TITLE of the project

Contract: 141085-EM-1-2008-1-BE-ERAMUNDUS-ECW-L02

Call for Proposals: EACE/07/34 - EM ECW 2nd Call for Proposals

Lead Applicant: Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Partners:
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
Cardiff University Wales, United Kingdom
U. Complutense Madrid, Spain
Sabançi University Istanbul, Turkey
Erasmus Hogeschool Brussel, Belgium
Technological Educational Institute of Patras, Greece
University of Trento, Italy
Lille-2 University of Health and Law Lille, France
University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy Sofia, Bulgaria
Westminster University, United Kingdom
American University Cairo, Egypt
Higher Institute of Optics Technology Cairo, Egypt
Ben Gurion University, Israël
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israël
Arab American University Jenin, West Bank Gaza
Hebron University, West Bank Gaza
Al Azhar University Gaza, West Bank Gaza

Project Abstract:

- Objectives:

  a) To enhance the international cooperation capacity of universities in Third-countries by facilitating transfer of know-how and good practices in the field of student and academic staff mobility;

  EMU2 already laid the foundation for this during the first year. Workshops and meetings were organised in Rome and Brussels for all participants. During these meetings with IROs from all institutions involved, good practices were shared. Experienced IROs from the partners, members of the expert groups from UNICA (associate partner), Unisolution (associate partner) hosted sessions on implementing the EMECW programme, on ECTS and credit transfer between the EU and the third countries involved etc. All partners were so enthusiastic about it that they all long for more workshops of this kind. More particular, they ask for sessions on international project management, software for the management of international exchange programmes, how to run an international office, set up and maintain international partnerships.

  An important evaluation meeting will take place in April 08 on the first round of EMU2. Good practices, lessons learnt and improvements will be discussed and settled as a preparation for the 2nd round.

  In any case we will also launch a second series of workshops end of August 08 on “Erasmus Mundus University 2” as international project and how to manage it; then also the TG2 ‘partners’ will be invited to participate. Topics: project cycle management as the common language at project management level, standard agreements, common language and documents used in the project (online application forms, mobility contracts, standard letters, learning agreements, transcripts of records, diploma supplements, ECTS); Credit transfer issues; Travel tickets, visa issues, insurances, financial aspects of the project; partner obligations for reporting the project; Disaster management; selection of candidates; Using MoveOn, the selected software application for informing prospective candidates, for the online application procedures, for the design of Learning Agreements, for the management of the scholarships, for the generation of Transcripts of Records
(explanatory session by UNISOLUTION, associate partner in the consortium). This will be open for all EMU2 disciplinary coordinators so that they can meet in person with their colleagues, building further on the EMU2 cooperations.

Apart from the workshops, teacher mobility will also have its impact in enhancing the international cooperation capacity of universities in Third-countries: as we will mainly involve those professors who will act as future “Erasmus Mundus Coordinators” for their discipline, their stay in Europe will teach them what this functions practically means in the LLP Erasmus Exchange programme, it will get them familiar with the procedures, using the standard forms such as Learning Agreements, transcripts of records, bilateral agreements etc. They should transfer these practices and knowledge to other disciplines at their institution. In any case, the first formation of EMU2 coordinators exists since the first round of EMU2.

Researchers mobility (postdocs, professors) will in any case increase the quality of both partners involved as mobility of researchers is one of the bases to bring innovative ideas in labs, share good practices, learn the skills and up-to-date knowledge in the field.

b) To promote cooperation between sending and hosting institutions
All hosting institutions, whether in the EU or in a Third Country will profit from the presence of international students, an inspiring context that is called ‘Internationalisation at Home’ (IaH). Several partners (EU and Third Country) committed themselves to increasing the capacity for hosting exchange students, esp. short-term students and students at Bachelor’s level in designing ‘international modules’ (taught in one of the main EU languages). This intercultural context is an inspiring context for innovative ideas, change and alike; extracurricular activities with mixed groups of students. It also leads to diversity in research groups which makes these groups stronger, as settled paradigms are being confronted with other/new ideas, theories etc. Also in the promotion of the joint degree formula, cooperation will get a sustainable character. As visiting teachers will take the expertise, good practices home, this will have a positive spin-off for curriculum development, quality management, professionalisation of pedagogical skills and educational management....

c) To enable students to benefit linguistically, culturally and educationally from the experience of pursuing academic studies in another country.
From Israeli participants the need was explicitly expressed that their students would get more opportunities to participate in an exchange programme abroad. Still the concept was quite new to both Israeli participants that their students would go to Europe for part of their studies. Mainly linguistic and cultural reasons count here as opportunities. One partner also expressed that it is an interesting counteraction to the relative isolation of Israel. Therefore they opt for more scholarships that last only one semester. For Egyptian and Palestinian students, the benefits will be mainly educational as they see their exchange period as an utmost efficient period in which they can commit themselves for 100 % to their studies or research, by far increasing their chances to succeed. Infrastructure and an acceptable teacher/student-ratio offer a cultivating context. This is certainly true for PhD-students, focusing on research, as research-development capacity in Egypt and Palestine is limited.

d) To improve the transparency and recognition of studies and qualifications.
Apart from the workshops (see a)) joint selection committees will design equivalence tables in order to match the ECTS-system with the Third Country-systems. Mobile teachers will play an important role in examining the compatibility of programmes at host and home universities. Alumni from different EU partners that have leading academic positions now in Third Country partner institutions, are eager to help the consortium in this as they know both systems.

e) To contribute to provide good students from vulnerable groups with further education and professional development and empowerment for leadership
As there are millions of Palestinian refugees in and outside the Palestinian Territories, and as there are many organisations that take care of this group of people, and as all participating Palestinian universities have strong links with these organisations, involvement of this group is rather obvious and easy. Complementary to that, EU-universities all have links with local organisations that take care of the education of refugees in these EU-countries. All partners agreed to stimulate the participation of disabled students, economically disadvantaged students and displaced populations. Other than in the first round of EMU2, and after negotiations with the Lot 3 project (Lund U.), we decided that we will focus for our TG3 participants on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This was mainly a suggestion by our Palestinian TG1 partners. We
respect this option. Dr. Sari Hanafi from the American University of Beirut will coordinate this action. BGUN will pay extra attention to the selection of students and participants from Bedouin Towns and Development towns.

f)  To enhance the skills and qualifications of foreign higher education staff
Formerly mobile teachers are convinced that ERASMUS teaching mobility has a positive impact on their institution of higher education. In this still early stadium of “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY 2”, mobile teachers and postdocs keep playing an utmost important role in this project; they must be selected strategically and need to agree to get the future role of EM coordinators, so they will play an important role in multiplying the effect of “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY 2” at their home institution.

g)  To build the capacity of the administration and public and private sector by participation of their staff in higher education mobility activities: also for the second call of “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY 2", we will mainly focus on administrations in Ministries of (higher) Education in Egypt and Palestine to involve candidates in this subgroup of Target Group 2. We keep on focusing on the educational sector, as this is immediately beneficial to the “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY 2” project (quality assurance, credit transfer systems, degree recognition, distance learning etc.). Later we can involve other areas.

h)  To enhance in the medium term the political, cultural, educational and economical links between the European Union and Third-countries: involving Egypt, Palestine and Israel in “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY 2” fits in the EU action plan as described in the country reports in the scope of the European Neighbourhood Policy: people-to-people contacts through education, research and development are one of the bases for a deepened political co operation and economic integration. Involving Israel is a counteraction to the academic boycott, opening doors for new dialogues. Involving Palestina will in any case have an effect on the development of its economical capacity, as young professionals are formed at high standard institutions. The first round of EMU2 shows that indeed beautiful things happen on micro-level, bringing these people together (cfr. Progress report on EMU2 dd. 31 January 2008).

➢ Main Activities: 

The University stimulates mobility in a diverse set of actions: small groups of Bachelor and Master students accompanied by one or more teachers residing for 6 months at an EU campus, combining courses with study, research initiation, and field trips. In the meantime, the academics teach in the programmes, guide the students, enhance their disciplinary skills, but also share good practices in issues such as curriculum development, quality assurance, diversity policies which they will take with them home. Moreover, they learn about the practicalities of exchange programmes and prepare themselves to be the future Erasmus Mundus Coordinators for “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY II” at their home campus. Over there, they will multiply the disciplines to be involved in future continuations of their project. That is why, exceptionally for the first phase of this project, the group of academic staff is better represented than suggested by the EC. Apart from the 30 staff members, 24 postdoc researchers will be strategically involved, 55 young promising students will get their PhD involving an “ERASMUS MUNDUS UNIVERSITY II” experience, 79 Master students will be mobile in the consortium, further to another 98 undergraduates. Some 11% of the group will move in the direction of the Third Countries involved.

For the efficiency and quality assurance of each mobility flow it is a necessity that all campuses of “Erasmus Mundus University 2” actively support setting up equivalence tables for the recognition of credits and degrees and fully act in the spirit and philosophy of the European Quality Charter for Mobility and the Erasmus Charter all EU-partners have ratified.

➢ Mobility flow:
### Number of Individual Mobility Activities foreseen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Mobility</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Third-Country nationals</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target Group 1</td>
<td>Ctry code(^1)</td>
<td>Target Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>EG</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-doctorates</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Duration: 45 months

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\(^1\) Please enter the figure for each of the specific countries of the targeted geographical window