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In this issue:
**Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Vision for
the Future**

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The Thirtieth Anniversary of UNESCO-CEPES: From Retrospective to Prospective

JAN SADLAK

In lieu of the usual “From the Editors” piece, the Director of UNESCO-CEPES briefly describes the scope of the Thirtieth Jubilee Conference held at the Centre on 6–8 September 2002. He introduces the articles that resulted from the presentations and the interventions of a number of participants in the Conference.

A year ago, a special issue of this review (No. 1—2, 2002) was published on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of UNESCO-CEPES. But the main event that was organized on this occasion was the Jubilee International Conference on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Its Role and Contribution to Our Common Advancement. It was held in Bucharest, Romania, from 6 to 8 September 2002. The event, which was organized under the joint patronage of H. E. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, and Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, brought together high-level governmental officials in charge of higher education and top-level leaders of international and national academic institutions and organizations. Because of the exceptional standing of the participants, some observers even called the Conference a kind of “higher education summit”.

There was a topical link between the special issue of the review and the title of the Conference. It is therefore appropriate to present the work and findings of the Conference. The very special character of the event also meant that not all the papers presented at the meeting, and, consequently, also those which were selected for presentation in this issue of *Higher Education in Europe*, are *sensu stricto* “scholarly” articles. This caveat, however, in no way means that they are less relevant or of less interest to our readers interested in higher education, for they are texts presented by high-ranking political and academic figures. It is their views that give the political dimension as well as elucidate a general debate about the role of higher education in modern society.

In our opinion, the quite original *Table of Contents* of this issue stems from the very structure of the Jubilee Conference itself. It begins with three major political texts, the first by the President of Romania, the second by Adrian Năstase, Prime Minister of the Government of Romania, and the third by Sir John Daniel, the Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO.

The texts by the President and the Prime Minister both evoke the role of UNESCO-CEPES in assisting the reform of Romanian higher education so as to facilitate its entry into the Bologna Process and its successful participation in the arenas of European and global higher education. While President Iliescu evokes the similarities of the democratic ideals of Romania and UNESCO and their shared belief in the beneficent

role that education, science, and culture play in the well-being of all nations, Prime Minister Năstase evokes the origins of the Centre and the fact that it served as a “Window of Opportunity” for young Romanian academics like himself.

Sir John Daniel, too, reflects on the history of UNESCO-CEPES, with which he has had a long involvement, and of its role in promoting co-operation in higher education in Eastern and Central Europe. He also dwells on the work of UNESCO, in general, in the domain of higher education in the immediate future. The organization, he writes, will pursue its efforts to promote twinning and networking through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme that has just celebrated its tenth anniversary. Other major efforts will be made to broaden access to higher education worldwide, to further strengthen quality assurance measures, to diversify the sources of funding for higher education, to strengthen the synergy between teaching and research, to continue efforts underway to strengthen academic freedom, and to pursue the reform of management and governance structures in higher education. This way, higher education can be further developed, and more can be expected of its contribution to other levels of education.

Next comes a set of five articles by representative personages reflecting regional contexts and developments in higher education in specific regions of the world: Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Arab world.

The first of these is by Professor Eric Froment, who is the President of the European University Association (EUA). For Professor Froment, European higher education is a basic building block for European integration, and the Bologna Process, the construction of the European higher education area being the response of European higher education to the call for integration in other areas. While being unified at European level and diversified at world level, European universities must remain true to certain basic values that include *(i)* a tight link between teaching and research; *(ii)* a continued effort to develop joint programmes and networks both within Europe and with the rest of the world; *(iii)* continued efforts to enhance a culture of quality; and *(iv)* higher education to remain a public service. In short, the universities of Europe are crucial partners in the strategic goal of making Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

The other authors in this group of texts both respond to this exposition of European intentions in the domain of higher education and propose individualized solutions to problems specific to the areas that they represent.

Referring to the development of higher education in Africa, Professor Komlavi Seddoh, the Director of the Higher Education Division in UNESCO, a former Rector of the University of Lomé and Minister of Education and Scientific Research of the Republic of Togo, outlines the strengths, the weaknesses, and the needs of African higher education. Most frequently, African universities are the most efficient institutions in their respective countries and produce most of the professional people and the leaders of the private and public sectors. At the same time, the higher education sector is very poorly developed and lacks resources. African universities need to pool their resources and to form networks and international centers of excellence. An African higher education area is in an incipient stage. New ways of delivery must be developed, particularly the use of the NITs to deliver virtual higher education. Partnerships with higher education institutions in Europe and North America and with international organizations must be

developed and expanded. In particular, the UNESCO UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme needs to be expanded in Africa.

For Professor José Raymundo Martins Romêo, President of the Latin American Council of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Latin American universities very much need to develop mutual solidarity and to avoid an overemphasis on vocationalism at the expense of humanistic general education. At the same time, they too should participate in networks linking them to universities in the other regions of the world, particularly Europe, and to international organizations.

Dr. Pornchai Mongkhonvanit, who is both the President of Siam University in Thailand and President-Elect of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), situates Asian universities, vis-à-vis European higher education, in the larger and very long history of interactions between Asia and Europe, the aspects of which have included international trade, technology transfer, and foreign policy. The universities of certain Asian countries reflect the shift of their countries from being developing countries to becoming developed countries. Asia and Europe are both being changed by ICTs and by globalization. Thus, a system of standardized degrees as part of a phenomenon called University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) is being implemented as well as an Asian/European Credit Transfer System. English is becoming increasingly the international language of Asian university exchanges, and European and Australian higher education programmes, delivered through franchising and electronic virtual means, are becoming increasingly important. Like in Europe with the Bologna Process, the Asian region is attempting to integrate its higher education systems while preserving their diversity

Arab universities, writes Dr. Abdalla Bibtana, also have a long history of interaction with European as well as with North American universities. The author, a leading expert on higher education, who is also the Director of the UNESCO Office in Doha, Qatar, in addition to being the UNESCO Representative to the Arab Gulf States, stresses the importance for the development of universities in the Arab world of the long tradition of studying in Europe (and also in North America) on the part of Arab students who later became academics in their own countries. Although one result has been the evolution of given universities and university systems, in given Arab countries, so that they resemble the universities of the European countries in which their founders studied, a negative result has been the increasing brain drain from Arab universities to European and American universities. Europe is called upon to find constructive ways to reverse, if not to end, this brain drain. European universities as well as international organizations are also called upon to assist in the development of non-conventional forms of higher education, in the development of research programmes and infrastructures, and in the promotion of the use of ICTs in higher education.

These articles reflecting regional points of view are followed by a set of twelve articles, all of which consider, among other things, prognoses of the future development of higher education and its role in the unfolding of knowledge societies. For the most part, the authors represent major international organizations such as, for instance, the World Bank; NGOs devoted to higher education such as, for instance, the International Association of Universities; a student organization; and the media.

The first three articles making up this group deal, from varying points of view, with the increasingly important role of higher education in the development of so-called

knowledge societies. We begin with a text by Dr. Jamil Salmi, the Co-ordinator of the Tertiary Education Thematic Group of the World Bank. For him, the principal set of challenges facing higher education nowadays is that set that links it to the construction of knowledge societies. This position, indeed, is taken by a recently published (2002) World Bank report, *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*. The World Bank, it seems, has reversed its earlier position of not offering much support for higher education in developing countries to arguing that tertiary education should have a “considered place” within the “overall development agenda” of a country. Policy makers are called upon to “pursue the substantial opportunities that tertiary education, in combination with knowledge networks and new technologies, now offers for raising national productivity and contributing to economic growth”

The author of the second article, C. J. (Jim) Reinhartsen, a former aerospace executive from the United States who is now the President of a foundation dealing with regional economic development, adopts a similar position in regard to the university as a factor in the founding of knowledge societies. He argues strongly for the creation of university—business and university—industry partnerships.

Finally, Martina Vukasović, a student leader and the Chairperson, at the time of the Conference, of the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB), expresses the student point of view in arguing that since higher education is indeed a major factor in the founding of knowledge societies, it behooves governments to offer very strong support for well-developed and diverse higher education systems in which the interests of students are well represented and give rise to tangible actions and results.

As universities evolve in order to better serve the globalized knowledge societies in which they are situated, becoming increasingly marketized and directed towards practical entrepreneurial objectives, do they not run the risk of losing sight of their traditions, particularly that of the pursuit of truth for its own sake? Mgr. Guy-Real Thivierge, the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (FIUC), who is aware of this risk, stresses the role of Catholic universities in participating in globalization and in the market while striving to humanize both according to Christian principles of justice. One role of Catholic university education is to serve “as the voice of those who have no voice”.

For Professor Hans van Ginkel, the Rector of the United Nations University, who is also the President of the International Association of Universities (IAU), as well as being a member of the International Follow-Up Committee of the World Conference on Higher Education, higher education nowadays is called upon to perform a much wider variety of tasks than could have been easily predicted in the 1990s at a number of conferences having as their themes a variant of “The University of the Future” (or of the Twenty-First Century). The future has arrived. The processes that have shaped universities, in only a small number of years, have transcended any blueprints that might have been crafted for them in these conferences. The complex processes of the knowledge-based economy, globalization, the use of information technologies, and the subtleties of the debate on public *versus* private responsibility for higher education call for increased university autonomy, the use of buffer organizations and boards of trustees between governments and higher education institutions, more entrepreneurial funding and behaviour on the part of university administrators, financial autonomy, and more sophisticated university management all-around.

Still, while achieving all of the above, argues Professor Ingrid Moses, the President of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of New England in Australia, universities must be true to their mission statements that may link them to their regions in which they have vital roles of all sorts to perform. They must also serve as the consciences of their local societies. She cites examples of the above derived from her own university.

Two American commentators follow who reflect on the internationalization of higher education, the first one directly, the second one indirectly. The first commentator, Dr. Marlene Johnson, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, of Washington, D. C., reflects on the massive expansion of international student and faculty mobility in higher education since the Second World War. The global economy, she argues, requires both exchanges of this sort and the end-product—graduates who can operate professionally in a global environment. Of course, as she mentions, the events of 11 September 2001 have led to certain restrictions on the influx and movement of international students in the United States; however, these same tragic events would suggest that greater international movement is needed in the future to make societies more culturally aware and tolerant. For NAFSA, certain initiatives taken by European higher education should serve as inspirations for American higher education policy makers. These would include the Bologna Process, the European Union Lifelong Learning Memorandum, the European Union policy on higher education co-operation and exchange with other countries, the European Union policy on mobility, and certain innovations in relation to the funding of higher education. NAFSA is lobbying, with mixed results, for a US government policy on international education.

In general, Dr. Constantine Curris, - the President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), considers that the United States has been well served by its higher education system, the product of two philosophies: a commitment to the discovery and the furtherance of knowledge, and fulfillment of the needs of the population. It seems, however, not to have been as successful in the arena of international studies and policy formation, despite, one might add, the large number of foreign students who have studied in the United States since the Second World War and the existence of such international studies programmes as the Fulbright Program.

The authors of the following two articles reflect on the role of UNESCO-CEPES in furthering change, particularly internationalization, in European higher education. The first of these is by Eva Egron-Polak, the Secretary-General of the International Association of Universities (IAU). While reviewing her role and experiences as a former member of the Advisory Board of the Centre, she cites the importance of the role played by UNESCO-CEPES in establishing the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees Concerning Higher Education in the States Belonging to the Europe Region (1979), serving as its Secretariat, and then by contributing to the holding of the Diplomatic Conference that gave rise, in 1997, to the Council of Europe—UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. She concludes her article with a series of recommended tasks for the future intended to assure higher education institutions of their capacity to undertake seemingly contradictory tasks such as how to balance the need to be competitive and of the highest quality with the need to offer access to the most diversified and broad-based

population. And she reiterates a call for more partnership building and networking, an effort in which her organization will fully engage itself.

The second of these authors, Dr. Per Nyborg, who reflects on the long and productive collaboration of his organization, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO-CEPES, is the Chairman of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CD-ESR) of the Council of Europe and also an International Representative of the Norwegian Council for Higher Education. Looking back on the history of the links between the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, he points out that the mutual work for recognition and equivalence of credentials in higher education that gave rise to the joint European national information centers on higher education, the ENICs, the Lisbon Recognition Convention of 1997, the Diploma Supplement, and the Code of Good Practice for Transnational Education all contributed to some of the “central building blocks” of the Bologna Process and reflect the European Higher Education area under construction. Dr. Nyborg’s organization, the Council of Europe, and its Committee for Higher Education and Research (CD-ESR), contributes successfully, through its activities, to the realization of the European Higher Education Area as both build on trust among national educational systems and among individual higher education institutions in Europe. However, he expresses some concern about the effects on European higher education of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization. “Can the Bologna Process”, he asks, “building on co-operation, and GATS, building on competition, co-exist?” He is uncertain as to what the outcome will be.

Still, with or without GATS, European higher education systems understand that they must internationalize in order to progress. Ulrich Grothus, the Deputy-Director of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), presents some of the steps that German higher education is taking in this direction. In addition to the promotion of international mobility for numbers of German and international students and scholars, it supports German efforts to adapt to the Bologna Process with regard to the setting up of reformed degree programmes, and it supports the inclusion of German universities into numbers of academic networks.

The final article in the group of twelve reflecting the future of higher education and the development of knowledge societies is by a Polish journalist who has contributed a profound, but at the same time refreshing, reflection on two industries—the mass media and higher education—the former being far more commercialized, in Poland, than the latter. Because of the serious lack of funding for higher education in Poland, despite the existence of a private higher education sector, he reflects seriously on the pros and cons of operating the state higher education institutions as businesses. With governance that is more commercially oriented, and thus more rational, these institutions might attract and make more money and thus be able to finance improvements of all sorts. (Tangentially, the author describes the effort made by an influential Polish weekly, *Polityka*, to combat the brain drain by subsidizing worthy young Polish academics.) He also suggests, however, that a large proportion of the Polish media should have their intellectual and aesthetic standards raised—possibly by means of appropriate education programmes.

This issue of *Higher Education in Europe* is brought to a conclusion with “summarizing reflections” by Dr. Kenneth Edwards, a former President of the Association of European Universities (CRE), who is currently Chairman of the Board of

the Observatory of Fundamental University Values and Rights at the University of Bologna, and, last but not least, a newly appointed member of the UNESCO-CEPES Advisory Board. As he points out, many questions were raised during the debates but few definitive answers were given. The two major issues, according to him, were: (i) how can international cohesion be achieved without reducing diversity? (ii) How can collateral damage to local higher education systems be avoided, given the push for international cohesion? The future of the university, he concludes, is uncertain, even if, on the European scene, certain common trends can be observed, like, for instance, the redefinition of institutional autonomy; changing relationships with the state; changing paradigms owing to the assimilation of information and communication technologies; an evolution from collegiality, inside institutions, to managerialism; and continued debate about the sense of higher education as a public good. No doubt many of the themes broached in this conference will become topics of future issues of *Higher Education in Europe*.