

**Campus Europae and its contribution
to the European Higher Education Area**

Publishing Information

European University Foundation [EUF]

Château de Munsbach

31, Rue du Parc

L-5374 Munsbach

Phone +352 - 261510

Fax +352 - 26151032

contact@campuseuropae.org

www.campuseuropae.org

Layout by: Agentur an der Ruhr

up@aadr.de

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Table of contents

■__ Introduction	4
1__ Quality Assurance	6
Internationalisation of national accreditations	
CE-Degree: A new seal of quality	
2__ Mobility	7
Two years in two different cultures	
Equitable balance achieved by the CE Language concept	
Ex-Ante-recognition of curricula	
3__ Social Dimension: The CE-Bursary	8
4__ Data collection	9
5__ Employability	10
Bologna meets Lisbon – the CE-programme which combines studying and working while living abroad	
The “CE-Degree”: A quality seal for the European Labour Market	
6__ Student participation: The added value of a student-centred Bologna process ...	11
7__ The EHEA in a global context	12
Campus Europae – a European advantage for international students	
The external dimension for European graduates	

Introduction

The European University Foundation – Campus Europae (EUF-CE) is a committed advocate of the Bologna Process whose primary targets are to increase the mobility of teachers and students, to encourage them to play an active role as European citizens, and to strengthen the Europe-wide employability of young graduates. EUF-CE has developed, and already partially implemented programmes and activities which will help to augment the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as well as the knowledge based European economy, on the basis of the Lisbon Strategy as outlined by the EU Prime Ministers in 2000.

The Bologna Process is a derivative of the following European inter-ministerial activities:

- the Sorbonne Declaration of May 1998
- the Bologna Declaration of June 1999
- the Lisbon Strategy of March 2000
- the Message from Salamanca Convention of March 2001
- the Prague Communiqué of May 2001
- the Berlin Communiqué of September 2003
- the Bergen Communiqué of May 2005.

The London Communiqué issued by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process in May 2007 summed up, again, the targets for the Bologna Process:

“Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principals that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe’s attractiveness and competitiveness.

We reaffirm our commitment to increasing the compatibility and comparability of our higher education systems, whilst at the same time *respecting their diversity*. We recognize the important influence *higher education institutions* (HEI) exert on developing our societies, based on their traditions as centres of learning, research, creativity and knowledge transfer as well as *their key role in defining and transmitting the values on which our societies are built.*” (Accentuation by EUF-CE)

After describing the progress which has been made in realising the Bologna Process in the last number of years, the London Communiqué sets out a list of “Priorities for 2009”. Campus Europae’s programmes and activities will specifically contribute to reach the goals of the Bologna Process according to the London Communiqué list of “Priorities for 2009”.

1 ____ Quality Assurance

1.1 __ Internationalisation of national accreditations

Campus Europae attaches great importance to the quality of its study programmes by combining the national standards, obligatory for each of the member universities on the basis of national regulations and laws, with the standards, established by its Subject Committees. These Subject Committees guarantee the quality of the CE-programmes between the CE-members. The constant comparison between the programmes of each CE-university draws upon the strengths of each programme and will subsequently lead to a steady increase in the programme's quality.

1.2 __ CE-Degree: A new seal of quality

The creation of the "Campus Europae-degree" (see under 5.2) will introduce a new quality-seal which illustrates the specific academic qualities of a CE-graduate as well as being a useful indicator for potential future employers in the labour market. The CE-degree affirms not only that the students have studied in two different countries with two different languages, different from his or her home language, but also that he or she fulfilled the academic qualifications in the host countries by attaining the requisite ECTS-points. Due to the integration of the "Bologna-meets-Lisbon"-programme (see under 5.1) into the CE-study programmes the majority of the CE-graduate will have at least one year long study-related work experience in one or two other European countries and a deeper understanding of the society and the economy in the host countries.

Both components (the international Subject Committees and the CE-Degree) will lead to a system of peer-review between the CE-member universities. In addition all CE-movers (i.e. students) take part in an evaluation of all the components of the programme twice a year (language courses, teaching quality, social affairs etc.).

2___ Mobility

2.1__ Two years in two different cultures

To understand the richness and diversity of European cultural heritage and the specific idea of unity in diversity of Europe, Campus Europae advocates that students during the five or six years of their Bachelor- and Master-cycles study not only in their home country, but, in addition, in two different countries with two different languages exposing two more cultures which are different from their home culture.

2.2__ Equitable balance achieved by the CE Language concept

To increase success in their studies students will, if necessary, get lectures in English during the first half of their study-year abroad.

To assist students to study in countries where a language is spoken which is not taught in schools, traditionally, it is necessary to allow students to live actively in these countries and to learn the local language in the host country before the beginning of the study year. The Campus Europae Language Concept is based on the experiences of the "Polonicum Mainz" and the "Studia Baltica", Münster, which have been running for more than twenty years. It consists of a short introduction to the language of the host country at the home university (about 30 hrs). For this introduction e-learning-courses can be utilized. At the host university students will get an intensive language course of four to six weeks. During the first half of the study year they will have additional language training. At the end of this they will attain the B1-level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). From the beginning of the second half of the study year, students will be able to follow the lectures in the local language in most of the subjects. This exchange increases the possibility for students to get experiences not only in one of the major European countries, but to get a better understanding of the contribution also of the "minor" European languages, cultures and states to European development.

With the support of the faculties and of the "CE-buddy network" organised by the local student unions or /and the international departments of the host universities the over 200 students who have taken part in the CE-exchange since 2004 have already reached the academic requirements (i.e. the requisite ECTS-points).

2.3__ Ex-Ante-recognition of curricula

Respecting the diversity of the higher education systems and of the traditions of the individual member universities, Campus Europae avoids the harmonisation of study programmes. However, it ensures that there is full recognition of ECTS-points, earned abroad, by the home universities. Any point acquired at a CE-member university has to replace a point of the home university, following the regulations the CE-Subject Committees has set out. The rationale for this is to avoid the prolongation sometimes caused at present by today's international exchange.

In the CE-Subject committees Business, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences, Law, Medicine, Natural Science, Teacher Training the EUF-CE member universities are represented according to their university profile. At the beginning of each study year, the committees publish the study programmes and lectures of the individual universities, which are accepted as "equivalent" by the other CE-members. The students have the guarantee that the ECTS-points in these lectures will be recognised by their home universities upon their return home from a CE-exchange.

3___ Social Dimension: The CE-Bursary.

From its beginning Campus Europae has dealt intensively with the "social dimension" of European student exchange.

The primary purpose of the Erasmus grants since their inception was to offset the costs borne by students when they went abroad. Even though the Erasmus grant has increased since 2007 it is apparent that they cannot replace the income derived from part-time working in a students home country. A second problem: Erasmus grants can only to be awarded on one occasion. However Campus Europae students are obliged to go abroad for a second year.

Therefore Campus Europae introduced the "CE-bursary". This CE-Bursary is organised in cooperation with local employers confederations, chambers, university foundations, banks and student affairs departments (Studentenwerke) and will be financed mainly by local employers.

With this CE-Bursary Campus Europae meets the recommendation of the London communiqué that all stakeholders should have a role within their spheres of responsibility.

Campus Europae offers students the possibility to get an “exchange-loan” from a local bank for a low interest rate (2 %). Under special conditions, CE will also act as the guarantor for 50 % of the loan.

If students will participate in the “LEP-programme” (see under item 5.1) Campus Europae will convert up to 50 % of their loan into in a non-repayable grant.

As there are many local or national support programmes for student exchange Campus Europae has developed specific financial aid programmes for each of the member-universities.

These programmes are reserved, at the moment, only for those, who participate in the LEP-programme. Following the analysis of the first pilot projects of this programme it will then be opened to all CE-movers.

4___ Data collection

In addition to the existing data base, Campus Europae developed the student oriented database LIVIS, which informs the prospective CE-movers about the student-related costs for foreign students at each of the member university towns.

This detailed information gives the students additional criteria for choosing the target-university. It helps to give valid information where studying abroad is “more expensive” than at their home university.

It is also the basis for calculating the necessary “CE-bursary”.

This database is also useful for attracting students to less expensive and attractive universities, which may be perceived as less “fashionable” than others.

Details of LIVIS are available on the Campus Europae website.

5___ Employability

5.1__ Bologna meets Lisbon – the CE-programme which combines studying and working while living abroad

Campus Europae offers an alternative to the usual several weeks or several months' full-time internships: Study related part-time work for 8 to 16 hrs per week in companies, hospitals, administrations and other organisations during the whole exchange year. Therefore after a short time of induction the students will be, for the exchange year, a productive employee.

Campus Europae has negotiated terms with local chambers and employers unions and confederations, which assist in finding study related working places for incoming students close to the host university. Due to the labour regulations in some European countries and regions, the legal status of the students is that of an "internship position without a salary": The employers do not pay a salary to the students. Should the students require additional financial support they will receive a CE-Bursary (see under item 3. above).

The advantages are:

- a. The universities and faculties will expand and consolidate their network of contacts with companies and employers. Having an increasingly high number of its students working in partner companies will facilitate future strategic collaboration as universities and companies learn more about each others needs, expectations and interests;
- b. The employers will have access to highly trained and motivated students, eager to make use of their portfolio of aptitudes within the "problem based learning" context that the companies will provide. Their international background may also add value to the company, not only from a social and cultural perspective but also from a commercial and technical point of view. Last but not least, the employers will be in a privileged position to become better acquainted with the potential of future partnerships with the universities, as described in paragraph above;
- c. The students will have an enhanced learning experience, thanks to the combination of studies and study related internships. This will also make their experience in their country of destination more varied, from a social and linguistic point of view. In conjunction with this, they will get a new system of finance for their stay abroad.

5.2__ The “CE-Degree”: A quality seal for the European Labour Market

To underline the extraordinary qualification of the CE-movers, Campus Europae and its member universities will award a special academic degree to those students, who have fulfilled the requirements:

- studying for two years in two different countries
- passing successfully the two language exams at the B 1-level
- Attaining the academic requirements (at least 45 ECTS-points).

The CE-degree is based on a memorandum between the EUF-CE and each member university which allows the evaluation of the quality of study-programmes at the member university by the subject committees. The evaluation of the success of the CE-degree on the labour market will be conducted also in close connection with European employer’s organisations and the European Trade Union Council (ETUC).

6__ Student participation: The added value of a student-centred Bologna process

Campus Europae is mainly a student oriented higher education programme. Therefore qualified student participation in all organs and committees is imperative in maintaining the quality, coherence and consistency of the CE-programmes and Campus Europae as a whole. Students take part in the decision-making process on the network level as well as in the seven subject committees, where the study programmes are planned and where the quality standards and the regulation for recognition are formulated.

The Campus Europae Student Council consists of one representative of each member university. The Student Council elects both its president, who is member of the central organs of CE, and the student representatives in the subject committees.

The Student Council as well as the local CE-student organisations are crucial for making the CE-programme attractive and for giving the students the impulse and encouragement to take part in this activity for young European citizens.

7___ The EHEA in a global context

7.1__ Campus Europae – a European advantage for international students

Campus Europae as a widespread network of European universities will attract students from all parts of the world who want to study in Europe – not only for a semester or a year in one European university. Campus Europae will offer them a full European study programme starting with Bachelor Programmes. Students from all continents will be able to book their studies at Campus Europae as a central agency. They will ask for individual combinations of countries and universities, equating to the CE-programmes, and will learn – besides English – at least two different European languages and cultures in two different European universities. Campus Europae will organise the programme for those incoming students. It will present on international level, the programmes and the fields of excellence of its member universities.

7.2__ The external dimension for European graduates

Realizing the EHEA in the European context is a precondition for realizing it in a global context. In today's era of globalization the advent of the CE degree is a timely development to deal with the global challenge and international competitiveness Europe will face in the future. To ensure that Europe is adequately equipped to deal with these challenges CE degree graduates will be very much in demand due to their unique blend of skills and experience. Education has become a global commodity. Students from all over the world now pick and choose their higher level institution and Europe needs to remain at the forefront of this global market. Europe will need more and more CE graduates to cope with the task of ensuring that Europe's educational quality, competitiveness and social and economic power remains to the forefront on a global scale.

The bestowal of the CE-degree as a sign of exceptional academic and international experience and success will prove to be an asset for the EHEA that makes it attractive for Europe's best students to study in Europe while at the same time enhancing the attractiveness of these students in the eyes of their prospective employers worldwide.