

TEFCE presentation and consultation at the “2019 European Quality Assurance Forum: Supporting Societal Engagement of Higher Education”

Date: 21-23 November 2019

Type of event and name of the event: Conference; 2019 European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF): Supporting Societal Engagement of Higher Education

Organizer: Jointly organized by the European University Association (EUA), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union (ESU). It was hosted by the TU Berlin.

Venue: Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin), Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623 Berlin, Germany.

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

Presenter: Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt and Thomas Farnell

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

Abstract and full paper: available at <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/892:could-we-create-a-european-framework-for-community-engagement-in-higher-education.html>

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 represents an opportunity to become a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education.
2. Since more than 500 policy makers, researchers, practitioners and students from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries attended the above conference, the second goal of the participation at the conference was 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.

Background related to the decision to attend the conference:

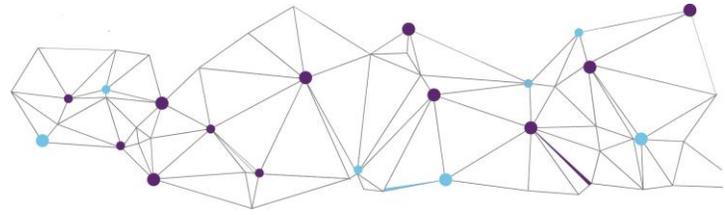
The European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) provides a platform for discussion, professional development and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in quality assurance (QA). Specifically, the Forum will be of interest to rectors and vice-rectors responsible for QA, QA officers in higher education institutions, students, QA agency staff and researchers working on higher education or the QA field. Through a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, the 2019 EQAF, entitled ‘Supporting societal engagement of higher education’, will combine practice-oriented or research-based discussions that will take place in the paper sessions and workshops with presentations of current developments in quality

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assurance. The Forum provides an opportunity for participants to update their knowledge and extend their professional development.

Societal demands on higher education are changing and becoming more complex. Higher education institutions need to foster academic excellence in research, drive innovation and ensure through high quality teaching that graduates have the knowledge and skills that prepare them for their future careers and role as active citizens. To do this successfully, institutions are expected to engage internal and external stakeholders, and entertain partnerships with industry actors, their local and regional environment, and often in collaboration with other higher education institutions. This year's EQAF will explore how external and internal QA processes can support engaged higher education institutions in developing activities that meet the expectations and needs of all stakeholders and demonstrate their value to society.

Since the TEFCE Toolbox represents also a quality enhancement tool, we decided to present it to the European QA community and to explore if the QA system could act as a driver for enhancing community engagement in higher education.

Main conclusions and outcomes:

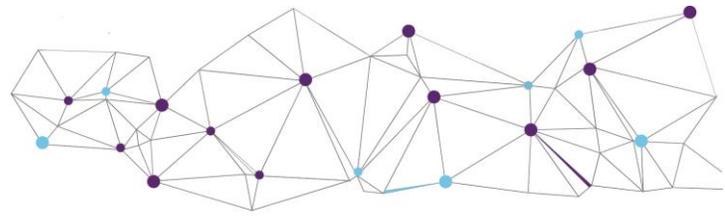
- Schmidt and Farnell have successfully submitted the abstract (150 words) and the text of the paper (3,000 words) for this conference, which was precondition for having the presentation at the conference. The abstract and the paper have been accepted and published as an EQAF paper (number 2) at the EUA web site <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/892:could-we-create-a-european-framework-for-community-engagement-in-higher-education.html>. The paper is cited in the following way: Šćukanec Schmidt, N. and Farnell, T. (2019). Could We Create a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education?
- The presentation was a part of the parallel Paper Session I on Friday 22 November 2019 (11.15-12 hours) and was chaired by Michal Karpisek, General Secretary of the EURASHE. The TEFCE presentation (PPT) is published at the EQAF web site: <https://www.eua.eu/component/attachments/attachments.html?task=attachment&id=2501>. The TEFCE presentation appeared in the EQAF Program under the Paper 2 (along with the abstract) – the conference program is available at <https://www.eua.eu/events.html?task=euaevents.downloadDoc&id=2477>.
- Schmidt and Farnell delivered a very successful presentation, which was followed by a 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, at the level of higher education systems and at the EU level. Community engagement as a new policy area in higher education 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

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encompasses all main university functions (engaged teaching and learning, engaged research, engaged knowledge exchange and outreach, engaged management, engaged students and staff).

- Representatives of universities, QA agencies and ministries in the EHEA showed a considerable interest to further learn about the community engagement 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. The photo gallery of the conference shows the networking activities with different stakeholders at the conference: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/153686878@N06/albums/72157711973917753>
- Schmidt and Farnell held a business meeting with Michal Karpisek, General Secretary of the EURASHE, in order to explore a potential for cooperation in the development of community engagement in higher education on the EU level. The conclusions of the meeting are:
 - The TEFCE representative from IDE will participate at the kick-off meeting of the new project that EURASHE will implement in the field of community engagement in the period 2020-2023.
 - EURASHE and IDE will advocate that the program of the Croatian EU-Council's Presidency will include the topic of the community engagement in higher education.
 - IDE and EURASHE will explore the opportunity to organize jointly the TEFCE conference in Brussels in October 2020 (in parallel with the EURASHE annual conference in Brussels).
 - EURASHE will explore an opportunity to include the IDE representative in the new project application for community engagement in higher education that EURASHE prepares for the KA2 Erasmus+ call for proposals.
- Schmidt held a business meeting with Alicia Miklavcic from Slovenian association of professional higher education institutions in order to explore a potential for cooperation in the development of community engagement in higher education. The conclusions of the meeting are:
 - IDE will consider to cooperate with the above association in developing a new project proposal for KA2 Erasmus+ on community engagement.
 - IDE will invite the above association to participate at the IDE Higher Education Fair in 2020.
- Schmidt and Farnell held a business meeting with Tia Loukkola, Director of the EUA Institutional Development unit. She is in charge of a variety of EUA's activities dealing with improving and monitoring the quality of universities and their educational mission, as well as specific topics including quality assurance, recognition, rankings and learning and teaching. The conclusions of the meeting are:
 - IDE should present the TEFCE project and the TEFCE Toolbox at the 2020 EUA Annual Conference in Gdansk. IDE and University of Rijeka will jointly submit the paper on the before mentioned topic for this conference.

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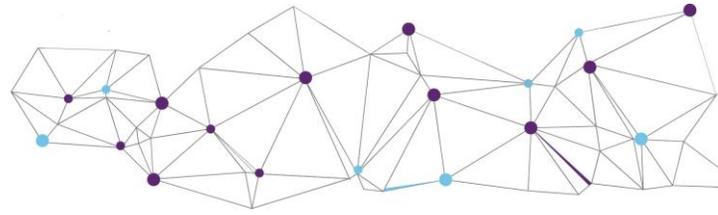
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- Schmidt and Farnell held a business meeting with Anna Prades Nebot, Head of Internationalization and Knowledge Generation Department, Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) – the goal of the meeting was to discuss a possibility that the AQU Catalunya uses the TEFCE Toolbox in its external evaluations of universities in Catalonia. The conclusions of the meeting are:
 - Ms. Prades Nebot will participate at the TEFCE Consultation Meeting for representatives of Catalan universities that will be held in April 2020 in Barcelona. After this meeting it will be decided in which way the TEFCE project could cooperate with the AQU Catalunya.

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Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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