

# Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #4 December 2016

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## Editorial

Dear colleagues,

As we head towards the end of the year, we would like to share with you the results achieved by CAEP in 2016 and some exciting plans for 2017, aimed at enhancing cooperation between the European Union and Central Asia countries.

### Highlights of 2016:

- 2 high-level regional conferences were held involving 134 participants from the EU and five CA countries;
- 3 national meetings were conducted involving more than 102 local stakeholders;
- 2 in-depth studies – one on NQF and one on student mobility - were carried out, with the participation of more than 200 respondents and multiple stakeholders and organizations;
- 5 round table discussions were held;
- 2 steering committee meetings were conducted;
- 3 field trips were organized;
- A total of 15 events and activities were carried out over the course of the year with more than 260 education professionals, ministry representatives, decision makers, university academics and students taking part.

In this issue, we will focus our attention on the events that have taken place since the publication of our October issue and provide a preview of the planned activities for 2017.

Firstly, a regional conference on **cooperation in Higher Education between Central Asia countries and the European Union** took place in Cracow on November 16-18, 2016.

The CAEP team also organized a National Qualifications Framework seminar in Kazakhstan, following on from successful events in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan earlier in the autumn.

Overall, 2016 has been a very productive year for all those involved with CAEP. It has given us the opportunity to not only better understand the challenges in HE and VET in CA countries but also to learn from best practice examples in Latvia and Poland



and how they addressed similar challenges.

The outcomes of the discussions and the resulting recommendations will be presented at the **Ministerial Meeting planned for June 2017** in Kazakhstan.

We are looking forward to meeting you at our upcoming seminars, working groups and Peer Learning events.

Last but not least, we are currently renovating our website and will be launching the new updated version in the coming weeks.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you – our partners and event participants - for your great support and understanding.

We wish you and your families a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Christian Wagner  
CAEP Team Leader



**The Regional Conference “Enhancing cooperation in Higher Education between Central Asia countries and the European Union” provided a platform for policy dialogue between government, universities and industry.**

“Cooperation”, “internationalization” and “mobility” were the three most popular words at the event which took place in the historic city of Cracow in Poland on November 16-18.

The conference brought together 74 delegates from CA countries, the European Commission, Latvia and Poland, including education experts, university academia and management, and representatives of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland. The event was jointly organized by the CAEP team and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and funded by the EU.

### Also in this issue:

NQF meeting in Kazakhstan



CAEP market intelligence report on student mobility



Peer learning events on NQF and QA in 2017



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The opening speech delivered on behalf of Mr. Jarosław Gowin, Minister of Science and Higher Education, expressed hopes that the sharing of best practice from the HE sector in Poland and continuing dialogue with the Central Asian countries would strengthen future relationships.

This emphasis on collaboration between EU and Central Asian higher education sectors was a theme that ran through all the opening remarks - including those delivered by Professor Stanisław Kistryn from Jagiellonian University, Mr Peter Burian, EU Special Representative to Central Asia, Ms Bérénice Muraille, Head of Sector Central Asia, DG DEVCO and Ms Zuurakan Kadenova, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic.



Following a key note speech by Ms Muraille, Mr Klaus Haupt, Head of Unit from the EACEA, explained how Erasmus+ is being used to enhance cooperation and mobility between the EU and Central Asian countries.

Mr Jan Helbich, CAEP Education Expert, then presented the preliminary results of the recent stock-taking report on existing capacity development and mobility programmes between the EU and CA countries. A summary of the results can be found in the article below.

Over the course of the two days, representatives from CA countries shared their experiences and best practice of international cooperation in HE, and case studies highlighting successes in internationalisation in the Latvian and Polish HE sectors were presented.

Mr Piet Henderikx, from the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) showcased some innovative internationalisation strategies and emphasised that; ***“Educational requirements are a driver for internationalization. Students need an international learning experience as jobs become also increasingly international. Mobility is important for language and intercultural skills learning and for personal and academic deployment”***.

Mr Arjen Vos from the European Training Foundation (ETF) discussed how increased cooperation between the HE and VET sectors, including the development of NQFs, can lead to an improvement in meeting labour market needs and graduates' expectations.

Delegates also attended lively working groups and round table discussions on a variety of related areas, including the role of government and legislation in the internationalisation of HE, mobility and mutual credit recognition, best practice in

linking HE programmes with labour market needs and how to best align HE systems in the context of Bologna.

The conference sessions closed with an outlook on future CAEP activities from Mr Christian Wagner, CAEP Team Leader, and closing statements from the key speakers.

The third and final day gave participants the opportunity to visit the Cracow-based Jagiellonian University (JU) and affiliated units: the Centre for Technology Transfer (CITTRU) and the Centre for Administrative Support to Projects (CASP). CASP is dedicated to supporting the JU in the field of fundraising and general management of projects realized within the schemes of e.g. EU Structural Funds, European Commission Funds and Domestic Agencies Funds: Department of Science and Higher Education, Foundation for Polish Science, National Science Centre, National Centre for Research and Development. Up to now more than 961 projects have been supported by CASP, including: 855 research projects, 58 educational projects and 48 other projects.

As a closing activity, the participants attended a networking event during which representatives of Central Asian and EU universities had the opportunity to discuss potential future cooperation.

The full conference programme and downloadable presentations can be found on the CAEP website at

[www.caep-project.org/cracow2016/](http://www.caep-project.org/cracow2016/)

and CA Countries and within Central Asia itself. 30 schemes were identified; 28 funded by the EU and its selected Member States (Germany, France, UK and Latvia) and 2 national schemes within the CA countries, promoting international mobility of their students.

In 2015, these programmes supported at least 1793 individuals from Central Asia to spend time studying or working at European HEIs and a minimum of 375 European learners, teachers and researchers coming to Central Asia.

The findings of this study confirm that mobility is one of the most complex and challenging processes in VET and HE and the key message is that there is a need for further promotion of the opportunities for cooperation between the EU and Central Asia.

The feedback from the presentation of the report is now being incorporated into an updated version which will be ready by February 2017.

Mr Helbich's presentation of the report, including a summary of the data, identification of success stories and recommendations can be found online at:

[www.caep-project.org/cracow2016/materials-and-presentations/](http://www.caep-project.org/cracow2016/materials-and-presentations/)

## Steering Committee Meeting

The second CAEP Steering Committee (SC) meeting was also held during the conference and chaired by Ms Bérénice Muraille, Head of Sector Central Asia, DG DEVCO.

Representatives from the EU Commission, ministries of all the CA countries, ETF, the European External Action Service, experts from Latvia and Poland, and the CAEP team were present at the meeting.

The following items were discussed:

- the achievements of CAEP in 2016 and the activities planned for 2017;
- the organisation of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting in Kazakhstan in 2017;
- nomination of Central Asia participants for CAEP activities, including SC meetings;
- the establishment of peer learning groups focusing on NQF and Quality Assurance (QA) to enable mutual inter-regional exchange of experience and facilitate mutual learning;
- the constitution of a working group for data collection and evidence-based policy making in education - meetings will address data collection approaches and methods and the use of data for evidence-based policy making;
- the Erasmus+ call for 2018, with an overview given of the process of defining regional and national priorities and the underlying consultation procedure.

## Student Mobility Report



The first version of a stock-taking report on mobility and capacity building in HE was shared with stakeholders at the Regional Conference in Cracow.

The report presents an initial database of existing capacity development and mobility programmes between the EU and Central Asia Countries, selected EU Member States



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## Peer Learning Approach (PLA) events on NQF and QA planned for 2017

As discussed in the SC meeting in Cracow, peer learning groups are to be established to enable mutual inter-regional exchange of experience and facilitate mutual learning.

The general aim of Peer Learning (PLA) within CAEP 2 is to contribute to shaping and supporting regional collaboration between the CA countries, with the expected outcomes being in part specific to the two macro-themes (National Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance) and partially of a more general nature:

- the acceleration of policy development and implementation at national and regional level (if sufficient institutional support is maintained);
- the development of a core team of people across the countries with mutual trust and an understanding of collaboration;
- a greater understanding of policy implementation approaches, challenges and solutions;
- the collection and documentation of best practice, made available not only to the participants in the Regional Working Group, but to all interested stakeholders in the participating countries through CAEP events and the website.

Six Peer Learning events are currently being planned for 2017 to take place in Istanbul and in the EU, three of which will focus on NQF and three on QA. Details of the events will be published in the CAEP newsletter as they are finalised.

## NQF meeting in Kazakhstan



## Twenty-seven participants attended the NQF meeting held on 15 December 2016 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kasipkor Holding, JSC Information Analytical Center, the Association of Colleges of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the National Academy of Education, universities and other institutions exchanged views and shared opinions on the implementation of a NQF in Kazakhstan with experts from Latvia and Poland.

The meeting was opened by the Head of the Political Section of the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan, Mr Zoltan Szalai. Mr Szalai

welcomed the participation of Kazakhstan in EU HE and VET programmes and stressed the importance of NQFs in graduate employability and further cooperation between the EU and Central Asia.

Mr Darkhan Akhmed-Zaki from the Ministry of Education and Science presented the current status of the National Qualifications Framework in the country and looked at some of the challenges they have faced. Kazakhstan has designed and developed an initial NQF and is in the process of implementing it across the sectors. The NQF is fully compatible with the European Qualifications Framework on all 8 levels, creating the basic conditions for the integration of the Kazakhstan education sector and the labour market with those of the EU. Current challenges include developing links with sectoral qualifications frameworks and setting up a process of self-certification.

Professor Ewa Chmielecka from the Educational Research Institute in Poland and Ms Baiba Ramaņa, Director of the Academic Information Centre in Latvia, both presented case studies highlighting the lessons that have been learnt from the introduction of NQF in their respective countries, including the development of sectoral qualifications frameworks and occupational standards in Latvia.

The afternoon saw roundtable discussions and working groups on issues relating to the practical implementation of NQFs and the development of recognition tools. In the session focusing on self-certification of NQF, Prof. Chmielecka was able to share her valuable experience as a member of the EQF Advisory Group which evaluates self-certification reports across the EU.

The Rector of North Kazakhstan State University, Professor Omirbayev, noted: *"The discussions were very deep and detailed. We were keen to learn about experience from Latvia and Poland as well as from other countries in Central Asia. What I liked especially was the enthusiasm and sincerity of the invited experts when they shared their experience"*.

The meeting was organized by CAEP and the Center for Bologna Process, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

[News from the EU](#)

## HansaVET; an enterprising look at international work placements



The benefits of international work placements and apprenticeships are well-known; they allow students to learn about other cultures and languages whilst

acquiring practical, professional skills. But what about entrepreneurial skills?

HansaVET was established to build on the success of a previous project, the Baltic Training programme (BTP). BTP showed that, with the right guidance, students who had a business idea could develop a realistic and viable business project by observing and working with successful companies in other countries.

Based on these principles, HansaVET developed a new methodology for integrating entrepreneurship into international placements in the longer term, which they shared with vocational education and training institutions at a series of workshops in 2016.

Six partners in five Baltic Sea region countries worked together to develop the HansaVET entrepreneurship strategy, and published a guide for training providers. Now, more and more trainers are learning how to work with companies to guide students to develop their business ideas, and their confidence.

Project Co-ordinator Inta Baranovska recalls, *"Positive evaluation of seminars in all the partner countries proved that the new methodology was useful and necessary for vocational education and training institutions."*

So far, 10 key policymakers in vocational training from five countries, have agreed to support a focus on entrepreneurship skills in international placements, and more than 340 teachers and teacher trainers have already been trained.

As one workshop participant put it, *"I found the technique very useful, not just for organising international placements, but also for local placements, project work and problem-solving at school and for my personal development"*.

Find out more about HansaVET:

<http://www.hansavet.eu/>



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## Partner events

We greatly value the work of our partners in the education sector - in this section we will highlight some partner events held during the last three months.

Erasmus+ activities in Kazakhstan have been reviewed in in this issue and we will be covering Erasmus+ in other CA countries in future issues.



## ETF event in Brussels

**The "Getting organized for better qualifications" Conference, organised by the European Training Foundation (ETF), took place in Brussels, Belgium on 23-24 November 2016.**

This two-day event brought together 150+ experts from 23 countries - policymakers, social partners, EU officials and other stakeholders from the ETF partner countries, EU member states and beyond, to learn, share and discover best practice on the development and implementation of National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs).

The event included panel discussions, workshops and summary analyses from working groups.

The discussions focused on the ways NQFs can be implemented, the contribution they make to quality assurance, how QFs can be made to work globally and the implications of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The conference also saw the launch of a new NQF toolkit which examines the issues faced in implementing an NQF and proposes solutions to speed up implementation. The toolkit addresses the four key elements of a qualification system: laws, stakeholders, institutions and quality assurance.

In the Opening Address, Madlen Serban, ETF Director, stated that *"Well-implemented NQFs can transform vocational education and training systems."*

More information on the conference can be found at: [www.etfqual.eu/](http://www.etfqual.eu/)

## Erasmus+ events in Kazakhstan



During 2016 the National Erasmus+ Office in Kazakhstan has held several events in Almaty including;

### • Four TAM (Technical Assistance Mission) seminars:

13-14 January 2016 - Training HEREs and University Staff in Using Information-Communication Technologies (ICT) in the Teaching and Learning Process;

14-15 April 2016 - International Credit Mobility: Management, Recognition of Results and Quality Assurance;

8-9 June 2016 - Student-Centred Learning Environments: Modern Approach and Instruments;

3-4 November 2016 - Corporate Governance in Higher Education Institutions of Kazakhstan: Principles, Forms and Prospects;

- **Institutional Monitoring of 13 projects** with the participation of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University on 18-19 October;
- **A Cluster Meeting of 9 Tempus Structural Projects** on 20 October.

More information about the Erasmus+ office in Kazakhstan can be found on their website: [www.erasmusplus.kz](http://www.erasmusplus.kz)

Erasmus+ offers opportunities for HE mobility and cooperation projects with European partners. A Call for Proposals has been launched with deadlines in February 2017. HE institutions interested in cooperation in the field of Capacity Building and students and university staff looking for Erasmus+ scholarship opportunities to study in Europe can now apply.

**Further details including deadlines and application guidelines and e-forms can be found at**

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-in-field-higher-education-2017\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/capacity-building-in-field-higher-education-2017_en)

## "Save the date": Next CAEP events

**30 January, 2017 (to be confirmed)**  
*National Seminar on NQF*  
*Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

**1-2 February, 2017 (to be confirmed)**  
*National Seminar on Bologna Principles*  
*Ashgabat, Turkmenistan*

**3 February, 2017 (to be confirmed)**  
*National Seminar on NQF*  
*Ashgabat, Turkmenistan*

**20-21 February, 2017**  
*Peer Learning NQF Kick-off Meeting*  
*Istanbul, Turkey*

**22-24 February, 2017**  
*Data Collection Working Group Kick-off Meeting*  
*Istanbul, Turkey*

## In the next CAEP Newsletter issue #5 (February 2017):

1. Outlook on the Meeting of Ministers for Education in Astana, June 2017
2. Country Focus Tajikistan
3. EU and other donor funded education projects launched in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan

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