

The Campus Europae programme
of learning abroad and combining studying and working



Bologna meets Lisbon

Employability in the

European Higher Education Area

I. Europeanwide Employability

The more difficult the process of political unification of Europe seems to become, the more necessary it will be to make young people "Europe-able" and to educate them to be young Europeans.

In the Bologna Declaration of June 1999 the Ministers prioritised Universities as one of the primary instruments in assisting new academics and graduates in European Employability. In the Lisbon Strategy from March 2000 the European Prime Ministers emphasised the fact that Europe should agree to become a "knowledge based economy". Therefore education for and in Europe has to have highest priority.

Employability does not come about does not occur spontaneously and is not a natural sequence although it should be. During studying it will be only be reached when learning in universities will be combined with practical experiences in companies, administrations, schools, hospitals etc. natural

In the European context employability will become a natural progression, only when young academics have gained such experiences in universities and companies of several European countries.

Therefore effective employability will be possible only as a result of fruitful communication between companies, administrations, schools, hospitals, civil organisations with and on the other side and universities.

II. The Concept Campus Europae

The Campus Europae member universities have put at the top of their agenda the aim to "combine academic qualification with international employability and an awareness of European identity".

The aim of Campus Europae is to gradually ensure that all students – at least those from the universities participating in the Campus Europae project – will complete their course of study after having spent time away from their "home university". During their three to five years in a BA/MA-programme, students will spend one year each at two universities in two other European countries where different languages are spoken. The first year is to be spent during the BA programme, i.e. the first study phase.

The added value of the innovative Campus Europae approach can be summed up as follows:

- Fundamental European Emphasis in programmes
- Promotion of European Identity for students
- Early period of study abroad
- European languages promoted
- Standardised/ Functioning procedures of study recognition
- Contribution to the Higher Education Sector while maintaining the individual character of the local university programmes.

III. The crossroads in the financing of European-wide student mobility

Campus Europae has been designed with the purpose of - in the long run - being open to all students of its member universities. This ambitious aim raises a multitude of questions that boil down to understanding how can CE be financed.

Foreseeing a scenario of large-scale student mobility in the European Higher Education Area stands for an unprecedented challenge that can be more easily understood with the help of a three-folded explanation:

- 1) On the one hand nothing indicates that in the near future there will be conditions to reach widespread political commitment that allows for a radical increase of European public grants devoted to mobility programmes;
- 2) Secondly a fairly high percentage of the already existing mobile students are self-financed free-movers, whose integration in programmes like Erasmus would dramatically increase the need for added funding;
- 3) Last but not least studies like the "Eurostudent" have found evidence that there are groups of students who are "structurally excluded" from mobility programmes, notably working students. Working students are kept ashore of such programmes because the incomes that they depend on are not transferable, and working students account for nearly half of all students in Europe.

A more equitable approach of the financial mechanism that is now currently in place could be a fundamental step forward in finding ways to push European-wide student mobility beyond the annual share of roughly 5% of all students.

IV. Underlying the social fairness of mobility

There are innumerable challenges that prevent student mobility from becoming universally accessible. The Campus Europae Universities are intensively engaged in a remarkable effort to ensure ex-ante recognition of ECTS awarded abroad, to promote the learning of foreign languages and to disseminate essential information about stays abroad, while minimising the administrative burden for mobile students.

Whereas these initiatives play a role in reshaping the perception of mobility in the students' eyes, the crucial step will be to ensure that all learners will not be deterred by unfavourable financial backgrounds or misconceptions concerning the costs of studying abroad.

This can be achieved by means of granting loans to all interested students. The fundamental criteria to award such loans will be the living cost difference between the city of origin and destination. This will be made possible due to the LIVIS – the CE LIving cost Information System – which will become an online information source accessible to all potential students.

The European Investment Bank will provide the necessary financial assistance. While the payback mechanics is still being outlined together with the EIB experts it has already been decided that the students will have a 0% interest rate. Further consideration is being given to the possibility of implementing an income-contingent payback system. loan

V. When Bologna meets Lisbon

One might ask if fostering massive student mobility spells more than extraordinary personal development and increased employability perspectives for its participants. In fact, Campus Europae is being put in place due to the firm belief that mobility will lead to two remarkable by-products:

- a Europe united by highly educated, polyglot and lively citizens;
- and
- a generation of scholars able and eager to transform Europe into the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world.

To achieve this goal the Campus Europae Universities are committed to come up with innovative ways to work increasingly together with companies and enterprises in as many fields as possible and provide their international students with study-related work experiences.

The academic world understands that this combination may considerably strengthen the quality of their study programmes, while companies regard this as a crucial step to bring transferable knowledge into their daily working routines.

The current internships and traineeships are fulltime jobs and last about four to eight weeks, to avoid a prolongation of the study-time. Unlike for instance the Campus Europae “learning employability partnership model” are based on a part-time concept and will allow students to participate in the programme for at least 10-11 months without prolonging the duration of their studies. They have, also unlike participants in current internship programmes, an at least an “intermediate” level knowledge of the local language. Therefore, after an induction phase, they will be for several months an active and productive component in the companies, enterprises and administrations.

This situation will benefit the students because:

- their linguistic, cultural and personal adaptation will be facilitated
- the learning process will be strengthened by the combination of studies and work-related work
- they will improve their international employability
- their financial situation while staying abroad will be improved significantly because they will get an CE-Grant during their internship period.

VI. A new generation of financing policies for the increase of student mobility and their European employability

To implement such a programme the following components are necessary:

a.

In conjunction with the co-operating universities, agencies have to be established (or existing institutions have to be used) which will organize study-related “learning-employability- places” for 8 to 10 hours a week in companies, enterprises, administrations, hospitals, schools, social, cultural and political organizations etc. The agency will get financial assistance. The financial assistance should be about 10% to 15% of the donation given to Campus Europae by the local employer (See under d.)

b.

The student will not get a “salary”. The labor regulations in most of the European countries are not flexible enough for students to find such working places. The students will get a trainee-contract without a salary.

c.

Students who need financial support may be granted a CE Loan. Working students will have their loan complemented with a grant of about 50% of their total financial support.

d.

The grant-component will be financed by donations from sponsors, i.e. the companies, enterprises etc. where the students have their “learning-employability-places”. The donations will also be utilised to cover a part of the administrative costs of the programme.

e.

The loan-component will be financed by a loan given to Campus Europae from the European Investment Bank (EIB). Negotiations about the loan commenced in July.

f.

A central constituent of this programme will be a fund, financed by some large enterprises. This fund should be double the amount of the EIB-loan. The fund will have two main functions: firstly it will serve as a security for the loan; secondly it will cover the interests for the loan, so that the students could get 0%-interest loan. In the medium term the fund might replace or minimise the EIB-loan.

Annexes

A. Financial supports of Campus Europae

Campus Europae is a 1998 founded project that was supported by

- Quandt-Foundation (Altana) (360.000 €)
- Allianz-Kultur-Stiftung (200.000 €)
- Volkswagen-Foundation (185.000 €)
- Leo Kirch (125.000 €)

Since 2004 the government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is financing the project with 500.000 € per year.

B. Political Support

The project is honored by the support of:

- former Chancellor Dr. Helmut Kohl
- former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder
- Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker
- German Chambers of Industry and Commerce
- European Trade Union Council (ETUC)
- Union des Industries des Pays de la Communauté Européenne (UNICE)