



***"Virtual Mobility:
European Education and beyond"***

BEST Symposium on Education, Sofia

13th - 21st September 2007

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Abstract Summary

A BEST Symposium on Education is a public event of the Board of European Students of Technology. This event creates a forum in which students from all over Europe can meet for one week, and state their opinions on hot topics related to education during round table discussions.

The Symposium was run by the Educational Committee of BEST (**EduCo**), and the hosting local BEST group of Sofia. During the Symposium the discussions were usually held in four groups, that were facilitated by EduCo members. Prior to the working sessions, participants were provided topic presentations by experienced professors.

This particular symposium was sponsored by EuroPACE under VM-BASE project. EuroPACE ivzw[2] is a European non-profit association of universities, educational organisations and their networks.

Its main objective is to foster networked e-learning for virtual mobility and, lifelong learning.

VM-BASE[3] (“Virtual Mobility Before and After Student Exchanges”) is a two-year project supported by the European Commission under the Socrates Minerva Programme. It aims to improve efficiency of the Erasmus programme:

- Acting as a complement to the existing Erasmus exchange programmes in which virtual Erasmus can be used to prepare and follow-up the physical mobility;
- Supporting teachers in coaching at a distance (e-coaching) for both preparatory and return initiatives

At this Symposium there were 24 participants from 13 different European countries. The participants were ensured to have sufficient background knowledge to participate actively in the discussions by reading the topic introductions provided by EduCo, by participating in the preparatory session, where several professors provided information about virtual mobility, e-learning and online seminars.

Day 1: Learning Café

Group 1: Virtual mobility before Exchange

Expert: Laszlo Kottyan

Facilitator: Balazs Kerper

Participants at this table focused on what is Virtual Mobility before Erasmus Exchange and how it can be helpful to Erasmus students. They have identified three main sources of information, that can be valuable to potential exchange students: international offices of universities they are interested in, as well as the local and exchange teachers and students of those universities.

Participants that have already been on Erasmus shared their experience about what kind of information would be useful for incoming exchange students. They indicated that there are two types of information that can be useful:

- Technical – culture and customs, accomodation, local transportation, prices, entertainment, how to get there.
- Academical – what courses and study programs are offered at university, what grading system and academical calendar are used, potential scholarships, academic traditions, educational system

This information can be provided in several formats. One of such format could be survival guides – one written by students and another one – by university officials. Also international offices could post relevant information.

According to participants, information provided by host and home university should complement each other. They expect home university to guarantee recognition of studies abroad. Some participants shared sad stories, how their exchange studies were not recognised by their home universities.

On the other hand, host university is expected to provide not only information, but also other services, such as on-line local language courses and communication channels for incoming exchange students, like mailing list, newsletter or forums.

Some participants expressed desire to have opportunity to do video conferencing with students from host university before going on physical exchange and communicate with former exchange students who already studied there or access some information repository, where reports of previous exchanges are stored. The format of that repository might vary from wiki to more formal database. Such database would also contain information of former exchange students, however during discussion privacy issues were raised and there was no firm agreement who should be included – volunteers or all students who have participated in Erasmus exchange.

Group 2: Virtual Mobility after Exchange

Expert : Katrin Bijmens

Facilitator : Edita Šemeškevičiūtė

This group focused on discussing what Virtual Mobility is to offer to students who have already done their physical exchange. They have identified both advantages and disadvantages of such service. One of the main advantage is ability of former exchange students to provide feedback about their stay in foreign country. It can be beneficial for both new exchange students who plan to come to this particular country and university, and university officials, who can use this information to provide better services to Erasmus students.

Another opportunity identified by participants for VM after Exchange service is keeping contact with other exchange students, who studied there together. It might serve as tool for organising Erasmus alumni reunion, as was suggested by one of participants, who took part in such event after his exchange. Students also expressed desire to be able to upload digital content, like photos, that could be later shared with others. Some student groups might want some specialised communication tools such as digital whiteboards. This service could also provide contact database for former exchange students to find each other, however the privacy concern remains.

On the other hand, universities could also keep contact with those students and provide them information about new courses that are being offered on-line, help with getting their credits recognised by home university and perhaps provide access to on-line university resources to former Erasmus students.

Finally, such on-line resource could also provide companies, looking for students with exchange experience, with opportunity to post recruitment ads there as well.

Another interested idea that was suggested by participants is that such service could be used to “acquire critical mass for making pressure to recognise the credits.”

The disadvantages are typical for most virtual communication. The main problem that iterated over and over again was lack of personal face to face contact, that makes relations difficult to maintain. As the memories fade away, motivation to continue communication with other exchange students drops.

Another drawback of such service, that many students might not have enough time to commit to such service, so they will not be interested in using it after some time. Some participants voiced concern that exchange students might not be interested in receiving newsletter, once exchange has been finished.

Group 3: E-Coaching

Expert : Nicola Mrose

Facilitator : Ioana Branescu

This group focused on discussing benefits and problems of e-coaching. The general opinion was fairly positive, however several possible pitfalls were spotted as well.

Participants noted that not all subjects are equally suitable for e-coaching. It is much more difficult to implement e-coaching for courses that require access to specific equipment or laboratory facilities.

The major advantages of e-coaching is that it enables students to study at their own pace, while providing access to courses to wider audience. While classrooms have limited space and require physical presence, e-coaching would enable virtually any number of students to attend lectures on-line. Capability to have lectures recorded and played back later is an important advantage for students. This way, it is much less critical if student is unable to attend the lecture.

Also, students felt somewhat safer asking questions on-line, than while being in the classroom. Majority of participants preferred instant messaging (MSN, GoogleTalk, etc.) over

traditional email, as it is a faster mean of communication, however, it was noted, that it requires for teacher to be on-line at the same time as participating students. However, participants felt that established mailing lists would also foster cooperation between students and better exchange of ideas and information. The main drawback in this area is lack of personal touch, physical interaction, which can lead to various miscommunication problems, especially between people of different cultures.

Another benefit of e-coaching identified by participants is capability to provide better quality courses. It is hardly disputable that quality depends mostly on professors and their way of teaching. E-coaching enables to invite world-class specialist in the field to teach courses. These people are usually very busy and might not be interested in travelling to another country to give a lecture. However, they could record lecture and prepare materials for students all over the world to attend at their convenience. Moreover, students could then ask questions and get answers from such specialists.

Such activities would be real money and time saver for all involved parties. Students will not have to travel to attend lecture, universities would have to pay less for lectures, since there will be no travelling and accommodation costs involved and professors, will have more time for their other activities as well.

The major drawbacks so far are mostly technological. Both students and professors need to have access to high-bandwidth Internet connection, as video streaming is quite demanding technology. Another potential issue is available virtual tools. While some are already freely available – email, instant messaging, podcasting, video conferencing, some courses might need some specialised software.

However, some participants also mentioned potential social problems with students and professors resisting such innovations and unwilling to forfeit traditional ways of teaching and learning.

Also, e-coaching is no replace for physical exchange programmes, as in this case students miss out cultural aspect of going abroad for exchange. All participants were for e-coaching being complimentary to going on Erasmus exchange, not replacing it.

Group 4: Virtual seminars

Expert : Bieke Shreurs

Facilitator : Vasilij Savin

The topic of this table was “Virtual Seminars”. Participants were asked to evaluate usefulness of such seminars to students, whether they would be interested in taking part in them.

The main advantage of these seminars as outlined participating students is bringing people all over Europe together, which would not be an easy and cheap task otherwise. It allows to discuss common issues with people from different cultural backgrounds, what otherwise would require going abroad. In the longer run, it fosters tolerant approach to other cultures and better cultural awareness. Also those discussions can be recorded and saved for later references.

Another important advantage of virtual seminars is capability to invite world-class speakers and experts to talk on provided topic and address any question that public might raise.

The drawbacks mentioned during discussion were mostly technical or organisational. Some participants were concerned with equipment and facilities required, making it not so easily accessible for everyone to participate.

All in all, participants were quite positive about virtual seminars and expressed their interest in attending them themselves.

Day 2: SWOT analysis of VM-BASE pilot projects.

On the second day participants were divided into four groups. The purpose of the discussions was to conduct SWOT analysis of 3 VM-BASE pilot projects: Orientation Guideline Pilot, e-Learning and Buddies program and VENUS project[4].

VENUS pilot

First of all participating students identified objectives. According to them, Virtual European Seminars, otherwise VENUS project, should involve not only students, but professors and interested European citizens. It can serve as valuable platform to gather opinions on internationally significant matters. Taking into consideration that these seminars are virtual, it is much easier to arrange international audience, as well as involve in discussions citizens who generally has difficulties participating. Everyone agreed that virtual seminars can provide balanced discussion. So, objectives can be to share knowledge and promote collaboration within European dimension.

Strengths

Regarding strengths, participants noted better availability and accessibility as the major pilot strengths. It is no longer necessary to go somewhere to participate in discussion, but possible to just sit at home and join discussions via Internet, also one can participate in several discussions at the same time. Wider audience is another strong point of this kind of seminars, because it provides an opportunity to acquire new international contacts. Recording of seminars for later playback is yet another strong side of this project.

Weaknesses

The main concern that was expressed by participants was time format, which might make difficult to properly discuss the issue. Also, participants might be pressed for time to reach conclusion and it will produce non-optimal decisions. Another weakness identified by participants was that such new media requires different approach and seminar participants might feel uncomfortable using such technologies. Finally different timezones might make it difficult to arrange time that is suitable for all involved parties.

Opportunities

The main opportunities that virtual seminars provide is development and efficiency validation of new communication methods, that can be used later in other fields as well. The general opinion was that VENUS pilot is reaching objectives, and proves that European seminar idea has potential.

Threats

One of the main threats that has been identified are various technical problems, that might plague the project. Providing reliable video conferencing across Europe might prove to be a tough challenge to tackle, since technological level and high-speed Internet availability varies a lot from country to country.

Improving Internet infrastructure might demand significant investments, which can be better spent on other project, like helping people in need. Topics of Virtual European Seminars should be interesting to people from all corners of Europe, which is not easy to assure, since problems and main concerns vary in different European regions.

Orientation Guideline Pilot

The idea of the pilot is to offer a fully virtual tour around Leuven and through all the campuses of the K.U.Leuven. This way foreign students are able to virtually 'walk' around Leuven, before their arrival in the city and university. Pictures of important places and faculties of the K.U.Leuven, valuable information and explanatory videos will be gathered on a CD-ROM and sent to exchange students before their arrival.

Strength

One of the perceived strengths of this pilot is up-to-date information. It helps students to find out information they need about educational system of different universities, planning their exchanges. Another important point is information accessibility. Students expressed desire that such information should be available with only Internet connection and presented in student-friendly way. Finally, this pilot has important role of providing communication channels between incoming students, hosting university and local students. Additionally, participants expressed desire for Orientation Guidelines to provide assistance in becoming more familiar with area, where exchange takes place.

Weaknesses

The main identified weaknesses are differing interests of incoming students, so it is difficult to cater to all interested parties. Also, reliability and freshness of information can become an issue for this pilot. Finally, there are always potential problems, that due to cultural differences some people might find information offending.

Opportunities

Participants had problems identifying opportunities of this pilot, since they were not aware of similar projects, therefore their experience was rather limited.

Threat

The main threat of this pilot is need for change. Participants expressed concern that it will change social life, university, city, around the state. Finally there are some technical threats – unreliable software and information that is not properly organised.

E-Learning

This pilot is organised by the teachers at the Department of Geoinformatics and consists of a virtual preparative course for exchange students in a virtual learning environment preparing students for the technology used during practical and field work at the Faculty of Geoinformatics. The whole course is created in the virtual learning environment of MOODLE software at VGEO portal.

The teachers responsible for both practical work and field work regularly control the terms of their interest to keep the quality control of provided information. There is one course tutor who is responsible for regular control of update, students' activities, he also motivates and activates the work of students.

Strengths

The main strong points identified are time flexibility, getting familiar with the topic. Students can study at pace they are comfortable with and when they feel like doing it. This presumably makes learning more efficient. And last but not least – e-learning is cheap and easy accessible, as long as student has Internet access.

Weakness

On the other hand, during the discussion about pilot weaknesses, participants expressed concern that they would not feel enough pressure to do the work and that they would not be controlled during the learning. It might cause some problem with less responsible students, who require constant supervision to get the work done.

Threats

Regarding threats, students suggested that there might be problems with privacy and copyright. Students claimed, that professors have more significant impact on study efficiency in e-learning than during traditional lectures. Students have higher expectations for content to be related to practical work they have to do within the course.

Opportunities

Being familiar with one e-learning project might encourage participation in other e-learning projects. It is an opportunity to get access to other related topics. Also more practical lessons can be provided instead of purely theoretical courses. This project can enhance the remote collaboration work. E-learning can have opportunities, because this project and e-learning can be blended to improve overall efficiency. Finally, this pilot facilitates mobility by providing domain knowledge terms, the way they are used in foreign language.

Buddy programme

KHLeuven has developed a ‘matchmaking service’ to link incoming students (before their arrival) with local students from KHLeuven. By giving the incoming students the necessary information and guiding them through their arrival and stay in the guest university, the adaptation to and their performance in Belgium and more specifically at KHLeuven is made easier and more successful. Apart from this, the KHLeuven buddies also profit from this type of communication: they come in touch with and learn to understand other cultures and educational systems without moving physically.

Strengths

The main strength of Buddies programme is that when foreign students arrive they are less stressed, better prepared to study in another country. Also, buddies provide valuable assistance in handling various paperwork that also contributes to more pleasant experience during exchange.

Weaknesses

One of the main weaknesses identified was lack of contact after the exchange program when buddies only help out during the first days of exchange and do not maintain contact thereafter. Some students argued that being buddies is not worthy at all and free time should be spent in other way, like having part-time job.

Opportunities

For buddies, such programme is an opportunity to get international experience without going abroad, learn or hone language skills. Some students suggested that buddies should be paid, while most participants argued it is better for buddies to work on voluntary basis, since volunteers are more likely to be helpful.

The buddies programme can benefit from various virtual resources like instant messaging or forums, where students can communicate among each other before going abroad and meeting their buddies live.

Threats

The main threat for this programme is irresponsible buddy, who disappears, leaving foreign student high and dry without help. Another potential threat is cultural incompatibility, when students from different cultures have problems communicating and cooperating.

Day 3: Classical discussions

Non formal education – another step towards to successful career?

Facilitator: Vasilij Savin

Participants: Adrian Leica (Romania), Adrián del Amo (Spain), Evangelia Mitsopoulou (Greece), Rui Duarte (Portugal), Lenka Raudenska (Czech Republic), Zsofia Tóth (Hungary).

The working session started with a discussion about what are the benefits of being involved in extra curricular activities. Some important things that students can learn are working in teams, being responsible, management skills and working in multicultural environment. Also, students have the opportunity to choose the activities that they like and that are interesting for them, compared to university curriculum which usually is not flexible at all. This way, they can focus on something more relevant for their future career.

The participants agreed that the companies nowadays desire more than just a diploma, they are also expecting extra skills from students they are hiring. Companies want people who can adapt easily and have some previous experience and these skills can be gained from different non-formal activities. Students can also take a part-time job in order to gain some experience. During discussion 2 broad questions were addressed.

1. Are there any extra curricular activities in your university?

Romania : They do exist, but they are not promoted enough. You have to search a lot in order to find the one that you like and also, the information usually is too general.

Greece: The university has an office where you can search for a job. There you can also find details about different European programs.

Also, all over Europe there are many organizations which organize job fairs.

After talking about examples of extra-curricular activities, the participants wanted to know who is organizing them. So, they discussed about the organizations in their university.

Czech Republic: The university has a student board where students can find information.

Greece: There is a student club, theatre and sport club. They present themselves at the beginning of the lectures.

Hungary: Each faculty has a mailing list and there you can find information.

Romania: AIESTE, AEGEE have some local groups.

During discussion about organizers of non-formal activities a new question arose: **is it better to have one big and strong student organization or many local student unions?**

The idea of only one big and strong organization is that it's easier to negotiate with the government and the institution. When they are more, they are weaker. Each organization has its own agenda and identity, different interests, so they often fight among themselves for financial support and members. But when they have a common goal they know how to combine and work together in order to fulfil their purpose. Also, competing to each other is a good way to improve and get better.

When there are many and small organizations, students have the opportunity to choose the one that is more related with their personal goals.

Next, the participants shared their experience with extra curricular activities.

Many students mentioned that they are not involved in any organizations, but some had quite a lot of experience. They contacted companies for sponsors (this can be useful for future career), prepared documents and logistics for outgoing exchange students, worked in teams for different projects.

2. What is missing in the university curricula and can be improved with non-formal activities?

One important thing is the fact that the students study a lot of theory but usually they do not have enough opportunities to try it practically.

Another important point that is missing is courses offered in English. Everybody study English in the primary and secondary school but after that there are not many opportunities to hone it in university. However, nowadays it is essential for students to be able to speak English if they

want to study abroad and some job interviews are being held in English. In Czech Republic, if you want to study English in the university you have to pay for it.

Another point is that the students don't have access to the latest products in their field of study and this should be improved.

The benefits of NFE for youth and society

Facilitator: Balazs Kerper

Participants: Robert Cserti (Hungary), Tarvo Kärgerberg (Estonia), Valentina Largo (Italy), Huiling Liu (Austria), Paloma Merino García (Spain), Cristina Mincu (Romania), Eugene Norman (Russia)

The working session started with a short comparison between formal and non-formal education. The participants agreed that mainly the students, as part of students organizations and NGOs, are involved in organizing non-formal activities. Opposite, usually teachers lead formal education. Some youth exchanges, seminars and competitions can be examples of non-formal activities.

After clarifying the idea of non-formal education, the participants discussed over the benefits that students can gain from this kind of activities.

First of all, you can meet new people and this gives the opportunity of sharing experiences, cultures and ideas. You can make new friends and find people with same interests .

Usually taking part in these activities suppose working in teams, so students can develop their team work and communication skills, but also became more responsible taking different tasks.

Also, the participants at this kind of activities gain some experience that it is useful for their future job and it is well seen by the companies. One particular example is with the university from Belgrade : there you can get credits for participating at different non-formal activities.

The benefits for the society

The people taking part in this kind of activities are getting in contact with real things and they can see different opinions and ways of organizing things. It's a good opportunity of development for both participants and organizers of this non – formal activities. So, in the end, you can give something to citizens and change something to society.

Another part that can be involved in non-formal education is the university.

The participants discussed its role in this kind of activities. The students agree that the university should only provide information about this, not advertising, because the ones involved in organizing these activities will promote them.

Some teachers are encouraging these activities and want to help and share their experience. But, on the other hand, taking part in non-formal education takes time and some teachers think that the students will study less. An idea popped up that the universities could give credits for non-formal activities. But, on the other hand, these activities are voluntary and giving credits for them can be seen regarded like payment to some students.

Academical recognition of Non-Formal Education

Facilitator: Ioana Branescu

Participants: Mercedes García de Acilu Laá (Spain), Meliz Tunc (Turkey), Jeremy Cara (France), Ioan-Mihai Baba (Romania), Laura Laszkaràty (Hungary), João Oliveira (Portugal)

In the beginning, it was explained to the students what does Non-formal education means, also what kind of advantages students get by being involved in it and problems with the recognition of this non-formal education were presented. Three different forms of the recognition were presented - political, social and individual recognition with examples for all of them.

1. What are the issues for recognition and how do you think it can be resolved?

Romania : As an example, a pilot project for students studying architecture was mentioned: most of the students find job during their studies and do not attend courses any more. This project introduces new system, which enables working students to receive academic credits for working. These credits can be used to substitute credits that are not received due to failed exams.

Austria : Here university recognize the non-formal education. Students can also choose what to do as practice (project, internship, etc.)

2. What about volunteer work? Is it recognised?

France :University can recognise the extra activity and students can get extra marks or extra points. The university recognises the ability of student to learn soft skills during such activities. Some extra activities are recognised and student can receive credits.

Portugal : If you are member of an student association, university can give you some advantages.

Romania : As student representative you can have also some advantages. You can receive letters, invitation and recommendations easier. Students do not get advantage during exams, but receive preferential treatment during selection for internships, for practice. Also, some students join student organisations because they get advantages from the University.

3. What are the problems with recognition?

Portugal: For universities, it is hard to recognise something that they do not control. The big problem is not for local university, it can easier recognise an local event, but for foreign universities it is much harder to recognise such activities.

France: To improve the recognition process, student unions invite representative to their events. So, the universities can have a better understanding about the events and recognize them. But the companies recognise these activities. For example: telling that you are/were a member of a student organization, improves chances to get hired.

Hungary: The recognition depends of each country and university. But, also there are a lot of university networks. This can help with recognition.

Turkey : If most of the universities will do it, then everybody will do it. For example, in Greece there are some one week courses and there are recognised like Erasmus.

Romania : The problem can be also that the credits are treated differently in different countries.

Spain : Some companies really look for this kind of events before offering a job.

4. How can student organizations promote these activities for teachers and companies?

Turkey: The companies are really interested in certificates and not so much about what has been done.

France: It is different from Turkey, the companies are interested about extra activities

5. Which form of recognition do you think it would be useful? Do you think that just presenting them it would be enough?

If the extra activities are related to normal courses, then these extra activities should be recognised with academic credits as well, and for the activities not related, participants should at least receive a recommendation or participation certificate.

6. What activities do you think will help you gain real competences, for future job.

Peoples have different problems and also different ways to solve them. Some participants expressed that those, who have problems talking publicly, were actively involved in student theatre.

It is also worthy to be mentioned is that it is possible to get credits for working in a fast food chain in some countries.

Day 4: Open Space technology discussions

Open Space Technology (OST) is a way to convene people for a conference, retreat or meeting. Attendees are asked to generate the meeting agenda as well as participate by leading small group break-out sessions during the meeting time. There is usually a facilitator, but no official meeting leader who demands compliance.

Method description

In Open Space meeting, a facilitator explains the process and then participants are invited to co-create the agenda and host their own discussion groups. Discussions are held in designated areas or separate rooms known as 'breakout spaces' and participants are free to move amongst the discussion groups. Each group records the conversations in a form which can be used to distribute or broadcast the proceedings of the meeting (in hard copy, blog, podcast, video, etc). On-line networking can occur both before and following the actual face-to-face meetings so discussions can continue seamlessly. At the end of the day the full group reconvenes for comments and reflection. This helps participants to re-engage in the full group over the duration of the meeting.

OST session

There were many topics suggested by participants, but eventually their number boiled down to only 5. The topics discussed were:

- Working during university/internship
- The implementation of foreign languages to the curricula
- Fee for education
- Bologna process
- Send the dinos home!

Working during university/internship

Most participants told there is not so much opportunity to work beside university. Reasons are both the lack of time (students need to study), and also lack of opportunities and interest from the companies. They were discussing about the role of the university of organising internships, and they

reached to the question: Should universities work like a company? Some of them said that it could be a nice possibility, but there were also participants with the opposite opinion. There was an idea, that spin-off work can be a possible solution for the problem. So students can start working/doing research during university, and after they can start their own company for example.

The implementation of foreign languages to the curricula

Participants divided their thoughts into groups. First they were talking about professors' perspective. They pointed out, that in many countries, professors don't speak foreign languages, or their knowledge is not enough for teaching their subjects in foreign language. In some countries it's not possible to study in foreign languages. Those participants who had have lectures in foreign languages, agreed it is great thing.

From students' point of view, they pointed out the same problems, as for teachers. Sometimes students do not want to have lectures in foreign languages, because it's just more comfortable to study in your own language.

Universities can do a lot by for example giving language courses to teachers. Mostly it's up to the university to change the mentality of both professors and students.

They gave some examples from countries. In Hungary, there are some lessons in foreign languages, but quite few. In France there are no lectures in English. A big problem is, that in some countries, when they have lectures with foreign students, after a while, teachers switch back to their native languages. That's why foreign students lose interest and stop attending classes.

In general, participants saw the inclusion of courses taught in foreign languages to the curricula as a really important part of education.

Fee for education

First the participants identified two main reasons, that can lead to tuition fee. These reasons are economic situation and social welfare system. It leads to the idea of sharing costs which leads to tuition.

Mainly there are two different system:

- No fee for everybody. This system can be found in Hungary, and also in Romania. Approximately 50% don't have to pay tuition, others pay full tuition fee. There are no scholarships, or if there is, it's not much.
- Everybody pays. This system can be found in Spain, Portugal and also in Turkey. There is an encountering scholarship system, based on social state and performance. Result is, that 10-30% pay nothing, and 50-70% have to pay tuition.

There are significant issues of paying fee. Ratio of cost-sharing changes, mostly the state support gets smaller, and the part of the students increases. Some students were concerned about how tuition will effects quality. It was said, that despite motivation of tuition to improve quality of education, in fact it didn't happen at all.

Participants were talking about the systems of reduction of tuition fees (social / social&performance / performance based system). Equal access of students from different financial backgrounds was named as the most important goal to take into consideration.

Bologna process

First of all participants listed some advantages and disadvantages of introducing the the Bologna Process(BP). Recognition of diplomas was seen as really big benefit of the BP, mostly for people going abroad to work. Academical and vocational mobility is improved as well. There was only one big disadvantage mentioned, as for some universities without credit system, it would be really hard to change, and implement the BP.

They were also discussing about the systems of getting into the universities. For example in Hungary there was a change to A-O system (just taking into account the school leaving exam) from the old „exam + points/grades from high school”. The conclusion was, that this system has positive and negative sides, but in general it's better.

Send the dinos home! (Discussion about old teachers)

There were many examples from many countries. The title was pointed to those old teachers/professors, who are giving lectures with outdated information. Also many of the participants mentioned professors, who are just reading out from the book, without ever changing a word. They also pointed it out, that this is actually not about age, but about mentality, and young

teachers can also do the same. The biggest problem is, that in most of the countries, these teachers can not be removed from their positions. For example in France, if you got a job as a professor in a university, you cannot be fired from that position.

There are also good examples, like in Czech Republic, every students have to fill in a form, where they can evaluate professors, and if there are problems with one of them, the university board can make changes.

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