# **Innovative pedagogies for internationalisation**

## **Current European Commission initiatives**

In the new Erasmus+ programme, the European Commission is promoting virtual mobility, e.g. by the creation of a portal for online curriculum collaboration and virtual mobility and by“European universities”(European Summit 14/12/2017; first call in autumn)

*European universities*

In a *draft and still confidential document,* European Universities’ are described as alliances. They are key to delivering on the vision of a European Education Area by 2025.

Within these alliances, embedded mobility at all levels, including at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels, is a standard feature allowing any student, academic or researcher to study, work or do research in different languages and move seamlessly across borders and disciplines.

Among other things, European universities are defined as a European higher education inter-university ‘campus‘, where:

* The possibility for students, doctoral candidates and staff to study, train, teach, do research, work, or share services in any of the partner institutions is significantly enhanced, including through virtual or blended mobility. At least 50% of the students within the alliance should benefit from such a mobility, be it physical, virtual or blended.
* Students customise their choice of where and what to study within the confines of pedagogically sound and logically structured study programmes between the different higher education institutions and other members of the alliance.
* New joint and flexible curricula are delivered, where relevant, in the three cycles (Bachelor, Master and Doctoral), based on cross-disciplinary/multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches, integrating the most innovative pedagogies, including the use of the latest digital technologies. They have embedded and structured mobility, be it physical, virtual or or blended.
* Practical and/or work-based experience is provided by external mentors to foster an entrepreneurial mind-set and develop civic engagement;
* o The student body reflects the diversity of the population (in terms of social, economic and cultural aspects), including lifelong learners and access, participation and completion of under-represented and disadvantaged groups;

*European hub*

EADTU participates in a proposal for a call on ”European policy experimentations in the fields of

Education and Training led by high-level public authorities”, notably the creation of a European-wide hub for online learning, blended/ virtual mobility, virtual campuses and collaborative exchange of best practices. This hub will be an instrument for the European Commission to promote online course/curriculum collaboration and virtual mobility in Europe. It will include:

(i)  Trainings for academic staff on innovative pedagogies and curriculum design; spaces for discussions/fora where teachers could exchange material and best practices and advertise training opportunities;

(ii)  Blended and digital learning, for instance through the setting up of virtual classrooms: spaces where universities/companies/research centres from different countries could organize joint virtual interactive classrooms, allowing groups of students, teachers and professionals to collaborate and interact with one another on specific topics or projects/courses/modules);

(iii)  Blended mobility: the platform could be used to better prepare Erasmus+ KA1 participants for their individual mobility and foster cooperation after the mobility. In the context of KA2 (Strategic Partnerships, Capacity Building, Knowledge Alliances, Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters) it could facilitate transnational cooperation and complement mobility activities supported by these projects. Finally, it could be used to test new activities combining short-term physical mobility with a longer-term virtual exchanges period, to cater for needs of students which cannot or do not want to go for long-term mobility abroad;

(iv) The platform could host collaborations between HEIs and employers, and offer students the possibility to access work-based learning activities or work on projects proposed by employers. The platform should be developed as a host environment for existing EU, national or regional platforms and their activities, with the purpose to expand them and scale them up at European level.

The OpenU-project proposal seeks to increase learning mobility opportunities of student and staff (also including virtual and blended mobility), leveraging virtual (MOOCs, virtual classrooms, cross-university pedagogical activities) as well as physical (short, long) mobility schemes and mutual reinforcement (blending) between these schemes.

It will connect and scale up existing pedagogical resources; develop a dedicated tool for enhanced academic cooperation, facilitating the creation of mobility windows and double/joint degree programs; and create a digital infrastructure to deepen cooperation among HEIs and specifically to serve the creation of "European universities" (see above).

**International educational design**

*Education is a design science[[1]](#footnote-1).* International collaboration and mobility require a joint course or curriculum design.

*Course and curriculum design*

Course design theories and handbooks consistently focus on some agreed core design dimensions[[2]](#footnote-2), e.g.

* Defining, structuring and sequencing a series of *learning activities*, leading to the learning objectives of a course, e.g. following a series of classical lectures and seminars (in the case of blended education), reading a paper, writing an assignment, commenting a videolecture(clips), discussing concepts with peer students, reporting observations
* *Flexibilising* a course by different and personalized learning pathways, adapted to the prior knowledge and personal interests of the students
* Creating *learning communities* and room for interactions with teaching staff and learning communities for collaborative learning
* *Integrating learning resources*, available in the learning environment and on the internet, including open educational resources and open media
* *Assessing t*he learning paths and progress of students and designing the final examination

A maturity model for blended and online education is developed[[3]](#footnote-3).

*International course and curriculum design*

International course and curriculum design is affected by the international setting in a partnership:

* In international collaboration and mobility, *teaching and learning activities are distributed* over different partner institutions (e.g. lecture series and staff mobility, networked programs) or can be jointly designed (e.g. intensive programs, virtual seminars, joint courses, joint programs,…).
* In international settings, *more flexibility* is needed at the organizational level, requiring asynchronous delivery because of different time zones and course tables, not excluding synchronous activities like virtual classrooms. In many cases, more flexibility is also needed because of different levels of prior knowledge.
* *International learning communities* are a particular asset in international education, e.g. in virtual seminars, projects, think tanks, especially also when international staff is integrated. International resources can be brought together by students of international partner institutions, including systematic observations and non-published material.

International collaboration and mobility can be *physical, blended or completely online*[[4]](#footnote-4).

A systematic approach in course and curriculum design and development will lead to *patterns of good practices and innovative pedagogies* in the field of international collaboration and mobility.

We are at the beginning of new developments, made possible by ICT-based modes of teaching and learning. Gradually, a thesaurus of patterns of good practice and innovative international pedagogies will emerge and be published in journals and repositories. Examples of such innovative pedagogies are indicated below.

**Innovative international pedagogies in international collaboration and mobility**

***The virtual exchange scheme (based on MOOCs)***

***Tags: virtual mobility, MOOCs***

This virtual exchange scheme is based on online courses (MOOCs on Edx). Students take an online course at a top university and gain credits for their degree. They learn at thei own pace and at a time and place that suits them, be it from their favourite spot on campus or even from their holiday destination. Inspiring lecturers from high-ranking international universities, from Australia to Switzerland and from Hong Kong our brought tot heir own campus. They engage with students from countries across the globe to broaden and enrich their knowledge and portfolio.

Students need a clear commitment to engage with the course and stay with the programme, so that they don’t miss out on the benefits and the partner universities are able to maintain high-standards of participation and completion.  This is what the virtual exchange programme offers

* Online, flexible, free  
  Study at the time and place that suits you - more freedom, for free
* Enrich and broaden your portfolio  
  Choose electives from courses from leading universities
* Access to expertise  
  World-class academic staff – enthusiastic, knowledgeable lecturers the other side of the screen
* Diverse learning experience  
  User-friendly courses - varied activities, multiple format content and flexible choices to optimise learning – and exclusive access to enriched content
* Connect  
  Be part of a global, culturally rich student community – make connections and grow your international circle

These are the steps to be taken by the students:

Step 1: Find your online course in the online course catalogue defiend by your institution

Step 2: Apply on the online learning platform of your institution and follow the guidelines to enroll

Step 3: Start your online experience

On completion of the online course and on successful final assessment (this can vary, from a written exam at the campus to a digital oral assessment with the lecturer, the student will receive credits for his grade list.

The application process is to ensure that you student scan participate and that the result will be added to his grade list. For approval of the online course as part of the study programme (e.g. elective, or part of a free minor), the student has to follow the regular procedures of his faculty or programme.

The number of places available for each of the online courses can be limited.

Examples of MOOCs in this exchange scheme are: Solar Energy, Neural Dynamics, Antropology of Current World Issues, Astrophysics, Introduction to Computing with java, Enlish Grammar and Style,..

This Virtual Exchange initiative results from a collaboration between leading international universities. Active partners at the moment are: Delft University of Technology, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Leiden University, Rice University, the Australian National University, the University of Adelaide, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Université Catholique de Louvain, University of Queensland, UPMC Sorbonne Universités, Wageningen University & Research, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

<https://www.tudelft.nl/studenten/onderwijs/virtual-exchange/>

***European Virtual Seminar for Sustainable Development***

***Tags: virtual seminar; learning communities; virtual mobility***

The aim of the EVS is to foster an international, multidisciplinary dialogue on sustainable development among students from all over Europe by using modern ICT and the internet.

An advantage of a seminar presented as an e-learning opportunity using modern ICT and the internet is that it enables communication and interaction between the students and their teacher, and (even more importantly) between the students themselves, to be time- and place-independent.

The EVS might be described as a new method to foster a dialogue between a learning community of geographically distributed students, and consists of the following components:

* a learning community of students (and staff) of different nationalities and from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds
* a learning process that supports collaboration between geographically distributed students
* a learning content that consists of authentic, current scientific or societal problems
* a learning technology based on modern ICT and the internet that facilitates collaboration, communication and interaction between students (and staff).

The learning process in the EVS differs greatly from that in mainstream education. There are no lectures in an EVS, the students have to work in international, multidisciplinary groups, the group members cannot organise face-to-face meetings, and all collaboration and social processes depend on communication using modern ICT. Moreover, the learning process is spread over a relatively long period (i.e. 16 weeks) so as to create the best possible conditions for virtual collaborative learning and to allow the students to participate in the EVS alongside their regular study programmes. To support such an exceptional learning process, the EVS is divided into four stages:

* orientation and student selection (2 weeks)
* group forming and community-building (2 weeks)
* writing group research proposal (4 weeks)
* research case study and writing group report (8 weeks).

The organisational model for the EVS is based on a network of higher education institutions sharing expertise and investing staff time and resources. It is a bottom-up approach without formal, top-down institutional arrangements.

Institutions can become partners in an EVS run at three different levels:

* students and an institutional coordinator participate
* also a tutor participates
* a case study is provided as well and the expert participates.

The cooperation between the partner institutions can be described as a joint process of ongoing development of the EVS in educational and organisational respects. Since the pilot in 2001, the network has undergone substantial enlargement and the EVS has been organised once a year.

The coordinators at the partner institutions are responsible for organising the EVS in such a way that their students receive credit points. At present, the EVS is a compulsory component of the curriculum at some partner institutions, and an optional course at some other institutions.

Topics for 2017-2018 were: Decoupling of Environmental Pressure from Quality of Life, Geoconservation in Hateg Country Dinosaur Geopark, Urban Waste Prevention, Innovation in European Nature Conservation Policy, Resilient Coastal Regions, and Sustainable Tourism and the Region.

Partners in 2017-2018: Open University of the Netherlands (EVS coordinator), Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Charles University in Prague, FernUniversität Hagen, Karl-Franzens Universität Graz, Universidade Aberta, University of Antwerp, University of Bucharest, University of Maribor,  University of the Aegean

<https://www.ou.nl/eCache/DEF/1/23/424.html>

***The Lived Experience of Climate Change***

The Lived experience of climate change: interdisciplinary e-module development and virtual mobility project concerns education and lifelong learning in relation to climate change, to contribute to an informed and active European citizenry and to inform EU policy on this major challenge. Focusing on the lived experiences of climate change -- how individuals, communities and organisations conceive and respond to its perceived local impacts (e.g. extreme weather, biodiversity changes) – the project complements other work in the area. Through collaboration between nine participating institutions, designing innovative teaching modules and a virtual learning space, it aims to create a European community of scholars, students and citizens who collectively make a major contribution to the United Nations decade on education for sustainable development.

These deliberations complement, rather than duplicate, the considerable work that is already being undertaken on sustainable education throughout Europe. The educational level of the proposal is postgraduate Masters. A key feature is that it complements existing and proposed Masters programmes in the area, rather than create a parallel programme. Consortium members are free to use or adapt the content (see below) within their own programmes, through their normal accreditation processes. The teaching modules can be used flexibly by students: as available educational resources without assessment or accreditation to enhance their studies or as conventional modules with assessment and accreditation.  
To achieve the project’s aims, a virtual learning space contains the educational resources and facilitates learning communities and virtual mobility across the institutions.  
  
The work has focused on three principal areas:  
  
1. The consortium has performed *preliminary research on the composition and specificities of the content modules and their deployment.* The consortium reviews scenarios with respect to the pedagogic design and organisation of the content, and the potential virtual mobility of the students of the institutions involved. Institutional involvement of staff, financial and organisational issues is also investigated, as are the requirements and implementation of the interactive elements of the virtual learning space.  
  
2. The *collaborative content generation*. Five postgraduate content deliverables are devised:  
  
a) An introduction to climate change in the context of sustainable development (teaching module)  
  
b) Comparing the experience of climate change in the global South and North (teaching module)  
  
c) Interdisciplinary research methods for investigating the lived experience of climate change (teaching module)  
  
d) A Masters dissertation package based on the virtual learning space:

i) A repository of suggested dissertation topics

ii) Hyperlinks to existing local, national and regional projects on climate change and their databases

iii) A repository of Masters’ dissertations in the area.

e) A virtual mobility package based on the virtual learning space: 

i) A moderated virtual classroom for students and tutors/supervisors

ii) A moderated virtual café which expands access to citizens and organisations who might be the subject of dissertation projects, allowing for a dialogue on climate change between citizens and academia

iii) Ongoing monitoring of the package.

The teaching modules will become *open educational resources* at the project end for any University to use as it wishes.  
  
3. Content delivery and virtual mobility have been piloted. Students enrol in the virtual learning space and benefit from the educational resources, learning communities and virtual mobility offered. They are guided by institutional staff who also act as learning community moderators. 

<http://www.leche.open.ac.uk>

<https://www.ou.nl/web/the-lived-experience-of-climate-change> <http://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=1767>

***Think tanks***

***Tags: think tank, learning community, virtual mobility***

The KU Leuven – Stellenbosch University Think Tankis an extra-curricular and interuniversity honours programme in cooperation with Stellenbosch University (South Africa). The programme overarches all faculties. Thus, it has an eminently multidisciplinary character. Each year, both KU Leuven and Stellenbosch University select a maximum of 15 students out of all applications. The total group of 30 students will work together over the course of 10 months (from February to November) and will develop their own research project on a central theme.The participants are assisted by an interdisciplinary academic team of coaches, led by an academic coordinator. At the end of the project, the results and findings are presented to the public during a joint event.

The collaboration takes place via the available online platforms and tools. In addition, both groups of students will meet each other twice a year: once during  the spring semester for a short focus week and once during the fall semester for an intense workshop week, culminating in a concluding event that will give them the opportunity to present their findings to the public. The proceedings of the programme will be in English.

*Subjects were: Making the City of the Future !2015);* Brave New World?Merging technology and society (2016); Art & Science: An Enduring Relationship (2017); *The Voice of the People: Izwi labantu – Stem van het volk – Vox Populi – Die stem van die mense*

*Aims*

The Think Tank provides a platform for students to deepen and share the knowledge of their own discipline, and to broaden their knowledge by stepping beyond the boundaries of their own field of study. The students' own insights and perspectives can be key in the direct dialogue with their fellow students and with experts from various disciplines. Students will be challenged to think out of the box and they will get the opportunity to use their initiative.

As a group, they help define the content of the programme they shape their project independently and creatively. The members of the academic team will take on the role of ‘coaches’ and as such will be guided by the input of the group.

The intensive international cooperation with fellow students from another continent will confront students with a different daily reality and cultural context. This experience will provide a mirror that will force the student to look at their own context and points of view in a different way.

*When?*

The Think Tank programme starts in **February**, at the beginning of the second semester, and continues throughout the summer, until the end of **November**.

* February until the start of the study period  
  6 to 8 evening sessions (including video conference calls with Stellenbosch University)  
  Most sessions will take place on Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. on campus Leuven.
* July and August  
  During this period, both groups of students will independently organize their collaboration, choose how they will divide the workload, decide through which channels and how frequently they will be in touch, etc.  
  At the end of this two-month period, the students must be able to present to their coaches a comprehensive content statement, first versions of output and a first proposal for the format of their event.
* September to November  
  Feedback phase. The text, and possibly some other documents as well, must be finalized. The workshop week and the event must be prepared.  
  3 to 4 evening sessions (including video conference calls) will be organized to guide the groups through the process

Participating in the sessions (incl. focus week and workshop week) and cooperating with the students in Stellenbosch are essential for the project to be successful.

*Assessment*

Selected students who have successfully completed the full honours programme will be awarded a certificate. In addition, the programme is also included in the ‘Extra-Curricular I-Portfolio’ activities.

<https://www.kuleuven.be/english/international/thinkthank/index>

***Coriolanus Online***

***Tags: Virtual mobility fine arts; telepresence technology***

Coriolanus Online (Tampere, Coventry) was the first part of the two-year Immersive Telepresence in Theatre project, which in 2017 continued with King Lear, another Shakespeare play. Student actors of both universities cooperate with the support of a “telepresence” technology. At first, this technology was called “virtuality”, but telepresence is now the commonly used term as the project uses actual spaces which are conjoined via technology. Coriolanus Online brought the students from Tampere in direct contact with a living Shakespeare tradition in Coventry, instead of flying in experts from Coventry to teach and play in Tampere.

**Telepresence may be defined as “live video that allows for human-sized interactions, while offering clear sound and visual fidelity to individuals in remote rooms” (**[Miller et al. 2015](http://er.educause.edu/articles/2016/4/~/link.aspx?_id=41416649807E4DE79F86C3BB4AE69FC1&_z=z)**) and this project explores its potential for teaching and learning in the field of performing arts. In particular, the project facilitates international virtual mobility collaborations between theatre students at the University of Tampere (Finland) and Coventry University (UK), with a particular focus on acting in a foreign language.**

While providing students with opportunities to engage in intercultural collaborations and to develop valuable global attributes, the project promotes a more environmentally sustainable model, diminishing the need to move large groups of student actors across the globe for rehearsals, workshops and even performances.

Initially taking the text of Shakespeare’s Coriolanus as a basis for study, in 2015-16 students of the two universities worked on a small section of the script (3:3) in both Finnish and English. An ‘Immersive Space’ was created in both locations through the re-purposing of videoconferencing technology and the use of large rear projection screens, high speed internet connections and unidirectional, hypercardioid microphones. Moreover, a unified spatial design and a careful use of lighting gave the actors the illusion that they were occupying the same physical space.

A second iteration of the project took place in February 2017, utilising the same group of students and culminated in a field trip to Tampere where both groups performed together live in Telakka Theatre and demonstrated the use of the technology to an invited audience of theatre practitioners and technologists. The work continued to examine Shakespeare’s texts as the students already have some experience in dealing with Shakespearean language and the complexities of blank verse. The text chosen for this second stage was King Lear and we explored both a large ‘public’ scene as well as more intimate sections from the text in order to examine how this pedagogy enables rehearsal work in these differing circumstances.

The third iteration of the project was a collaboration between the team and the Theatre Academy at the University of the Arts, Helsinki and the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. On this occasion, the text chosen was Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night which offered the students the opportunity to explore the comic side of Shakespeare’s work, using a combination of large, intricate scenes as well as smaller ‘one on one’ segments.

The project has also crafted a unique telepresence banquet and performance of selections of Lear Online to support Coventry’s bid to become the UK City of Culture in 2021. For this, two banqueting spaces were created in Coventry and Tampere and participants were able to dine, converse and watch a performance as well as gain some insights into the project and the technology used to enable this collaboration.

In March 2018, King Lear Online travelled to the GREAT Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong to perform selections from the project and demonstrate the system live. Organised by the UK Department of Trade, this was an opportunity to share the work with fellow educators and artists from across the globe.

In April 2018 the team created a ground breaking performance to open the Network Performing Arts Production Workshop conference in the New World Symphony Centre, Miami. Using a motion captured actor and live musician in Tampere in conjunction with a live performer in Miami and the state of the art NIMBRA media server to connect the two spaces, the team performed a segment from Sam Shepard’s ‘Paris Texas’.

The project  continues to explore technical systems and configurations that are both affordable and user friendly so that a system for online rehearsing can be accessible to a wide variety of user groups. In order to explore alternative technologies and suitable pedagogical approaches, a workshop was hosted in December 2016 at the Disruptive Media Learning Lab of Coventry University with the aim of gathering academics and practitioners with experience in the use of telepresence in education or industry.

<http://telepresenceintheatre.coventry.domains/uncategorized/hello-world/>

***Edelnet – Schools of Law***

***Tags: comprehensive online collaborative programme at bachelor, master and docoral level; virtual mobility; summer and winter schools***

The FernUniversität in Hagen, the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) and the Open Universiteit Nederland (OUNl) are three leading European distance learning universities firmly devoted to further the principle of equal opportunity by safeguarding equal access to top quality higher education to everyone, using a methodology based on the principles of modern distance learning focused on the needs of the student. In 2014, after eight years of successful cooperation in the organization of international common teaching activities on the bachelor level, these universities established a Strategic Partnership to further cultural exchange and best practices in the internationalisation of high quality education in law for all three Bologna cycles. Developed within this framework, the *EDELNet (European Distance Education in Law Network)* project is planned to be the first building block in the implementation of an ambitious scientific and pedagogic concept of Blended Active Learning and student oriented teaching facilitating a personal learning path with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity and intercultural communication skills as a basis for a better understanding of each other’s legal cultures and practices throughout Europe and beyond. The project has been recently awarded with European Union funding in the amount of 403.555 Euro for the period 2015-2018 by the DAAD ERASMUS+ funding program for Strategic Partnerships (Call 2015).

In order to achieve these goals the EDELNet project comprises the development and implementation of virtual and face-to-face teaching and training activities and courseware in key methodological and substantive areas of the law, including language competences, intercultural communication skills and interdisciplinary methods of knowledge production applied to legal practice and scholarship.

The project is conceived as blended, student-oriented learning with virtual mobility at three levels: bachelor, master and doctoral. Face to face components are mainly Summer and Winter Schools.

<https://blog.fernuni-hagen.de/edelnet/about-us/>

***Global Health Education TropEd***

***Tags: networked master curriculum, networked virtual mobility***

“[The Network for Education in International Health (tropEd)](http://www.troped.org/) is an international network of member institutions for higher education in international/global health from Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin America. TropEd provides postgraduate opportunities for education and training contributing to sustainable development. It focuses on improving the management of health services for disadvantaged populations. The innovative approach is based on mobility of people, the exchange of experiences in different disciplines and the establishment of a common standard in education and training.”

This Erasmus plus project combines the Erasmus advantage of giving students access to international expertise at different academic institutions, but avoids the administrative challenges of physical travel and residence. However, the project leaders caution, that there were some administrative challenges associated with providing students access to the different Learning Management Systems at the 3 participating campuses.

The project involved researchers and specialists in their respective fields from the Centre for International Health Bergen, [KIT Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam](https://www.kit.nl/), and  [Queen Margaret University Edinburgh](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/). Each institution was responsible for producing one online module for the programme (5 ECTS) each year over the 3 year project period. When the project period is over at the end of 2018, there will be a total of 9 online modules in Global Health Education. In addition, each institution was responsible for enrolling 8 students in the programme, for a total of 24 students. The activity in the programme is evaluated both by students and staff, and the results will be published.

Moving from face-to-face classroom teaching to online, Learning Management System-based teaching is challenging and time-consuming. However, the overall consensus is that this kind of virtual teaching / learning have many advantages for students and teachers alike. A Handbook will be developed from the project to help others who want to create online courses. The project group plans to submit another project proposal for the next Erasmus period to build on the current project’s experiences.

<https://www.uib.no/en/cih/114159/virtual-mobility>

***The Master in Social Security – KU Leuven***

***Online staff moblity; networked master curriculum***

The Master of European Social Security is a specialised, advanced Master's programme organised by the University of Leuven's [Faculty of Law](http://www.law.kuleuven.be/faculty). The programme covers the area of social security in its broadest sense, including cash benefit schemes, pensions and health care systems. It is a one-year Master's programme of 60 ECTS. It starts with the [Summer School](https://www.law.kuleuven.be/EMSS/summer-school/summer-school) in August and ends at the close of the following academic year (July of next year).

The programme provides in an in-depth study of social security and social protection from a legal, economical, sociological, administrative and philosophical perspective. As well as being multidisciplinary, the programme also contains strong comparative and multinational aspects, as it focuses on the provision of social protection rights across Europe. This gives its participants the opportunity to encounter the many different approaches to social security that co-exist on the continent. At the same time, it provides students with a better understanding of their own national system. The programme also addresses the role of international bodies such as the European Union.

The programme offers students the opportunity to study at one of Europe's foremost universities.  At the same time, they are involved in an unique network which puts them into contact with Europe's foremost instructors in social security as well as with fellow students from all over Europe and beyond. The teaching staff includes academics from the KU Leuven and several foreign universities as well as professionals working within the field of social security and social protection.

Most of the courses are organised in Leuven, nevertheless for a limited number of courses there is a possibility of distance learning, which opens the possibility that students can remain professionaly active while working towards your degree.

<https://www.law.kuleuven.be/EMSS>

***The Joint Master's Programme in Comparative Social Policy and Welfare***

***Tag: Online master curriculum; embedded virtual mobility; intensive programmes***

The programme serves the purpose to enhance students’ career prospects as highly qualified sociologists and social policy/welfare experts in national, European or international organizations; that are able to apply their skills in developing, implementing and evaluating social programs and projects. The students will be able to continue their studies in PhD level.  
The programme offers basic academic training in the field of welfare management/ social policy development. Students will have an opportunity to increase competence and understanding of methodological issues and sociological research methods.

The curriculum for the Master’s Programme “Comparative Social Policy and Welfare” has been designed, is implemented and administered jointly by three partner-universities: Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), University of Tampere (Finland) and the Johannes Kepler Universität Linz (Austria).

The Programme was prepared within the framework of an EC Curriculum Development project “Development of European master’s degree programme in Comparative Social Policy and Welfare”.

Teaching and learning methods: Intensive programmes (2 weeks IP’s) in all partner universities in turn and distance learning classes (the online learning environment “Moodle”).

Students of the Master’s Programme “Comparative Social Policy and Welfare” complete their studies with a Joint Master degree. The corresponding equivalents in the countries of the partner universities are as follows:

* Lithuania Master of Sociology
* Finland Master of Social Sciences
* Austria Master of Social Sciences (MSSc)

<http://www.cosopo.lt>

## **Recommendations**

* National internationalisation policies and strategies for higher education should strengthen the policies of the European Commission with regard to “European Universities” as alliances to enhance the quality of higher and to harness students with an international awareness and with international competences. Digital education as a complement to physical mobility will support this process and intensify the international learning experience for all students. National strategies should build a framework to promote, stimulate and activate internationalisation in universities.
* Universities should develop leadership with regard to the internationalisation of education and share this at all levels of the institution, meeting the needs of students studying and working in an international environment and developing international citizenship.
* At the institutional level, international education should be part of mainstream course and curriculum design in education. Support should be given to program coordinators and teaching staff to develop an international dimension in education, facilitating collaboration in broader networks and consortia. This collaboration and networking will be facilitated by innovative international pedagogies.
* International relations offices should extend their activities to international curriculum and course development in connection with teaching and learning support services. Especially, they should focus on international collaborative pedagogies and innovative mobility formats
* Digital internationalisation pedagogies can be blended or completely online, depending on the educational design, taking into account the quality of the learning activities and the needs for flexibility and scalability.
* Benefit of the opportunities with regard to the granularity of digital education. Collaboration and mobility is possible for all organisational units: learning activities, modules, courses, MOOCs and short courses, degree programs (networked, joint) and for all qualification levels: foundation, bachelor, master and doctorate.
* Benefit from specific features of digital education which add to the quality and intensity of education, e.g. inquiry learning activities on the internet, communication with staff ad peers, learning communities , e-assessment and feedback.
* Benefit from the flexibility of digital education in international education: next to synchronous, also asynchronous formats, taking into account different time zones and conflicting course tables; adaptiveness to different prior knowledge levels.
* Benefit from the scale and cost-effectiveness of digital modes of teaching and learning in international education. The larger the number of students, the lower the cost per head (lower variable cost). As a consequence, transnational (blended and) online education enables universities to multiply international student numbers while keeping quality under control
* Benefit from the opportunities of networked and joint educational initiatives by digital education, involving multiple campuses simultaneously, e.g. in virtual seminars and think tanks, or in joint curricula in the framework of the “European universities” initiative.
* Organise on site staff training, bringing in external expertise and stimulate staf to experiment with MOOCs and online short degrees along their research interests.
* Create subject area communities and share online course materials when taking international academic initiatives.

P.H.

10/07/2018

1. Laurillard, D. (2012), Teaching as a design science. Routledge, New York, London [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Graham, R. (2013), Emerging practice and research in blended learning. In: Moore, M. *Handbook of Distance Education*, Routledge, New York, London

   Laurillard, D. (2015), *How should professors adapt to the changing digital education environment?*

   Laurillard, D. (2012), Teaching as a design science. Routledge, New York, London

   Boelens, R., Van Laer, S., De Wever, B. & Elen, J., (2015), *Blended learning in adult education: towards a definition of blended learning*, <http://hdl.handle.net/1854/LU-6905076>

   Contact North, Ten facts you need to know about blended learning. https://teachonline.ca/sites/default/files/tools-trends/downloads/ten\_facts\_you\_need\_to\_know\_about\_blended\_learning.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: The EMBED project, fuded by the European Commission, by KU Leuven, TU Delft, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Aarhus, the National Institute for Digital Education (City University, Dublin), and Tamk Tampere. Coordinated by EADTU. See: <https://embed.eadtu.eu> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See: Ubachs, G. & Henderikx, P., The EADTU Mobility Matrix, 2018. See: <https://eadtu.eu/documents/Publications/VM/2018_-_EADTU_Mobility_Matrix.pdf>

   See also: <https://www.distancelearningportal.com/articles/188/virtual-mobility-and-international-teaching-and-learning.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)