

## TEFCE presentation and consultation at the Transnational Cooperation Activity “Fostering Erasmus+ cooperation projects’ impact and cross-fertilization on social inclusion and civic engagement”

**Date:** 26 June 2019

**Venue:** University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy (Palazzo Poggi, Via Zamboni 33, Bologna)

**Presenter:** Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt

**Title of the presentation:** Could We Create a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education?

### Goal of the presentation and consultation:

1. The goal of the above presentation was to present the project “TEFCE: Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education” and its goals, as well as the main outcome of the TEFCE project – the TEFCE Toolbox, which represents a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education. The TEFCE Toolbox should help universities in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) structuring and developing their cooperation with wider communities in a mutually beneficial way.
2. Since the above conference was attended by more than 55 researchers and university administrators who have participated in the Erasmus+ KA2 and KA3 projects, the second goal of the participation at the conference was to find future partner institutions with whom the TEFCE project partners will advocate for including community engagement in higher education among future priorities of the Erasmus program and among future priorities of the EU strategy for higher education ET2030.

### Background related to the decision to attend the conference:

Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna hosted the above Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA) organized jointly by the INDIRE and the SEPIE, the Italian and Spanish national agency for mobility. As shown by the 2018 Bologna Implementation Report, one area where further commitment and cooperation are essential in the EHEA is the social dimension of higher education. Despite commitments made by the EHEA countries in developing social dimensions of higher education, many challenges remain: disadvantaged learners still face barriers for accessing and completing higher education; gender imbalances persist with important societal implications, and lifelong learning is not yet a reality in many countries. Especially in light of the future EU programming period 2021-2027, there is a chance to improve the structure of future transnational cooperation projects. The main objectives of the conference were:

1. Fostering collaboration between higher education institutions and third sector organizations (community partners and social enterprises) for the benefit of both students and community;
2. The role of higher education in promoting inclusion of disadvantaged categories and reducing inequality;

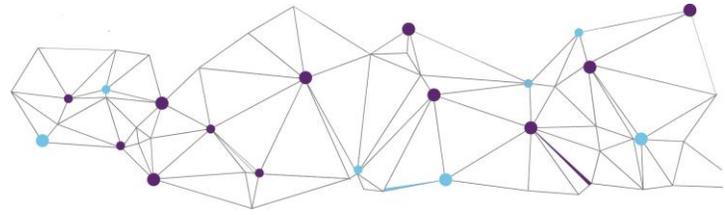
---

#### PROJECT FUNDING



#### PROJECT CO-FINANCING





3. The contribution of higher education in promoting democracy and intercultural dialogue.

**Main conclusions and outcomes:**

- The Schmidt's presentation was a part of the parallel session No. 1 "Fostering collaboration between HEIs and third sector organizations (community partners and social enterprises) for the benefit of both students and community". Schmidt was one of the six prominent speakers at the roundtable and delivered a successful presentation on the above topic.
- Schmidt has successfully submitted an abstract for this conference, which was a precondition for having the presentation in the above session. The abstract has been accepted and distributed to all participants. The name of the abstract was identical as the title of the presentation: Could We Create a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education?
- The discussion and the questions of the audience after the presentation proved that the future generation of the Erasmus program for the period 2021-2027 should include community engagement in higher education among its priorities. Participants stressed a need to create a European Network for Community Engagement, because the network could help universities structuring community engagement activities. The network could also help in the implementation of the future TEFCE Toolbox.
- University representatives and representatives of NGOs showed a considerable interest for being engaged in the area of the community engagement. Schmidt distributed TEFCE policy brief 1 and TEFCE leaflets to all interested participants at the end of the session.
- The conference was an excellent network opportunity and Schmidt established a large network of experts who will be included in the TEFCE mailing list through which they will receive the TEFCE Newsletter. These contacts will also enter in the IDE database of potential partners for future project applications, primarily related to the Erasmus+ call for proposals. With the established contacts, the TEFCE project will continue its advocacy activities for including community engagement among future priorities in the Erasmus program and among future priorities of the EU strategy for higher education ET2030.

---

**PROJECT FUNDING**



**PROJECT CO-FINANCING**

