

## eucen statement for the European Commission's consultation "A renewed Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education in the European Union"

Consultation launched by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Unit B1 - Higher Education

*This statement reflects the contribution of the eucen Steering Committee and the inputs received from national University Lifelong Learning networks that are members of eucen*

eucen appreciates that although the enquiry lacks **lifelong learning** as a concept, its features are concretely present in the formulations.

**The diversity of learners, institutions and contexts is essential at all levels**, and it should be accepted also in Europe-wide reforms and initiatives. In addition to innovations in technology, we need social, cultural and pedagogic development. While searching for the new and supporting students' careers and economic activity, the fundamental mission of universities is also to support human growth and active citizenship.

**Borders must be crossed** both geographically, culturally and socially as well as between research, work-life, professions and citizens. We need all scientific fields to solve wicked problems. HEIs are to transform the education of the past into interdisciplinary education in the emergent fields. Support for true European cooperation must be strengthened.

**Universities need to build capacity to make reforms for the future.** Staff training is a key function. Teachers' role is essential in enhancing research-based education, facilitating responsible studies and supporting transfer to work-life. Student support and expertise in LLL, competence-based design and blended learning are de rigueur with new audiences.

**HEIs' responsibility is also to enhance inclusion** and empowerment. The wide immigration demands for new approaches. Social and cultural barriers may be as strong as financial. EU, member states and stakeholders have key roles in the facilitation of access to successful studies. Recognition of learning is launched into HEIs but plenty of possibilities for both social initiatives and effective expertise construction remain untapped.

**Relevance of research is as important as its academic quality.** Research on LLL should support the development towards student-centred learning environments. Functional collection and utilization of valid information should enhance policy-making. Widening access to education has a parallel in widening access to data.

Funding must guarantee equal opportunities for studies in higher education. **Sufficiency of public funding needs expansion of multi-source funding** following the logic of responsibilities and benefits. The co-presence of education with and without fees demands new approaches and models. New learning environments call for developed systems of intellectual property rights.

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