

Council of Europe seminar on
“Universities as promoters of intercultural dialogue in multicultural societies”
20-21 May 2010
Sochi, Russian Federation

Synopsis of presentation

Title: Inclusive & responsive universities and intercultural dialogue – a state of affairs and the road ahead

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At the EUA Autumn Conference on “Inclusive and responsive universities” that took place in Rotterdam on 23-25 October 2008, EUA members from all over Europe adopted the European Universities’ Charter on Lifelong Learning.¹ The purpose of this Charter - written in the form of commitments from universities in addressing the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies, with a set of matching commitments for government and regional partners to make - is to assist Europe’s universities in developing their specific role as lifelong learning institutions forming a central pillar of the Europe of Knowledge. The philosophy of the charter is strongly connected to the debate on intercultural dialogue.

In 2009, Europe’s university leaders decided upon ten success factor for European universities in the next decade.² Many of these success factors in the Prague declaration also relate directly to the contribution of universities to intercultural dialogue: i.e. widening opportunities for participation, providing relevant and innovative study programmes, promoting internationalization and improving the quality of mobility.

Within this supportive policy framework, this presentation will explore the relationship between the policies as outlined above, current available data on implementation and the discussion on the role of universities as promoters of intercultural dialogue.

The recent EUA studies on “Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education”, “University autonomy in Europe 1” and “Trends 2010: a decade of change in European Higher Education” are a rich source of inspiration for the seminar’s discussion and relevant data from these reports will be presented. This will include data on: student diversity, the implementation of student-centred learning, widening participation measures and constraints and internationalisation.

In addition the presentation will seek to address the following questions:

- How can higher education engage in the discussion on what kind of citizens European society needs in the 21st century?
- How can student-centred learning contribute to intercultural dialogue?
- What role do student services play?
- How can student diversity become an asset for the university?
- What role does an institutional internationalisation strategy have?

¹http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/European_Universities_Charter_on_Lifelong_learning.pdf

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http://www.eua.be/typo3conf/ext/bzb_securelink/pushFile.php?cuid=2123&file=fileadmin%2Fuser_upload%2Ffiles%2FPublications%2FEUA_Prague_Declaration_European_Universities_-_Looking_forward_with_confidence.pdf