

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #12 August 2018

A newsletter published by CAEP — a project funded by the European Union's Programme for Central Asia

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

We hope you've had a good summer break and are ready for a busy autumn. This edition of the CAEP newsletter focuses on the activities of one of our partners, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). EACEA is responsible for the management of the Erasmus+ programme, the EU funding scheme that support activities in Education, Training, Youth and Sport. August saw the announcement of the results of the most recent Call for Proposals for Capacity Building in Higher Education—on page 2 you can find out more about the successful Central Asian projects.

The next Call will be announced in October with an application deadline of February 2019 –a contact seminar is being organised in Istanbul to help potential Central Asian applicants meet new partners and start preparing their applications. Further details and an interview with Ms. Piia Heinamaki, Project Adviser at the EACEA, are on page 3.

The CAEP Team is busy preparing for a number of events in the region. On 27th September the CAEP Regional Seminar on 'The role of education in supporting social inclusion and resilience among youth in Central Asia and the European Union' will take place in Tashkent. At the Second Meeting for Ministers of Education (MIN) in June 2017 the role of education in preventing and countering violent extremism among youth was identified as a priority for EU cooperation in the field of education and training in Central Asia. This event aims to contribute to policy dialogue on the link between quality education and training and issues of social inclusion, economic



integration and resilience among young people. The event will be attended by up to 50 delegates, including representatives from Central Asian Ministries for Education and Labour, staff from HE and VET institutions, youth and student associations and community organisations, as well as participants from EU institutions and Member States and other relevant organisations such as UNESCO and the OSCE.

CAEP will also be holding a second webinar, focusing on 'Gender Equality in Education', another priority highlighted at the Second Meeting for Ministers. In preparation, the CAEP Team is conducting a review of the current situation of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in HE and VET in Central Asia and identifying good practices for policies, methods and instruments supporting gender equality. The findings will be used for opening a debate on the issue among policy makers, education practitioners and stakeholders, starting with the webinar on September 26th.

Finally for now, the CAEP Team will be joining ETF and the team from the

EU-funded bilateral project 'Support to the Education Sector in Turkmenistan' at the Education and Sports Conference in Ashgabat on 13-14 November. The event is being organised by the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan and the three teams will work together to organise a number of sessions – more details to follow.

Christian Wagner
CAEP Team Leader

Also in this issue:

Results of 2018 Erasmus+
Call for Capacity Building in
Higher Education



Interview with Ms. Piia
Heinamaki, Project Adviser
at the EACEA



Report on Webinar on NQF
and Sectoral Councils



This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants



Selection for Erasmus+ 2018 Capacity Building projects announced



14th August saw the announcement of the 2018 selection of Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education applications.

Capacity building projects in the field of higher education support the modernisation, accessibility and internationalisation of higher education in Partner Countries and build on the success of the Alfa, Edu-link and Tempus programmes. The projects aim to encourage cooperation between the EU and Partner Countries and support the latter in addressing challenges in the management and governance of their higher education institutions. This includes improving the quality of higher education, developing new and innovative education programmes, modernising higher education systems through reform policies as well as fostering cooperation across different regions of the world through joint initiatives. Projects are of 2-3 years in length, can be joint (aimed at Higher Education Institutions) or structural (aimed at promoting reforms in higher education systems) and can focus on one or more Partner Countries. Grants awarded are from 500.000€ – 1.000.000€

For the Call for Proposals 2018 EAC/A05/2017, a total of 887 applications were submitted (6.5% more than 2017). The quality of the applications has generally improved, but the quality of cross regional projects was less convincing, as most of these projects did not sufficiently justify the need for cooperation between different regions.

Altogether 147 proposals (133 Joint Projects and 14 Structural Projects) have been selected for funding, corresponding to a total of almost 133 million euros. The overall success rate for the call was 16.8%. 128 applications

were submitted for regional and cross-regional cooperation projects with Central Asian countries, 14 of which were selected. Among these, 8 are cross-regional and 6 focus exclusively on Central Asia (one national Kazakh project and five multi-country projects with the participation of at least three Central Asian countries). European universities from 25 different Programme Countries will contribute to the implementation of these projects. A list of these 14 projects can be found on the CAEP website:

<http://www.caep-project.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CBHE-Call-2018-results-Central-Asia.pdf>

You can find the full selection results on the EACEA website:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/cbhe_2018_publication_website_list_of_projects_by_region.pdf

Contact Seminar in Istanbul to prepare for Erasmus+ 2019 Call



Erasmus+

For over 30 years, Europe has funded the Erasmus programme, which has enabled over three million European students to spend part of their studies in another higher education institution in Europe. In 2015, Erasmus+ opened up these opportunities to the world, allowing for student and staff mobility between the 34 Erasmus+ Programme Countries and non-EU Partner Countries as part of the International Credit Mobility Scheme.

As International Credit Mobility is still a relatively new action, the response rate from Central Asian countries under the first three calls for proposals has been relatively low. Some Programme Countries still face difficulties cooperating with countries in this region while the majority of Central Asian universities are only at the start of their internationalisation process.

After the successful organisation of a Contact Seminar with the Western

Balkans in Vienna in December 2015, one with the Eastern Partnership countries in Kyiv in November 2016, and one with Southern Mediterranean countries in Rome in 2017, it was decided to organise a similar event targeting Central Asian countries. This contact seminar, which will take place on October 8-9 in Istanbul, will bring together a wide range of representatives from higher education institutions in Programme Countries and Partner Countries (Central Asia, Afghanistan and Russia). The two-day event will offer them the opportunity to network and find new partners for bilateral agreements, in order to increase the number of successful applications under the 2019 Erasmus+ Call for proposals (to be published in October 2018).

Although the main focus of this seminar will be International Credit Mobility and Capacity Building in Higher Education, it will also target the other international actions open to universities from Central Asia, namely Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and Jean Monnet activities.

Interview with Ms Piia Heinämäki, Project Adviser, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)



Ms Heinämäki, the Executive Agency can look back to more than 30 years of implementation of the Tempus and Erasmus+ programmes - what do you see as the main achievements and lessons learnt in the Central Asia region in this period?

We have been working with Central Asia since 1994, first in the framework of the Tempus programme and now in Erasmus+, under the Capacity Building in Higher Education action. These programmes have responded to a clear need in Central Asia, because institutions there do not have many other forms of international support for reforming their higher education. If we count both Tempus and Capacity



This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants



Building, we have financed until now in the region a total of 276 projects, with the involvement of the five Central Asian countries.

Over the past years, we have also looked at the impact of the activities to see to what extent our programmes are really helping higher education reform. It is obvious that, first of all, the programmes have an important impact on the internationalisation of the beneficiary institutions. Another important element is capacity building at the individual level, through staff professional development. The fact that most of the projects are in curriculum development plays an important role in modernising study content. Projects either modernise existing curricula or develop new ones, trying in particular to adapt curricula to the needs of the labour market, in cooperation with business actors. This is one of the main achievements of the programme I think - developing modernised curricula which are usually in line with Bologna requirements.

Over the last 6 years representatives from the Agency and the local National Erasmus+ Offices, as well as Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs), have taken part in a number of CAEP events - how has this helped to disseminate knowledge and experience of Erasmus+ actions within the region?

The national CAEP events are very good occasions to bring together national authorities and people from the higher education institutions, to discuss issues related to higher education reform in the country. These events have also given the possibility to share some knowledge and experience from the Tempus and Erasmus+ projects in the fields concerned.

At regional events, we have usually also had our representatives making presentations on our programme, on the possibilities that it offers and also on best practices. These are the ways in which we can bring some added value to the platform events.

Can you share with us some information on the wide range of mobility actions the Erasmus+ programme is supporting?

There are two types of mobility in which Central Asian higher education institutions can participate. On the one hand, within the projects, financing is

available for travel so that partners can meet. They can also organise training, student placements, different kinds of mobilities for staff and students.

Since the start of Erasmus+, we also have what is called 'International Credit Mobility' (ICM), which is an expanded version of the former Erasmus mobility, which was only in Europe. In ICM, there is the possibility for mobility between Europe and Partner Countries all over the world. Central Asian universities are very interested and they do participate already.

Is there any message you would give to potential partners participating in the various Erasmus+ programme activities, especially applying for Capacity Building projects?

In Central Asia, the situation is somewhat particular because in most cases the local institutions do not act as applicants. The applications are usually submitted by the European partner universities.

As a general message for preparing projects, we always recommend that, even if the European university prepares and submits the application, there should always be a concrete contribution from the Central Asian partners. They should be involved in drafting the application and planning the project activities, on the basis of project ideas which are really relevant to the countries in question.

Many Central Asian universities have very good contacts in Europe and they can easily find cooperation opportunities, while for some less well connected institutions it can be more difficult. In this context it's worth mentioning that DG Education and Culture is organising a big contact seminar for Central Asian higher education institutions in October. It will take place in Istanbul and each of the five countries will be asked to nominate participants. The aim is for Central Asian participants to meet representatives of European universities, to try to build contacts and get new ideas for future projects. The next deadline for Capacity Building and International Credit Mobility is in February 2019, so there is still time to prepare new applications!

TAMs organised in Kyrgyzstan



The National Erasmus+ Office in Kyrgyzstan has recently organised two Technical Assistance Missions (TAM) within the framework of Higher Education Reform Expert (HERE) activities. TAM are a way of providing targeted, hands-on support and consultancy to the HERE and academic community and government in Partner Countries, through the provision of an international expert who conducts a workshop, provides input to a conference or chairs a round table discussion.

The first event took place in May at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bishkek. Administrative staff from Kyrgyz HEIs joined HEREs and an expert from the University of Edinburgh to discuss best practice in the role of higher education institutions supporting teaching staff and learning.

In June, Ministerial representatives joined HEI staff and HEREs at the Ala-too International University to discuss approaches to the formulation of descriptors in a national qualifications framework (NQF) as well as the design of a branch framework of qualifications and the formation of occupational standards. The expert was the Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria.

Two further TAMs are planned this year including a national event on PhD accreditation and a regional TAM on the 'The Role of Accreditation in Promoting Quality Assurance at HEIs' hosted by Kyrgyzstan with the participation of Kazakhstan and Russia.

The National Erasmus+ Office in Kyrgyzstan:
<http://erasmusplus.kg/en/>



This project is funded by the European Union



This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants

Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

A newsletter published by CAEP — a project funded by the European Union's Programme for Central Asia

First of new series of CAEP webinars held on Qualifications Frameworks and Sectoral Councils



The first of a series of up to five online 'webinars' planned for the extension phase of CAEP 2 was held in July. In order to make efficient and effective use of existing funds, and to enable the participation of a wider audience, webinars are considered to be not only an add-on to previously held face-to-face meetings, but as genuine forms of sharing best practice and facilitating policy dialogue at practitioner level.

The topic of the first webinar was *"The role of Sectoral Councils in CA and the EU in the context of National Qualifications Frameworks"*. In the First Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Education in Riga in June 2015, Ministers agreed that enhanced cooperation with stakeholders, including social partners and enterprises, provides a significant contribution to the development of VET and HE alike. In this context, Sectoral Councils (SeC) play an important role in aligning employers' needs for a qualified workforce with the overarching approach to provide a coherent system of qualifications. Although SeC had already been addressed during various CAEP events, Central Asia stakeholders had expressed interest in further, practice-oriented discussion on the working principles and tasks of SeC.

The webinar was co-organised by CAEP and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan "Atameken". Experts from CAEP and ETF

were joined by participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the EU Member States Latvia and Poland, representing Ministries of Education and Labour, state agencies; business associations, chambers, companies; education practitioners; HEI and VET institutions and international and donor organisations.

Prior to the webinar a set of questions to be addressed had been collated by the experts from inputs from all the CA countries and these provided the background for the presentations. Following an introduction to the webinar from the CAEP Team, the moderators presented a list of the 26 questions which participants could use as points for discussion. Examples of functioning Sectoral Councils in Kazakhstan, Russia, Latvia and Poland were then presented and their impact on the development of NQF discussed. In addition, a specialist from the European Training Foundation presented an overview of the experience and lessons learnt by ETF through their work with Sectoral Councils through the Torino Process.

Throughout the webinar, opportunities were given for Q&A and at the end participants were given a practical follow-up task to complete, in which they were asked to draw up proposals for the creation and operation of a sectoral council in their sector considering the issues discussed during the webinar.

The agenda and downloadable materials can be found here: www.caep-project.org/events-details/event/webinar-the-role-of-sec-in-in-the-context-of-nqf/

Further webinars on "Gender Equality in Education, "Innovative Teaching methodologies" and "Financing of education systems and institutions" are planned for the autumn.

"Save the date": Next CAEP events

26 September, 2018

Webinar on Gender Equality in Education

27 September, 2018

Regional Seminar on the "Role of education in supporting social inclusion and resilience among youth in Central Asia"
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

10-12 October, 2018

5th Working Group meeting on Evidence Based Policy Making in VET and HE
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

In the next CAEP Newsletter issue #13 (October 2018):

1. Report from the Regional Seminar on Social Inclusion
2. Stock-taking report on Gender Equality in HE and VET in Central Asia
3. Report on webinar on Gender Equality in Education
- 4 Education & Sport Conference in Ashgabat

Contact:

Christian Wagner

CAEP Team Leader

E-mail: christian.wagner@proqualityconsult.de

Dilyara Woodward

CAEP Communication Expert

E-mail: dilya_woodward@mail.ru

Nanna Pedley

CAEP Communication Expert

Email: nannapedley@gmail.com

Address:

GOPA Consultants

Hindenburgring 18

61348 Bad Homburg, Germany

Tel: +49 (0) 6172 9300

Website: www.caep-project.org



This project is funded by the European Union

This project is implemented by a Consortium led by GOPA Consultants

