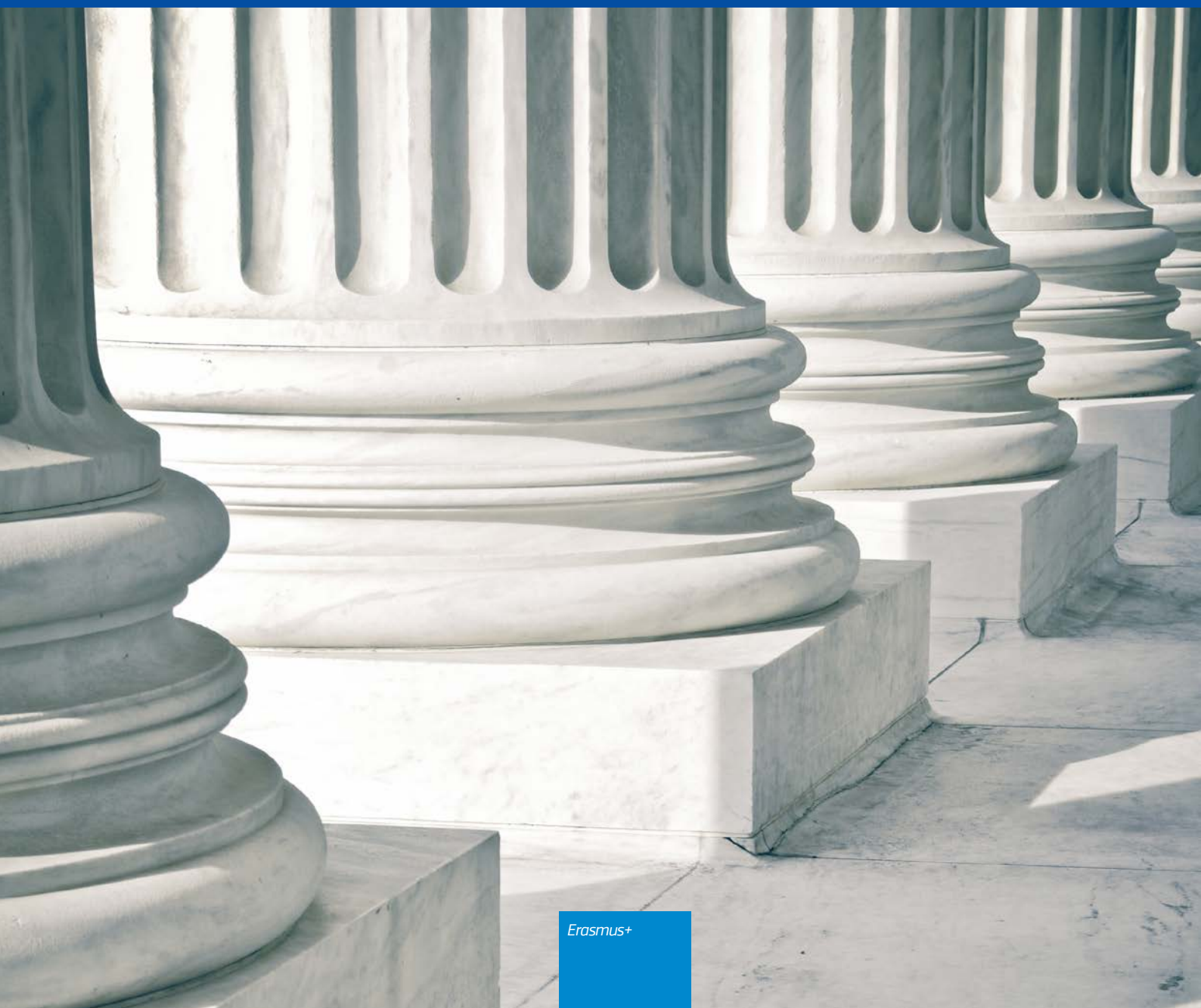




Higher Education Reform Experts

Activity report 2018



Erasmus+

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Activity Report 2018

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 HERE activities in 2018	5
2. Local HERE activities in Partner Countries	6
2.1 HERE events	6
2.2 Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs)	6
2.3 Dissemination and communication	9
2.4 Policy support	9
3. International HERE events	9
3.1 Types of events	10
3.2 Themes	10
3.3 Study Visit to University of Montpellier, France - Entrepreneurship	11
3.4 Seminar in Podgorica, Montenegro – Research-based Teaching	12
3.5 Study visit to LSE and KCL, London, UK – Professional Development of Staff	14
3.6 Study visit to University of Coimbra, Portugal – Joint Degrees	15
3.7 Annual conference in Rome, Italy – Capacity Building in Higher Education	16
4. Centralised support for HERE activities	18
4.1 HERE Virtual Community and website	18
4.2 The HERE Newsletter	19
4.3 The SPHERE Advisory Group	19
5. Conclusions	20
2018 HERE activities by country	23
6. Western Balkans	23
6.1. ALBANIA	25
6.2 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	27
6.3 KOSOVO	29
6.4 MONTENEGRO	31
6.5 SERBIA	33
7. Central Asia	35
7.1. KAZAKHSTAN	37
7.2 KYRGYZSTAN	39
7.3 UZBEKISTAN	41

8. Eastern Partnership countries	43
8.1. ARMENIA	45
8.2 BELARUS	47
8.3 GEORGIA	49
8.4 MOLDOVA	51
8.5. UKRAINE	53
9. Russian Federation	55
9.1. RUSSIAN FEDERATION	57
10. South-Mediterranean Countries	59
10.1 ISRAEL	61
10.2 EGYPT	63
10.3 JORDAN	65
10.4 LEBANON	67
10.5 PALESTINE	69

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 located in the Western Balkans, Central Asia, the Russian Federation, the Eastern Partnership and the South Mediterranean region. Individual higher education experts were identified by their national authorities in each of the Partner Countries in order to act as promoters of higher education reforms through the organisation of events, writing articles, providing consultation, etc. The initiative proved to be successful and was therefore continued under the Erasmus+ programme.

In order to enhance the expertise of the network, regular training and support activities for the HEREs are provided on a yearly basis by the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) with the support of a service provider. The current contractor, the "SPHERE team" (consortium consisting of the University of Barcelona and the European University Association) is responsible for organising international training events, supporting Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) in the Partner Countries and maintaining a Virtual Community platform for communication, event organisation and dissemination of information among the HERE network.

The HERE network consists of approximately 250 members nominated jointly by their national authorities and the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) in their country, with the endorsement of the local EU Delegations. These 250 HEREs come mostly from Universities, Ministries and other governmental institutions. Their profile includes rectors, vice-rectors, deans, professors, heads of study programmes, administrators, students and other experts of the higher education field, covering a wide range of academic areas and of higher education reform topics. 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 grants to organise local activities and to cover HEREs' costs of travel to international training events.

1.2 HERE activities in 2018

This report has been produced on the basis of the 2018 HERE reports received from 19 NEOs¹, and of a contribution from the SPHERE team concerning the international HERE activities. The introductory part is followed by country specific sections, which have been produced by the NEOs in order to present higher education developments in their country and to 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 national level and to inspire colleagues in other countries when planning their HERE activities for the coming years.

Despite the fact that 2018 was the year of renewal of the NEO grant agreements and coincided with changes in HERE teams in several countries, the variety and quality of activities remained at a high level. Internationalisation, quality assurance and National Qualifications Frameworks figure among the most frequent topics in local activities. The role of HEREs in supporting their national authorities in the higher education reform process continued to be considerable, as many HERE team members are involved in working groups responsible for drafting policies, strategies and legislative documents.

¹ Because of the renewal of their grant agreements during that same year, only 19 out of 26 eligible NEOs were able to implement their HEREs activities in 2018.

To support the HEREs in their local activities, the SPHERE team continued to organise international training events, provided experts for Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) and maintained the website hosting the HERE Virtual Community.

The support provided by the SPHERE team is based on the following methodological principles:

- 1) **Awareness raising about EU higher education policy and policy developments in the EHEA**, and how these policies could impact Partner Countries. This approach considers that HEREs have different levels of information and different starting points with regards to their knowledge, which may be a function of the countries in which they are based and their varying professional profiles.
- 2) **Capacity building of the HERE teams** to actively contribute to higher education reform at national level in their countries and at the level of organisations and higher education institutions. In addition to knowledge and information transfer on HE reforms, the role of HEREs in their respective countries and the ability of individual teams to propose and shape policy is highlighted.
- 3) **Enhancing networking** between HEREs of different countries, through a variety of regional and international activities, including through regional TAMs.
- 4) **Peer learning** approaches that allow HEREs at different levels of knowledge and experience to learn from each other.
- 5) Strong linkages with the Bologna Process and potential **support for Bologna implementation** in countries in need;
- 6) Strong linkages with **EU education, neighbourhood and foreign relations policy**;

2. Local HERE activities in Partner Countries

2.1 HERE events

The major part of the HERE activities take place at local level, in the Partner Countries. The events organised by HEREs focus on different aspects of higher education reform and provide a forum for discussion for local stakeholders. These events, usually organised in cooperation between the NEOs, the national authorities and the HERE teams, offer 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, as well as on the websites of the NEOs. 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 (TAMs, see below). 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.

2.2 Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs)

Many of the local HERE events are facilitated by the so called Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs), which allow National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) to invite foreign experts to 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. The SPHERE team identifies suitable experts for the approved TAMs and manages the contracts with the experts. The NEOs are responsible for the local arrangements for the events.

During its 3-year contractual period, the SPHERE Team will facilitate in total 165 TAMs, on average 55 per year. These missions are a means of providing targeted, hands-on support and consultancy to the HEREs and the academic community in their respective countries. They can take various formats, but generally entail organising a national seminar or meeting, with the participation of an expert identified by SPHERE.

The list below includes the most popular topics for TAMs implemented in 2018:

- Quality Assurance (5)
- Internationalisation (4)
- Student participation (3)
- Student Centred Learning (3)
- Entrepreneurship (3)
- Digitalization/ICT/e-learning (3)
- Teaching staff development (3)
- Joint programmes (2)
- National Qualifications Frameworks - NQFs (2)
- ECTS/Diploma supplement/mobility (2)
- Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL (2)
- PhDs and the doctoral cycle (2)

As in previous years, the interest in **quality assurance, internationalisation and mobility and student-centred learning** remained high. However, that TAM requests also became more specific in certain fields. For example:

- Strategies for the Establishment and Management of Technological Incubators in HEI: Boosting Added Value in National Industry (*Egypt*)
- Teaching Reforms for English as a Foreign Language in Higher Education in Israel as a stepping stone for internationalisation (*Israel*)
- Integrated Tertiary Education to Respond to Employability Challenges (*Lebanon*)
- Smart Specialization with focus on stakeholders (*Albania*)

In addition, the 2018 selection demonstrated that there are several **emerging topics**, which suggests new priorities in HE reform: e.g. student engagement / the role of students in governance, recognition of prior learning and ethics/values in the higher education sector

There were also a number of requests that referenced explicitly the international HERE events, in the interest of planning a follow-up activity at national level. Other TAMs have been proposed in a series, with several events over years following-up on a same topic.

The 2018 selection also demonstrated the continued interest of certain Partner Countries to work together collaboratively and to pool resources around a **regional seminar or event**.

Of the TAM events organised in 2018, four were regional:

Countries involved	Topic	Type of event	Date of implementation
Kyrgyzstan Russia and Kazakhstan	The Role of Accreditation in Promoting Quality Assurance at HEIs	Training Seminar	3-4/10/2018
Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestine and Algeria	Emerging entrepreneurship skills & Technical Education in South Mediterranean Countries	Seminar for focus group and policy makers	1-2/11/2018

Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine	Ensuring quality in scholarly research” Title: Introducing quality assurance mechanisms, securing credibility and validity of research	Joint Seminar and Training Workshop	15-16/10/2018
Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan	European best practices on major-minor educational programme development	Training seminar	13-14/04/2018

It should be noted that the TAMs continue to be used as **a mechanism to deliver upon Bologna Process commitments** in Partner countries that are part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and also to fulfil European Union policy commitments (in the context of the common market, such as in the field of regulated professions). Non-EHEA countries wishing to comply with certain EHEA frameworks and tools also use TAMs to this purpose.

Examples of TAMs that referenced specific laws/reforms that were being undertaken for the Bologna Process (or for the EU):

- Efficient Adaptation of National Qualifications Frameworks of the EHEA Member States (*Belarus*)
- Implementation of the Directive 2005/36/EC and the Directive 2013/55/EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Formation of the Quality Assurance Agencies in higher education: criteria and procedures for selecting members of QAA and forming QA experts pool (*Ukraine*)
- European Integration of Ukraine’ Higher Education: Conclusions from the Bologna Report 2018 (*Ukraine*)

Examples of TAMs in non-EHEA signatory countries, which addressed EHEA tools and frameworks were:

- Formation and realization of Diploma Supplement based on EU experience / ECTS principles and structure (*Jordan*)
- Which tools for developing National Qualification Framework in Algeria?
- Analysis of the national qualifications system in Kyrgyzstan

In 2018, the TAMs continued to be an activity that is highly appreciated by both experts and the HERE teams/NEOs. Feedback is collected after each event from the expert, the NEO and the participants. The experts, in addition to evaluating their general experience, provide some recommendations, e.g. on how to continue reforms or how the TAM can be followed up.

The expert pool for TAMs relies very much on practitioners. They contribute from their specific institutional and national experiences. They are often internationally renowned experts and involved in European policy making and project activities. Experts usually also report that they found the experience useful for their own professional development. This and the fact that they are recognised by HEREs as both experts and peers has been essential to ensuring the success of the TAMs.

More details on organised TAMs can be found on the HERE website:

<https://supporthere.org/page/technical-assistance-missions-tam>

2.3 Dissemination and communication

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 2018, 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. Links to these articles and publications can be found in the country sections of this report.

All National Erasmus+ Offices' websites contain a section dedicated to the HERE activities. While some of the websites only contain basic information about the action, on others, the sections describing the HEREs' mission, profiles and activities are very detailed. These NEO websites also include regularly updated information on the international and national HERE events, as well as reports by event participants.

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

2.4 Policy support

Beyond the more visible 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.

In particular, 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. Cooperation with the ministries of education is facilitated by the fact that almost all HERE teams include Ministry (/public authority) officials.

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

3. International HERE events

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.

In total 5 international events took place in 2018, including one conference, one seminar and three study visits. 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.

The five 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 Types of events

Three types of international training events are proposed each year. Study visits are aimed only at the HERE experts, while seminars and annual conferences are also attended by representatives of the National Erasmus+ Offices in Partner Countries, as well as by a limited number of Bologna Promoters from Programme Countries.

- **Study visits** present a 'case study' of an institution or country, and feature both national and institutional practices. The events are planned in exchange and collaboration with the host institution, which is encouraged to engage both staff and students. Study visits have proven to be the most popular centralised activity for the HEREs, who generally favour in depth, hands-on approaches to training activities. This said, at times it is difficult for HEREs to relate to an institution or system that is notably different in terms structure, autonomy and financing of higher education.
- **Seminars** are theme-focused and engage speakers from different European and Partner Countries. They focus on a thematic issue (quality assurance, doctoral education, university-industry linkages, for example), and attempt to provide both theoretical background to the issue as well as examples and cases from different systems – both within the EU and in Partner Countries – as to how it is implemented. While the HEREs have generally appreciated seminars, feedback has suggested that it is sometimes difficult to cater to the different levels of knowledge and experience that individual HERE may have on the topic.
- **Annual conferences** usually tackle an umbrella topic and serve as 'bridging events', linking themes under a policy framework. They have also been used to probe new themes and ideas. This is the biggest event in the annual training programme, and provides a large networking potential for the HEREs, as well as the chance to showcase results from the initiative.

3.2 Themes

For 2018, a **number of cross-cutting themes** were identified to inspire the HERE training events. These were topics in which HEREs had expressed interest, notably through their requests for Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) in past years, and were generally of common interest across different regions involved.

- Managing university - industry cooperation in research, teaching and fostering entrepreneurship
- Professional development of teaching staff / Centralised support services and structures and resourcing
- Research versus teaching careers / Research-based teaching
- Role of the international office versus other administrative support structures in supporting internationalisation
- University strategies for partnering (globally and locally)

The HERE events organised in 2018 were the following:

- Study Visit - **The role of universities in developing entrepreneurial skills**, *University of Montpellier – 19-20 April 2018*
- Seminar - **Research-based teaching and learning: From national and institutional policies to practice** – *University of Montenegro, 28-29 May, 2018*

- Study Visit - **Learning and teaching: Professional development of staff in higher education**, *King's College London and London School of Economics and Political Science - 3-4 September, 2018*
- Study Visit - **Joint degrees: Strategic and operational implementation: One size does not fit all**, *University of Coimbra, Portugal, 2-3 October, 2018*
- Annual Conference - **Capacity building for higher education reform: The impact of collaborative international projects**, *University of Rome – Sapienza, 12-13 December, 2018*

3.3 Study Visit to University of Montpellier, France - Entrepreneurship

The objective of this HERE Study Visit, hosted by the University of Montpellier on 19-20 April 2018, was to showcase a practical example of how a university engages in entrepreneurial activities and also how it provides training in entrepreneurship to students and staff. It tackled aspects of research and innovation management, teaching, course design and student support, as well as outreach activities and international collaboration. It also highlighted the role of universities in the entrepreneurship 'ecosystem', which consists of students, professors, administrators, investors, companies, regulatory bodies and legal frameworks.

The learning outcomes of this study visit were:

- Understand the process of defining and implementing university strategies for supporting entrepreneurship, especially of young graduates and researchers;
- Devise strategies for better defining and activating universities in entrepreneurship ecosystems;
- Support curricular development and teaching innovation, oriented at fostering entrepreneurial skills;
- Study and discuss university support structures and services that serve the same aim.

The study visit was attended by 33 participants, in addition to the staff from the host university. This included 28 HEREs from 15 countries with very different profiles, including ministry representatives, rectors, vice-rectors, teaching and administrative staff, directors of doctoral and master programmes, heads of quality assurance departments and international relations units. Three participants, from Georgia, Kosovo and Montenegro, provided written case studies on entrepreneurship in their countries, specifically on the development of entrepreneurial skills for students, innovative system development and experimental learning. All three case studies are featured on the SPHERE website.

Participants highlighted the points below as some of their main take-aways:

- 1) Entrepreneurship is feasible in all higher education institutions and systems:** it was generally agreed that support for entrepreneurship could be implemented in all systems and institutions. However, the understanding of what entrepreneurship is, and what the institutions and systems would get out of it, were quite diverse.
- 2) There are diverse benefits of entrepreneurship, depending on the environment and the mission of the institution.**

This can include:

- Stimulating inter- and multidisciplinary research, conducted in collaboration among diverse partnerships (large and small businesses, state agencies and municipalities, NGOs, students, etc.), which can also improve its application and dissemination;
- Helping to transform education in all study fields and promote interdisciplinary student-centred learning as well as innovative learning and teaching concepts. It also gives students a good framework for experiencing success and failure in real-life situations;
- Contributing to transforming institutional management and governance and allowing for collaboration in research and teaching across faculty and department structures. It can also help to develop structures for channelling interaction with outside parties;

- Enhancing the institution's external collaboration at regional, national and international level.

3) Entrepreneurship is a responsibility of the university and should be part of the institutional strategy

- Entrepreneurship, in order to be successful and to go beyond the initiatives of individual staff and students, requires structures and investment at the level of the institutional strategy;
- The institution and its members are responsible for the quality, legality and ethical integrity of all services and initiatives;
- Measuring success, both with regards to entrepreneurship ecosystem development and in learning and teaching activities, is a topic that must be pursued. Universities have to develop multiple and smart approaches for this (e.g. through data collection, and formal and informal consultation of internal and external stakeholders).

The feedback received from the participants was very positive both in term of the relevance of the topic and the quality of the presentations. The presentations and discussion of different initiatives of the University of Montpellier were equally appreciated for their diverse perspective on fostering entrepreneurship in both teaching and in research.

It should be noted that two Technical Assistance Mission (TAM) requests for 2019 made a direct reference to the Montpellier study visit, demonstrating the interest for follow-up on this topic at country level.

Event site: https://supportthere.org/montpellier_2018

Outcome Report: https://supportthere.org/sites/default/files/report_study_visit_montpellier_-_april_2018-3_0.pdf.

3.4 Seminar in Podgorica, Montenegro – Research-based Teaching

Research-based teaching is a topic of growing interest and prevalence in Europe and in Partner Countries. It touches upon some of the key questions that higher education institutions and systems are facing, notably with regards to the mission of universities and their added contribution to learning, specifically through research-based teaching and research-oriented learning.

In a study visit to the University of Milan in 2017, HEREs explored how a specific research-intensive university approached the concept of research-based teaching. This visit left a number of open questions that HEREs wished to continue to explore through Technical Assistance Missions, for example. It was decided to subsequently organise a seminar on this topic in 2018, to contrast different examples and approaches. The seminar was hosted by the University of Montenegro on 28-29 May 2018.

The learning outcomes of this seminar were:

- Clarify terminology and approaches when it comes to different facets of research-based teaching, so as to better explore institutional strengths and weaknesses in countries covered by the HEREs;
- Explore good practices in institution-driven, strategic approaches on how to integrate research and education missions;
- Generate ideas for how to build capacity of faculty members to implement research-based teaching and create a research-based learning environment. This includes both research-oriented didactics and teaching students to use investigative approaches;
- Analyse national frameworks, policies and funding that may help or hinder the development of research-based teaching in diverse types of institutions.

The event offered plenary and break-out sessions devoted to the following topics:

- Institutional missions
- The disparities between research and teaching career pathways
- Research-based learning
- Supporting academic staff in course design, with particular reference to internationalisation, ICT, and the specificities of the three Bologna cycles
- National policy approaches

The seminar was attended by 62 participants, including seven from Montenegro. The group was made up of HEREs (mainly academics) from 17 countries, representatives of 15 National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs), guest speakers and members of the SPHERE team. In addition, for the first time, the seminar also welcomed seven Bologna Experts from five European countries, who contributed extensively to the discussions.

It should be noted that six HEREs were invited to make presentations at the event, based on case studies submitted and also on the pre-survey results. Drawing examples from both EU countries and Partner Countries is generally an important feature of the seminar programmes.

Some of the main conclusions from the seminar were:

- The participants were able to gain a clear view of the potential benefits of re-thinking the relationship of research to learning and teaching.
- The participants noted the distinctions between learning which is research-based, research-led, research-tutored and research-oriented. It was suggested that whatever mode was appropriate to the institutional context, a basic aspiration should be for all institutions to become '**research-inclusive**'. Clearly, a number of institutions would also remain or become research-intensive. What is desirable is that modes of research-based learning and teaching are generalised across higher education systems, creating an embedded culture.

The seminar discussions generated a number of recommendations and take-aways:

- Managers, policy makers and social partners at system and institutional levels should be encouraged to
 - use funding and budgetary instruments to secure parity of esteem for research and teaching activities;
 - structure career pathways and workload accordingly;
 - extend academic autonomy to the level at which programme design becomes the responsibility of the practitioners.
- As for the academic community as a whole, it should strive to
 - develop a methodology to assess the incidence of gender sensitivity in research-based learning, since this is an issue relevant both to professional opportunity and to student performance;
 - develop over time ways of measuring and demonstrating the value-added of research-based learning, both as a basis for further raising standards and for constructing the evidence base needed to inform policy-makers;
 - use its leverage on policy-makers to influence the fostering of research-based learning in the secondary education sector, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. These conclusions are further elaborated in the event outcome report.

The evaluation survey conducted showed that this seminar largely met the HEREs' expectations. That said, the HEREs represented a diverse audience with diverse learning needs – some who were more versed on this

topic and some who needed more theoretical background and a more comprehensive approach to the topic. This demonstrates the need to consider a possible 'multi-track' approach to seminars in the future, and/or a different approach to addressing HEREs with different skill levels in these events.

Event site: <https://supporthere.org/montenegro2018>

Outcome report: https://supporthere.org/sites/default/files/report_seminar_in_montenegro_-_final_version_with_annexes.pdf

3.5 Study visit to LSE and KCL, London, UK – Professional Development of Staff

The study visit (3-4 September, 2018) was the first to examine the topic of professional development of teaching staff in higher education. It did so in collaboration with two globally-renowned institutions – Kings' College London (KCL) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). It juxtaposed these two institutions, showcasing the UK framework for teaching staff development and how this relates to quality assessment, student services and student-centred teaching approaches. The event targeted senior academic staff, senior university administrators of programme/course development and quality assurance, student HEREs and national policy makers interested in incentivising and supporting teaching and professional development in higher education.

The learning outcomes were:

- To learn from KCL and LSE practitioners and institutional policy-makers about what each institution regards as good practice in professional development;
- To understand the external (English) and internal contexts in which the professional development centres operate in universities;
- To locate professional development in the contexts of quality assurance and quality enhancement;
- To investigate how far practices at KCL and LSE are transferable to other national and institutional contexts.

The main plenary sessions of the event were dedicated to the topics of: 1) institutional missions and the link to teaching staff development, 2) support programmes for teacher development, 3) support for research-based teaching and 4) quality assurance/enhancement. LSE and KCL provided complementary speakers and case studies for each session and also involved students and diverse staff members in related break-out discussions.

The study visit was attended by 31 HEREs, in addition to staff members from the LSE and KCL, notably from the King's Academy, a centralised unit that supports staff development and the LSE Teaching and Learning Centre, which provides a similar function. The HERE participants represented 16 countries and were mostly from universities, including rectors, vice-rectors, professors and PhD students. Two ministry representatives attended as well as one representative of a national quality assurance agency. Two HEREs were asked to provide presentations based on case studies they supplied for the event, notably on research-based teaching and also on quality assurance (Egypt and Ukraine, respectively).

Some of the take-aways and conclusion were:

- Leadership, at the institutional level, should promote staff development and training that aligns to the institutional missions and values.
- Institutional leaders should work within a **strategic framework which is holistic**, i.e. linking learning and teaching with research and community service and ensuring that staff development reinforces the synergies between them.
- Reviewing resources, streamlining processes, improving support levels, and **building reward and recognition** for those who teach and lead on education is a key to implementing teaching and learning strategies.

- Centralised units for staff development in institutions can function in different ways, depending on the needs of teaching staff and the resources available. They should either be linked with or encompass other support units and structures in the university, ranging from technology support to student unions and centres. They should attempt to **guide and support teaching, enabling exchange of good practice, instead of imposing rigid procedures**. It is important that management information systems are transparent, in order to allow the centres to identify faculties and departments where support is particularly needed.
- Basic research skills should already be introduced at Bachelor level, in all disciplines. **Students should understand the importance of research skills in the labour market, beyond just research and academic careers**. Interdisciplinary approaches to teaching research skills are key in this respect.

In terms of feedback, participants were highly appreciative of the student intervention: this was a complementary presentation between a student and a professor on how research-based teaching methods can be integrated into the Bachelor level. In addition, participants appreciated the "comparative" nature of the event - being exposed to two different institutions and open discussion on their practices - was deemed as highly relevant. Having the two institutions represented in all sessions was a key to the success.

The HEREs also brainstormed specific initiatives that could be implemented in their countries, which are detailed in the outcome report below.

Event site: <https://supporthere.org/london2018>

Outcome report: https://supporthere.org/sites/default/files/report_here_study_visit_london_-_september_2018_v3.pdf

3.6 Study visit to University of Coimbra, Portugal – Joint Degrees

This study visit, held on 2-3 October 2018 at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, was a follow-up to a HERE seminar held in Novi Sad, Serbia, in 2016 on joint degree development. It was noted that the interest in joint academic programmes had continued to grow, as evidenced by the requests for Technical Assistance Missions. Moreover, a number of national legislations had changed to accommodate joint programmes, while in the Bologna Process significant efforts have been made to facilitate their quality assurance and accreditation. Hence it was deemed relevant to re-explore this theme via a study visit and look at a particular institutional case.

The defined learning outcomes were:

- To understand the overarching strategic planning of the University of Coimbra and the role played by the internationalisation of education and research in the accomplishment of its vision and missions;
- To learn – via the example of UC – how to ensure the success of joint degrees through robust and supportive management and administration, including quality assurance;
- To be aware of the importance of course coordination and support services in the implementation of joint degrees;
- To learn about different joint degree models at UC.

At the University of Coimbra (UC), joint degrees were explicitly included in the Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 and 2015-2019. During the HERE study visit, participants gained an overview of UC's strategic planning process and learned how joint degrees have contributed to the fulfilment of its strategic mission, notably with regard to development cooperation and the provision of an attractive portfolio of international programmes. They were able to appreciate how UC maintains quality standards for the full life-cycle of the joint programme, without sacrificing the flexibility required to develop solutions in the context of very different academic cultures and institutional contexts. Participants also learned about UC's different joint

degree models, their financial and legal implications, as well as the need to comply with specific requirements and formal procedures.

With the exception of the three members of the SPHERE Team and the representative of the Executive Agency, all 33 participants were HERE. They came from 19 countries.

In terms of feedback received, participants highly appreciated the opening session on 'UC Strategic Planning: Development cooperation and internationalisation of education and research through joint degrees', as this framed how joint degrees fit into the institutional strategy and profile. Participants also valued the case studies on specific joint programmes (how they were developed, why, their modalities of cooperation) and wanted to go even more in-depth on specific cases.

Some take-aways from the event were:

- An institution intending to develop joint programmes must have a clear idea of its **context and mission**, together with a coherent and viable implementation strategy.
- It must also have strong leadership, capable of ensuring that the **joint programmes are well integrated into the institutional course portfolio**.
- Its support services – notably the International Relations Office, the Administrative and Quality Assurance Offices – must be proactive and fully **participant in the design and delivery of joint programmes**.
- Without robust teamwork within the joint programme consortium, it is impossible to guarantee effective planning of the progress from concept to delivery and to develop viable approaches to the subsequent evolution and **sustainability** of the joint programme.
- There is evidence to suggest that successful joint programmes are most likely to emerge from existing research collaborations.
- Course design will depend significantly on the volume of external funding; planners should actively anticipate how to ensure sustainability – in the **framework of their institutional strategies** – once this funding is reduced or exhausted.
- From the bottom-up perspective, proposals for joint programmes may vary widely in conception. At the same time, institutional support services tend to function better where there is uniformity. Hence the need for a **versatile institutional template** which strikes an appropriate balance between administrative and procedural efficiency, on the one hand, and specific disciplinary requirements, on the other. Different models have to be accommodated.
- Joint programmes **vary in their degree of integration**. Course planners should consider whether, in their particular institutional contexts, it is better to aim for full integration at the outset or to approach it in a series of steps.

Event site: <https://supporthere.org/coimbra2018>

Outcome report:

https://supporthere.org/sites/default/files/report_coimbra_study_visit_october_2018_final_0_1.pdf

3.7 Annual conference in Rome, Italy – Capacity Building in Higher Education

Given that the HEREs have been tasked to contribute to and build capacity for higher education reforms in their specific countries, it was decided to focus the 2018 Annual Conference on the issue of capacity building; covering concepts and concrete impacts of projects within Partner Countries. This was considered an important follow-up to the 2017 HERE Annual Conference that examined the HERE initiative as a diplomatic tool and policy dialogue channel. The 2018 conference, hosted by the University of Rome – Sapienza on 12-13 December 2018, explored and show-cased specific collaborative, international projects in which HEREs are involved, which contribute to capacity building both at the policy-making level and the

institutional level. These were mostly higher education and research projects funded by the EU, under the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes, but also other international projects. The objective of the conference was not only to provide a space for HEREs to share projects results, but also to discuss policy impact and reflect more generally on the notion of 'capacity building', as well as to explore opportunities for better collaboration between projects.

The objectives of the conference were:

- To examine models of international collaboration and specifically how collaborative capacity building projects can have structural impacts on higher education institutions as well as national education policies;
- To both compare and seek synergies between projects that have similar objectives and address similar reform themes, such as quality assurance, recognition, employability, governance, autonomy, mobility and internationalisation;
- To allow HEREs to share results of such projects, but also discuss ways of maximising impact on policy reform;
- To demonstrate in particular the role of projects in contributing to the Bologna Process implementation.

The event was structured around plenary sessions that examined the topics of:

- Capacity building – the perspective of the EU versus the perspective of national governments and higher education institutions;
- Capacity building projects to implement the Bologna Process;
- The added value to EU partners in capacity building;
- Capacity building in university autonomy and governance.

The four plenary panel sessions featured speakers from Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Uzbekistan and the European University Association. They were policy-makers, project funders, policy analysts and project practitioners, drawn from governmental and non-governmental organisations and universities. The Italian minister for development cooperation also participated in the event.

Thematic break-out groups were held on the topics of mobility, quality assurance, recognition and teaching and learning reform, moderated by experts that had previously also participated in Technical Assistance Missions to the Partner Countries. In addition, and as a means to pre-empt the 2019 work plan, regional break-out sessions on **social inclusion** in higher education were held where the topic was fleshed out.

To complement the conference programme, a **poster session** was held on relevant EU funded capacity building projects from Partner Countries.

The conference drew 146 participants – including academics, administrators, policy makers. Of these, 91 came from 22 partner countries. Seven EU Member States were represented, most notably Italy: colleagues from the host university Sapienza were joined by academics from ten other Italian universities. Participants came primarily to be acquainted with good practice, to discuss and exchange experiences, but also to network more generally with colleagues working in different national policy environments.

The event had a number of conclusions, both regarding how to utilise capacity building projects to sustain impact in systems, but also on how to shape the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action in the future. These are outlined in the outcome report.

The evaluation conducted among participants of this event highlighted which of the topics addressed were most useful for the diverse HERE audience that the conference attracted:

- The strategic goals in Erasmus+ CBHE and the future of the programme
- Capacity building and social inclusion in the higher education sector
- The impact of projects on stakeholders, the institution and on student mobility
- The ‘institutionalised’ dissemination of capacity building that is needed to ensure reciprocity of benefits, particularly when projects are framed in a development cooperation logic
- Institutional ownership of projects and the related sustainability of results

It was observed that there is a wide range of expectations regarding the Annual Conference, and that this event could be shaped in a number of different ways. Some HEREs expressed an interest to have the conference as a bridging event that would tie together the events of the year, while others expected it to be more policy-oriented and/or introduce a new theme.

Event site: <https://supporthere.org/rome2018>

Outcome report:

https://supporthere.org/sites/default/files/report_rome_conference_december_2018_with_annex_final_1.pdf

4. Centralised support for HERE activities

4.1 HERE Virtual Community and website

The HERE Virtual Community and website (www.supporthere.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 HERE Virtual Community and website has the following functions:

- Provides comprehensive information on all events and hosts an event mini-site for each event;
- Advertises current higher education developments in the EU as well as relevant EU and EHEA policies and programme announcements (calls for funding, project results, etc);
- Provides background information on the HERE Initiative and provides links to other relevant topics;
- Has a library search function that allows HEREs to search for publications and materials that have been posted on different sections of the website;
- Features ‘Country pages’ for Partner Countries, based on content proposed by the National Erasmus+ Offices;
- Presents an overview of Technical Assistance Missions carried out to Partner Countries, with basic details on each event as well as a short report drafted by the expert having carried out the mission;
- Serves as a communication tool for the HERE community (Virtual Community): The Virtual Community hosts specific discussion groups on different topics, used in particular to prime events.

On the website, the SPHERE Team creates a new ‘mini-site’ for each event. This contains:

- The programme of the event
- The registration form and a pre-survey, to probe the HERE’s level of knowledge on the topic
- Suggested background reading
- Down-loadable practical information, including information on visas and local hotels, as well as maps of the city and venue
- The evaluation form, to be filled out after the event

- All presentations from the event
- The Outcome Report

4.2 The HERE Newsletter

As a means to feature and promote different HERE activities, and also to disseminate relevant information, the publication of a bi-annual HERE newsletter was launched in 2017. It is distributed by e-mail and published on the HERE website. Two HERE newsletters were released in 2018, one in May and one in December. The following types of content were covered:

- Feature articles on policy reform in selected Partner Countries
- Interviews with either a HERE or an expert, such as a Bologna Promoter, on a topical issue
- Feature articles on the results of certain TAMs, as provided by the NEOs
- Upcoming SPHERE events and a selection of upcoming TAMs
- Announcements of relevant policy events that may be of interest for HEREs
- Announcement of new relevant publications on higher education

The first newsletter in 2018 specifically included the following:

- A HERE opinion piece on learning and teaching in Algeria
- An interview with an expert – Declan Kennedy (University College Cork, Ireland) – who has conducted several TAMs on student-centred learning
- An article produced by two Palestinian HEREs on university cooperation with local industry
- Outcomes of a TAM in Serbia on Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL

The second newsletter included:

- Any interview with a Bologna Expert on his current perception of the Bologna Process priorities
- The announcement of the publication of a study that SPHERE conducted on Research in the Western Balkans
- A commentary/critical piece from an Armenian HERE on the need to sustain HE reform in Armenia
- Recommendations and follow-up to a TAM in Uzbekistan on entrepreneurship

The HERE newsletter is disseminated to all HEREs, in addition to selected European Commission officials, Bologna Promoters and other interested stakeholders. **LINK TO THE WEBSITE???**

4.3 The SPHERE Advisory Group

In order to generate ongoing feedback on the programming of the international HERE activities, a HERE Advisory Group was established with the intention to:

- generate rolling feedback on the activities and events planned, especially on event themes, structure and event materials;
- receive informal feedback on the dynamics of collaboration between HERE teams, at the national level and in the regions, so as to better enable synergies between TAMs, for example, and other HERE related activities;
- provide feedback on outcome reports from events and provide direct input on the reading materials suggested for HEREs in the run-up to events;
- contribute occasionally to the preparation of content for event materials and sessions, and for the HERE Virtual Community and website;
- generate greater ownership on the programming of HERE activities among HEREs.

The selected group - nominated by the NEOs with a maximum of two HEREs per region and height HEREs in total - was convened for the first time in December 2017, in conjunction with the Annual HERE Conference in Brussels.

The group selected for 1,5 years included:

Central Asia:	Igor Vikhrov, Uzbekistan
Eastern Europe:	Siarhei Piashkun, Belarus Ketevan Gurchiani, Georgia
Russian Federation:	Alla Akulshina, Russian Federation
South-Mediterranean:	Ma'ayan Hagage, Israel Chafik Mokbel, Lebanon
Western Balkans:	Aleksandra Nikolic, Bosnia and Herzegovina Mira Vukčević, Montenegro

The Advisory Group supported SPHERE programming through 2018, both electronically and via physical meetings. The members were consulted in particular on the contents and background materials for each event. This group has been partially renewed in the first semester of 2019.

5. Conclusions

The main aim of the network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) is to promote the modernisation of higher education in Partner Countries surrounding the EU. First in the framework of the Tempus programme and later through Erasmus+, EU support has been provided for the training of experts and for the organisation of local activities, with the aim to support higher education reforms in the Partner Countries concerned.

Local HERE activities consist mainly of events, publications and media appearances. As shown in the country sections of this report, these activities are fully in line with the national higher education developments in the countries concerned and support the reform agendas of the national authorities. The relevance of the events and publications is the result of a good cooperation between the NEOs, the HEREs and their public authorities. In addition to themes typically linked to the Bologna process, new and more specific topics are emerging, sometimes thanks to individual initiatives of active HERE members.

The role of HEREs in supporting their national authorities in policy reforms continues to be essential. Their expertise and the knowledge gained from the international HERE events makes them well placed to provide guidance and consultancy by producing reports, participating in working groups and contributing to the drafting of legislative documents. Many such examples can be found in country sections of this report.

In the course of the years, the HERE support activities offered through the Erasmus+ programme have evolved more and more towards peer-to-peer learning. The aim is not only to promote European best practices, but also to encourage exchanges and cooperation between HEREs from different countries. More than ever, HEREs are acting as speakers and chairs in the international HERE events and participate as experts in Technical Assistance Missions. The interest for Joint and Regional Technical Assistance Missions also shows a stronger need for cooperation and exchange between Partner Countries.

As 2020 will be the last year of HERE activities under the Erasmus+ programme, a reflection will need to be launched on the continuation of this action in the next programme phase. New forms of experts'

cooperation could be envisaged in order to support in the best possible way the reform processes in the Partner Countries.

2018 HERE activities by country

6. Western Balkans

6.1. ALBANIA

Key developments in higher education in Albania in 2018

The higher education sector in Albania was marked in 2018 by students' protest, which engaged the public and the policy makers in a debate about the quality of higher education.

In response to the students' demands for more quality and better standards in higher education, the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports promised strong measures to improve the situation. The Government representatives and the Prime Minister started a tour of meetings with university staff and students in public universities and proposed the "Student Pact" as a solution to the crisis and recognition of the problems raised by students. The 8 points Pact establishes a new agenda for Quality of Education and Meritocracy in the Higher education, to bring back the debate about the Quality of Academic titles, Students' voice in decision making in HEIs, the quality of education provision and students life, access to quality literature, etc.

Action plans and working teams were established to follow up on the implementation of each of these points from the Student Pact.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

1. Albanian HEREs have been actively participating during 2018 in the working group established by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth and working on the preparation of the draft bylaw on the "Methodology of evaluation of the research within departments in HEIs".
2. Drafting of the questionnaire on the roles and responsibilities of the students representatives in the governing bodies of the HEIs (selecting the student members of the HEIs academic senate) as required by the new law on higher education.
3. Awareness raising of the governing bodies of the HEIs on the importance of students' involvement in the institution's management and specifically:
 - The governance of HEIs
 - The curricula and teaching
 - Quality Assurance
4. The HERE team was also involved in the drafting of a comprehensive opinion and analysis of the Universities Pact, highlighting the main achievements and areas for improvement.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Organization of the National seminar on "Strengthening the Role of Students in the Management and Governance of HEIs in Albania". The event was very timely as the new law on higher education makes special provision for the role that students should play both at the level of Quality Assurance as well as participating in university governance forums. The event disseminated experience from the UK and recommendations were shared with all participating universities and also sent to the Ministry of Education. A special TV programme was commissioned and a wider audience was reached via broadcast on National TV.
2. Raising awareness of Albanian HEIs, through a number of activities and dissemination events, on the importance of Doctoral studies in compliance with Law 80/2015. Another TV programme addressed these issues and was broadcasted on National Television in July 2018.

3. An extensive analysis was prepared on the academic compatibility between the pre-university education system and the higher education system, preparing a case study on Teaching Courses in Biology and Mathematics. This analysis has laid a solid foundation for the policy drafting of the criteria and policies for University entrance and acceptance in the frame of the wider education sector reform in Albania.
4. The HERE team's expertise has been widely used in other actions and activities carried out in the sector:
 - a) Drafting of strategic plans and university statutes at the University of Tirana, the Polytechnic University of Tirana and the Agricultural University of Tirana.
 - b) Defining project objectives for various project proposals prepared for applications in the frame of Erasmus + programme.
5. Active participation in all the main events concerning higher education reform in the country.
6. The HERE team also continued its contribution to the drafting of various by-laws on the academic and scientific research reform agenda.

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 http://erasmusplus.al/?page_id=1034

- HERE event pages http://erasmusplus.al/?page_id=1034

- HERE Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Albanian-HERE-for-Erasmus--1815269242080077/>

-Media TV programme links
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ0PiF6vh1U&list=PL0XoaVRW0j7DAI77X9eedCHNXbambIRP0&index=34&t=0s> | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzGwIBj9ygk> | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVRfsskjgFA&list=PL0XoaVRW0j7DAI77X9eedCHNXbambIRP0&index=36&t=0s>



*HERE Seminar on “Enhancing student’s role in HEIs governance and management”
Polytechnic University of Tirana, 24/05/2018*

6.2 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Key developments in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018

The members of HERE Team are involved in the following most important higher education reform processes, started in 2017 but still in the process of implementation in 2018/2019, including:

- The implementation of "*Priorities 2016-2026 for Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina*" has continued in 2018. The Priorities encompass the following fields: Good Governance and Management; Resources; Connection Between Labour Market and Higher Education; Qualification Standards; Student Experience; Internationalization; Statistics.
- The establishment of the Foundation for Mobility of Students and Teachers in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018.
- The implementation of the strategic directions of the Higher Education Development in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012-2022, as well as the Education Development Strategy of the Republika Srpska 2016- 2021, are ongoing and various projects are funded for their implementation.
- Process of Programming of IPA II (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) for the country in the field of Employment and Education took place, with the focus on education for employment in accordance with the so-called Reform Agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The Council of Ministers adopted a Decision on the Designation of a Coordinating Institution and Contact Point for the Implementation of the Road Map for Implementation of the EU Directive on Regulated Professions 2005/36EC and 2013/55EU and further actions were undertaken.
- Detailed learning outcomes for 18 qualifications of 3 cycles across 6 sectors (Social Sciences, Biomedicine and Health, Natural, Biotechnical, Technical sciences, Humanities) have been developed and were piloted at 6 public universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Activities on drafting a referencing report for Lifelong Learning that includes a self-certification part are ongoing.
- Preparations for the establishment of the new Inter-sectoral Commission for the National Qualifications Framework are ongoing.
- The ENIC/NARIC Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina elaborated Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications for the Purpose of Employment. The Recommendations are the result of the Centre's endeavour to facilitate the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to bring closer the practices of recognition of the European Area of Recognition (EAR) to the competent recognition authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Some HERE members are directly involved in the reform processes in the country and involved in various national working groups contributing to higher education developments in the country. Some HEREs also participated in the Western Balkan ministerial meeting in Brussels in 2018, as well as the Bologna Ministerial Conference in Paris.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Participation in different national working groups, seminars, conferences and roundtables at national, regional and EU level, contributing to the higher education reform in the country.
2. Contribution to the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Implementation Report
3. Delivering recommendations on different documents, laws and regulations

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <https://www.erasmusbih.com/index.php/here>
- List of HEREs on NEO website: https://www.erasmusbih.com/documents/List_of_HEREs.pdf
- Country page on SPHERE website: <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-bosnia-and-herzegovina>

6.3 KOSOVO

Key developments in higher education in Kosovo in 2018

In 2018, the major developments in the higher education sector in Kosovo can be identified in legislative aspects of the policies concerning institutional and study programme accreditation at higher education institutions in Kosovo.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) drafted a new Law on Higher Education, an Administrative Instruction on Personal Incomes of Academic Personnel, and a new Administrative Instruction for Foreign Languages in study programmes of the second or third cycle. In addition, MEST organised several consultative meetings in order to make some technical changes in terms of starting and ending dates of the academic year/semesters and schedules of student examinations.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency drafted a new manual on preparing Self-Evaluation Reports. The Kosovo Erasmus+ Office and the MEST organised several meetings in cooperation with the Kosovo HERE team in relation to the above mentioned legislative changes.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Kosovo HERE team, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technology (MEST), actively assisted the National Education Authorities' initiatives aiming to promote the development of the higher education sector in Kosovo, through the application of newest reform and modernisation processes at all higher education institutions in Kosovo.

For example, the HERE team produced a set of recommendations after each HERE event in close collaboration with the representatives of higher education institutions and other stakeholders. These recommendations were based on knowledge and exchange of experience with other HERE teams from partners countries, acquired at the international training events organised for HEREs. They were submitted to the Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technology, in order to support and guide its activities in higher education enhancement and internationalization of Kosovar higher education institutions.

In order to make use of the education reform processes for the economic and social development of the country, the MEST drafted and approved a strategic plan for the development of education in Kosovo 2017-2021. This plan has served the Kosovo HERE team in designing and harmonising its activities and setting directions for the team's future work in 2019.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

Three highlights of the Kosovo HERE team activities in 2018 are the following:

1. Contribution to drafting the new Law on Higher Education.
2. Examining the role of the national quality assurance system in relation to institutional practice in Kosovo, using best practice examples. A publication about the main findings will be published in 2019.
3. Organisation of promotion and dissemination events related to the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action.

Links to further details

- HERE section at KEO website <http://erasmuspluskosovo.org/en/heres/kosovo-heres/>
- HERE event page: <http://erasmuspluskosovo.org/en/heres/activities/>
- Country page on SPHERE website: <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-kosovo>

6.4 MONTENEGRO

Key developments in higher education in Montenegro in 2018

One of the major changes in 2018 was related to the establishment of the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Study Programmes (QA Agency). The objective was to improve the mechanisms of quality assurance, through intensive international cooperation and exchange of information and good practices with similar agencies in the region and wider. The QA Agency is independent from the Ministry of Education (MoE), although collaborating closely with it, which will contribute to the impartiality on the (re)accreditation procedure, given that QA Agency is in charge of (re)accreditation. The new rulebook for accreditation is also a 2018 novelty, containing a set of rules for the accreditation of study programmes.

Thanks to changes to the Law on higher education concerning the structure of the three cycle system (3+2+3), the mobility of students was boosted. Higher education institutions in the country prepared rulebooks on mobility, which will facilitate future student and staff mobility and contribute to resolving potential problems of recognition.

A new Law on Academic Integrity was also adopted, as well as a new model of financing of universities, which is performance and results oriented.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Through the organisation of local events, the HERE team tried to raise the awareness of the academic community on topics of interest for the Montenegrin higher education reform agenda. During 2018, HEREs managed to steer certain reforms through their events, as it was the case with the reform of PhD studies. A seminar on the status of doctoral candidates enabled discussion on the prerequisites for high-quality doctoral programmes and on the role of universities in new developments in doctoral education, as well as on the status of doctoral candidates in Montenegro from the perspective of legislation. Synergies were achieved also with a CBHE (Capacity Building in Higher Education) project on the reform of PhD studies.

The event “Positioning and Distinguishing of Applied Studies in Montenegrin Higher Education Reforms” generated discussion on the general principles in designing applied programmes in higher education as compared to academic ones. Employability issues were tackled as well.



*(TAM) “Status of doctoral candidates EEC/WBC vs EU or wider”
Podgorica, 19/11/2018*

HEREs acted also as promoters of Erasmus+ mobility at their institutions, encouraging higher participation of students and staff in International Credit Mobility.

Many of the HERE members are involved in the management structures of their institutions, at university and faculty level, thus being directly involved in the creation and implementation of reform policies. For example, at the University of Montenegro, HEREs contributed to the preparation of a new Rulebook on international student mobility, which should enhance student mobility and facilitate recognition of credits. As members of the Centre for Doctoral Studies at the University of Montenegro, two HEREs were also directly involved in the reform of doctoral education.

Representatives of the Ministry of Education in the HERE team were involved in the preparation of the Law on Academic Integrity. One Ministry HERE member is also Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) member, and all reports that she prepared were disseminated to HERE team. Some HERE members were also involved in writing reports for the Bologna Ministerial Conference.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. The event "Positioning and Distinguishing of Applied Sciences in Montenegrin Education System" (December 5-6, 2018), focused on the status and importance of the applied studies in Montenegrin higher education, a topic so far underestimated in Montenegro.
2. Members of the HERE team took part in working groups that prepared the Law on Academic Integrity,
3. Members of the HERE team participated in writing a Rulebook on Mobility,
4. The seminar "Status of Doctoral candidates EEC/WBC vs EU or wider" (November 19, 2018), aiming at exchange of information on practices of doctoral candidate status in Montenegro and EU countries. It served as a good introduction to the topic, to be elaborated further through CBHE projects on this topic.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/?page_id=5777&lang=en
- HERE publications or articles: <http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/wp-content/uploads/NEO-publikacija-2017.pdf> | <http://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/1226/objava/17134-akademska-mobilnost-put-ka-naucnoj-istini-i-prosperitetu> | <https://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/1021/objava/16764-tokom-mobilnosti-mnogi-otkriju-svoje-istinsko-usmjerenje>
- HERE event pages: http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/?page_id=5633&lang=en | http://www.erasmusplus.ac.me/?page_id=5650&lang=en
- HERE Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/National-Erasmus-Office-Montenegro-905606999461139/>
- Country page on SPHERE website: <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-montenegro>

6.5 SERBIA

Key developments in higher education in Serbia in 2018

Towards the end of 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development introduced important changes which were reflected on the developments in the higher education sector during 2018:

- A unique register of institutions and employed researchers, teachers and associates was established in the information system of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Development. The aim of the Register is to increase the quality and monitoring of higher education and research in Serbia at the institutional level. It will enable real-time system performance monitoring and transparency through an open portal, as well as transparency concerning professional engagement at more than one institution.
- In 2018, based on the decision of the Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Council for Quality in Higher Education was formed. The Council has the task of determining the upcoming state of affairs in the work of higher education institutions, to analyse the relevant regulations and make proposals and recommendations to determine the quality indicators in higher education.
- The [Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia \(NQF\)](#) was adopted in 2018. It provides for easier mobility of the labour force and the implementation of the concept of lifelong learning. It defines the institutional framework for the inclusion of economy and education in the qualifications.
- The HERE team contributed to the Ministry preparations for the new higher education strategy 2020-2030, by creating a methodological framework for the elaboration of the Strategy.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development



*Round table “Challenges in Higher Education, Recognition of Prior Learning and Distribution of ECTS”
Palace of Serbia, Belgrade, 25/04/2018*

In April 2018, HEREs organised a round table discussion to address the recognition of prior learning and ECTS allocation. The event was attended by 40 representatives of the higher education community in Serbia, including management and teaching staff of state and private HE institutions, as well as representatives of the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. The European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning was presented at the event, as a key pan-European tool, supporting the member states in the process of adopting recognition procedures.

In May 2018, HEREs organised a conference attended by more than 80 representatives of the academic community, devoted to the internationalisation in higher education. The Minister opened the event and announced several initiatives that can facilitate the internationalisation, such as raising the number of study programme accredited for provision in foreign languages and easier issuing of student visas for foreign students. Several HEIs with rich experience in international cooperation activities were invited to present their perspectives and to participate in the debate on crucial recommendations for the process of internationalisation. The recommendations and useful articles prepared by the members of the HERE team were collected in a publication that was distributed at the event.

On 23 June 2018, HEREs organised a round table discussion focusing on modalities of stronger cooperation between industry and institutions. The event was attended by around 60 participants from both private and public higher education institutions. The presentations of the HERE team members addressed several topics: Dual higher education, as a specific modality of cooperation with industry, Centres for cooperation with industry at higher education institutions, Cooperation with non-industry type of institutions and Good practice examples for cooperation with industry in Europe. The recommendations and articles prepared by the members of the HERE team were collected in a publication that was distributed at the event.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Three local events (see above) and two TAM (Technical Assistance Mission) events - all attended by 50 to 100 members of academic staff and other representatives of institutions:

-TAM: "Social Dimension of HE" (May 2018) The event aimed at exploring the concept of social dimension of higher education from the international and system-level perspective, as well as institutional and student perspectives. Over 80 participants including representatives of the Ministry for Education, Science and Technological Development attended the conference. Conference presentations are available on the Foundation Tempus website and the Conference video is available on the Foundation's YouTube channel.

-TAM: "Challenges of the digital era for higher education" (October 2018) The Conference focused on presenting the latest trends regarding the development of HEIs' digital strategies and MOOCs. Conference presentations are available on the Foundation Tempus website and the Conference video is available on the Foundation's YouTube channel.

2. Two publications:

- Challenges in HE: Internationalisation <http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/HERE-brosura.pdf>

- Challenges in HE: Cooperation with industry and institutions http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/HERE-brosura_jun-2018.pdf

3. Working document for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development: "Methodological Framework for the work on the Strategy for HE in Serbia 2030" (internal document)

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <https://erasmusplus.rs/european-networks/here-team/>

- HERE publications or articles: http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/HERE-brosura_jun-2018.pdf

- HERE event videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWJcQ80bEJ8&list=PLRaXrC4uxO_Psna7J2it1pCfALijtQIqe

- HERE event pages: <https://erasmusplus.rs/odrzana-konferencija-o-izazovima-digitalne-ere/>

<https://erasmusplus.rs/here-konferencija-saradnja-sa-privredom/>

<https://erasmusplus.rs/odrzana-konf-soc-dim-vo/>

<https://erasmusplus.rs/here-konferencija-internacionalizacija/>

<https://erasmusplus.rs/here-okrugli-sto-visoko-obrazovanje/>

- Country page on SPHERE website: <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-serbia>

7. Central Asia

7.1. KAZAKHSTAN

Key developments in higher education in Kazakhstan in 2018

The major changes in the field of higher education in Kazakhstan in 2018 were related to the new Law "On introducing amendments and addenda to some legislative acts on the expansion of academic and managerial independence of higher educational institutions". The Law introduced 16 types of commercial activities that higher education institutions now can engage in; 24 independent functions for all types of universities; and 2 functions for universities with a special status, such as defining the content and awarding Doctoral degrees.

In accordance with the amendments to the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, HEIs gained more autonomy in the following domains:

- Modernising the system of management of higher education institutions
- Developing and approving educational programmes
- Defining internal standards for academic load, rules for admission, rules for organizing internships, rules on student flows and other procedures regulating academic activity of the higher education institutions
- Conducting ongoing monitoring of student performance, as well as final certification of students
- Introducing modern forms of professional training

The existing functions of universities were complemented by the following new functions:

- Creating an endowment fund
- Creating legal entities for scientific and educational activities
- Opening start-up companies
- Establishing branches in foreign countries

These changes led to regulating the operation of higher education institutions. The reform is aimed at increasing the competitiveness of universities, by allowing them to gain academic autonomy and managerial independence through the transformation into non-profit joint stock companies. It is expected that universities will increase the effectiveness of their activities through accountability to corporate bodies of governance. In addition, HEIs will be able to diversify their sources of income and introduce modern methods of management and budgeting.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

HEREs took part in several working groups which developed 56 legal acts regulating the activities of higher educational institutions. After the new legislation had been adopted, the HEREs were invited by the Ministry of Education and Science as keynote speakers at training seminars to explain the main provisions of the new law and by-laws to HEI senior management.

The team also continued the regular practice of organising training seminars in remote regions. In 2018, HEREs trained 127 university staff members in the East Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan regions in how to develop and implement their institution's academic policy.

Every year, HEREs define one topic of high importance for the country and organise a series of activities related to it. In the context of the current changes to the legislation, the focus of 2018 was the expanding autonomy of universities. It was the central theme for one of the Technical Assistance Missions, one international conference, and the HEREs' annual publication.

TAM seminars organised in the country play an important role in promoting reforms. The recommendations worked out during the seminars laid foundation for some national regulations. For instance, thanks to the relevant TAM seminars, the concepts of Major and Minor, the recognition of non-formal education and some ideas on university autonomy became part of the national legislation in 2018.

In order to reach a wide audience all over the country, HEREs organised two webinars with the technical support of NEO on topics of internalization and inclusion. Moreover, HEREs came up with the idea to record video lectures as follow-up to the international HERE training events and upload them online. Two such lectures were recorded, featuring the Study Visits to London and Coimbra.



HEREs of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at the Regional TAM Seminar “European Best Practices on Major-Minor Educational Programme Development” - Almaty, 13-14/04/2018

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. The influence of the HERE team at the national level significantly increased in 2018 due to their contribution to the amendment of the Law on Education and development of relevant by-laws. This also contributed to greater visibility and authority of the team, as they were invited to the national events to comment and interpret the new legislation for HEI staff.
2. The TAM seminar «Academic, Administrative and Financial Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions» was definitely a highlight of 2018. The event gathered 67 participants from all over Kazakhstan and contributed to changing the mind-set regarding university governance.
3. The topic of autonomy continued at the conference organised by the HEREs jointly with the CBHE project “TRUNAK”, as follow-up to the TAM seminar. The conference gathered 500 participants and key presentations were made by the HEREs and representatives of EUA. HEREs also moderated group sessions and took part in the panel discussions as panellists. The outcomes of the conference were summarised in the form of recommendations for HEIs on transition to the university autonomy.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website (including list of HEREs) <http://erasmusplus.kz/index.php/en/about-us/here-team>
- HERE Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/HEREteam.kz/>
- HERE YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCierATLHeYSqdzdyTWIBayw>
- Country page on SPHERE website <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-kazakhstan>

7.2 KYRGYZSTAN

Key developments in higher education in Kyrgyzstan in 2018

According to the Action Plan 2018-2020 on implementation of the Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012-2020, the following trends have been addressed in higher education in 2018:

- Development of national qualification system – to date there is no national qualification system in the country, even though the process was launched in 1993. In 2018, the full package of legislative documents were finalised and presented to the Parliament, first parliamentary hearings were passed successfully. Second parliament hearings were planned for 2019.
- Improvement of education content – educational standards and professional standards are not responding to labour market needs and therefore needed to be updated. In 2018, the Ministry initiated to change education standards for all profiles. This project is not yet finalised because the national qualification system needs to be adopted first.
- Development of legislation on E-learning – in 2018, the concept on e-learning was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Currently, the National Concept for the Development of e-Learning and Digital Management is under consideration in an inter-ministerial working group.
- Adoption of PhD degree in Kyrgyzstan - the amendments have been presented to the Parliament and have been sent for further development to the Ministry and profile committees of the Parliament.
- Development of next Education Development Strategy 2030 – the Ministry of Education and Science developed a draft concept and sent it for approval to the Government.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Two members of the HERE team are members of working groups on the development of the Action Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science 2018-2020. HEREs proposed to include three objectives into the Action Plan:

Development of national qualification system – HERE team summarised outputs of several Tempus and CBHE projects dealing with the topic. The HEREs proposed the Concept for the national qualification system and the Action Plan on the implementation of the Concept, which was approved by the Government.

Development of legislation for introduction of electronic education – currently there is no legal basis and regulations on electronic education in Kyrgyzstan and thus HEREs proposed to include this aspect to the Action plan and offered to develop regulations on the introduction of e-learning. Best practice from the Tempus project QAMEL were presented to the Ministry.

Updating the content of education on all levels – the HERE team made an analysis of 46 regulatory legal acts in the field of higher professional education and presented the final text of the provisions for approval to the Ministry of Education and Science in the period of 2017 and 2018. These acts are now under consideration in the Government as approval of these documents is needed by several profile government agencies (minimum 10 agencies). This process is ongoing now.

Moreover, the HERE team made expertise assessments of 9 regulations on higher education operations and management: Regulations on additional vocation education, Mechanism on financing, Regulations on educational standards, Regulations on branches, Regulations on structure of educational institutions, Regulations on fee based education, Regulation on requirements how to calculate study volume, Regulations on documents for higher education institutions and Regulations on order to develop education programmes.

In view of the adoption of the PhD degree in Kyrgyzstan, HEREs initiated piloting of PhD programme at those universities which implemented Tempus / Erasmus+ projects in 2013-2017. In 2018, results of this piloting

were discussed in a round table and summarised in order to propose an amendment to the Law On Education, which would introduce the PhD degree in parallel with the existing scientific structure in the country. HEREs conducted expertise follow up and assessment and prepared justification for the PhD legislation.

Finally, HEREs contributed to the development of the new Education Development Strategy 2030, by participating in working groups of the Ministry of Education and Science. HEREs were responsible for the development of the section on higher education.



HERE Seminar "Development of entrepreneurial skills - New challenges to universities", Bishkek, 20/09/2018

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. HEREs contributed to the development of the draft of the Education Development Strategy 2030 and the National Concept for the Development of e-Learning and Digital Management.
2. The HERE team made an analysis of 46 regulatory legal acts and regulations on higher education and presented the final text of the provisions for the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science.
3. The Ministry of Education and Science, with the support of HERE team, proposed amendments to the Law on the National Qualification System. The draft law is now under further development after comments from the Parliament.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website <http://erasmusplus.kg/en/here-section/here-team/#>
- List of HEREs on NEO website <http://erasmusplus.kg/en/here-section/here-team/>
- HERE publications or articles <http://www.nauteh-journal.ru/index.php/en/---ep18-01/4225-a>
Certified university teacher- university didactics and teaching competences, Vienna 2018, 90 pp;
Entrepreneurship and business development, Vienna 2018, 96 pp;
- HERE event pages - <http://erasmusplus.kg/en/novosti/>
<http://bilim.akipress.org/ru/news:1484232>
- Country page on SPHERE website <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-kyrgyzstan>

7.3 UZBEKISTAN

Key developments in higher education in Uzbekistan in 2018

The higher education reform process was intensified in 2018 by a number of significant decisions and considerable developments on the quality improvement of graduate training, qualification upgrading of academic staff of higher educational institutions, wide-scale development of international relations, opening of new HEIs, establishing of joint degree programmes and joint faculties, introduction of new education directions and specialties as well as extramural and evening departments, university autonomy on student quotas and educational programmes, recognition of diplomas obtained abroad etc. The total number of higher education institutions increased from 77 in 2016 to 95 in 2018. 16 new joint programmes were introduced in cooperation with prestigious overseas universities. Student's quotas for overall admission to higher education institutions were doubled.

Two Presidential Decrees on “Additional measures on enhancing quality of education in higher education institutions and ensuring their proactive involvement in considerable reforms” and “On strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for innovative development for 2019-2021” encouraged the overall continuous changes in the higher education system of Uzbekistan.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education (MHSSE) relied on the knowledge and networking opportunities of HEREs for obtaining information and clarifications related to best practices in European countries and developments of the Bologna process. The aim of aligning with the Bologna process is clearly stated in the Strategy Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021.

The State Inspection for the Supervision of Quality in Education also invited HEREs to round table meetings, in order to review specific directions of higher education reform.

The HEREs' contribution was considerable through the organisation of Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) on topics related to the latest reforms. The TAM topics were developed by HEREs according to the priorities of the country and approved by the MHSSE. National and regional TAMs were organised in cooperation with the MHSSE and disseminated via national mass media (TV, radio and online publishing).

After each international study visits of HEREs to the European universities, the National Erasmus+ Office submitted detailed reports to the MHSSE, including specific recommendations relevant to the current modernisation agenda of higher education in Uzbekistan. The reports were prepared by HEREs involved, based on seminar materials. Also on individual basis, HEREs provided consultations and were invited as experts to working groups in the MHSSE on the development of specific strategy documents, regulations, draft decrees and new Law on Education, which is to be adopted soon.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. In 2018 the Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT) initiated piloting of ECTS and prepared a draft Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers. On request of TUIT administration, the national HERE team provided clarifications on necessary procedures for introducing ECTS and initial steps to be taken. Five HEREs and two NEO staff members participated in the round table meeting “ECTS introduction: difficulties and solutions” for both academic and administrative staff of TUIT which took place in March 2018. The meeting and recommendations of HEREs contributed to the final version of the Decree “On Measures to improve quality of specialist training at TUIT”. It is worth to underline that the initial experience of ECTS introduction at TUIT will be further disseminated to all HEIs of Uzbekistan.

2. The joint report of two HEREs who benefited of the HERE study visit on ‘The role of universities in developing entrepreneurship skills’ in Montpellier, was highly evaluated by the MHSSE and forwarded to all higher education institutions as a brief guide on the enhancement of entrepreneurship activities at universities. The most appreciated part was a set of recommendations on the role of universities in the development of entrepreneurial skills of graduates and researchers, which are applicable to HEIs in Uzbekistan.

3. Round table meeting of HEREs on the Bologna process with the representatives of the Inspection for Supervision of Quality in Education under the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Uzbekistan took place on 6 November 2018. Heads of Inspection departments, two representatives of TUIT (Vice-Rector and university teacher), four HEREs and one NEO representative participated in the meeting. The presentation of TUIT Vice-Rector about their experience of ECTS introduction was followed by a lively discussion with many questions. The meeting was appreciated by all participants and in particular by the Inspection staff, who had been working on new Law on Education.



The 2nd conference “Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility: Role in Improving Quality of Education and Research”, Tashkent Financial Institute, 4/12/2018

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 event pages: <http://www.erasmusplus.uz/> (news and events of NEO, HERE activities)
<http://erasmusplus.uz/heres/TAMs/index.htm>
- HERE Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/uzheres/>
- Country page on SPHERE website: <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-uzbekistan>

8. Eastern Partnership countries

8.1. ARMENIA

Key developments in higher education in Armenia in 2018

Two main directions at the policy level should be emphasised for the current stage of higher education reforms. The first one is the new approach of the draft law on higher education that is based on two core interrelated components:

- a) Essential increase of the level of university autonomy and academic freedom.
- b) Combining governance of research and HE structures into one legislative frame.

The existing draft law on HE that has been discussed since 2016 is now in its intense redevelopment phase, aspiring to a Law on Higher Education and Research.

The second direction of activities is the initiated process of composing the new boards of trustees of the public universities. Though the ongoing process is based on the existing law, which envisages 50 percent of representatives of the Government and the Ministry, the majority of their delegates are not officials but representatives of public and private sectors, employers, and alumni of the respective universities.

In the new political situation, a process of rectors' elections was started and two new rectors elected at the public HEIs are already in charge. The Ministry also revised the approach to Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) projects, in order to ensure their real impact on reforms at institutional level and make them an essential tool for a real increase of capacities at Armenian universities.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE team, whose composition was enriched by five new members, played an essential role in making gradual impact on developing the higher education system.



*Armenian HEREs at the Annual HERE conference,
Rome, 12-13/12/2018*

HEREs were involved in the ongoing reform processes in different ways:

- Being involved in the national working group on the preparation of the new draft Law on higher education and research.
- Submitting a package of recommendations for the development of a regional university strategy within the framework of new tasks and challenges specific to the current stage of higher education.

- Presenting a package of proposals to improve the mechanisms for developing the planning and management strategies of a regional university, as well as monitoring the strategic directions and performed activities.
- Developing the structure of the internal control implementation of a university, the substantive part of which is planned to be presented in universities from 2019 within workshops and trainings.
- One Regional and two national TAMs organised, in which HERE members helped to accelerate the implementation of reforms by integrating good practices in the local context.
- A panel discussion on current trends in higher education and the impact of the Erasmus+ Programme on the local academic environment was organised by the NEO and HEREs during the Erasmus+ Information Days in Yerevan, with the participation of five rectors.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Active work on the new draft Law on Higher Education and Research
2. Regional TAM on ensuring quality in scholarly research
3. Workshop on development of entrepreneurship skills in universities

Links to further details

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- HERE section of NEO website: https://erasmusplus.am/here/- List of HEREs on NEO website: https://erasmusplus.am/here/- Country page on SPHERE website: https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-armenia |
|--|

8.2 BELARUS

Key developments in higher education in the Republic of Belarus in 2018

The main strategic objective for education development in the Republic of Belarus is to improve quality and to contribute to creating a competitive economy based on high and advanced technologies.

The major trends in Belarusian higher education reform in 2018 correspond to the principles of the Bologna Declaration. The changes in the higher education system emphasise the use of innovative approaches to teaching and learning; strengthening resource and methodological support of education; upgrading and improving the technical base; proper balance between free education and education provided on a fee-paying basis, provision of a variety of education programmes and the use of information technologies. Adequate human, material and financial resources are in place to implement these objectives.

The new educational standards of higher education are based on a competence approach and allow implementing the ECTS system as a necessary tool to support student mobility. Transition to the two-level system of training specialists allows to ensure, on the one hand, mass and available education, and on the other hand, its academic and elite nature because education of the highest level can be acquired only by the most well-trained students.



*Seminar on 'Quality of higher education in Belarus with the stakeholders' eyes
Belarus State Economic University, 21-22/03/2018*

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

All of the experts are pro-active, willing to make changes to the higher education system and motivated to disseminate their gained knowledge to the whole sector. The HEREs representing the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Higher Education are able to impact on the whole higher education system in Belarus. The representatives from HEIs are vice-rectors and they are able to disseminate the knowledge gained through cooperation with other HEIs via publications and in the context of their participation in different conferences and other inter-institutional events.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. TAM seminar "Prior Learning Recognition in the Context of Tools Implementation".
2. Participation of one of the HEREs at the II International Seminar "Quality of higher education in Belarus with the stakeholders' eyes" with the presentation "Correspondence of the higher education content to the labour market requirements".

3. Digital publication “Correspondence of the higher education content to the labour market requirements”.

Links to further details

1. TAM seminar “Prior Learning Recognition in the Context of Tools Implementation”:
<http://nihe.bsu.by/news-instituta/2248-mezhdunarodnyjseminar-priznaniepredshestvuyushchego-obrazovaniya>
2. II International Seminar “Quality of higher education in Belarus with the stakeholders’ eyes”:
<http://bseu.by/English/international/fosterc/seminar-2.htm>
3. Digital publication of Igor Titovich “Correspondence of the higher education content to the labour market requirements”:
http://bseu.by/russian/international/erasmus/seminar2/%D0%A2%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87_%D0%A1%D0%BE%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B5%20%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B6%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%81%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%BE%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%20%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B1%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F%D0%BC%20%D1%80%D1%8B%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%B0%20%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B0.pptx

8.3 GEORGIA

Key developments in higher education in Georgia in 2018

2018 was the year of significant changes and reforms in quality assurance of higher education in Georgia: the first round of newly approved external QA standards and procedures was implemented this year. Crucial steps were made towards meeting international standards and internationalising quality assurance processes in Georgia. 25 HEIs in Georgia underwent an external evaluation according to the new authorisation and accreditation standards in 2018. International peers were involved in the assessment process for the first time, making this the first attempt to implement external quality assurance processes on an international level.

Another priority was the revision of the national qualifications framework (NQF), already adopted in 2010. The main aim was to bring the NQF closer to the European one. The final version of the revised NQF, which was discussed and agreed with main stakeholders and beneficiaries, was presented at the final conference in December 2018.

The higher education funding scheme was also actively discussed during the year. The authorities together with World Bank experts continue to work closely in order to revise the existing voucher model for higher education and to introduce a combined-style funding model (per capita + performance based).



*Annual Conference "Introducing revised QA system in HE"
Tbilisi, 17-18/12/2018*

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

In 2018, the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) started the system-wide implementation of the revised quality assurance standards and procedures at Georgian HEIs. The National Erasmus+ Office and the HERE team were actively involved at both preparatory and implementation stages of the institutional authorization and programme accreditation processes. NEO and HERE representatives were members of an experts' panel, participated in site-visits, while two of the HEREs were working at the NCEQE administration in key positions.

Two important surveys were launched in 2018:

1. "Implementation of the Revised Higher Education QA system for Institutional Evaluation: Impact Assessment" which will focus on the outcomes and impact of the first cycle of QA process. The survey envisages a statistical overview of the outcomes and a content analysis of the self-evaluation reports of the HEIs and evaluation reports provided by the experts. The desk study component will be followed by a survey and in-depth interviews of HEI teams, experts and NCEQE. The survey results and developed recommendations will be presented in a national conference and discussed with all stakeholders in 2019.
2. "Erasmus+ staff mobility impact at personal (professional development) and institutional levels (HEI strategic development)" will study the influence of the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility programme on staff and institutional development. The survey will cover all HEIs involved in ICM. At the second stage, target universities will be selected for in-depth interviews/case studies.

These two research projects will be followed by the set of recommendations for HEIs and governmental authorities.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

The NEO and HEREs were working with governmental authorities in charge of higher education reform on a daily basis.

1. **Annual Quality Assurance Conference**, organised by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and NCEQE – all HEREs were present and HEREs and NEO were actively participating as organisers, moderators and presenters. The contribution of the HEREs and NEO to the QA process reform in Georgia was underlined. They also played a significant role when NCEQE applied for ENQA membership (report writing, interviews, trainings, media presence).

2. The working process on the **revision of the National Qualifications Framework** has been going on for several years. In recent years, the NEO and HEREs have been actively involved in the process together with NCEQE. The HERE team's translations and publications on ISCED-F 2013 and ISCED-F 2013 Detailed Field Description played a significant role in the revision process. The HERE who translated the ISCED documents was invited as an expert to work on the revision of the document. The results of the working team were presented in the annual conference in December 2018.

3. HEREs were **interviewed for the study "National initiatives in learning and teaching in Europe"**. The study is based on a series of semi-structured interviews on national learning and teaching initiatives, with experts from 28 European higher education systems, conducted from November 2017 to August 2018 as part of the Erasmus+ co-funded EFFECT (European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching) project (2015-2019). For details visit: <https://www.eua.eu/downloads/publications/NILTEe.pdf>.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website - <http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/umaghlesi-ganatilebis-reformis-ekspertebi>
- HERE publications or articles - <http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications>
- HERE event pages - <http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/news>
- HERE Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/National-Erasmus-Office-Georgia-1401668916764629/>
- Country page on SPHERE website - <https://supportthere.org/page/higher-education-georgia>

8.4 MOLDOVA

Key developments in higher education in Moldova in 2018

- The national regulatory framework regarding the access to higher education studies was modified for the 2018 enrolment, considering the extension of the universities' autonomy.
- The culture of quality in higher education was promoted in 2018 - based on the results of external quality evaluations carried out by ANACEC, the Government approved the accreditation of about 230 bachelor programmes for strategic areas: Economics, Medicine, Information Technologies.
- Based on the results of external quality evaluations carried out by ANACEC, the Government approved the accreditation of about 230 bachelor programmes for strategic areas: Economics, Medicine, Information Technologies.
- A performance-based financing methodology for higher education institutions was being developed to strengthen the financial autonomy of Moldovan universities.
- A new Regulation for conferring the scientific-didactic titles to university staff was issued in order to boost the career promotion of university staff.
- New salary conditions for university staff differentiated the categories of employees in institutions, forming new managerial positions of dean, vice-dean, head of department, chief of programme, etc. for tasks which were previously considered as additional work of the teaching staff.
- During 2018, seven of the most important public universities in Moldova developed a common vision on a National Strategy for HEIs Internationalisation.
- The Regulation on the recognition and equivalence of educational documents and qualifications in educational institutions was developed.
- A Methodology for financing projects in the field of research and innovation was elaborated.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE team members in Moldova were directly involved in different working groups for the elaboration/updating/improvement of different legislative document related to higher education development in the country:

- Assistance in the elaboration of the Regulation on recognition and the equivalence of educational documents and qualifications in educational institutions in Moldova.
- Proposals for amending and completing the draft of the Government Decision regarding the salary conditions of the educational institutions staff functioning under the regime of financial and economic self-management.
- Working with the Economic Council attached to the Prime Minister on the Methodology of Standard Funding in Public Higher Education.
- Elaboration of the HEIs Budgetary Funding Methodology, including the draft Policy paper.
- Proposals for the National law on labour migration.
- Revision of the draft Government Decision regarding the Methodology for the financing of projects in the field of research and innovation.
- Contribution to the Strategic Research Priorities of the Republic of Moldova.

- Endorsement of the National Strategy for the Integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Research Area Roadmap 2018-2020, and promoting further the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. The constant involvement of the HEREs team members in various committees and working groups in their field of expertise is assuring the quality of their proposals, studies, evaluations and assistance. The seminars organised with the participation of the HERE team members offer a way to disseminate to the wider community the outcomes gained during the HEREs international training events. The HERE team's valuable assistance can be mentioned for example in the context of the organisation of the TAM "International Academic Mobility management improvement - a boost for HEIs Internationalisation".



Technical Assistance Mission "International Academic Mobility management improvement – a boost for HEIs Internationalisation", 16/11/2018

2. HERE study: Ensuring access to higher education in the Republic of Moldova. The study refers to the national and European context on participation and access to higher education, policies regarding the access insurance, openness of enrolment systems and social dimension, financial support and fees in higher education, as well as good practices to improve the process of student recruitment and retention.

3. HERE study: Evaluation of Erasmus+ mobility: Erasmus student network impact on "quality of Erasmus + mobility". The study analyses the mobility experience of 110 students from the Republic of Moldova and their interaction with ESN or similar organization, demonstrating the necessity of such support organization in Moldova to ensure a successful implementation of mobility:

http://www.erasmusplus.md/sites/default/files/pdf/esn_moldova_studiu.pdf

Links to further details

- HERE section & List of HEREs on NEO website - <http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/article/heres-higher-education-reform-experts>
- HERE publications or articles - <http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/publications>
- HERE event pages - <http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/evente>
- HERE Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/erasmusplumoldova/>
- Country page on SPHERE website - <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-moldova>
- TAM organised in Moldova in 2018 - <http://www.erasmusplus.md/en/news/international-academic-mobility-management-improvement-boost-heis-internationalisation>

8.5. UKRAINE

Key developments in higher education in Ukraine in 2018

(1) The renewed National Quality Assurance Agency (NQAA) Charter and NQAA members list was approved by the Cabinet (27 December 2018) and placed at the Cabinet website:

(<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/ua/npas/pro-zatverdzhennya-skladu-nacionalnogo-agentstva-iz-zabezpechennya-yakosti-vishchoyi-osviti>; <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/244-2015-n>).

(2) More than 100 drafts of Higher Education Standards were developed by the Scientific and Methodical Commissions (SMCs), and 55 Higher Education Standards were approved by the Ministry in 2018. Established NQAA will provide accreditation taking in account Higher Education Standards according to the Law of Higher Education of Ukraine (<https://mon.gov.ua/ua/osvita/visha-osvita/naukovo-metodichna-rada-ministerstva-osviti-i-nauki-ukrayini/zatverdzeni-standarti-vishchoyi-osviti>).

(3) The Parliament Committee on Sciences and Education developed and registered a Draft Law on Amendments to the Law of Higher Education concerning improvement of University management in line with autonomy (http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=64048).

(4) The Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine prepared a draft of a renewed Regulation on academic mobility covering recognition of ECTS credits obtained during mobility, financial issues, etc. It is now under development and expertise assessment.

(5) The Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine prepared a draft Law on the National Qualification System, including further NQF implementation, which will be presented for public discussion.

(6) The Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine started to review the NQF in line with the Paris Communiqué 2018 as well as the Law of Education (2017).

(7) According to the new Law of Education (September 2017) the Government established a National Qualifications Agency and approved its Charter (December 2018). The Agency will be responsible for NQF implementation and realise international cooperation in the field of qualifications, in particular with a view to harmonise the NQF with relevant international instruments (<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/ua/npas/deyaki-pitannya-nacionalnogo-agentstva-kvalifikacij>).

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

(1) Advising the Minister and Deputy Ministers as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine and the Parliament's Committee on Science and Education on higher education reform issues.

(2) HEREs provided consultations on the development of the draft Law on the National Qualification System, as well as reviewed the NQF in line with the Paris Communiqué 2018.

(3) The Selection Committee of NQAA members includes 2 HEREs who coordinated the development of the Regulation on NQAA members' selection, including a transparent selection procedure and the identification of qualification requirements for candidates.

(4) One of the HEREs became member of the NQAA (<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/ua/npas/pro-zatverdzhennya-skladu-nacionalnogo-agentstva-iz-zabezpechennya-yakosti-vishchoyi-osviti>).

(5) HEREs, in close cooperation with the NEO, provided methodical expertise on more than 100 drafts of Higher Education Standards developed by the SMCs during 2017-2018. Methodical expertise was based on ESG 2015 and the NQF, as well as on Guidelines on HE standards developed by the HERE team.

(6) HEREs participated in a national working group on the development of the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law of Higher Education that modernised University management in line with autonomy (<http://kno.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/36707.pdf>).

(7) HEREs, in cooperation with the NEO, developed recommendations for higher education reform (QA, QF, learning outcomes, standards, etc.) on the base of findings from the Cluster events, TAM events, and outcomes of Tempus & Erasmus+ Structural Projects.

(8) Preparing publications and presentations on higher education reform to clarify key issues for society.



*International Bologna process conference - TAM Event "European Integration of Ukraine's higher education"
Kyiv, 27/11/2018.*

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. NQAA members, including one HERE, were approved by the Government and representatives of the HERE team as Selection Committee members provided a transparent and open procedure for NQAA members' selection.
2. Cluster meeting and TAM event on quality assurance and Bologna tools provided support for the successful implementation of best practices in QA system development (about 400 participants).
3. Consultations for more than 100 drafts of the Higher Education Standards in line with ESG, NQF and the Law of Higher Education.

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 publications or articles <http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/useful-information/resources/category/3-materialy-natsionalnoi-komandy-ekspertiv-shchodo-zaprovdzhennia-instrumentiv-bolonskoho-protseesu.html>
- HERE event pages <http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/erasmus/ka3-support-to-policy-reforms/national-here-team/254-here-activities.html>
- HERE Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pg/NEOinUkraine/posts/?ref=page_internal
- Country page on SPHERE website <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-ukraine>

9. Russian Federation

9.1. RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Key developments in higher education in the Russian Federation in 2018

No major legislative changes or reforms took place on the national level.

The major trends can be formulated as follows:

- Due to the implementation of the National Project “Export of Education”, and to growing compatibility of higher education programmes and qualifications with the European and international ones, an increase in the number of foreign students was observed and confirmed by statistics of Rosobrnadzor (Agency for Supervision in Education and Science): a 17% increase in the number of applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications with a view of entering universities in the Russian Federation as compared to last year. (<http://www.garant.ru/article/1212009/#ixzz5f7ig9hWv>).
- Increase in the number of joint programmes implemented with both foreign universities and between RF universities, as well as an increase in programmes delivered in English.

Global goals for the 5 coming years were formulated in the Presidential Decree of 7 May 2018 as follows: enhancement of the international competitiveness of higher education and implementation of new national projects in the sphere of education and science, five of which relate to higher education (including: Young Professionals, New Opportunities for All and Enhancement of HE Competitiveness).

The key targets for all of the above have been defined as:

- Enhancement of fundamental research at universities, supported by increased funding.
- Improvement of the procedures of state accreditation of universities in the context of the right granted to a group of universities to adopt their own higher education standards.
- Expansion of the list of the participants in the project 5-100 (to ensure enhanced competitiveness of Russian universities internationally).
- Development of university campuses.
- Translation of Russian research journals into English and their free-of-charge circulation in foreign libraries.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

HEREs actively participated in the Ministerial Bologna Process Working groups, in expert groups of the National Qualifications Council, and in the preparation of the final version of the 2018 Bologna Process National Report for the Paris Ministerial Conference.

HEREs were actively involved in the promotion of internationalisation issues via professional associations in the sphere of higher education (Association of Engineering Universities, Association of Technical Universities of CIS countries, Association of Classical Universities). They participated in ad hoc meetings, provided consultations (on demand) and made presentations at events of the above associations.

Individual HEREs contributed to the following activities:

- Development of Recommendations for updating the legal/regulatory framework to foster implementation of double degree/joint programmes, which have been included in the document package of the National Projects (Federal Strategic Policy documents adopted by Government).
- Involvement in the work of the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group as the official representative of the Russian Federation.
- Development of recommendations on legislative support for the accreditation system at Russian Universities that have been submitted to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

- Drafting proposals for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on enhancing the role of higher education in the provision of skilled personnel for managerial positions at Russian energy enterprises and drafting recommendations on improving the quality of education of CIS member states.
- Preparation of recommendations for the Rectors' Union on strategic aims of the internationalisation policy of Russian higher education institutions that have been submitted to the President.

All HEREs have been involved in preparing data underpinning the preparation of the Presidential Decree and in the public discussions of the proposals for the National Education Development Programme.

On the regional level, HEREs contributed to policy decisions relating to higher education modernisation:

- Participation in the development of recommendations that have been approved regionally on the development of alternate training methods.
- Development of proposals for enhancing internationalization in the strategy of education institutions for the Sverdlovsk region and the City of Yekaterinburg.
- Proposals for measures to enhance dialogue between universities and industry.



Working meeting of HERE team and NEO, Moscow, 17/12/2018

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Structured publications on the theme of higher education internationalisation and the impact of Erasmus+ projects.
2. Participation in up-dating higher education Standards and requirements for the development of curricula. This was achieved through the participation of HEREs as experts in the Thematic Academic and Methodological Associations and ad hoc ministerial working groups.
3. Promotion of student-centred teaching and learning via Academic divisions at their own universities.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website, including list of HEREs
<http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/en/experts>
- HERE event pages <http://www.erasmusplusinrussia.ru/index.php/ru/eksperty/39-sobytiya-obzory-i-komentarii>
- Country page on SPHERE website <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-russia>

10. South-Mediterranean Countries

10.1 ISRAEL

Key developments in higher education in Israel in 2018

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) has appointed a steering committee for the issue of Internationalisation. The committee is responsible for recommending policy to further promote internationalisation in the Israeli higher education system. 2018 was the second year since the launching of the CHE's multiyear plan, which included promoting International cooperation. As part of the plan's execution, a call for proposal was published in 2017. During 2018, the proposals were evaluated by a selected committee and HEIs in Israel were obliged to submit their international strategies and received funds accordingly. This is the first time funds have been directly allocated from the regulatory body to promote Internationalisation.

Furthermore, a call for proposals was published in 2018 for "The New Campus". This initiative encourages entrepreneurship and innovation in Israeli academia by supporting the establishment and upgrading of entrepreneurship and innovation centres within the higher education institutions. Ten projects were awarded millions of EUROS for advancing these issues on Campus.

The quality assurance division at CHE is also going through transformations and has begun a process of shifting the method of assessment from National to Institutional QA mechanisms, by promoting the establishment of institutional quality assurance centres in the higher education institutions. This process is still taking its' first steps.

During 2018, a committee of experts discussed the current condition of English studies as a foreign language in the Israeli higher education. Recommendations were submitted to the CHE and policy is under development.



Members of Israeli HERE team

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

In accordance with the national agenda – the HERE team significantly contributed to the promotion of higher education in the selected fields. The team split into "sub teams", each of them specializing in a specific field:

1. Internationalisation - The sub team on internationalisation had several meetings with policy makers from the CHE and took an active role in setting priorities for the international division of the CHE. Two experts in the fields of Internationalisation at Home and Teaching English as a foreign language were given major platforms to advise, train and inform on these issues.

2. QA policy- 2018 was the first time that joint cooperation between the HERE team and the CHE division for quality assurance was brought to action. As part of the planned reform in English studies, it was decided to further cooperate and create activities to set the stage for future implementation. The HERE activities provided training for the English units in the HEIs to use the CEFR as part of a national policy to standardise the field. This led to more cooperation with the QA division in the form of proposing a Technical Assistance Mission (TAM) for February 2019 on Institutional QA mechanisms - another major goal in the divisions' strategic planning.
3. Innovation and Employability - The sub team of experts devoted to this field worked together with the CHE's Strategic department. They also met with the Deputy Director in charge of promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The activity plan for 2019 involves conferences and an official Forum of leaders in Entrepreneurship in Higher Education to be led by the HERE team.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Conference on "Teaching Reforms for English as a Foreign Language in Higher Education in Israel as a step towards internationalisation" (in the framework of a TAM) was a large-scale event for English teachers in academia. It served as a catalyser for change within the HEIs themselves in order to assist the necessary transition to the CEFR (an EU model for teaching languages). The event corresponded with the planned regulatory changes as well as the effort to expand the impact of the ECOSTAR Tempus project in collaboration with its' Israeli partners.
2. Promoting Internationalisation at Home to the national steering committee on internationalisation and the high management at the CHE. Through this TAM activity, the HERE team was able to meet directly with the top regulators and policy makers in the field of internationalisation and present key concepts in implementing internationalisation at home. As a result, the national committee changed its outlook on the issue and scheduled further discussion on how to implement necessary change in the Israeli higher education system, allowing more students to gain skills to succeed in an international environment.
3. Training for IROs on International Credit Mobility (ICM). In the framework of the Erasmus International Forum of IROs and mobility coordinators, a HERE team expert held a training session on how to implement ICM projects, proving best practices from Ben-Gurion University. Through this meeting, IROs were exposed to tools and advice on how to promote mobility on their campuses.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website - <http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/here>
- List of HEREs on NEO website - <http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/experts-2018-2020>
- HERE publications or articles – Managing ICM <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A-8jIBMjNTBW9Ing-gct1H6767DQNZvc/view?usp=sharing>
- Capacity Building – looking forward (Heb) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xfWANlyt4ym4FjBiNtAlAa1f35ihD69j/view?usp=sharing>
- HERE event pages: <http://www.erasmusplus.org.il/training-day-for-erasmus--international-mobility-forum-24-5-2018>
- Country page on SPHERE website - <https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-israel>

10.2 EGYPT

Key developments in higher education in Egypt in 2018

1. Issuing the by-laws for the Law of Innovation Incentives that allow universities to create companies and private entities for the exploitation of research/innovation outputs of Universities. This will positively impact university self-funding, strengthen the links with industry and provide perfect conditions to boost entrepreneurship and create start-ups based on innovation.
2. Establishing International Branch Campuses for Universities in Egypt (started with Austria, Hungary and Ukraine, negotiations with universities from the United States of America and Canada were started and should be finalised before the end of 2019).
3. Initiating procedures to reform the laws and regulations of recruiting university teaching/research staff. The key feature of this law is to change the contractual conditions of teaching and research staff and will mainly change from permanent to temporary contracting for a certain number years. The renewals of any teaching/ research staff employment contract shall be conditioned with achieving specific objectives that are in line with the university strategy. This will also help in balancing the staff-to-student ratio in various fields (e.g. Medicine and all Humanities sections).
4. Enhancing Technical and Vocational Education through finalising the rules to establish Technical Universities that will make use of the existing technical institutions. The main feature of this law is that it will open the path to create post-graduate studies in technical education and will also oblige main industrial entities in Egypt to create partnerships with the established universities, in order to boost their credibility and ensure jobs for graduates.



*Regional TAM on “Emerging entrepreneurship skills & Technical Education in S.M”
Aswan, 1-2/11/2018*

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

Members of the HERE team have been carefully selected to represent various stakeholders of higher education in Egypt. Thanks to the high profile of the team members, it was nominated by the Minister of Higher Education in February 2018 to be a Think Tank for the Ministry and Higher Education in Egypt. Many of its members are actually holding key positions at the Ministry (including the Deputy Minister of Higher Education) and at other higher education organisations. Consequently, the Egyptian HERE team was involved in various meetings and discussions to draft strategies and visions for the new laws and regulations of recruiting university teaching/research staff.

The HERE Group in Egypt invited the Deputy Minister for Vocational Education during the Regional TAM on "Technical Education in the South Mediterranean Region". During the event, the rules for establishing technical universities were discussed and many of the key features that are now included in the law were highlighted by the group and presented during the event.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Contribution to the development of the new laws and regulations of recruiting university teaching/research staff
2. Participation in Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs) and Information Days.
3. Participation in the National Authority for Quality Assurance and the Annual Conference "Accreditation in Education".



*TAM on "Developing Institutional Internationalization"
Alexandria University, 14-15/05/2018*

Links to further details

- HERE List and introduction section of NEO website: <http://erasmusplus-egypt.eu/index.php/en/heres/introdaction>
- HERE Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HEREsEgypt/>

10.3 JORDAN

Key developments in higher education in Jordan in 2018

The *Law of higher education and scientific research* and *Law of Jordanian universities* were amended in 2018. The main goal behind these changes was to highlight the role of governance in higher education and the importance of quality in education. On the other hand, the new Law of higher education has changed the status of the *scientific research fund* from an autonomous unit to a directorate at the Ministry.

Article 3 of the Law of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan calls for enhancing the international competitiveness of higher education institutions, through the development of capacities of their academic and administrative staff members. It emphasises keeping abreast of the developments in the information and communication technologies, and incorporating these into the learning and teaching process as well as into research. It also calls for securing international accreditation for the institutions and programmes. The Bylaw on *Foreign Student Affairs* was amended in 2018 to enhance the competitiveness of Jordanian universities to foreign students.

The Bylaw for *academic practice at universities and colleges* in Jordan was adopted in 2018 for the first time. It includes paragraphs related to technology and e-learning. In particular, article 7 includes the conditions and criteria for academic staff to obtain the license for academic practice. These stipulate that the staff member should have passed specialised training in teaching and learning methodologies, using modern tools for teaching and educational technologies, as well as open source electronic course platforms.

Other than the above, no major changes in regulations took place in 2018. Higher education in Jordan continues to be regulated and monitored by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR). To respond to the Jordanian and regional markets, vocational education is gaining significant attention by the MOHESR.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

HEREs had discussions with the Head of the Labour Committee and the Head of the Committee of Education at the House of Senate to advocate for Technical Education (TE), to encourage their role in regulating, allocating resources and overseeing government actions in this regard. HEREs also exchanged with the Minister of Social Development, encouraging her to direct the funds provided to families having youth eligible for technical education to funding their enrolment fees in higher education institutions providing technical education. This would enable the young people to develop their knowledge and skills, and equip them with a degree that leads to employment. Meetings were held with the President of the Balqa Applied University concerning technical education and the need to communicate with the private sector, thus passing the knowledge and experience gained from the regional TAM on “Technical Education and Entrepreneurship in the South Mediterranean”.

The HEREs discussed with the dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Jordan about the need to develop and document governance in the School, and about introducing flipped strategies for teaching. Both topics will be tackled in upcoming events as part of the HERE 2019 work plan.

Some concrete examples of work where individual HEREs were involved include the contributions to the Human Resources Plan and to Bylaws of governance and Unified Admission and automation of services. One of the HEREs shared his experience in updating study plans at Mutah University, including the concept of entrepreneurship and implementing online courses.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. All HEREs were actively involved in the NEOs' local activities in 2018. For example, all of them participated in the "Cluster meeting with the stakeholders", held at the Dead Sea in September 2018, and all sessions of this meeting were chaired by HEREs. Furthermore, the Aqaba seminar for higher education reform was organised with the active participation of HEREs. The HEREs delivered 7 presentations during the event, addressing various aspects of higher education reform. HEREs were also in full charge of the Technical Assistance Missions (TAMs).



*TAM on Research Based Teaching, University of Jordan,
Amman, 25/09/2018*

2. Jordanian HEREs played an important role in the regional TAM on "Emerging Entrepreneurship Skills & Technical Education in South Mediterranean Countries", organised on 1-2 November 2018 in Aswan, Egypt. One of the Jordanian HEREs delivered 2 presentations in this TAM and another chaired one session.

3. Jordanian HEREs participated actively in international HERE activities. The student HERE delivered a presentation on a Case Study from the University of Jordan about the participation of undergraduate students in scientific research in the HERE seminar "Research Based Teaching & Learning" in Podgorica, Montenegro. Another HERE chaired a panel discussion in the HERE annual conference. A third HERE presented a poster at the same conference.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <http://erasmus-plus.org.jo/en/HERE-Team/Tasks-of-the-experts>
- List of HEREs on NEO website: <http://erasmus-plus.org.jo/en/HERE-Team/HE-Reform-Experts>
- HERE events: <http://erasmus-plus.org.jo/en/HERE-Team/Local-Activities-Seminars>
<http://erasmus-plus.org.jo/en/HERE-Team/TAMs>
- HERE publications or articles: <http://erasmus-plus.org.jo/en/HERE-Team/Newsletter>

10.4 LEBANON

Key developments in higher education in Lebanon in 2018

The Lebanese higher education sector, which consists of 49 private institutions and one public university, continues to develop along 4 main directions: Quality Assurance, the National Qualifications Framework, Research activities and doctoral studies, and Social dimension and role of students.

Quality Assurance

At institutional level, Lebanese higher education institutions continue to seek accreditation from international agencies both at institutional and programme levels. The Ministry further implements the 2014 law through additional procedures for certification, authorisation for starting new programmes, recognition of programmes and renewal of recognition. The Ministry has formed more than fifty national specialised committees for assessment. Many of the QA principles have been integrated into the working modalities and requirements of these committees.

Ranking being a fact, interest in this domain has been significantly increasing. Very good positions at the regional level were attained by several Lebanese higher education institutions in 2018. In cooperation with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, activities are being conducted in the domain of quality assurance for the different education sectors.

National Qualifications Framework

As interest in the definition and application of a Lebanese Qualifications framework is increasing, the Ministry keeps promoting discussions on this issue in collaboration with many stakeholders like the Francophone University Agency (AUF), the UNESCO and the Erasmus+ CBHE project TLQAA+.

Research Activities and Doctoral Studies

The need for a better organisation of research activities and doctoral studies has been acknowledged nationwide. Some progress in this direction has been achieved with the support of UNESCO.



*TAM "Roundtable on Students' Participative Role in HE Governance"
Beirut, 11/10/2018*

Social Dimension and the Role of the Students

The Higher Education Council has adopted the standards for professional development of university staff as elaborated by the Erasmus+ CBHE project E-TALEB.

Civic engagement remains of high interest and the Ministry is still looking to leverage upon the results of the "civic engagement charter" that was proposed in 2017 as a result of a Technical assistance Mission (TAM).

It is in the duty of the higher education sector to look for the interest of the students at all levels. Awareness about the role of the students in governance has been increased. This was confirmed through a special TAM and a CBHE project called STEER. A good initiative was worked out by the Ministry for the definition of a status for a “student entrepreneur”, with the support of the AUF.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

The HERE team has significantly supported activities along the four dimensions mentioned previously.

Quality Assurance

Several HEREs are members of the specialised committees organised by the Ministry. The HEREs also contribute at an individual level to QA activities at both the national and international levels. One HERE participated, as expert, to the accreditation of a Swiss university with the Swiss Agency for Quality Assurance AAQ.

The HEREs took the lead in the activities organised jointly by the Ministry and the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO for the development of a global quality culture in all the sectors of education. One seminar organised by the Commission was completely presented by HEREs. HEREs also participated in the training sessions conducted within the CBHE project TLQAA+ about programme evaluation.

Two HEREs participated in a regional workshop in Baghdad, Iraq, regarding the rankings of Arab universities.

National Qualifications Framework

Leveraging on the outcomes of the TAM on “Rethinking Lebanese Higher Education” the HEREs explored further the possibility of establishing an Integrated Tertiary Education. A TAM was dedicated to the subject and organised jointly with the NQF conference by the Ministry, UNESCO and AUF. The HEREs follow up the developments on NQF taking place in the TLQAA+ project.

Research Activities and Doctoral Studies

Several HEREs participated in the national discussions about the organisation of research and doctoral studies. Some are members of the taskforce created by the Ministry for that purpose.

Social Dimension and the Role of the Students

The HEREs continue to follow up on the civic engagement charter. The social dimension of higher education continues to be a topic that HEREs cover in their interactions with the Lebanese Higher Education stakeholders. In addition, a TAM on Students Participative Role in higher education has been organised with the participation of an external expert and a student representative from ESU invited by the HEREs.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. Joint effort with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO towards a total quality assurance covering all sectors of education.
2. Increasing the awareness regarding integrated tertiary education and the need for a NQF.
3. Support to the training of experts that serve in the different committees of the Ministry.

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/26>
- List of HEREs on NEO website: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/26>
- HERE publications or articles: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/837>
- HERE event pages: <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/content/837>
- Country page on SPHERE website: <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-lebanon>

10.5 PALESTINE

Key developments in higher education in Palestine 2018

1. Governance and Management:

- Adopting the new law of higher education and launching the development of regulations and instructions emanating from it.
- Restructuring the Higher Education Council as stipulated by law. The Council represents all segments of the academic, economic, civil society and gender.
- Establishing the Council of University Presidents for the first time, to provide the Higher Education Council with consultation and assistance.
- Computerizing all administrative procedures & systems of higher education (equivalence and accreditation of certificates, comprehensive application exam for technical colleges, data systems of higher education institutions, database of scientific research, scholarships and student missions)
- Establishing a Higher Education (HE) WAQF Fund to provide HEIs with funds to enhance scientific research and higher education

2. Quality:

- Restructuring the Board of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission.
- Creation of a national classification of Palestinian universities containing 24 measurable indicators.
- Working on updating the system of the Commission, and the system of licensing and accreditation of higher education institutions.
- Adopting new educational programmes of a technical nature that respond in a flexible way to the needs of the labour market.
- Preparing the licensing and accreditation manual for higher education institutions
- Preparing the first draft of the quality assurance manual.

3. Open and Electronic Education systems:

- Adopting new systems for open and electronic education, and launching the development of a system and guidelines and by-laws for this purpose.

4. Scientific Research:

- Reshaping the Scientific Research Council to be a representative of all national spectrums that are interested in scientific research and unifying efforts in this field.
- Initiating the preparation of a national strategy for scientific research.
- Advisory Board for Horizon 2020, which is one of the largest and most important programmes supporting scientific research.
- Supporting the local universities to develop their research infrastructure. The ministry allocated more than 20 million shekels in this context.

5. Entrepreneurship:

- Initiating the formulation of a comprehensive national vision for the search for best practices to integrate leadership in higher education.
- Focusing on the skills of the twenty-first century in institutions of higher education.

6. Vocational and technical education:

- Expanding vocational and technical education.

- The introduction and use of new types of educational programmes that respond flexibly to the needs of the labour market.
- Preparation of a guide to study plans and programmes based on competencies.

Contribution of the HERE team to higher education development

- **Governance and management:** the HERE team and NEO took part in two meetings that aimed at drafting the new higher education law in Palestine. The contribution of the HERE team and NEO on the current draft of the Higher Educational Law is tangible and clearly visible.
- **Quality:** The Head of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance commission (and HERE member) led efforts to create a national classification of Palestinian universities, containing (24) measurable indicators. This procedure was discussed in one of the HERE meeting.
- **Open and Electronic Education Systems:** Adoption of new systems for open and electronic education, and work to develop a system and instructions for this with the Ministry. Al-Quds Open University, the only Open University, represented by a HERE Member, was heavily involved in the development.
- **Entrepreneurship:** - Initiate the formulation of a comprehensive national vision for the search for best practices to integrate leadership in higher education. A HERE member and Assistant Deputy Minister for HE Affairs organised a workshop entitled “Orienting research in HEI’s toward labour market competences”, which was attended by representatives from the HEIs and private sector.
- **Scientific Research:** At least 4 HERE members and the NEO Director are members of the Horizon 2020 Advisory Board.

Main achievements of the HERE team in 2018

1. The composition of the current HEREs team is very efficient and influential. The contribution of the HERE team is visible in the development of the higher education law in 2018, especially in the following areas: implementing a classification tool for the Palestinian HEIs, introducing entrepreneurship and integrating scientific research in the HE system, implementing an open and digital education system, and using the HEREs and NEO expertise in the H2020 programme and the WAQF Fund.
2. Adoption of new systems for open and Digital education, and work to develop a system and instructions for this.
3. A HERE member and Associated Professor at Birzeit University published an article in the SPHERE Newsletter entitled: University Cooperation with the Local Palestinian Industry: Example of the Faculty of Engineering at Birzeit University

Links to further details

- HERE section of NEO website: <http://erasmusplus.ps/page-579-en.html>
- List of HEREs on NEO website: <http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-692-en.html>
- HERE publications or articles: <http://supporthere.org/news/university-cooperation-local-palestinian>
SPHERE website: <http://supporthere.org/news/university-cooperation-local-palestinian>
- Local events: <http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-693-en.html>
- International activities: <http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-694-en.html>
- TAM: <http://www.erasmusplus.ps/page-580-en.html>
- Country page on SPHERE website: <http://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-palestine>

Getting in touch with the EU

IN PERSON

All over Europe there are hundreds of local EU information centres.

You can find the address of the centre nearest to you at: europa.eu/contact

ON THE PHONE OR BY EMAIL

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by electronic mail via: europa.eu/contact

Finding information about the EU

ONLINE

Information in all the official languages of the European Union is available on the Europa website: europa.eu

EU PUBLICATIONS

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at: <http://bookshop.europa.eu>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see <http://europa.eu/contact>).

EU LAW AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

OPEN DATA FROM THE EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

Contact us

For more information please consult our website where you will find details on upcoming events and publications on how to apply for funding.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>
eacea-info@ec.europa.eu

Website :
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-3-support-for-policy-reform/higher-education-reform-experts-heres_en

General questions about the programme :
EACEA-EPLUS-CBHE@ec.europa.eu

