

TEFCE presentation at the conference “European Conference on the Local Mission of Higher Education”

Date: 18 June 2019

Type of event and name of the event: Conference; European Conference on the Local Mission of Higher Education

Organizer: Council of Europe (CoE)

Venue: Palais de l’Europe (Room 6, 2nd floor), Avenue de l’Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg CEDEX, France

Type of the TEFCE activity: presentation and consultation with higher education stakeholders

Presenter: Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt and Thomas Farnell

Title of the presentation: Community Engagement in Higher Education: Toward a European Framework for the Community Engaged Universities

Cost sharing: Costs of travel and stay are shared between the TEFCE project and CoE for N.S.Schmidt; TEFCE project covered costs for Mr. T.Farnell.

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. 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. The Toolbox has potential to become a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education.
2. Since more than 30 international leaders in higher education (active in the field of community engagement in higher education) attended the above conference, the second goal of the participation at the conference was
 - a. To advocate that the community engagement in higher education becomes one of the strategic goals for the future development of higher education institutions and higher education systems in the EHEA.
 - b. To explore possibilities for the creation of the European Network for Community Engagement in Higher Education.

Background related to the decision to attend the conference:

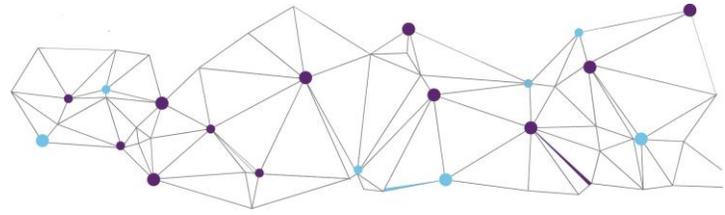
The Secretariat of the Council of Europe (CoE) invited Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Farnell to attend and to present at the European Conference on the Local Mission of Higher Education that was held on June 18 -19, 2019 at the Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg, in cooperation with the Anchor Institutions Task Force from the USA. This conference has build on previous conferences on the Local Mission of Higher Education held in Rome in June 2017 and Dublin in October 2018 and aimed to explore the local role of higher education institutions in Europe as well as to establish organized European cooperation in this area. This cooperation could be inspired by the example of the Anchor Institutions Task Force in the USA. Since the

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TEFCE Toolbox represents a tool for enhancement of local mission of universities, TEFCE project decided to present it at the above conference.

Main conclusions and outcomes:

- The TEFCE presentation was a part of the plenary program on Tuesday June 18, 2019 (12-12,45 hours) and was chaired by Sjur Bergan, Head, Education Department, Council of Europe.
- Schmidt and Farnell delivered a successful presentation, which was followed by the discussion. The discussion and the questions of the audience after the presentation showed a need to establish a new policy area related to the community engagement at the level of higher education institutions and at the level of higher education systems in Europe. Community engagement as a new policy area in higher education in Europe should horizontally link and enhance all the structural reform tools developed in the last two decades through the Bologna Process. Community engagement has an opportunity to build effective horizontal links with other policy tools, because it encompasses all main university functions (engaged teaching and learning, engaged research, engaged knowledge exchange and outreach, engaged management, engaged students and staff).
- Conference participants showed a considerable interest to further learn about the TEFCE project and about main outcomes of the TEFCE project. Schmidt and Farnell 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 and Farnell established a large network of future potential collaborators, who will be included in the TEFCE mailing list through which they will receive the TEFCE Newsletter.
- Participants agreed that the reference to the local mission of universities and community engagement in higher education should become a part of the Roma Communiqué in 2020 for the EHEA. Mr. N.S.Schmidt and Mr. S.Bergan, as members of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), will explore this option through consultation with other BFUG members.
- Participants agreed that there is a need to establish a European Network for Community Engagement in Higher Education (or a network for advancing local mission of universities). There is a need to find out information about previous EU-funded project on this topic, because it should represent a base for building a European network. Previous projects have already developed networks and build capacity in this field, which represents an opportunity to build synergies and further advance community engagement and creation of a network.

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