



TechnoTN 2012

STECET - Science & Technology - European Cooperation in Education and Training

*ERASMUS ACCOMPANYING MEASURES
Project 518206-LLP-1-2011-BE-ERASMUS-EAM
<http://www.sefi.be/technotn/>*

TechnoTN is a series of forums organised to bring together representatives of European networks in science and technology, dealing with educational matters.

- On May 4 and 5 of 2012 the TechnoTN forum was organised in Antwerp Belgium by the STECET project, a consortium of 12 networks, funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.
- Partners of STECET are the networks STEPS TWO, ECTN, SEFI, EUGENE, ECCE, ENAEE, Aqua-TNET, ELLEIEC, ISEKI-Food, LE:NOTRE, E-PRAGMATIC, CLAIU-EU.
- Previous meetings were organised in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009

Three broad topics were discussed

1. New skills and University-Business cooperation
2. Attracting and retaining students
3. Tools for enhancing mobility of students and graduates

New skills and University-Business cooperation

The topic was introduced by two speakers from industry: Frank Stefan Becker (Siemens) and Yiannis Pavlou (National Instruments), and then discussed in three parallel working groups. The results were presented in a plenary session. A report is found on our web site.

A main issue is how to motivate the students to acquire the 'soft' skills necessary for employment. A skills training should be integrated in the technical education. The training of the trainers is important in this context.

Differences in the needs of major industry with that of an SME were pointed out.

Tools for enhancing mobility of students and graduates

Peter Bauer from the European Commission was not able to be present, but his Powerpoint presentation is found on our web site. Iring Wasser (ASIIN) highlighted the need for subject-specific accreditation. Ulrich Teichler (INCHER, Universität Kassel) questioned whether the major strategic objective of the Bologna process "to enhance student mobility" has been achieved.

The discussion groups reviewed obstacles and incentives for mobility. The Lisbon Convention on recognition of studies is not yet followed universally. Language preparation is a major issue, unless the teaching is in English. Staff training is

crucial to promote flexibility. Students looking back on study abroad see personal development, CV enhancement and ability to cope. But students looking forward see financial issues, wasted time and difficulty with language.

Attracting and retaining students

This topic was discussed in a round table format, chaired by Gareth Jones (Imperial College). Pieter Coppens, a recent graduate, and Justina Pop, a current student, represented the student organization BEST. They stressed the importance of personal development of the students and the rôle of the peer group. Kamel Hawwash (University of Birmingham and the Higher Education Academy) discussed the enabling factors for finding employment.

The opening presentations were followed by a lively discussion in plenary session. A main concern is the image of science and engineering. Publicizing achievements is recommended. Staff need training in public presentation.