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**Higher
Education
In Europe**

In this issue:

**Growing Legitimacy and Recognition:
Trends and Developments
In Private Higher Education
In Europe**

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Higher Education in Europe

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From the Editors

Europe, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, has seen an astonishing growth in the number of private higher education institutions operating across the region offering at least first-cycle degree programmes, with an even greater number of institutions offering vocational and continuing education diplomas, certificates, and short courses. Some have disappeared as quickly as they arrived in the sector, but many more have continued to thrive and grow in status and importance, becoming an integral part of the system of higher education.

This almost meteoric rise to prevalence has not gone unnoticed by the traditional higher education sectors, especially in those countries where private higher education institutions have begun to enrol a significant number of students, i.e. in Poland and Romania, while public higher education institutions have also entered the educational market by enrolling “tuition-fee-paying students”. In certain countries, for example Austria, the emergence of private higher education institutions has paved the way for an innovative approach to multi-stake-holder partnerships.

All these developments have brought with them much debate and discussion among academics, policy-makers, students and employers. Is private higher education a panacea to the challenges facing higher education in Europe? Is private higher education in its present format and governing system sufficiently adjusted to the requirements set up in the context of the main objectives of the Bologna Process? These are the main questions, in addition to obtaining a better overall picture of private higher education in Europe, addressed by the UNESCO-CEPES project, “Private Higher Education in Europe and Quality Assurance and Accreditation from the Perspective of the Bologna Process Objectives”, and the International Conference on this topic organized by UNESCO-CEPES and “Leon Koz´ min´ ski” Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management (LKAEM), in collaboration with The World Bank, 3 – 5 November 2005, Warsaw, Poland.

This issue of Higher Education in Europe paves the way and sets the scene by offering an abridged summary of a comparative analysis of private higher education institutions in twelve European countries covered in the project; gives a contextual overview of the journey of legitimacy of private higher education institutions (legitimacy being a factor so often raised when comparing the traditional public/state sector with the private higher education sector); and the results of an empirical comparison of the implementation of the Bologna objectives in private higher education institutions and public higher education institutions, which draws on the Trends III Report and Survey of the European University Association (EUA).

This current issue in a certain way can, therefore, be seen as a prologue to the forthcoming volume published by UNESCO-CEPES, under its Studies Series.

The demand for employable graduates, with practical competences has often, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, served as a catalyst for the proliferation of the private higher education sector. The Tribune section of this issue looks at this topic Higher Education in Europe, Vol. 31, No. 1, April 2006 by linking the labour market and graduate competences to new study programmes, and, separately, examines the roles of teacher education and faculty development in meeting the new pedagogical challenges in education, and the goals of the Bologna Process.

Finally, Professor Gilder’s review of David Riesman’s seminal book, *Constraint and Variety in American Education*, now approaching its 50th anniversary since publication, provides a timely reminder of the potential myopia of falling into what he describes as the “hyper-market” of higher education, and ignoring the meaningful pursuit of higher learning.