordan by one of the HEREs on "New Trends in Teaching Methods at University Level". This workshop provided some best practices from European universities regarding the methods related to student-centred learning. Furthermore, it highlighted the linkage between learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment at university level. Two seminars on the "Role of Social Media in Higher Education" were delivered jointly by one HERE and the only student HERE. These seminars aimed to make both faculties and students aware about the importance of the social network use in their classes in the teaching and learning process. The above seminars and workshops were attended by many staff

members including Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Deans, Heads of Department, Directors of HR, Heads of QA offices, Directors of Admission and Recognition, Heads of Registration Departments, International Relations Directors and professors, in addition to large numbers of students.

2. Two HERE newsletter issues were prepared by the HERE student. The first newsletter included information about the HEREs' mission and objectives, a summary about their national and international activities, and an explanation on the role of the National Erasmus+ Office. The Newsletter was distributed to the participants in the Erasmus+ information day on 26th October 2016. The second newsletter provided detailed information about HERE participation in local and international events. This issue was published on the NEO's website.

3. The HERE local activities in 2016 in Jordan also included the implementation of 3 technical assistance missions. Three HEREs were involved in these TAMs that were delivered by European experts. The TAMs topics were as follows: "Leadership Management Benchmarking for Quality Leadership in Jordanian Universities", a seminar on "Bologna Process and the ECTS Credit System", and a seminar on "Contemporary Issues in Applying Blended Learning at University Levels". Two TAMs were organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research whereas the third one was organized jointly by public and private HEIs in northern and southern Jordan. These TAMs were attended by a total of 172 participants.

Links to further details

HERE section on NEO website, including list of HEREs:

<http://erasmus-plus.org.io/en/HERE-Team>

HERE event pages:

<http://erasmus-plus.org.io/HERE-Team/Local-Activities-Seminars>

<http://erasmus-plus.org.io/HERE-Team/TAMs>

LEBANON

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Lebanese team has 6 experts (2 women and 4 men). The presence of the Director General of Higher Education (DGHE) in the team shows a strong interest from the national authorities. The other experts come from five universities from the public and private sector, representing 57% of the total university students in Lebanon. The team includes a Dean of graduate studies, a Chairman of Research Council, an Honorary Dean of Educational Sciences and a Director of international relations Office. Universities from the capital, the middle and the Northern part of the country are represented in the team.

Key developments in higher education in Lebanon in 2016

The Lebanese higher education is a free sector and the impact of the longstanding political deadlocks of the country is limited on the private sector, but has more influence on the public Lebanese University. The private Lebanese HEIs are continuing to invest in the following:

- Internal QA structures
- Accreditation by international bodies and agencies
- Response to the Syrian refugee issue
- International cooperation and networking

The Directorate General of HE started the implementation of the law on HE which was adopted in 2014. The two laws on the creation of a Lebanese QA Agency and the restructuring of the DGHE are still pending ratification by the Parliament. The DGHE is pushing further its newly adopted policy of setting up task forces for the different aspects in the HE system that need to be developed.

A new Minister for Education and Higher Education has been in office since December 2016.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Three HEREs participated in the committee established by the Directorate General of HE (DG HE) and the Francophone University Association AUF, to organise training seminars on developing internal quality assurance units. One HERE intervened on the steps for the implementation process and animated a related working group.

HEREs also participated in two separate initiatives, one by the University Association of Lebanon UAOLB, and one by the Lebanese Standards Institution (LIBNOR), to review the quality standards for educational institutions. Moreover, HEREs provided consulting services to different institutions related to establishing internal quality assurance processes.

Few HEREs represented the Directorate General of HE in different seminars, events or activities implemented by international projects.

Some publications/presentations:

- De Ketele, J-M. & Moghaizel-Nasr, N. (2016), « **Le curriculum, élément clé d'une politique d'excellence** ». In : J-M. De Ketele, B. Hugonnier, Ph. Parmentier & L. Cosnefroy (sous la direction de), *Quelle excellence pour l'enseignement supérieur ?* Bruxelles : De Boeck (pp. 53-70).

- Moghaizel-Nasr, N. (2016) « **Chantier pédagogique pour la qualité de la formation dans l'enseignement supérieur** », Actes du colloque « *Evaluation de la qualité des formations dans l'enseignement supérieur* », Université islamique en partenariat avec l'Université Franche-Comté, l'AUF et l'Institut Français au Liban.

- Presentation at the University Association of Lebanon about the management and follow-up of placements: « **Plateforme Numérique SEMSEM-Stages** », a platform developed within a Tempus structural project.

- As a follow-up of the e-learning debate that was launched by the HEREs in 2015, a paper was published by Pierre Gedeon and Chafic Mokbel in the framework of the EADTU (European Association for Distance and Teaching Universities), Rome, 19-21 October, 2016, <http://conference.eadtu.eu/>.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The team has provided concrete support to the DG HE on several issues, in particular this year the issue of enrolment of Syrian refugees, students and professors, in the HE sector. The academic constraints related to the difference in the programmes (structure, language of teaching, recognition) were studied. Issues related to the employability of graduates and to the limits of the Lebanese labour market were tackled. The team was also represented in the policy dialogue meeting organised by the European Commission in Brussels (July 2016).

2.. The HERE team gathered 60 experts from the different Lebanese universities in a **seminar on**

“Indicators for Measuring Performance in Higher Education”. This TAM seminar organised with the support of SPHERE took place on September 8, 2016 at the American University of Beirut. As a preparation for this seminar, the HERE team produced a reader in 3 languages (EN, FR, AR) in which models and characteristics of systems of indicators were described. The document also showed the needs and challenges related to the usage of indicators within the Lebanese higher education system.



TAM seminar “Indicators for Measuring Performance in Higher Education”, 8 September 2016, American University of Beirut

During the seminar, a Latvian expert presented the current European trends and tools for using indicators. Four Lebanese cases were also presented. In a hands-on session, indicators relative to five domains were discussed: i/ Student admission, retention and follow up, ii/ Student support services, iii/ Learning outcomes, iv/ Research and, v/ Teaching and Learning. The different stakeholders agreed on the need for developing indicators and connecting them to the governance of their respective institutions and academic units.

3. With another TAM supported by SPHERE, the HERE team organised on December 2, 2016 a **roundtable on “Financing Higher Education”**. The team had conducted a study of the current situation that revealed several characteristics of the Lebanese HE sector. While the public Lebanese University is financed by public funds, the

remaining private HEIs (about 46) depend to a large extent on the tuition fees, that differ largely from one institution to another. In addition, limited funds are available to support research. Moreover, the number of HEIs is increasing while the number of students stopped to increase since 2013 (employability is suspected to be the reason). This increases the financial pressure on the institutions. The study results suggest that the HE system must seek higher quality and must define ways to share resources. All the findings were summarised in a reader (English and French). This event was jointly organised with the Arab Open University. The EU expert Pedro Texeira presented to the participants the different financial models. He stressed on financing efficiency and effectiveness especially with the limited available resources. He also covered issues related to competitiveness and diversification. Recommendations were debated.



Roundtable on “Financing Higher Education”, 2 December 2016, Arab Open University,

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website, including the list of HERES: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/26>
- HERE event pages <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/837>

MOROCCO

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Moroccan HERE team consists of ten members, including three women. There are four university presidents, three deans / directors and three professors-researchers in the group. The geographical representation of the experts does not cover all regions; in fact the capital Rabat and its regions are overrepresented (with five experts), while there are no experts from universities in the South and the East. Despite this geographical imbalance, it is worth to note that all types of institutions are represented, profiles are complementary, and experience in leadership and management of reform is well represented.

Key developments in higher education in Morocco in 2016

Being at the centre of national priorities and concerns, the higher education system is undergoing successive gradual reforms that have led to important achievements. These include the upgrading of the legal and regulatory framework allowing, inter alia, relative autonomy of universities, the LMD ("licence – master – doctorat" i.e. Bachelor – Master - Doctorate) reform, the updating of study programmes and the development of vocational training programs. However, the Moroccan higher education system is still suffering from major malfunctions.

Highlights of this year included the development of the "Strategic Vision for Reform 2015-2030" by the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research (CSEFRS). It aims to capitalize on the achievements of the previous reforms and to make them evolve in order to face the societal challenges and challenges that the education and training system will have to face in the future, in particular massification and quality issues.

The trend is now to develop governance, in order to improve the higher education system's performance in response to employability and internationalization. Planned and / or on-going measures include:

- The development and upgrading of the legal framework governing higher education and scientific research, through the revision of Law 01-00 and related bylaw text regulations;

- Improving the governance of universities and promoting their regional anchoring in order to accompany the project of advanced regionalization;

- The establishment of a permanent system of contracting between the State and higher education institutions on the basis of performance indicators;

- The development of institutional mechanisms for the sustainability of public higher education funding and the diversification of its funding sources;

- Development of continuing education and training programmes for the various stakeholders;

- The establishment of a comprehensive and integrated information system for higher education;

- Promoting international cooperation.

Other significant developments are:

- Establishment of the National Agency for the Evaluation of Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ANEAQ)
- The development of the 2015-2021 Strategy for Professional Training (VET)
- Development of the National Certification Framework
- Accreditation of some private universities
- The signing of a joint decision between the Ministers of Higher Education and the Ministry of Finance on how to manage the capital of universities (cooperation)

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The 4 HEREs who are Presidents of universities are members of the Conference of Presidents of Universities (CPU) and one of them chairs it. They are therefore in a position to take initiatives and to influence the reform, by moderating or accelerating certain orientations deemed not to be relevant.

In addition, some HERE are members of high level Commissions such as the Research Commission of the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research (CNEFRS). One of the HEREs is the representative of the Ministry in the ANEAQ Administration Council. The Director of the ANEAQ is a former HERE.

Two other current HEREs are members of an ANEAQ evaluation committee. The Moroccan HEREs are therefore at the heart of the decision process, in key positions and they can play an important role as moderators or accelerators of decisions.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Organization of a round table on ECTS (with the participation and presentation of the Tempus CREMAR project);
2. Acceleration of the implementation of ANEAQ;

3. Facilitation of the implementation of the institutional evaluations of the Tempus project RECET ("Renforcement des compétences en évaluation institutionnelle").

Links to further details

List of HEREs on NEO website:

<http://www.erasmusplus-morocco.ma/neomaroc/presentation/programme-2007-2013/tempus-programme/liste-validee-par-monsieur-le-ministre/>

PALESTINE

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Palestinian HERE team is composed of eight members; two women and six men. The team is geographically distributed over all areas in Palestine from north to south. The team members represent university rectors & deputies, the Ministry of HE, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) and academics.



Palestinian HERE team

Key developments in higher education in Palestine in 2016

The HERES have helped to draft the new Palestinian higher education law, which was finalized and has been submitted to be endorsed by the President. The draft law proposes the following changes:

- HEIs and scientific research centres would have autonomous status, while the state provides support and development. Freedom of scientific research and innovation are guaranteed.
- The Board of the Higher Education Council in Palestine would become an independent legal body (which was not the case in former Palestinian HE law).
- A special regulation is suggested for the recognition of the non-Palestinian institutions and the equivalence of certificates and degrees issued by these institutions.
- Establishing a unified body for Technical and Vocational Education (TVET).
- A unified Diploma Supplement template was approved and already adopted by many Palestinian HEIs.

- The new law suggests enabling the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) to be fully autonomous.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education developments

1. Three HERE members and the NEO director have taken part in all the meetings that aimed at drafting the new higher education law in Palestine. The HERE team's recommendations have been taken into consideration in the current draft of the Higher Educational Law.
2. The national Diploma Supplement workshop led by the Higher Education Reform Experts' team (HERE) contributed to a number of Palestinian HEIs adopting the Diploma Supplement.
3. Two of the Palestinian HEREs are members of the Board of the Higher Education Council in Palestine and so could easily present the outcomes of HERE's seminars to the HE council in Palestine. Four of the Palestinian HEREs are members in the "Education Reform Committee" headed by the Prime Ministry. This committee significantly contributed to developing HE in Palestine.
4. The HEREs workshop on the "Palestinian National Qualifications Framework" contributed to the revision of the draft proposal on the National Qualifications Framework.
5. Three of the HERE members are from National Educational Authorities (one of them being special advisor to the Prime Minister) and were therefore in a privileged position to contribute HERES' knowledge to policy development in HE.
6. Some fruitful meetings were arranged with both the Prime Minister and the Minister of HE. It was agreed that the Minister of Education and his Deputies will have a quarterly meeting with the participation of the Director Generals of the Ministry, to get feedback from the HERE team and use their recommendations for the development of the national education plan.

7. One of the HEREs is the head of AQAC and has played a significant role in the qualification and accreditation of all new Erasmus+ curriculum development programmes and degrees. He is also the Director General of the University Education Directorate at the MOEHE and is therefore in a good position to disseminate and institutionalize the outcomes of HERE seminars in which he has taken part. He managed to make a collective effort to institutionalize a Palestinian National Qualification Framework and the Diploma Supplement, on the basis of the knowledge and skills acquired from HERE seminars.
8. The Minister's Deputy Assistant for Higher Education Affairs, who is also a member of the HERE team, has helped in disseminating the outcomes of the HERE seminars and the study visits which he attended at the MoHE.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. For the first time in Palestine and following the HEREs initiative, an integrated draft proposal on a National Qualifications Framework was revised in the HEREs NQF workshop, "From Methodology of Architecture to Implementation Practice". This was considered in the new Palestinian law.

2. Diploma Supplement "Opportunities and Obstacles". For the first time in Palestine it was unanimously agreed by 25 decision-makers from both the Ministry, the AQAC and 15 HEI representatives, to draft a description for the diploma Supplement in Palestine, which was considered in the new Palestinian law.

3. Perspectives on Doctoral Education in Palestine: Following the HERE study visit in Malmö, a concrete proposal to institutionalize the Ph.D. programmes at HEIs was presented and subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Education and AQAC.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:
<http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-579-en.html>
- List of HEREs on NEO website:
<http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-692-en.html>
- HERE event pages:
<http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-693-en.html>
- HERE Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/ErasmusPlusPalestine/>
- Country page on SPHERE website:
<http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-palestine>
- Meeting the minister of HE:
<http://erasmusplus.ps/page-696-en.html>

SYRIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Syrian HERE team was composed of five HEREs in 2015-2016, representing Syrian higher education institutions as academics, administrative staff and students. The HERE team in Syria comes from different parts of the country: one HERE from Aleppo in the north, one from Lattakia in the west and three from the capital city of Damascus in the south of Syria. The HEREs come from private and public HEIs. There are two women and three men in the group. The HERE team covers a variety of HE specialisations: engineering, geography, business and social sciences. The HEREs have experience as academics (3 Ph.D. holders) as managers (HR, PR and Project Management expert for HE system) and as students (a Ph.D. student acting as chair of the group).

Key developments in higher education in Syria in 2016

The main challenge in Syria during the ongoing war is to continue the development of the higher education system, regardless of the difficult situation. For example, new legislation was imposed for higher education to make the system more flexible in dealing with IDP students (Internal Displaced People).

Three new higher education institutions were registered and accredited in 2016. New degrees and HE study programmes have been developed in order to deal with new demands of the labour market, especially the shortage of skilled workers with TVET qualifications. To mitigate the risk of brain drain and losing students and professors, new laws were imposed to develop the HE system.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

In 2016, the HEREs team in Syria provided seminars, workshops and lectures for local HEIs to disseminate the outcomes and to share the knowledge that they have learned from attending international HERE events. Two of the HEREs were also members of the special higher education scientific research national committee to develop research in Syria.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. The annual HERE team's event in Syria for HE reform policy about "Applications and Mapping of the Analytical Framework for HE Reform Policy and Development", which took place on 28 December 2016, as a follow up event of the HERE Annual Conference in Barcelona (December 2016). This local HERE event was the first of its kind in Syria. It was organised by the HERE team and the Syrian NEO, to present to Syrian HEIs the Analytical Framework Matrix for HE reform policy and to map this matrix to Syrian HEIs.



Participants of annual HERE event, 28 December 2016, Orient Club Damascus

2. Local HEI events (workshops and round tables) in each of the HERE's local HE institutions, as follow-up of the international training events that they had attended.

3. The active participation of the HERE team in the NEO national information days. They presented the experiences they gained from the international HERE events to local Syrian academics and HE students. The national Erasmus+ information day took place on 14 August 2016.



HERE team members at the national Erasmus+ Information Day, 14 August 2016, Orient Club Damascus

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website:

http://erasmusplus-neo.org/index.php/site/single_article_page/173

- List of HEREs on NEO website:

http://erasmusplus-neo.org/index.php/site/single_article_page_with_video/16

- NEO Syria website with articles about HEREs events: <http://erasmusplus-neo.org>

- NEO Syria Facebook page with posts, photos and videos about Syrian HERE team:

<https://www.facebook.com/erasmusplusyria/>

- HEREs photo albums:

http://erasmusplus-neo.org/index.php/site/all_albums

TUNISIA

Composition of the Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) team

The Tunisian Higher Education Reform Experts team is composed of ten members, two of which are female. The selection of the team took into consideration the geographical balance, ensuring an appropriate representation of the three Tunisian regions: five experts represent the Northern region, two experts come from the Centre and three experts from the South. The team consists of three university presidents, three vice presidents, a director of a Preparatory School of Engineering, a professor, an advisor of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and a recently nominated Director General of University Reform in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS). The experts represent a wide range of expertise in terms of academic profiles and in terms of Reform Committees to which they contribute.

Key developments in higher education in Tunisia in 2016

The strategic plan which aims at reforming the Tunisian higher education system (2015-2025) has been approved. The reform plan is based on 5 main objectives:

1. Enhancing the quality of programmes offered and improving the employability of graduates
2. Promoting research and innovation
3. Reinforcing university governance and autonomy and optimizing the available resources
4. Reviewing the university map in order to better localize the HEIs in their environment and to create fair distribution across the various regions
5. Improving the pedagogical training offered to university teachers.

Ten principal committees have been formed, two of which are concerned with employability and openness of the university to the socio-economic environment. The reform plan is designed to improve cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Education (primary and secondary school education) and the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. Furthermore, the national reform plan includes the development of a network of Career and Professional Competencies Certification Centers,

whose role is to link the university to its environment.

A set of draft decrees are being prepared within the framework of the national reform, and in line with international standards. The most important draft decree relates to the reform of the existing system of traineeship and alternated training. A second draft decree aims at revising the existing evaluation and examination systems applied in the bachelor programmes of the three cycle system. A third decree concerns the promotion and the implementation of lifelong learning.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Most of the members of the Tunisian HERE team are either presidents, rapporteurs or members of the national committees responsible for the implementation of the national higher education reform plan. Accordingly, they assist with their expertise in conceptualizing or commenting on the various proposals.

In particular, Mr. Ammar Mlaoueh contributed and coordinated the drafting of the new decrees related to the creation of Career and Professional Competencies Certification Centres and the revision of the existing evaluation and examination systems, the existing traineeship and alternated training systems.

In addition, some experts from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research are members of a joint committee with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment. The joint committee's role is to develop a unified national strategy for the development of human resources.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2016

1. Involvement in the implementation of new decrees related to the creation of Career and Professional competencies Certification Centres and the review of the existing evaluation and examination systems, the existing traineeship and alternated training systems.

2. TAM: "Montage d'un Projet de Mobilité des Etudiants" - in March 2016, approximately 55 persons participated in a workshop animated by a European expert in the framework of a Technical Assistance Mission (TAM). As a main learning outcome of this workshop, the participants gained familiarity and skills to draft good mobility

projects, including the national project on which the MESRS is working.



Technical Assistance Mission: Montage d'un Projet de Mobilité des Etudiants, 24 March 2016, Hotel Le Palace Gammarrh

3. Following the HERE seminar organized in Tbilisi (Georgia) in 2015, another TAM was organised in Tunisia in December 2016 on the same subject: **Innovation in Curriculum Design and Learning Outcomes**. The expert Mrs. Maria Sticchi Damiani

animated the seminar attended by around 40 participants. The aim of the event was to introduce learning outcomes as an alternative teaching/learning approach and a prerequisite for providing an innovative curriculum and a high-quality academic programme.

Links to further details

HERE section of NEO website

<http://www.erasmusplus.tn/en/articles/higher-education-reform-experts> (ENG)

List of HEREs on NEO website

<http://www.erasmusplus.tn/en/article/0018-tunisian-heres-team-2015-2017> (ENG)

HERE event pages

<http://www.erasmusplus.tn/en/article/0019-national-activities> (ENG)



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Erasmus+ : Higher Education - International Capacity Building

Brussels, 18 March 2014

Erasmus+ Programme
The Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs)
Terms of Reference⁵

1. Objectives and mission of the HEREs

The purpose of the National Teams of Higher Education Reform Experts is to provide a pool of expertise in order to promote reforms and enhance progress in Higher Education in the countries concerned and therefore participate in the development of policies and reforms in Higher Education in their respective country.

The mission of the HEREs is threefold:

- support policy development in their respective countries by supporting modernisation reform processes and strategies in Higher Education, in close contact with the local authorities concerned and in particular as regards for instance curriculum development, modernisation of governance, management and functioning of higher education systems and institutions, strengthening relations between the higher education sector and the wider societal and economic environment, etc.
- support policy dialogue with the EU in the field of Higher Education possibly in synergy and coordination with the various policy platforms established under the Erasmus+ programme or other potential initiatives established by, and under the guidance of, the European Commission.
- support Erasmus+ and former EU programmes projects by disseminating their results and outcomes, notably best practices and innovative initiatives and exploiting them for modernisation and development purposes.

2. Geographical scope

HERE teams will be established in some of the Partner Countries eligible for participation in the Higher Education Capacity Building actions, in particular in the neighbouring area (Eastern Europe and Southern Mediterranean), the Western Balkans and Central Asia and Russia.

⁵ Established after the NEOs/NCPs coordination meeting on 12/13 February 2014.

3. Profile of the HEREs

The HERE scheme is a “peer-to-peer” exercise. Although HEREs do not replace the work done by Ministries, Rectors Conferences, Quality Assurance Agencies, academic recognition centres, National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs), etc., they should be well embedded in the national higher education environment and cooperate closely with national authorities.

Members of the national team of HEREs should hold (or have held) one of the following positions (or a combination thereof):

- (Vice-)Rectors,
- Deans and Heads of Department,
- Senior Academics,
- Directors of Study,
- Responsible of administrative services (such as International Relations Offices, Quality Assurance departments, Career orientation services, etc.)
- Ministry officials dealing with higher education
- Other Higher Education experts and researchers
- Students

Whatever their status or functions, HEREs must be highly motivated and concerned by their overall mission, available to attend and actively participate in the proposed events, willing to report widely about the results and to initiate activities locally.

Further to their appointment, HEREs will have to sign a **Code of Conduct** stating their responsibilities and duties in relation to their activities as HEREs. In particular, the absence of conflict of interests and the experts' availability to participate in the activities abroad and the coordination meetings in his/her home country will be essential.

4. Size and composition of the HERE teams

As a group, each national team of HEREs must have the necessary knowledge and expertise to provide counselling to institutions and peers on the different areas covered under their mandate. In this context, the **composition** of the team must provide a suitable balance between the various profiles (academic/administrative/Student representatives) and fields of competences. The inclusion of at least one student within the team should be ensured.

In order to ensure that each members of the team has the knowledge and competences required to fulfil the tasks assigned, training will be provided through international training events suchs as conferences, seminars and study visits.

The **size** of each national team of HEREs will vary in accordance with the size of the country and the number of higher education institutions, with an estimated number of 5 to 15 members per team.

A **Chair** will have to be identified by each national team of HEREs with the responsibility of coordinating the activities of the group and being the privileged contact person for external stakeholders.

5. Activities

In order to fulfil their mission national teams of HEREs will perform activities at national and international level, targeting primarily:

- all Erasmus+ and on-going Tempus beneficiaries as well as potential Erasmus+ beneficiaries in the country (i.e. higher education institutions and individuals; civil society; non-governmental organisations; enterprises, professional organisations, research institutions, vocational training institutions; etc.) and any other stakeholder in the field of higher education.
- National authorities in charge of higher education and their affiliate bodies.

5.a Activities at international level

Activities at international level will be organised by an external service provider, under the supervision of the European Commission and the Executive Agency, and will correspond to the following types:

- a) **Thematic seminars** designed to meet specific needs common in various Partner Countries. The aim of the thematic seminars is to provide new knowledge and practical experience. They may include field visits at higher education institutions or other relevant stakeholders. They will also provide a platform for questions, discussion and exchange of practices on specific topics and processes.
- b) **Study visits** that will take place in prominent EU or Partner Country universities, focusing on specific topics and fields of interest, common to various Partner Countries. Such visits will provide an opportunity to meet with academic and non-academic staff directly responsible for the introduction and the implementation of specific reforms or policies in the field of Higher Education. The visits will include meetings with several types of stakeholders as well as presentations, question & answer sessions and debates.
- c) **International large-scale conferences** including key note speeches by prominent experts and specific workshops dedicated to the attention of the HERE teams of all Partner Countries. Such conferences will deal with themes and topics connected to the core issues of the modernisation of the higher education sector in fields such as governance, management, funding, curriculum development and lifelong learning.
- d) **Technical assistance missions.** Specific technical expertise and advice by EU or Partner Country experts will be provided locally to HERE teams to carry out training and consultancy activities in the Partner Countries, targeted at a wide audience of university staff, officials and other higher education stakeholders. The service provider will identify relevant experts, who can be entrusted with such short term missions. These technical assistance activities will be organised upon specific request from the HERE teams, channelled by the NEOs.
- e) **Surveys / publications:** HEREs may be involved in the preparation of surveys or publications commissioned by the European Commission or EACEA in relation to the Higher Education sector, its institutions, policies, reforms and modernisation process.
- f) **Virtual expert community and material:** HEREs will be provided with a web platform to communicate, liaise and exchange. This includes the provision of information materials, brochures and case studies.

The support services required for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the international HERE activities will be provided by the European Commission and EACEA with the support of an external provider.

5.b Activities at national level

In addition to the international activities referred to under 5.a above, HERE teams will have to perform counselling and advisory activities at national level and more concretely:

- a) **At institutional level**, HEREs' work will consist in counselling, advising and providing assistance to higher education institutions with regards to the introduction and implementation of reforms.

Higher Education Reform Experts should be actively involved in all kinds of promotional and awareness-raising activities about HE reforms in general and EU higher education programmes and initiatives in particular. Experts with specialist knowledge and experience may be recruited for the development and delivery of training activities for HEREs in those areas.

- b) **At national level**, HEREs will support national authorities in designing, implementing and monitoring policy reforms in the field of HE. Overall, this could include the following types of activities:

- Advice and expertise;
- Involvement in policy making process, preparation of national reports, codes, draft laws & decrees;
- Organising or participating in seminars, workshops, roundtables (teaching, training, informing, disseminating);
- Lecturing, participation in panel discussions and debates;
- Interviews (radio, TV, newspaper, specialized press), public appearances;
- Drafting of reports, analysis, studies;
- Publication of papers on the HE reform processes in the Partner Country.

6. Appointment of the HEREs

HERE teams will be designated (/renewed or reconfirmed) for a period of 3 years (renewable) starting as from 01 January 2015.

HERE candidates (new or already in place) will be proposed by the NEOs and the national authorities in the Partner Countries. This proposal will have to be endorsed by the respective EU Delegation and confirmed by the EACEA in line with the criteria defined by the European Commission.

7. Management of the HERE teams

The setting up of the HEREs' initiative together with the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the HEREs' activities in support to the higher education modernisation and reform processes in the Partner Countries is based on joint responsibilities shared between the European and Partner Country responsible bodies.

The European Commission is responsible for the general steering of the HEREs' initiative according to its political priorities. In particular, the Commission will give guidance related to the themes to be considered for training and events. This includes also steering of the content, priority setting, overall monitoring of the activities and budget of the action, definition of the selection criteria and profiles of the HEREs. It also includes regular review and approval of the HEREs overall objectives and results achieved based on ex-ante & ex-post information, reports and presentations submitted by the EACEA.

The EACEA is responsible for validating the selection of the individual HEREs in accordance with the criteria and profiles defined by the European Commission. The EACEA is also responsible for approving and monitoring the HEREs' activity plan and budget included in the NEO grant agreement, ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach for all involved countries. Finally, it is also responsible for managing the service contract with the external provider that will support the organisation of HEREs' activities at international level.

The EU Delegations in the Partner Countries are closely associated in all HERE activities. They endorse the appointment of the HEREs in the Partner Country.

The National Authorities propose the appointment of the national teams of HEREs, in liaison with the NEOs. They will set strategic goals and targets for the work of the HEREs, in the light of the state of progress of higher education reforms at national and institutional level.

The National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) provide administrative, logistical and financial support to the National Teams of HEREs, supporting and coordinating their activities, following the strategic goals and targets set by the national authorities. They act as intermediaries between the EU (/EACEA) and the HERE teams, as well as between the Erasmus+ Capacity Building projects (/on-going Tempus projects) and the HERE teams. In close cooperation with the National Authorities, NEOs participate in the process of appointment of the Higher Education Reform Experts.

From a management point of view, NEOs must

- implement the budget allocated to the HEREs as part of their grant agreement (see section "8. Funding" below);
- monitor the activities of the HEREs;
- prepare and submit to the EACEA annual reports and a final report about the activities implemented by the HERE team;
- keep the national authorities informed on the implementation of the HEREs' work programmes.

8. Funding of the HERE activities

The travel and subsistence costs incurred by the HEREs for their participation in international events, as well as the direct costs related to local initiatives involving the HEREs, will be covered by the specific budget dedicated to the HEREs in the NEO grant agreement. No remuneration is foreseen for the HEREs, but a limited part of this budget could be used to compensate certain specific tasks carried out by the HEREs, subject to prior approval by the EACEA.

The organisation of the international HERE activities will be financed through a service contract with an external service provider.

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