Virtual Mobility
on Higher Education institutions

Enhancing Virtual Mobility to foster Institutional
cooperation and internationalisation of curricula

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Presente y futuro
de la formación virtual universitaria en España:
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Table of Contents:

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The MOVINTER Project[1] explores the concept of virtual mobility (hereafter VM), primarily understood in the framework of the internationalization of higher education and mutual benefits in the Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (ALCUE) area.

From the internationalisation point of view, VM is seen as an innovation catalyst; organizational, pedagogical, economical and cultural aspects undergo important transformations, nevertheless local culture specificities - that make each HEI unique - are carefully preserved.

As a matter of fact, such specificities are used as currency in the 'international market of knowledge': excellence in academic

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[1] The MOVINTER Project is conducted with the support of the European Union within the framework of the ERASMUS MUNDUS PROGRAMME – Action 4.

research and innovation are disseminated worldwide irrespective of the country/HEI of production.

Hence, VM can be fruitfully applied to meet Knowledge Society needs, to answer the rapid and versatile integration of the new information and communication technologies in training and education.

However, the success of VM, at least in Latin America, depends on the existence of a number of elements and factors that are not necessarily given in the Latin-American countries and in particular in Latin-American Higher education institutions (hereafter HEIs), where a high level of heterogeneity in terms of conditions and capacities is seen.

As regards intra-Regional mobility, on the contrary, we cannot ignore that higher education demand in Latin America and in the Caribbean is growing fast in comparison to Europe where such demand is experiencing a slowdown in recent years. As regards mobility, on the contrary, European situation appears to be more lively. In Latin-America the percentage of students involved in mobility experiences is less than 1%, while in the Caribbean it is almost non-existing.

For that reason the role of VM could represent an opportunity for both sides, giving concreteness and coherence to the LAC – EU cooperation enhancing mutual confidence, understanding and respect. Being the latters crucial for successful VM experiences.
Following these preliminary remarks, two central aspects need to be carefully analysed:

- needed conditions for VM existence (design and implementation of specific policies);
- existing conditions of HEIs to favour VM implementation.

Conditions favouring VM implementation:
- Public policies promoting and supporting VM. There is no trace of agreement – similar to the European Bologna Declaration – ensuring universal recognition of credits in the Latin-America area.
- Resources of all kinds (financial, infrastructure and human resources) devoted to VM. HEIs do not properly finance VM, but initial investments in technology are needed when dealing with such mobility.
- Researchers networks interested in virtual teaching and learning.
- New professional competences for teachers. Teachers should know and apply pedagogic models that consider the value of intercultural differences, the intense communication and collaborative project work. Moreover, teachers and students should gain specific knowledge, the so-called e-skills.

According to the speech of the Ministry of education of Costa Rica in the framework of the Foro de Ministros de Educación: Unión Europea-América Latina y El Caribe "Education Innovación e Inclusión Social", (Madrid, 25-26 March 2010), the interuniversity cooperation – particularly in the field of education, research and innovation – between Europe and Latin-America is fundamental.

The capacity of all countries to accede to high quality education and knowledge is a vital condition for preparing citizens to the changing and challenging labour, social and political contexts.

This document aims to stimulate the debate on VM which is a valuable tool for interuniversity cooperation.But this process is not just functional or suitable for Latin-American and/or European countries, on the contrary; the present document is intended to launch a worldwide discussion on VIRTUAL MOBILITY benefits.

1.2. Approach

The MOVINTER project aims to explore a concept of virtual mobility as a good support for the internationalisation of higher education with a balanced and "mutual benefit" approach. Our work has been focused on the following areas:

- A clear definition of the concept of virtual mobility
- An in depth desk research focused on the Identification of best practices, legislation review, and literature about virtual mobility
- Promotion of debate involving the following target groups: EU Higher Education institutions (managers, decision makers, academic staff and students); Latin American Higher Education institutions, (which will benefit by a strongercollaboration with EU universities and by the strengthening of a Common Area for HE), Academic and Professional associations and HE Networks; Policy and Decision-makers responsible for the Higher Education field from EU and LA (at regional, sub-regional, national, regional and local level, including the European Commission and the European Parliament); Academic and Professional associations and HE Networks and Public at large and the research community,

The project's main long-term outcomes will therefore be the following

- Operational outcome: the MOVINTER Modelling Engine providing tools and prototype services to support academic institutions in the exploitation of ICT and virtual mobility as means to foster international cooperation. This will be developed to respond to the needs of academic cooperation between EU and LA in the field of Social Sciences but its final version will be a transferable model adaptable to other geographical contexts and learning subjects.
- Policy outcome: the MOVINTER White Paper containing a Roadmap and recommendations on how to exploit the potential of ICT and Virtual Mobility to improve the nature and the effectiveness of international academic cooperation (targeting policy and decision makers involved in the design, development, monitoring and evaluation of policies relevant to HE).
- Networking outcome: the MOVINTER Stakeholders Community gathering experts, researchers, policy and decision makers and practitioners interested in implementing VM strategies to increase international cooperation.

1.3. Partners

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The Virtual eLearning Centre of the University of Granada accumulates previous experiences in the field of ICT and eLearning and is devoted mainly to the following set of activities: ICT Training of the academic staff, both in technological and methodological aspects of e-learning and design and implementation of a number of undergraduate and master courses. The CEVUG maintains relationships with Universities world-wide and has been involved in numerous joint research projects dealing with ICT. Through these different projects the University of Granada has reached a considerable expertise in the design, management and pedagogical and technological implementation of on-line courses. Furthermore, in the last two years the CEVUG took part in several projects that connected the Erasmus experience and the use of ICT, the Victorious Project aimed at better understanding the issues of virtual student mobility in Europe and the REVE project, aiming at enhancing the impact and efficiency of traditional Erasmus programmes through the set-up and support of mainstream Virtual Erasmus actions in the European Higher Education Area. It is also worth mentioning its participation in the e-learning task force of the Coimbra Group and in the alliance EUNITE, as well as in the European Foundation for Quality in eLearning (EFQUEL).

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SCIENTER, a centre for Research and Innovation for training, was established in 1988 as a non-profit consortium organisation, which includes the University of Bologna among its shareholders. During its twenty years of existence SCIENTER has become recognised as one of the leading European research centre in the field of Distance Learning carried out activities throughout European Community. SCIENTER's study and research activity is combined with participation in pilot projects at local, regional, national and European level, and includes the provision of technical assistance to National Governments, the European Commission, Regional Administrations, Universities, Training Organizations and both private and public enterprises.

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EuroPACE ivzw is a European non-profit association of universities and their partners in education and training, e.g. private companies, international networks and governmental institutions. The main objective of EuroPACE is to foster networked e-learning for virtual mobility, for internationalisation of higher education, for knowledge creation and sharing and for lifelong learning.

In order to do so EuroPACE ivzw develops, prepares and manages networked e-learning projects in the framework of international, national and regional programmes, in close collaboration with its members. Main fields of interest are internationalisation, innovation in education, new

educational technologies, quality in e-learning and e-learning competences and skills. Its target groups are higher education institutions, private companies and policy making bodies. The main activities of EuroPACE are research and development through projects, networking, expert 14ublis, events and 14ublishing of reports, papers and presentations

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The University of Aveiro is a young university, founded in 1973, with over 12000 full-time students (Graduation and Post-graduation). 8000 of these students use e-learning technologies in their coursework, which is coordinated by the Centre for Multimedia and Distance Education, a dedicated service for ICT in the education context. The University is a member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities and was one of the first institutions to be granted the ECTS label in 2004. UA participates in four ERASMUS MUNDUS Joint Masters programmes (and is co-ordinator in one of these) and runs a Joint Masters with the University of Carnegie Mellon in the US. UA also runs 2 joint doctoral programmes with two other Portuguese Universities.

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The Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO) began its activities in 1957 in Santiago de Chile-its original campus- thanks to a UNESCO-sponsored initiative. An international organization of an autonomous and regional character, FLACSO was created with the purpose of enhancing the knowledge on, as well as the social and political analysis of Latin America, through graduate programs and academic research in the fields of social

sciences and public policy. FLACSO offers a variety of graduate studies,, continuing education and professionalization programs. Its faculty engages in serious research in the field of social sciences, with emphasis on Latin American themes and issues. In addition, it develops teaching materials and has set up cooperation agreements with several universities, research centers, as well as with international, government and private organizations

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The Alma Mater Università di Bologna – operational unit of Buenos Aires (University) is formally established and operating in Buenos Aires since March 1999, following the signature of the Scientific Collaboration Treaty between Italian and Argentinean Governments. Principal objectives of the University: 1. To contribute to institutional innovation and internationalization of Italian university through the local settlement in Argentina of an autonomous representation of University of Bologna; 2. in the actual framework of political, cultural, economical globalization, to contribute and support, at a scientific and cultural level, the Italian international relationships with reference to Latin American countries, through the specific activities of a university: higher education, research and knowledge and ideas dissemination. The University has started its activities in Post Graduate Higher Education with a very light structure and a Master in International Relationships between Europe and Latin America.

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Chapter 2

The Role of Virtual Mobility on Higher Education Institutions

2.1. Definitions and concepts

In this chapter we give an overview of different types of mobility, (real and virtual), describe the key-concepts related to (virtual) mobility and list some important VM definitions. It will be obvious that the debate about the terminology is not yet over and that many definitions and classifications co-exist, emphasising different aspects of a complex reality. Within Movinter and in view of the cooperation between Europe and Latin America, it is also important to point out that both the history of ICT in education and the current situation with respect to mobility are very different in both continents.

Physical mobility[2]

Physical mobility, mobility in space, 'real' mobility, are all terms used to refer to students and/or teachers in (higher) education that are "physically" moving to another institution inside or outside their own country to study or to teach for a limited period of time. In the following paragraphs different aspects and different types and modes of mobility such as horizontal and vertical mobility, are distinguished.

Horizontal and vertical mobility

Student mobility can be classified by the length of the study period abroad. When students only spend part of their study programme abroad or at a different institution in the same country, and only complete some modules or courses, but not whole degrees, it is referred to as horizontal mobility (also called temporary, credit or non-degree mobility). Most national and European mobility programmes promote this variant of mobility. The maximum mobility period for students and graduates in such programmes is usually one year. With the implementation of the Bologna process and the increasing introduction of Bachelor and Master programmes in Europe, many higher education institutions are also expecting an increase in what is known as vertical mobility (also called degree or diploma mobility). Here, students study abroad for a full degree, achieving for example their first degree at an institution in one country (usually their home country) and their second degree at another institution, either in their home country or abroad (e.g.

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[2]   This chapter on Physical mobility is taken from the handbook 'Home & Away. Coaching exchange students from a distance. A best-practice manual on blended mobility', ed. Ilse Op de Beeck, Katrin Bijnens, Wim Van Petegem, EuroPACE ivzw, 2009

Bachelor degree at home – Master degree abroad). The EU Erasmus Mundus programme for example supports vertical mobility in a systematic manner (Wuttig S., 2006).

Mobility: different modes of organisation

Mobility can also be classified by the mode of organisation of the study period abroad. Programme students are mobile students taking part in an organised mobility programme. "Free movers" on the other hand do not benefit from any kind of agreements between institutions and do not take part in an organised mobility programme. "Free-mover" mobility is the oldest form of academic mobility. Since the middle of the 1970s organised mobility has gained increasing importance, with the rise of structured national promotional programmes (see for example the DAAD scholarships) and European mobility programmes. Organised or programme mobility is nowadays considered to be the major mobility engine for students, graduates, doctoral candidates and teaching staff in Europe (e.g. Erasmus, Leonardo, Marie Curie) and, increasingly, the entire world (e.g. Erasmus Mundus, Alßan) (Wuttig S., 2006). The geographical mobility of free-movers can take place within a country or across national borders. Free-mover mobility can also be seen on a worldwide scale and is generally not limited to certain regions or target countries. In contrast, organised or programme mobility usually focuses on certain regions (e.g. Ceepus, Nordplus…) or on certain continents (e.g. Europe in the case of Erasmus, Marie Curie) (Wuttig S., 2006). The importance and popularity of particular mobility schemes often differs between countries and in some countries free-mover mobility still plays a considerable role. Apart from the free-mover mobility and the international cooperation coordinated by specific externally funded programmes, many

higher education institutions cooperate with each other on a bilateral basis. Bilateral agreements between institutions are organised in order to start up joint initiatives or intensify existing contacts, and usually also create opportunities for student and staff mobility**.** The advantages of such bilateral agreements with regard to mobility are for example ease of application, smooth credit transfer and recognition of studies. Bilateral agreements can exist both on the level of the institution and on the level of faculties or departments. Finally, mobility can also be supported in the framework of networks of higher education institutions or student networks. The Coimbra Group Student Exchange Network for example is a mobility scheme complementing the traditional Erasmus mobility. It facilitates and encourages the mobility of students within the Coimbra Group, a network of long-established European multidisciplinary universities. An example of a student run mobility programme are the courses organised by BEST, the Board of European Students of Technology. Students from the BEST member universities get the opportunity to increase their knowledge, skills, international experience, establish contacts, etc. The cost of the courses is covered by the organisers.

Virtual Mobility

Below we will list different definitions of Virtual Mobility before describing in more detail the definition used within the Movinter project.

Virtual Mobility definition of the European Commission

At the e-learningeuropa.info portal 'Virtual Mobility' is defined as ''The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility but without the need to travel''.

Source:
http://www.elearningeuropa.info/main/index.php?page=glossary&abc=V

Virtual Mobility is a complement to or a substitute for physical mobility (Erasmus or similar) in addition to a type of independent mobility which builds on the specific potentials of on-line learning and network communication. It may prepare and extend physical mobility, and/or offer new opportunities for students/academic staff who are unwilling or unable to take advantage of physical mobility. It involves the development of virtual mobility for academic staff. It means that full academic recognition is given to the students for studies and courses based on agreements for the evaluation, validation and recognition of acquired competences via virtual mobility. In this context, cooperation agreements are key to ensuring sustainable mobility schemes.
Source:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/guide/glossary_en.html

Virtual Mobility defined by the BEING MOBILE Project
The BEING MOBILE - Disseminating Virtual Mobility for Students and Teachers project uses a more elaborate definition: "Virtual Mobility is a form of learning which consists of virtual components through a fully ICT supported learning environment that includes cross-border collaboration with people from different backgrounds and cultures working and studying together, having, as its main purpose, the enhancement of intercultural understanding and the exchange of knowledge".
Source: http://being-mobile.net/pdf/BM_handbook_final.pdf

Typology of Virtual Mobility proposed by the Being Mobile project[3]

Based on this broad definition the project identifies four main types of virtual mobility activities, within the framework of the Being Mobile Project the following typology of Virtual Mobility has been made:

- A virtual course or seminar: Learners in a higher education institute engage in virtual mobility for a single course (as part of a whole study programme) or a seminar (series) and the rest of their learning activities take place face-to-face in a traditional way.
- A virtual study programme: Hereby an entire virtual study programme is offered at one higher education institute, giving students from different countries the chance to take this programme without having to go abroad for a whole academic year.
- A virtual student placement: Student placements are organised between a higher education institute and a company (sometimes in a different country). In the virtual equivalent students are using ICT to support their internship, giving them a real-life experience in a corporate setting without the necessity to move from the campus to the company or to relocate to another country for a certain period of time, and providing them with a practical preparation for new ways of working through (international) collaborative team work.

Virtual support activities to physical exchange: Virtual mobility enables both better preparation and follow-up of students who

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[3]   Ed. H. Bijnens, M. Boussemaere, K. Rajagopal, I. Op de Beeck, W. Van Petegem, *European Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility. A Best-Practice Manual*, Being Mobile project, 2006

participate in physical exchange programs. Preparatory activities could include student selection at a distance through video- or webconferencing (for checking social and language skills) and on-line language and cultural integration courses. Follow-up activities will help students to keep in touch with their peers, scattered around the world, to finish their common research work and/or paper work. They could also take on the form of a so-called 'Virtual Alumni' organisation, to foster life-long friendships and networks

Virtual Mobility in the VM-Base project

The VM-Base project linked Virtual Mobility to physical mobility and introduced the concept of **blended mobility**. It described the different types of 'virtual' activities needed to support the students before, during and after their physical mobility experience.

The phase of supporting the students during their stay at another institution by 'virtual means' is called e-coaching and refers mainly to the activities of the teacher who is coaching the students at a distance.

Source: http://vm-base.europace.org/

Virtual Mobility defined by the E-MOVE Project

In general Virtual Mobility is defined in the E-MOVE project as an "activity that offers access to courses and study schemes in a foreign country and allows for communication activities with teachers and fellow students abroad via the new information and communication technologies"

In the guide to Virtual Mobility an additional criterion is used to further define Virtual Mobility. Virtual Mobility is defined as "an activity based on a co-operation of – at least two – Higher Education-

institutions: two or more institutions agree to offer their students the opportunity to acquire a number of ECTS-points at one of the foreign partner universities or through a joint activity of the partners. The ECTS-points of this international experience will then be counted to the student's degree at his/her home university".

Source: EADTU Position Paper on Virtual Mobility
http://145.20.178.4/Portals/0/documents/The_Guide_to_Virtual_Mobility.pdf

Virtual Mobility on Wikipedia[4]

Virtual mobility refers to students and teachers in higher education using another institution outside their own country to study or teach for a limited time, without physically leaving their home. Virtual mobility has been defined as an activity that offers access to courses and study schemes in a foreign country and allows for communication activities with teachers and fellow students abroad via the new information and communication technologies. Striving for a European educational space, the European ministers of Education consider Virtual Mobility as a necessary addition to the traditional ways of studying abroad, that required travelling. In Europe, databases like Educontact provide students with an overview of available courses.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_mobility

Virtual Mobility defined by the MOVINTER Project[5]

Within the MOVINTER project we defined a set of relevant key components of Virtual Mobility that have to be present in order to talk about Virtual Mobility. These are:

- International student groups

- International teacher groups

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[4]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_mobility

[5]   Cf. also the 'Concept of Virtual Mobility within the MOVINTER project.'

- Interactivity and communication
- Technological solutions
- Multicultural exchange

Additional components that are to be considered and that can add to the impact of Virtual Mobility are:
- (Joint) Titles
- Joint curricula design
- Joint Production of learning resources
- Motivations/Stakeholders

The MOVINTER project does not want to define Virtual Mobility only in relation to physical mobility/ or as a support to physical mobility since Virtual Mobility has a value as an autonomous activity.

2.2. Virtual Mobility Framework

In this section we give an overview of the framework in which Virtual Mobility is developed, looking at the regulations, legal and administrative aspects for Latin America and Europe.

2.2.1 Overview on regulations' framework for Latin America

The Fields of analysis in Latin America

In the context of Latin America it is unsuitable to speak about specific legislation on a topic like Virtual Mobility, which is still not sufficiently developed. Therefore, the Movinter project proceeded in the research on regulations' framework on Virtual Mobility considering three fields of analysis, all of them involving some

aspects about legislation, regulations and programs that, although not directly referring to the Virtual Mobility (VM) concept, are the ones that actually would a direct impact on the development of VM in LA. The State of Art on these three fields give a general regulations' framework in which Virtual Mobility would have to act, the same in which the actual Virtual Campuses developed in Latin America are operating.

The fields of analysis for regulations' framework in Latin America are the following:

♦ **Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Countries, at national and sub-regional level (Accreditation Process)**

These field provides a general overview on the State of Art on Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Countries, at national and sub-regional governmental level, in order to clarify how the Latin-American countries and sub-regions still not have a common legislation framework to refer to on the theme, but an ongoing recognition process that has to be taken in consideration to have a clear picture on the LA regulations and framework on VM, as mutual titles recognition is a main component in VM;
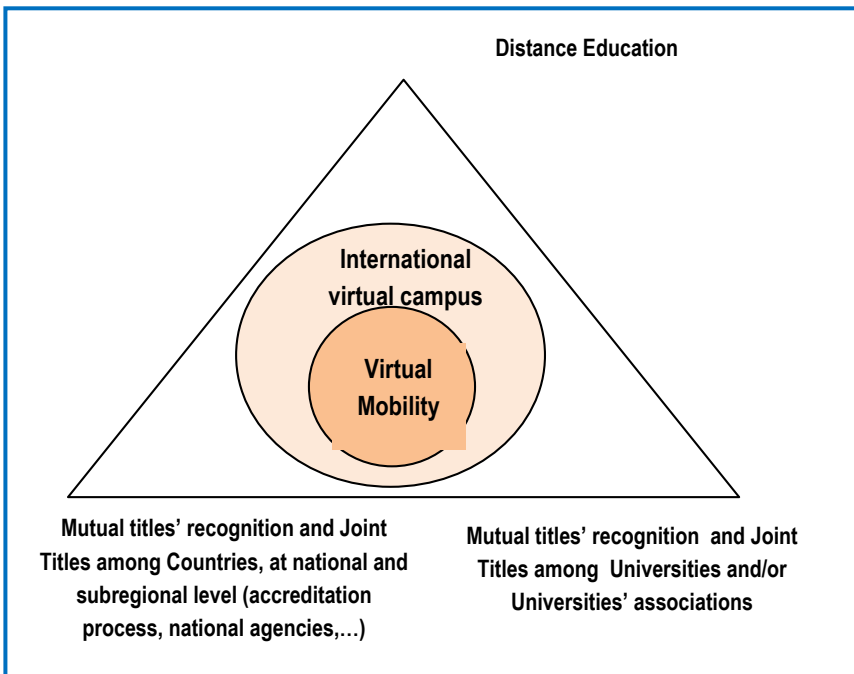
♦ **Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Universities and/or Universities' associations**

In parallel to national and sub-regional governments processes, there are direct agreements among universities and universities associations that has to be taken in consideration when thinking at the state of art on VM in Latin America, for the same reason above mentioned.

♦ **Distance Education**

Distance Education is referred to in the laws at national level in some countries in LA. There are also sub- regional programs (VirtualEduca) that are being developed that give suggestions and examples on potential actors, stakeholders and regulation context relevant for VM projects.

In the following picture the three fields of analysis are shown in relation to the Virtual Mobility, fields that are also the same in which the International Virtual Campuses are operating.

Distance Education

International virtual campus

Virtual Mobility

Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Countries, at national and subregional level (accreditation process, national agencies,…)

Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Universities and/or Universities' associations

Regulations' Framework on Mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Countries, at national and sub-regional level (accreditation process, national agencies,…) and mutual titles' recognition and Joint Titles among Universities and/or Universities' associations

The objective of this section is to give an overview of the national and cooperation processes in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, to have a framework of reference for Virtual Mobility. In the '90 in Latin America and the Caribbean different elements have contributed to a great challenge to maintain quality, among which: a great expansion of students in a period of economical crisis; the reduction of the national budgets on higher education; the entry of the private sector in higher education; the affirmation of different models of higher education. These processes raised the issue and the priority for quality assurance and accreditation, that is almost the main issue in Latin American context of Higher Education, and that gives the general framework for institutions and actors relevant for regulations in the field.

In Latin America each country has developed different actions with this respect, according with its necessities and the regulations of its educational system. Nevertheless, although each country have created its own agencies and accreditation institutions, today different typologies of entities exist in terms of objectives, field of application, study fields, procedures, experience and level of consolidation.

Although in different ways, in Latin America and the Caribbean the accreditation is consolidating as an external certification process of study programs, titles or institutions, with a temporal valid period, that is based on quality standards previously established form the institution responsible for the accreditation. It includes, generally, the auto-evaluation and an external evaluation. In the Latin-American region the central aspect of accreditation is the control and the

quality assurance, meanwhile the evaluation is associated more with the logic of increasing academic level.

Frequently, the State regulation in terms of quality – both directly and/or in a decentralized mode – coexist with the activity of the National Agencies of Accreditation that, in some countries, are authorized and linked, in different ways, to ministries of education and universities associations.

The National Agencies or Commissions are the focal point on which the International Accreditation Network are based and different networks with the objective of an harmonization of LA Higher Education systems have been developed. From this perspective have to be considered the:

♦ Red Iberoamericana for the Accreditation of Quality in higher education (RIACES)

♦ Sistema Centroamericano de Evaluación y Acreditación de la Educación Superior (SICEVAES),

♦ and local fora that interact to agree on different dimensions and criteria to define education of quality.

In this context the **Andrés Bello Agreement** by the States of the Andenean region has to be mentioned, and is applicable on the fields of education, sciences, technology and culture. A special mention has to be given to UDUAL-SEASESALC, that also do not arise from an initiative of the States, is important to be considered when analyzing the regional processes of accreditation. The experiences most developed at sub-regional level are in the framework of the Mercosur educativo: the **Mexa** and **Marca** programs for the development on the general accreditation systems for titles in Mercosur. (ARCUSUR). The National Agencies network La *Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación* (RANA) is responsible for the

implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the system. This framework supports the implementation of MEXA and MARCA programs, which contribute led to the definition of a permanent mechanism in the Region.

A relevant process in the process of building an harmonized system and framework of regulations in LA is the consolidation on an International Agency, **IESALC/UNESCO** as the main instrument to support the change management and transformation of higher education in the region. The "Instituto Internacional para la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe" (IESALC) it is an UNESCO institution dedicated to the promotion of higher education, contributing to the implementation of the program approved each two years by the general conference of UNESCO.

The central mission of IESALC is to contribute to the development and transformation of higher education in Latina America and Caribe with a program that actually define it as an instrument to support change management in Higher Education. In the last World Conference in Higher Education (CMES), in the final chapter named " New Dynamics in Higher Education and Research for social change and development (2009), recommends to UNESCO to pay particular attention to specific matters among the 5 functions, and to give support to the strategy definition for higher education and research in long terms; to suggest platforms for dialogue and experiences and information interchange; to help governments and institutions to treat international matters linked to higher education, promoting instruments that are focused to the definition of standards, helping to develop capacities to ensure quality in higher education. IESALC do not only participate to the conceptualization and definition of programs, objectives and strategies of UNESCO in higher education matters in regional context, but contributes to

reaching this objectives collaborating with governmental and non governmental bodies and with the academic local community.

This happens through the constitution of networks and the production and dissemination of studies and researches on relevant aspects on Higher Education in Latina America and the Caribe, and the support to Member States in the definition of national, sub-regional and regional policies.

UNESCO is implementing an important function to support, revise and actualize existing agreements in the Region for title recognition. If these frameworks were put in place, these agreements could give an international framework for title recognition at international level.

With the LIMA declaration of July 2009 the support to the *Conferencia Regional de la Educación Superior-CRES* Declaration is underlined, to develop the Latinamerican space of Education, **ENLACES**, as the main cooperation and integration process in Latin America and the Caribe Higher Education Systems.

While these harmonization processes are developing in the sub-regional and regional context, specific agreements   among member of Universities Associations (as ASCUN in Colombia and ANUIES in Mexico) are put in place for specific title recognition, in the framework of the individual association.

VIRTUALEDUCA, a sub-regional program referring to Distance Education; specific references to Distance Education in laws at national level: the Mexican Case

In the Latin-American context characterized by fragmentation and an on-going process of harmonization of agreements and regulations, the Distance Learning sector is in line with the general

framework. A particular sub-regional program has to be mentioned in the Latin American context, as also a specific national context, the Mexican, is taken into consideration, as an example of what level of legislation on the subject is present in Latin American countries.

Virtual Educa (http://www.virtualeduca.org/) is a multilateral cooperation initiative on education, training and innovation. It's a project formally inserted in the *Cumbre Iberoamericana de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno,* the commission of Ibero-American Chiefs of Government. Virtual Educa is a Space of convergence for the interchange of experiences and project implementation linked to Knowledge Society. The initiative underlines that professional training and continuos learning are critical for development and the matching of demand and offer in professional training and learning cannot be resolved exclusively through traditional instruments and methods.

The Ibero-American institute for training (IBERFORM) is the operating priority of the sub-program "Capacitación Profesional y Formación Continua" de VirtualEduca. Its main objective is to put in place innovating systems for professional training and permanent learning in Iberoamerica

Among the general actions it is important to underline the mission given to Virtual Educa by the Directive Council of the *Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (OEI)* to "push for a strategic plan for iberoamerican cooperation 205-2006 in New Technologies, according to regional priorities" [69ª reunión ordinaria, Playa del Carmen, México, 20-21.01.2005].

Also the *Consejo Directivo de la Asociación de Televisión Educativa Iberoamericana* (ATEI) agreeement has to be mentioned: "...*ATEI asume – in collaboration with Virtual educa Program, the*

Organization of iberoamerican States and the Secretaría de Cooperación Iberoamericana (SECIB) – will offer trainign to professors in pedagogic use and management of OCT, oin the incorporation of ICTs in pedagogic practices and certification of competencies..." [Acuerdos del XXII Consejo Directivo de la ATEI, La Habana, Cuba, 02-03.02.2005].

" *…SEGIB will support will support the transversal integration of Virtual educa in pother actions of training and education, in the development of innovative projects with ICT technologies in order to generate creative answer to the professional demand and technical training in the region. In the same way SEGIB will promote the articulation and links among this project and similar initiatives…*"

In the Executive Report of the General Secretary of VirtualEduca in 1rst septiember 2009, the Declaration of the *XIX Conferencia Iberoamericana de Educación*, is mentioned in its 4th point [Lisboa, 20.04.2009] "*…Virtual Educa will be strenghted for 2010-2010*" and is therefore the reference Program for the Distance Learning and Innovative projects in Higher Education that refered to ICT. Therefore also for Virtual Mobility.

At national level, Distance Education in referred to in educational policies and sectorial programs, but in a general way and with very general definition and mentions in the national regulation context. To have an example, in Mexico the **National Plan for Education** is inserted in **the National Plan for Development (PND)**. To get an idea on priorities in national plans in the region, the National Plan for Education 2007-2012 in Mexico, has the following main objectives:

- to cover education demand with equity
- higher education with quality, integration and coordination
- management of the higher education system

- international cooperation is vital for continuos development of Higher Education

The reason to incorporate the international dimension is the that international cooperation is considered as a relevant factor for an higher quality in education. For this reasons, the National Plan for Education (2007-2012) establishes explicitly the interest in the internationalization of Mexicans IES:

- *Objective 1.2 To promote the international dimension in mexican institutions of higher education, in their programs and activities, for an higher quality in education*

The objective 9.3 refers to the actualization of study programs, their content, materials and methods. But it is relevant to underline that in the National Education Program reference to UNESCO objectives, among which the reference to ICT are refered to as:

- *Objective 3: To push the development and use of ICT in the education system to support learning process of student, reinforce their knowledge for life and facilitate knowledge society.*

2.2.2 Overview on Regulation's Framework for Europe

The need for a legal framework - comparable with the real Erasmus - is felt by most stakeholders involved in Virtual Mobility. In the REVE manual[6], I. Perez (University of Granada) stated that 'even today, legislation or internal university rules often still make it rather hard to set up Virtual Mobility activities.' Although the practical situation has improved, mainly due to the efforts of motivated individuals and institutions, there is still a lack of an overall Framework.

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[6] Virtual Mobility Manual 'How to teach internationally from your own desk?' http://reve.europace.org/drupal

Physical Erasmus has been made possible thanks to the establishment of general agreements between European universities, while most of the Virtual Mobility initiatives at this moment are only supported by (ad hoc) bilateral agreements.

The programmes that form the mobility framework within Europe are described further in this document, but it is important to stress at this point the urgent need for a broader comprehensive and explicit framework for Virtual Mobility that would allow for further development and mainstreaming. Since now, on the one hand, the virtual exchanges that are happening within European institutions find their origin in personal contacts of teaching staff and personal motivations and can therefore not be mainstreamed. On the other hand, we see even that the existing legal situation is often causing new/additional problems: some countries in Europe still have legislations in place that prevent the recognition of qualifications gained by distance learning, and many countries regard them as inferior qualifications.

Even cultural aspects such as language can now cause legal problems. In Belgium for example the national law to protect the local culture forbids there being more than 10% of the courses in another but the local language. While in Virtual Mobility activities there is a need for a 'common' working language (can be more then one) used by the participants.

2.2.3. Legal Framework of the European Higher Education Area with Latin America.

The building of the European Higher Education Area with Latin America represents a challenge from both the legal and institutional

point of view since it demands the reproduction of the process, already proved in Europe, of tackling in the first place the mutual recognition of degrees, then to advance the progressive approach of the contents of those degrees.

In the 70s to achieve the goal de free movements of persons, the community institutions encouraged the Member Status to carry out a profound change in their university systems. With the initiative of the European Commission, the first directives were then adopted leading to the mutual recognition of the degrees in medicine, nursing, and veterinary sciences, to deal later with technical studies. Thirty years later, the Member States and the Community Institutions initiated the creation of the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process to facilitate the recognition of European university degrees.

Now the European Union seeks to travel the same road with Latin American and Caribbean States. We know the steps to take, although the context is different and therefore it will necessary to adapt the initiatives, the plans to those differences that characterize those countries, especially those who are now confronting the challenge of the expansion of university studies as well as that of the digital gap. For these reasons we must take into account that:

♦ The Latin American and Caribbean States have not yet assumed the free movement of persons as goal in their cooperative and integration relations, even though, in most Latin American constitutions the right to move freely is recognized as evidence of the spirit that united them after decolonialisation.

♦ Most inter-university programmes between Latin American and Caribbean States grant academic recognition but do not

enable the holders of such degrees to exercise their professions in States of which they are not nationals.

♦ Regional academic cooperation has been developed in the improvement of Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Control in teaching.

To achieve the Higher Education Area between European Union and Latin American and Caribbean countries (ALCUE) pilot projects and initiatives have been started because the strategy adopted by the EU is to analyze the results obtained and draw consequences from an "outcome-based approach". Starting from university degrees, undergraduate and preferably post-graduate, the results obtained will determine the academic procedures necessary at the state level and each university to obtain:

♦ The mutual recognition of degrees.

♦ The creation of double and joint degrees.

This pragmatic and casuistic approach is being carried out without a community legal framework. Lacking this legal framework, it is necessary to identify not only the national norms applicable in a case by case basis according to the European State or States participating in the initiatives but also the national norms of the participating Latin American and Caribbean States, and to determine the validity of the degrees obtained. The validity of the degrees obtained may be purely academic, with a national scope or for a set of States and/or may qualify the holder to exercise a profession not only in the member Status that award the degree but also in other participating states.

In the very long term, once the ALCUE Higher Education Area has been consolidated, similar to the way in which the European Higher Education Area has been built in Europe with the Bologna Process,

the degrees obtained should be accepted in all the States participating in the Area.

Lacking a referential legal framework that has been agreed by the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean Status, a pragmatic approach to promote university projects is being fostered, such as the Erasmus Mundus initiative for the building of university networks that create joint and double post-graduate degrees. Moreover, the EU Member States have promoted their own initiatives, as in the case of Spain and the Programme Pablo Neruda of mobility of professors and post-graduate students, which in the first place will facilitate the free recognition of degrees and later, double and joint degrees.

Within this framework in construction of the Higher Education Area, the MOVINTER Project has among its aims that of facilitating the information hended to foster the creation of double and joint degrees among the European, Latin American and Caribbean Universities working in projects of university cooperation with a technological basis. For this, the universities participating in MOVINTER have initiated a selection process of 'good practices' made until now in the field of Open Distance Learning (ODL) to identify both existing problems and their possible solutions. From the analysis of these good practices that date from the middle of the 90's until today, we can conclude that:

♦ Most teaching carried out has had an academic recognition based on good will, namely, lacking any agreement between university institutions, the activities have been incorporated in the teachers and students curricula in accordance with the

national regulations of the country granting the degree, without reflecting the inter-university character of the degree.

♦ Initially, in the 90s, when developing the ODL academic projects the following problems were tackled:

  ♦ Lack of resources: There were not even computer rooms and/or software necessary for ODL in the European Faculties, so that they have to be acquired as in the case of the WEBCT platform.

  ♦ Lack of training for the teachers who were familiar with the resources and methodology required. The teaching methodology has been progressively adapted to ODL at the same time as it has been implemented.

  ♦ Lack of training for students: Initially the students had no notion about Internet. That problem has today been overcome by the implementation of the new technologies in virtually all European University Centres.

♦ So today we can say that the interuniversity initiatives of Higher Education with a technological basis have the technical resources and jeans necessary and with a teaching methodology adapted to the new virtual and technological environment. However, there is still not a clear legal framework that establishes the validity of the negrees obtained beyond the country leading the academic projects. The question of legal validity of undergraduate and post-graduate degrees obtained is being dealt with in a new phase that must result in the establishment of the legal framework to enable the scope of the validity to be established, through the recognition of double and joint degrees.

Moreover, the experience gained in ODL in European Universities can now be applied to the programmes being developed with Latin American and Caribbean countries. In particular, the lessons learned must be taken into account when identifying and assessing the problems posed by the digital gap that exists in those countries. That digital gap has been analysed by UNESCO and the specialised regional organisations such as the Organisation of Iberoamerican States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI, Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura). That gap exist not only among Latin American and Caribbean countries, but also within them, as serious differences exist between the rural zones and the cities and between the different social sectors, which biases the statistical data, revealing that the resources are concentrated in the private universities in the case of Higher Education.

For all these reasons, MOVINTER faces the challenge of developing a community of users that will create databases to gather the information necessary to assess the state of ODL in European, Latin American and Caribbean countries. On that base, future actions can be projected.

2.2.4 Overview of Programmes related to Virtual Mobility and EU-LA cooperation

The best-known programme of the European Commision with regard to mobility is of course the Erasmus programme that allows thousands of students to travel and spend part of their study time in another country. But the European Commission funds several other mobility schemes and many students are not traveling under Erasmus

but under other schemes. A few of those examples are briefly presented here. Other programmes described below, concern the structural cooperation between EU and Latin America that together form the reference framework for the Movinter activities.

Erasmus

Erasmus is probably worldwide the best-known programme of the European Commission. It has become the EU flagship programme promoting student and staff mobility and enhancing quality and reinforcing the European dimension of higher education. In 1987 the European Commission began supporting a mobility programme for European students named after the philosopher, theologian and humanist Erasmus. Its core idea was to facilitate university students' mobility amongst European universities. Quickly the programme became very popular amongst European students. Since 2007 Erasmus became part of the EUs Lifelong Learning Programme and expanded to cover new areas such as student placements in enterprises (transferred from the Leonardo da Vinci programme), university staff training and teaching for enterprise staff. The programme seeks to expand its mobility actions even further in the coming years. Currently, the Erasmus programme contains a wide range of measures designed to support the European activities of higher education institutions and to promote the mobility and exchange of their teaching staff and students. Actions include not only support for students (studying and working abroad, linguistic preparation), but also for university/higher education institute staff (teaching or receiving training abroad), for universities/ higher education institutes (intensive programmes, academic and structural networks, multilateral projects), and for enterprises (student placements, teaching abroad, university cooperation).

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm

Erasmus Mundus

Erasmus Mundus started in 2004 to promote European higher education as a centre of excellence in the world. The programme is intended to strengthen European cooperation and international links in higher education by supporting high-quality European Masters Courses, by enabling students and visiting scholars from around the world to engage in postgraduate study at European universities, as well as by encouraging the outgoing mobility of European students and scholars towards third countries. The current Erasmus Mundus programme (2004-2008) has been successfully running since its launch. The new Erasmus Mundus II programme (2009-2013) builds on this by aiming to become the EU reference programme for cooperation with third countries in this area.

Over a period of five years, over 950 million euros will be available for European and third-country universities to join forces in joint programmes or collaborative partnerships, and to grant scholarships to European and third-country students for an international study experience.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm

Tempus

Tempus (the Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies) supports the modernisation of higher education and creates an area of cooperation in countries surrounding the EU. Established in 1990, the scheme now covers 27 countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Tempus finances two types of actions: • Joint Projects are based on multilateral partnerships between higher education institutions in the EU and the partner countries. They can develop, modernise and disseminate new curricula, teaching methods or materials, boost a

quality assurance culture, and modernise the management of higher education institutions. Joint Projects also include small scale and short duration mobility activities for students, academic staff, researchers, university administrators and enterprise; • Structural Measures contribute to the development and reform of higher education institutions and systems in partner countries, to enhance their quality and relevance, and increase their convergence with EU developments.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/external‑relation‑programmes/doc70_en.htm

Ceepus

The Ceepus (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies) programme started in March 1995. Ceepus supports university networks operating joint programmes, ideally leading to joint degrees. In the framework of these networks, Ceepus covers mobility grants for students and teachers. The Ceepus partner countries provide the funding for the programme. Students can spend a study period abroad or teachers can undertake a teaching period at a partner university.

These opportunities are designed to strengthen professional and personal relationships among Central European scholars. Member countries are Albania, Austria, Bosnia‑Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Kosovo.

http://www.ceepus.info

Nordplus

The Nordplus Framework Programme offers financial support to a variety of educational cooperation between partners in the area of lifelong learning from the eight participating countries in the Nordic

and Baltic regions (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden). The Nordplus Framework Programme 2008–2011 supports mobility, project and network activities and consists of four sub–programmes: Nordplus junior, Nordplus Higher Education, Nordplus Adult Learning and Nordplus Horizontal. The Nordplus Higher Education Programme was established in 1988 and offers opportunities for students and teachers as well as administrators. The main activities of the programme include mobility grants for students and teachers, intensive courses for students to experience more than the usual classroom, teachers learning from each other and networking for developing innovative projects.

http://www.nordplusonline.org

Alfa - Regional Cooperation Programme

ALFA is a programme of co-operation between higher education institutions (HEI's) of the European Union and Latin America. The Programme's general objective is to contribute to the development of the higher education in Latin America (LA) through cooperation between the EU and the countries of Latin America, as a means of contributing to the economic and social development of the region in general and the more balanced and equitable development of Latin-American society in particular.

The Alfa III Programme is developed around the following priorities:

♦ reform and modernisation of higher education institutions (HIE) and systems in the beneficiary countries;

♦ quality, accessibility and relevance of higher education in the beneficiary countries;

♦ development of skilled human resources in the Latin-American region, taking particular account of the least favoured or

vulnerable groups and the region's poorest countries, promoting the participation of entities from these countries;

♦ support for HEI and other relevant actors in making progress towards the creation of a joint higher education area in LA and to promote its links with the EU;

♦ promoting cooperation and the establishment of networks and lasting links between institutions of higher education in the two regions.

The actions are carried out in the 27 EU Member States and the 18 countries of Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/alfa/index_en.htm

@LIS2 - ALliance for the Information Society, phase 2

@LIS2 is a European Commission Programme aiming to continue the promotion of the Information society and fight the digital divide throughout Latin. Its objectives are to continue to promote, and at the same time improve and extend the dialogue and applications on Information Society in Latin America, boost interconnections between research networks and communities in both regions reducing the digital divide and integrating Latin America into a Global Information Society. The activities of the programme (in which all LA countries are involved in the whole of the region) have been organised around three lines of action with as many projects to be implemented between 2009 and 2012.

Each of the projects will contribute to bring closer the communities of players and users of the two regions and facilitate the integration of the Latin-American countries in a global information society.

Specific objectives of the second phase of @LIS2 Programme

♦ Continue promoting and at the same time improve and extend the dialogue and applications on Information Society in Latin America

♦ Stimulate and support research intra LA and with Europe

♦ Support the homogenization and harmonization of regulatory processes, in the telecommunications sector in Latin America.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/alis/index_en.htm

http://www.delchl.ec.europa.eu/en/whatsnew/EVENTS_2009_03_17_@lis_cepal.htm

SMILE · Student Mobility in Latin America, Caribbean and Europe

The SMILE programme is a pilot programme launched by the Magalhães network and allows the exchange of students between the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean countries, with academic recognition between Europe and Latin America and Caribbean, in line with the ERASMUS programme.

The mobility rules of the SMILE programme are similar to those of ERASMUS programme. Should your university of origin have a SMILE agreement with IST, you can carry out a period of studies of one semester or a full academic year at IST. The Department Coordinator of the home University shall be responsible for drafting the study plans, in cooperation with the Coordinator of the host University.

Universities involved in the programme (and study areas)

♦ Brazil, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro - Architecture, Engineering

♦ Brazil, Universidade de São Paulo - Architecture, Engineering

- Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile - Architecture, Engineering
- Colombia, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana - Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Management, Electrotechnical Engineering, Management
- Colombia, Universidad de los Andes - Architecture, Engineering
- Mexico, Instituto Politécnico Nacional - Architecture, Engineering
- Venezuela, Universidade Simón Bolívar - Architecture, Engineering

ALBAN · European Union Programme of High Level Scholarships for Latin America

The ALBAN Programme is a high level scholarship programme specifically addressed to Latin America, adopted in 2002 by the European Commission. The ALBAN Programme wants to enable Latin American students and professionals, future academics and decision-makers in their own countries, to benefit from the excellence of the Higher Education Area in the European Union. The periods of education and training may range from 6 months to 3 years depending on the type of project and the level envisaged. To foster the student mobility in the framework of the ALBAN programme, there is a reduction of 50% of the IST's tuition fee.
http://www.programalban.org/index.php?lg=13#

Chapter 3

In praise of Virtual Mobility: How ICT can support Institutional Cooperation and Internationalisation of Curricula in Higher Education

3.1 The place of Virtual Mobility in the modernization agenda of Higher Education

In a short three-year period the European Union issued three fundamental Declarations[7] that completely re-designed training and education policy to help EU citizens to cope with globalisation challenges.

These Declarations - not to mention the World conference on higher education held in Paris in 1998 - rethought the role of the University for the years to come, that is the role to be played in the Europe/World of Knowledge. In such a Europe/World, higher education institutions (HEIs) abandon the 'splendid isolation' and open to society, relate to other actors - principally their own kind – also encouraged by the role of technologies in facilitating information and knowledge flow at global level.

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[7]   Bologna, Lisbon and Copenhagen Declarations – 1999, 2000, 2001

The internationalisation process of universities, their strive towards cooperation, represents HEIs answer to globalisation: while meeting and cooperating, HEIs work hard to adapt their programmes and curricula towards the societal needs.

More recently, the UNESCO World Conference of Higher Education (Paris 5-8 July 2009) closes with a call to governments to increase investment in higher education, encourage diversity and strengthen regional cooperation to serve societal needs. The communiqué stresses that "higher education must pursue the goals of equity, relevance and quality simultaneously", moreover it notes that information and communications technologies should be more fully integrated throughout higher education to meet increasing student demand and share the results of scientific research.

According to "Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution" report – prepared for the 2009 UNESCO World Conference of Higher Education – major trends in higher education are: massification in higher education; globalization and internationalization; distance education and new applications for information and communication technologies (ICTs); the privatization of higher education; the global flow of talent (globalization has exacerbated the worldwide movement of highly educated people); the academic profession at a crossroads for the student experience; research universities and the "world-class" phenomenon; financing higher education; quality assurance and university-industry linkages.

To cope with these major trends and to strengthen and enhance international cooperation – by encouraging diversity, pursuing equity, relevance and quality – HEIs can rely on VIRTUAL mobility, one of the most valuable and, at the same time, underestimated tool.

Physical mobility (of students, researchers, teachers and staff) gained fame in the last years, also thanks to specific programmes promoting it extensively (i.e the MARCA Programme, the regional academic mobility programme of the educational sector of MERCOSUR, the Erasmus programme in Europe). The Educational Sector of Mercosur (SEM)[8] has been proposed as a regional space to foster the integration of educational sectors of member countries. The SEM was created in 1991 with the signing of the Protocol of Intent by the Ministers of Education of the region, made up of member countries and associates (Bolivia and Chile). Although the SEM has moved forward with great caution, its activities and meetings have exhibited ahigh level of continuity.

Still, physical mobility entails a great deal of time, money, administrative and organisational support, while VIRTUAL mobility can be seen as a cost-effective and more inclusive complement to physical mobility.
As a matter of fact, time and economic resources won't represent a barrier for individual and, at the same time, HEIs keep pursuing and promoting their internationalisation policy.

The two terms, VIRTUAL and MOBILITY, are often misconceived.
MOBILITY leads one to think to separation rather than to connectivity, access and community; but, presumably, what makes virtual mobility really weak is the term VIRTUAL. In some respects 'VIRTUAL' – if compared to 'physical' – recalls a sense of intangibility and volatility, running the risk of conveying such flimsiness to the MOBILITY

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[8] Reference:
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLACREGTOPEDUCATION/Resources/Higher_Ed_in_LAC_Intnal_Dimension.pdf

contents themselves. People are not mobilised in this case, what is *mobilised*, and therefore transferred, is knowledge, that is what lies at the basis of the Knowledge Society. Probably, the terminology needs to be revised to make sure and bring consistency and immediate clarity on what virtual mobility is and benefits that may bring in the academic arena.

VIRTUAL mobility does not simply represent the use of tools and approaches allowing the transfer of knowledge, we would then simply talk about e-Learning and Distance Learning.
These are teaching/learning approaches, while virtual mobility just makes use of ICT, and has an inborn political undertone. What is then virtual mobility? Virtual mobility is a clear answer to:

- Geographical/physical constraints;

- Socio-economical barriers;

- Time constrictions.

Within the modernisation process of HEIs specific areas/activities can be identified: the use of VM "to complement Physical Mobility of students and researchers", VM as a mean to enhance "Research collaboration", to enforce "capacity building", to provide further "opportunities for postgraduate students and researchers ", to deliver "joint titles", to "jointly develop curriculum" and to further exploit "ICT potential". Ultimately, VM is a facilitator and aggregating element providing overall coherence to HEIs fundamental activities. VIRTUAL MOBILITY can be then visualised as a 'meeting point' of these areas/activities that also represent different "paths" towards the discovery of VM potential (Figure 1).
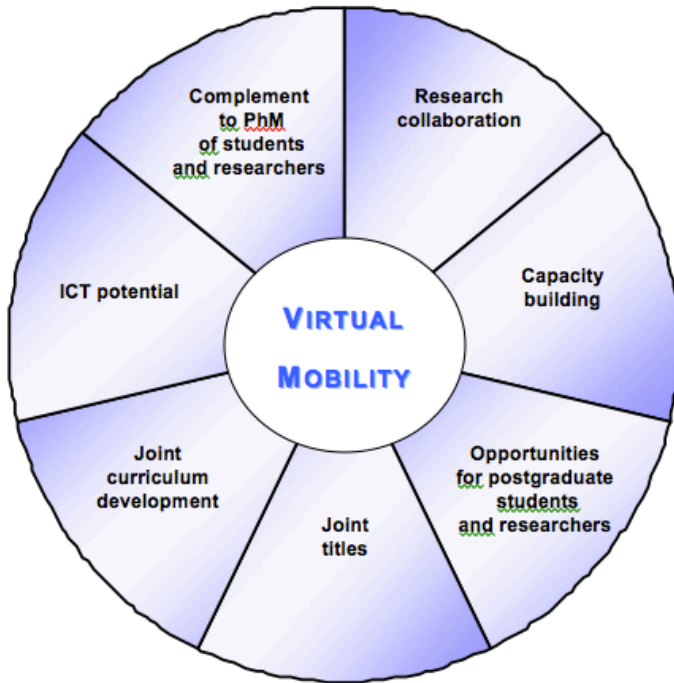
Figure 1

3.2. Why VIRTUAL MOBILITY is important

The Movinter White Paper intends to attract attention on the unexploited potential of Virtual Mobility:

- To democratise access to international, transdisciplinary and intercultural study experience (now reserved to a relatively small minority of students), contributing thereby to the social inclusion and cohesion;

- To produce stable collaboration among teaching and research teams, and their institutions, building on recognised complementarities and specialisations through collaborative and

participative networking activities. This stable collaboration could enhance and increase research and innovation answering the challenge to link global (new) knowledge to local knowledge and problems.

- To seize the opportunities presented by cultural convergence and participation in the current Information and Knowledge Society;

- To make the practice of joint titles, at various academic levels (undergraduate, master and doctoral programs) and with diverse modalities (master courses, single subjects, seminars and workshops) a reality, much before a full institutional recognition of academic titles from other countries is in place;

- To link universities/HEIs among them and with universities/HEIs of other parts of the world in an "academic friendly way", multiplying the impact of inter-regional cooperation programmes now focused almost exclusively on physical mobility of students, teachers and researchers;

- Mobility is an enriching life experience and a recognized policy priority, but cannot reach any student regardless of social, economical or accessibility issues and may probably remain an option only for elites, especially when inter-continental mobility is involved.

- Distributed e-Learning and cross-border Distance Education are often more affordable than Physical Mobility, but not always allow and promote interaction among the educational community (students, teachers and staff) and authentic intercultural dialogue.

- Virtual Mobility shares some elements of both but is presently the less developed option. Questioning the reason for this fact is, therefore, an imperative action.

3.3. Why the concept of VIRTUAL MOBILITY needs to be re-formulated

The MOVINTER Consortium, on the basis of the considerations expressed above, has come to the conclusion that the concept of VM must be re-visited for the following reasons:

- Too much emphasis is put on comparison with classic student and teacher physical mobility, thus presenting VM as a second choice;

- Too much confusion is made with Distance Education and eLearning due to the broadly used metaphors of "virtual campus", "virtual education", "virtual university", etc.; e-Learning and Distance Education do not necessarily imply internationalization of learning/knowledge, intercultural dialogue and cross-border academic cooperation. Distance Education and e-Learning may lack of these elements, which are, in turn, the major VM drivers.

- Too many years have passed from the introduction of VM concept in the Nineties[9], the true potential of VM is still far from being fully understood from a methodological and practical point of view;

- Maybe a new terminology is needed in order to define VM and its various components (e.g. blended mobility, inter-cultural curriculum development, connectivity, access to international

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[9] HUMANITIES Project – 1995-96, Coimbra Group – for more information: Journal of Information, Law, and Technology at :

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/jilt/1996_3/special/schweighofer/

learning groups and resources, teaching programmes based on comparative research, etc.).
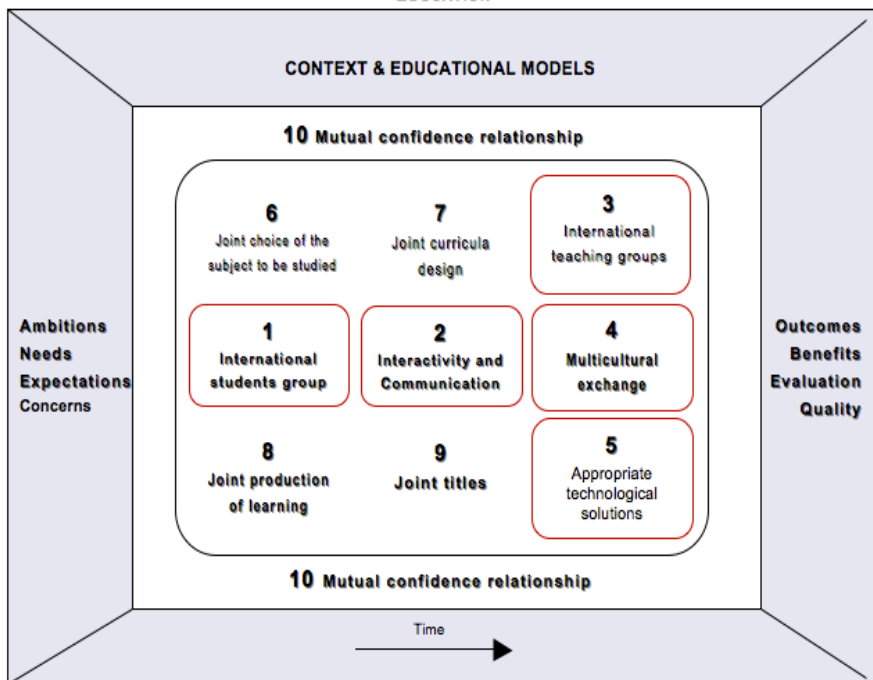
3.4. The proposed concept of VIRTUAL MOBILITY

Virtual Mobility is a concept that still needs consolidation and has been used to describe experiences with different characteristics, inspired by different educational models, conducted in different academic and non-academic contexts.

They reflected different ambitions, needs, expectations and concerns of stakeholders and learners involved in each of them. They produced learning and interaction experiences of different relevance and quality, sometimes certified and "accredited", sometimes not.

Most of these experiences had their own evolution in time, from an organisational and technological point of view, gaining growing awareness of the most qualifying elements of the models they were referring to or even developing.

Ten descriptive elements were identified by the MOVINTER Team, out of which the first five were chosen as those which really define "the identity" of a new concept of VM to be proposed.

CONTEXT & EDUCATIONAL MODELS

10 Mutual confidence relationship

6 Joint choice of the subject to be studied

7 Joint curricula design

3 International teaching groups

1 International students group

2 Interactivity and Communication

4 Multicultural exchange

8 Joint production of learning

9 Joint titles

5 Appropriate technological solutions

Ambitions Needs Expectations Concerns

Outcomes Benefits Evaluation Quality

10 Mutual confidence relationship

Time

Constitutive elements of Virtual Mobility

1) **International student groups -** VM as a means to internationalise study experiences requires learners from different countries and, preferably, groups of learners (to avoid the possible feeling of isolation typical of distance education) that are locally organised by their university/institution and follow a full programme or a part of it in a "virtual mobility" mode.

2) **Interactivity and communication between students of different countries -** It is fundamental that students are encouraged to

and actually work with fellow students and/or teachers of other nationalities in order to generate learning out of inter-cultural interaction, both on the specific content of the course and on more general issues and informal exchanges on the respective learning and living contexts.

3) **International Teaching Group -** Participating lecturers and tutors should belong to institutions of different countries in order to guarantee that different national and cultural perspectives are made available to the learners.

4) **Multicultural exchange -** Occasions to comment on and learn from the diversity of cultural perspectives should be created and promoted in the course program.

5) **Appropriate technological solutions -** In order to assure virtual mobility ICT must be a well thought out variable which means that its use must be highly context-related and suited and up to date with the technological trends and studied phenomena such as international social networking, the Google generation, digital natives vs. digital emigrants, and the growth in the use of mobile technology in education.

Additional descriptive elements

6) **Joint choice of the subject to be studied through VM -** The joint choice of the subjects to be studied through virtual mobility and the design of the learning approach should reflect a clear perception of the advantages that a multi-country, multi-cultural a broadly comparative approach may bring to the students. Examples such as the History of migration, implementation of international law in different countries,

comparative literature, important policy and social issues water resources, energy, environment, education, public health, etc. (and in general all address issues related to the well-being of the population) may well illustrate fields in which the value added of a multi-country and an intercultural perspective virtual mobility is considerable.

7) **Joint curricula design -** This element adds enormous value in terms of reciprocity and mutual benefits in the relationship among participating HEIs, avoiding the possible inconvenient of having a leading HEI providing the conceptual and scientific strength to the teaching/learning programme and the partner HEIs assuming a mere teaching and local support role. This point is particularly delicate when HEIs of differently developed continents are involved as partners. The correct identification of complementarities between HEIs and partners promotes a sense of a shared goal with shared responsibilities and outcomes.

8) **Joint production of learning resources -** This point is related to the previous one, but also includes resources such as: case studies, data sets, scientific content and publications, that are produced by/with students within of the programme and may well enrich the potential of VM to become a multiplier of research potential of students and institutions. Moreover, joint production of learning resources and joint curricula design would help avoiding the risk of delivering programmes/courses that aren't fully acknowledged and accepted as part of the HEI academic production. That risk is particularly high in cooperating programmes where a leading HEIs act as a 'supply chain coordinator' and one or more HEIs delegate key-powers to that leader.

9) **Joint titles -** Although not a necessary element in VM from a theoretical and methodological perspective, the agreement - among the participating institutions - to deliver a joint certificate at the end of the programme acts as a powerful motivation factor which allows participants to credit the virtual mobility experience as a fully recognised part of an academic or training experience and achievement.

10) **Mutual confidence relationship** – Last but not least, the mutual confidence relationship has a fundamental role in VM experiences. This component is one of the most powerful element when trying to establish a successful VM experience. It is an intangible but powerful element that strengthen all other VM components and enable the activation of HEI unaware resources and potentialities that could benefit VM further development. Mutual information openness and transparency with regards to different missions and performance of HEIs are then the capstone of this peculiar component.

On the basis of this characterisation, what is proposed is not a uniform and rigid model, but a system of modelling tool (a modelling framework) adaptable to different contexts, needs, teaching and learning goals and approaches. VM experiences may have different facets and degree of implementation, ranging from the one-off seminar up to a full developed programme; for that reason different models of VM may be put in place, involving VM components at a different development stage.

Nevertheless, regardless of the leaning format and the chosen VM models, three key-elements are essential to design an internationalisation strategy respectful of diversity:

Interculturality – Intercultural dialogue and internationalisation of learning/knowledge are integral part of VM; when talking about VM, both must be there, as internationalisation does not necessarily imply interculturality. The intercultural dialogue implies the recognition of diversity: difference of opinions, points of view, and values existing within each individual culture but also between cultures (see intercultural dialogue definition of the International Association of Universities – 2008). Then, intercultural dialogue goes beyond HEIs internationalisation, providing and integrating insight of diversity when dealing with more complex environments. In our Society there is a great need for each individual to challenge its own perspectives on diversity: intercultural dialogue is a valuable tool to that end. It encourages people awareness of the importance of developing aptitudes open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity leading, ultimately, to common values building. This aptitude also challenges academic institutions carrying on their internationalisation process. They should slide from a multicultural perspective (culture peaceful coexistence) to the more dynamic intercultural perspective where cultural diversity is not just recognized but also understood and there is a strive for dealing with it. Intercultural dialogue is then crucial in our changing society where people's interaction is growing faster and – to cope with these changes – HEIs should strengthen intercultural perspective in their internationalisation process.

Ensuring all partners' participation – All partners should actively participate in the VM experience; that is, each partner should contribute to the choice of the subject to be studied through VM, to the learning resources production, to the course/programme design and teaching. As indicated above, the active participation of each partner, allow to avoid the possible inconvenient of having a leading HEI providing the conceptual and scientific strength to the teaching/learning programme and the partner HEIs assuming a

mere teaching and local support role. Moreover, the course/programme resulting from the active participation is better accepted as part of each HEI's academic production. Thanks to the active participation of all partners, HEIs develop a real cooperation experience, by fairly sharing objectives and ways to reach and assess them.

Strong communication aptitude – Communication flow among partners should be encouraged and developed at all levels to ensure dialogue, exchange of ideas and growing mutual confidence. This aptitude should go beyond the HEIs partners sphere involving all VM actors (students, researchers and teachers). Communication tools should also be carefully taken into consideration: they should be easy to deploy and easy to use to meet non-digital natives' needs and, at the same time, new communication tools and phenomena (social networking, the Semantic Web & WEB 3.0) should be embraced to meet digital natives expectations and needs.

3.5. Affordability of generalised virtual mobility [10]

In the Nineties, one of the arguments most used against VM was that costs of technological infrastructure for multicultural teaching and learning was prohibitive. Nowadays such argument is outdated, since the technological advancement has accelerated the pace of infrastructure development and cost reduction.

Moreover, introducing VM in already existing technological infrastructure allows to increase the use of such technology and therefore to amortize the costs and return a reasonable profit/benefit.

Besides, the core of teaching-learning process takes place through direct interaction between teacher and learner, tutor and learner and among learners themselves producing knowledge. The collaborative learning that takes place in the framework of the VM is one of the main knowledge producer/vehicle.

The knowledge resulting from this interaction, together with the appropriate learning materials (materials expressly designed for virtual environments) can be productively re-used in future online

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[10] An in-depth analysis of costs and benefits of VM is available in the following paper: Dondi C, "An Economic Analysis of Virtual Mobility", in Coimbra Group, Beyond *HUMANITIES. Long Term Strategy for ODL in University Environments and Virtual Mobility*, Burssels, 1998

courses, allowing the capitalisation of both the teaching/learning acts and the learning materials.

Most of the VM benefits – such as internationalisation of curricula, institutional cooperation, meaningful use of technological infrastructure, development of autonomy attitudes in learners, development of intercultural communication skills, academic cohesion – are very hard to be appreciated in pure economic terms, nevertheless they have certainly an economic value in the long term.

Among the cultural and economic outcomes that will be appreciated in the long term, there is also the role that VM can play in reducing and/or preventing the brain drain phenomenon, a very sensitive issue: the possibility to avoid the drastic choice "either in my native country, or in the in the country where I can earn more" and to transform it into a "both, and" option thanks to the possibilities of ICT and structural collaboration among higher education institution of difference country.

It is important to point out that economic analysis of VM cannot really be separated from strategic, pedagogic and organisational analysis: whether the level of sophistication that is adopted in the analysis of costs foreseen to implement VM, some of the important benefits depend on learning quality, organisational and cultural outcomes. And most of them can really deploy their importance and value in the long term.

3.6. How to extract the potential of virtual mobility in the next decade

On the basis of the re-formulations of the aim and concept of virtual mobility the following twelve lines of action are proposed as means to build on and from the potential of VM in the next ten years:

1. set and launch information campaigns to widely disseminate VM concept, opportunities and benefits for individuals, institutions and the society as a whole;

2. develop, document and analyse good practice in view of developing an educational model for Virtual Mobility;

3. include VM elements in best examples and common practices of international cooperation amongst higher education institutions;

4. propose (or at least allow) VM actions within existing policies and programmes (Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Alfa, etc.);

5. invite top academics and key players in specific context-related areas to take part in VM experiences; in particular involving existing and successful thematic networks to experiment VM because the "social capital" of trust and confidence may facilitate successful VM experiences and their consolidation;

6. Involve student unions in the debate on VM to get inputs and support for the equity potential of virtual mobility in giving access to international HE experience to all students;

7. Invite VM 'Alumni' to witness their experience to promote VM, but above all to reflect on potential and criticalities to be addressed;

8. Develop a case for VM at all relevant international organisations who lead the policy discourse in higher education modernisation;

9. Develop approaches capable of guiding and assuring sustainability conditions for best practice, including capitalisation of learning resources developed through VM;

10. Develop a quality assurance approach for VM and present it to the relevant Quality Assurance Institutions as well as HEI and their networks;

11. Develop awareness campaigns towards policy makers and academic leaderships, presenting VM benefits and urging them to set specific policies aimed at VM promotion and advancement;

12. Set objectives for student participation in VM by 2020 and commit stakeholders to achieve them.

Each of these action lines needs a higher level of specification and the whole set needs articulation around a road map: these are tasks that will be conducted through a consensus building exercise

involving all relevant stakeholders of Higher Education, in Europe and elsewhere.

Even when all these action lines are implemented, coherent long term policy support at Government and Institutional level remains a key factor to be considered if the potential impact of Virtual Mobility has to be achieved.

3.7. Next steps

To sum up, institutional cooperation and internationalisation of HEIs may be accelerated by promoting and introducing the unexploited potential of VIRTUAL mobility. The MOVINTER Consortium, with its investigation and its web environment, proposes to act as a facilitator and a catalyst of a convergence process that should involve institutional actors and the most consolidated networks active in internationalisation of higher education.

The present paper is proposed for the discussion and consensus building to all those interested in the achievement of common higher education areas by introducing VM in the everyday academic practice.

Comments and suggestions are welcome at: movinter@googlegroups.com or in the area for comment and discussion working on the MOVINTER Website [www.movinter.eu].

Policy Seminars

During the project, we have promoted several activities such as meetings with experts and stakeholders. One of the most relevant activities is the organisation of policy seminar: seminar specially focused to decision makers, governments and academic staff of Latin America with the aim of receiving their feedback about the process of Internationalisation and closer collaboration with Europe, and their feelings with VM approach. For its relevance, we outline the two most important seminars held in Mexico and Buenos Aires.

4.1. Policy seminar: Mexico

This section presents the rapporteur of the project Movinter Policy Seminar held on January 22, 2010 at FLACSO Mexico Headquarters. Attended a total of 40 participants from various colleges, educational associations, and decision makers from both, higher education institutions as government departments related to mobility, among others. The following lists the participants and their institution of origin:

Participants	
Lic. Christina Guerrero Harmon	Directora Dirección de Cooperación Internacional Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior
Dr. Manuel Sepúlveda Stuardo	Secretario Ejecutivo del Consejo Consultivo Internacional de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León
Lic. Samuel Bourdeau Delalande	Director de Relaciones Internacionales de la Dirección de Relaciones Multilaterales de la Secretaría de Educación Pública
Dr. Laura Medina	Directora Asociada a la Dirección de Programas Internacionales de la Universidad de Guadalajara
Dra. Jocelyne Gacel Ávila	Coordinación General de Cooperación e Internacionalización de la Universidad de Guadalajara
Dra. Norma Angélica Juárez Salomo	Directora de Cooperación y Desarrollo Internacional de la Asociación Mexicana Para la Educación Internacional
Dra. Joan M. W. de Landeros	Directora del Centro Internacional de Educación Universidad La Salle
Dr. Hanns Silvestre	Director Regional de la DAAD de México
Lic. Héctor Sámano Rocha	Director de la Oficina de Enlace de la Unión Europea y México en Ciencia y Tecnología para la promoción de la Cooperación entre México y la Unión Europea en Ciencia y Tecnología
Lic. Thomas Martin Buntru Wenzler	Presidente de la Asociación Mexicana Para la Educación Internacional y Director de Programas Internacionales de la Universidad de Monterrey
Dr. Nancy Patricia Bermúdez Arboleda	Coordinadora del Centro Académico Virtual FLACSO Ecuador
Dr. Alex Téran	Coordinador de la Unidad de Formación Continua FLACSO Ecuador
POLICY SEMINAR Dra. Maura Rubio Almonacid	Coordinadora General de Educación a Distancia de la FLACSO México
Dr. Jordy Michel	Investigador del Departamento de Economía de la UAM – Azcapotzalco

Mtra. Ana María Bañuelos Márquez	Directora de Desarrollo Educativo de esta Coordinación de Universidad Abierta y Educación a Distancia (CUAED), UNAM
Mtra. Paloma Ibáñez Villalobos	Rectora de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Azcapotzalco
Dr. Luis Jorge Soto Walls	de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco
Dr. Alfredo Sánchez Daza	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

The agenda was composed of a master board "Public policies for virtual mobility" with the participation of the MSc. Buntru Thomas Wenzler, President of the AMPEI and Director of International Programs at the University of Monterrey, Mtra. Maura Rubio Almonacid, General Coordinator of Distance Education of FLACSO Mexico and Dr. Jordy Michel, Researcher, Department of Economics at the UAM - Azcapotzalco. By the lecture, "Virtualization and Internationalization of Higher Education. Scope and Limitations "given by Dr. Jocelyn Gacel Avila, and two discussion panels, the first " Virtual Mobility Latin American Experiences", involving Dr. Laura Medina, Associate Director of International Programs, ITESM-Campus Monterrey, Dr. Nancy Patricia Bermudez Arboleda, Coordinator of the Virtual Academic Center at FLACSO Ecuador and Dr. Alex Teran, Coordinator of the Continuing Education Unit FLACSO Ecuador.

The second panel entitled "Inter-agency cooperation between Latin American and European IES" had the participation of Ms. Christina Guerrero Harmon, Director of International Cooperation ANUIES, Dr. Manuel Sepúlveda Stuardo, Executive Secretary of the International Advisory Council of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, Mx, of Mr. Samuel Delalande Bourdeau, Director of International Relations of the Directorate for Multilateral Relations of the SEP and Mtra. Ana Maria Bañuelos Marquez, Director of Educational Development Coordination Open University and Distance Education, UNAM

Motivation

The Policy Seminar that the project Movinter made sought to create a space for reflection and discussion on the issue of virtual mobility in Latin America and the potential for cooperation between regions within this framework. The discussion was framed within the Green Paper of the project. Such document may, seeks to draw attention to the potential benefits of virtual mobility has not yet been referred to and / or explained in the literature. Also, democratizing access to the experience of academic exchanges, strengthen cooperation through education and research institution of higher education in different countries, support and multiply the impact of interregional cooperation programs, especially those that focus almost exclusively on the physical mobility of students and teachers and disseminate that although distance education and e-learning educational methods are less costly economically, do not always achieve intercultural learning.

The main scope that had this meeting was:
1. Disseminate the project Movinter
2. Creating space for reflection and discussion of virtual mobility
3. Knowing the Latin American experiences on the issue of virtual mobility
4. To form a network of academics, researchers, teachers, policy makers, among others interested in promoting virtual mobility
5. Discuss the Green Paper generated for the project Movinter

The following topics were mainly covered:
• Curriculum design between various institutions of higher learning around the world.
• The status of distance education in Latin America and Mexico.

72

- Legislation, regulation and standardization of distance education.
- International groups of teachers to cooperate in the design, implementation and evaluation of courses.
- A cluster of students from different countries who mainly study at their university of
- Local choice and do not go for long periods of time for studying elsewhere.
- High interaction between ICT among groups of students from different countries to discuss diversity depending on the national, local and contextual.
- Choice of topics justified in a contribution of different countries, especially in the social sciences (law, economics) and virtually any subject that includes the comparison from different national contexts so as to prepare students for a social, economic and international professional environment.
- Joint degrees between institutions of higher education.
- The scope and limitations of virtual mobility.

Rapporteur of the Policy Seminar

Under the Policy Seminar of the day January 22, 2010 brought together researchers, policy makers and government educational field and Movinter project partners, in order to reflect from the field of public policy and decision making, possibilities for implementation in Latin America of Virtual Mobility, the benefits of this and the possible forms of cooperation between higher education institutions in terms of this concept as conceptualized in the Movinter project. The detonator of the discussion was the presentation of Movinter's

project Green Paper by Dr. Claudio Dondi, President of Scienter. The discussion was fueled by the participation of the guests as well as the shared concrete experiences of higher education institutions in topics of distance education, virtual education and internationalization of education, among others.

At the beginning of the seminar was held the presentation of "Movinter Project" by Dr. Gloria del Castillo (FLACSO-Mexico) and Dr. Rosana Montes representative of the University of Granada and responsible for coordinating the project. The activities, scope and goals of it were highlighted. Among the achievements were taken into consideration, careful review of the literature on the subject to establish a common legislative framework and best practices on the issue. And the goals set are building a community, developing a guide of what is Virtual Mobility, a Virtual Mobility deployment model, pilot and conferences.

It highlighted the need to gradually build a community through networking that drives this issue. For this purpose, it requires agreements between decision makers, higher education institutions (HEIs) and researchers, as well as favorable conditions for Virtual Mobility, which include national public policies that encourage the construction of Virtual Mobility, HEI's networks and researchers with interests in teaching and virtual learning, new teacher professional development and by developing students' e-skills "and the powering of learning networks.

In the seminar, we propose two important questions detonator: what are the policy decisions and international, national and institutional (at higher education institutions) that make possible its existence and how can we organize to encourage mobility between Latin America and Virtual the European Union.}

Then began the presentation and discussion of the Green Paper presented by Dr. Claudio Dondi. It begins with a history of Virtual

Mobility and takes us back to 15 years before, when you begin to be addressed for the first time this term, and is among the years 1997 and 1998 when he published the first guide to Virtual Mobility.

Virtual Mobility is defined as the description of experiences with different features, inspired by different models of education, which reflects different levels, needs, expectations among those involved. The importance of this definition is that today there is still confusion between distance education and virtual mobility. From the Project's perspective of what it is looking for is to avoid identifying the Virtual Mobility with virtual learning.

This presentation highlights the importance of this concept and emphasizes that one of the elements making it a priority is because it allows democratize access to higher education. However, one of the outstanding challenges is the resistance that occurs in both academic levels as decision makers in public office.

One of the central questions revolves around: what is it that makes it a Virtual Mobility or is not? And in which, one could deduce that, depends on if there is an overall vision, joint degrees and multicultural change and exchange.

Moreover, the question of how to take advantage of the potential of Virtual Mobility in the next decade, allowed a great reflection leaving ideas of who the development and documentation of best practices, international cooperation between HEIs, to promote virtual mobility actions between policies and programs and to invite scholars and students to participate in the Virtual Mobility.

Master Board: "Public Policies for Virtual Mobility"

The first Board Master begins with a brief characterization of Virtual Mobility in Latin America, noting that mobility is low because there are less than 1% of students enrolled in Latin American universities, and where mobility is mainly made to North America and Western

Europe; 86% visit the United States and Spain (Mtro. Buntru Thomas Wenzler, President of the AMPEI and Director of International Programs at the University of Monterrey).

In this same line of Virtual Mobility, noted that universities have a common agenda in the following areas: expansion and diversification of educational offerings, changes in demand for diversified programs, availability of public resources, accountability and efficiency, and internationalization (Maura Rubio Mtra. Almonacid, FLACSO-Mexico).

Internationalization which is on the agenda of the universities speaks of the great importance of this issue, and that is a big step for Virtual Mobility, and even more if we can glimpse the relationship between virtual education and field work, as has been the belief that a virtual degree has a low quality (Jordy Mtro. Michel, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco).

The issue of quality is a key factor, and HEIs will need to work in their institutions, it is important to clarify that there is a difference between public universities and private universities to carry out the Virtual Mobility. One of the aspects that make them different is the resources that they account, infrastructure, and economic and social level of the students (Mtra. Maura Rubio, FLACSO-Mexico).

It could be noted that in Mexico there are strategies for Virtual Mobility, at least four institutions. UNAM, which has focused on the innovation but has not been possible due to its structure and in this same range, is the National Polytechnic Institute. Meanwhile, the University of Guadalajara has faced a complex political context. (These three institutions are public). TEC de Monterrey is among the pioneering and innovative institutions in this area and has the

resources (Jordy Mtro. Michel, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco).

It should be noted, that it was also referred the model of the Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM), who has designed a strategic plan for internationalization, so that this institution has an international educational experience and a virtual mobility, although it has been more to support personal mobility. Thus, it is noted that Virtual Mobility should be seen as a mobility of knowledge, not people (Mtro. Buntru Thomas Wenzler, President of the AMPEI and Director of International Programs at the University of Monterrey).

Virtual Mobility limitations found in order to develop, including: a low funding, limited proficiency in a second language, lack of motivation, little support to universities and low academic reputation.

During the board master: Virtualization and Internationalization of Higher Education, Scope and Limitations, given by Dra. Jocelyn Gacel-Avila, University of Guadalajara, Mexico, and the reflection were about the differentiation of borderless or transnational education and international education.

Borderless education is increasingly seen as a business (Virtual Education) and its main tool is the Internet. In higher education is conducted the mode where students are in another part of the world and it looks for competitiveness between nations.

By contrast, in international education is investigated by cooperation, peace and has an international curriculum. The internationalization benefits students in their education and mobility, the institution benefits in international recruitment, networking and the collaboration it has.

As for the challenges of Virtual Mobility identifies two: first, that focuses on the privileged by the type of material used, so it is

important to seek new means of access to higher education. Second, Latin America does not have consistent experiences in virtual mode and there is a delay in internationalized curriculum.

According to these challenges, policy recommendations were made. The first to be mentioned is that there should be a policy of internationalization of the curriculum and to think about what careers are going to be internationalized. Subsequently, there must be a policy of the institution and of State for virtual education.

In the Panel Discussion on "Virtual Mobility Latin American Experiences" each panelist gave a brief description of the virtual method in their institution.

It started with the Tecnológico de Monterrey, which contains classroom activity 33 campuses, 32 campi of Tec Milenio and the virtual university. The virtual university model has focused on the student and has accreditation from the Association of Collages Southern and School (SACS) and an international committee (Dr. Laura Medina, Associate Director of International Programs ITESM-Campus Monterrey).

Meanwhile, FLACSO-Ecuador presented its virtual model, created by a public need and has a local capacity. It was stressed that it is a technological scenario developed and set in new methodologies and pedagogical models that allow users to interact synchronously and asynchronously with the actors only at open and diploma courses. (Alex Teran, FLACSO-Ecuador).

Finally, detailed the Andean Virtual Center, which highlighted the socialization of knowledge that allows the design of a portal that is used as a tool for the production and dissemination of knowledge. (Ms. Patricia Nancy Bermudez, FLACSO-Ecuador).

Panel Discussion: "Inter-agency cooperation between Latin American and European IES"

The last panel presented a set of experiences on cooperation in virtual education. It included a presentation describing the model of Virtual Mobility of its institution (Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo León) a statement that briefly described the results of Net ACTIVE Project: AIESAD-EADTU Credit Transfer in Virtual and distance Education, and two presentations describing programs that have their institution (ANUIES and SEP) to support the Virtual Mobility.

For its part, the Autonomous University of Nuevo León has a hybrid model, because the distance education has a minimum classroom percentage and focuses more on the virtual. It was mentioned that they have dealt with distance education through infrastructure that they account on, given that all of them are connected to a satellite, they have a long-distance training, has its own platform, datacenter, wireless communication and 70% their students have a scholarship.

The emphasis, in which the technology has to be seen as a means and not as an end. So the teaching factor is important and training of teachers. (Dr. Manuel Sepúlveda Stuardo. Executive Secretary of the International Advisory Council of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, Mexico).

On the project Active Net referred to its purpose: to improve the quality of European higher education and promote intercultural understanding.

Some of their results are the basis and proposals for good practices for Virtual Mobility; their findings showed that there is great variation in the credits granted by each institution. Some of the challenges are to ensure formation and the training of those involved and

infrastructure. (Ms. Maria Ana Banuelos, Director of Educational Development of the Coordination of Open University and Distance Education (CUAED), UNAM).

The National Association of Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES) stated that its goal is to support HEIs in international relations. To fulfill this objective ANUIES mentioned the programs that the institution accounts are: Mobility programs for teachers, development of networks, joint research programs, teacher mobility, student mobility and the European Union Programme (Ms. Christina Guerrero, ANUIES).

For its part, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), said that has programs to support the Virtual Mobility, which are full scholarships, language assistant, for technical and engineering. Carrying out these programs has detected at least two problems: in sending students to France the problem is that way of teaching, i.e. the educational model. Therefore, you have to compare curricula and pedagogy.

The project ALFA - tuning, has identified the problem of model equivalence. Thus we have to work on a model of equivalence. We must bear in mind that if we want to have equivalences we need to have flexible programs. (Dr. Samuel Bourdeau Deland, Director General of International Relations of the SEP).

Conclusions

One of the main conclusions is that there is no doubt that the topic of Virtual Mobility is strategic for the internationalization of higher education. Among the salient words in this seminar include: lines and changes that are the reason of being here.

Among the challenges is the need of further refining the concept of Virtual Mobility, as it continues to confound with virtual education. Also, continue working on public policy issues, strategic alliances, methodology, control and flexibility in curriculum to carry out the Virtual Mobility.

In general terms, the Policy Seminar was well evaluated. The boards and discussion panels were an average rating of 8 out of 10. The level of discussion was also considered in a rating of 8 out of 10 and suggest levels of discussion was also considered in a rating of 8 out of 10 and suggest that the documentation provided was useful. The participants considered that what the seminar gave them were: ideas, contacts and clarity on the issue as the top three responses and 90% of attendees said the event met their expectations.

4.2. Second Policy Seminar at Buenos Aires

This section overviews the policy seminar held the 7th of July, 2010 in Buenos Aires. It took place at the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna Headquarters (Rodriguez Peña 1464, C.P. 1021, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina) organised by Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna operational unit of Buenos Aires.

The goals of this seminar were the followings:

-   to promote a framework for reflection and disscusion on the basis of Virtual Mobility for Latin America and their potential benefits for cooperation

- Dissemination of Movinter activities and outcomes, especially on the main position paper (Green Paper).
- Establish a (stable) academic network of researches, teachers and decision makers in the promotion and support of VM.

Some of the most relevant themes proposed were:
- Joint curricula design between different HEIs around the world.
- The state of the art in Distance Learning
- Legislation and normatives
- Clustering of stakeholders to promote collaboration and design of new joint tittles,
- Point of view of students

The Policy Seminar was attended with more than 30 participant of 20 different Education Institutions. The most relevant authorities involved in the seminar are listed as follows:

Participant	
Director of the B.A. operacional Unit of University of Bologna. Full Professor of Marketing and Management, UniBO	Angelo Manaresi
Director of the Department of Politic Sciences, UniBO	José María Ghio
Previous Director of UniBO operational Unit.	Giorgio Alberti
Director at Government of Province of Buenos Aires, Cabinet Secretary	Ivanna Travaini
Vicepresidenta Consejo Mundial de Educación a Distancia (ICDE) para América Latina	Marta Mena
FLACSO Argentina	Pablo Echeverry

Gestor del Proyecto TUNING América-Latina	Pablo Beneitone
Coordinadora del Area de Cooperación Internacional de la Universidad Nacional de Jujuy	Gabriela Siufi
Fundação de Apoio à Universidade de São Paulo	Edison Spina
Universidad Central de Chile	Beatriz Peluffo
Universidad de la República - Uruguay	Ana Buti
Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo	Alvaro Maglia
Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco	Silvia Coicaud
Universidad Nacional del Camahue	Carina Fracchia
Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica	Carlos Álvarez
Universidad de Montevideo	Ana Buti
Universidad central de Chile	Elia Naabad
Universidad Católica Argentina	María del Pilar Toloza
Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Industrial	Marta Pesado

Rapporteur of the Buenos Aires's Policy Seminar

The welcome addresss was given by Prof. Angelo Manaresi, Director of the Buenos Aires operacional Unit of University of Bologna.

Following, Dr. I. Blanco shows the most relevant issues of VM in the framework of the project. After that, C. Dondi presents the Green Paper to open the debate and analysis with a Expert Disscusion Panel. Some of the most relevant topic were:

-   Virtual mobility need to be consolidated and it demands a better clarification respect of other learning modalities.
-   Elearning and distance education does not neccesarry imply an internationalisation of curricula.
-   VM as a tool of cooperation between Latin America and Europe. In fact, the demand of higher education is growing in L.A. whereas the situation is opposite in Europe. Nowadays, physical mobility is lower than 1% of the total student population. It is trae that study abroad is still costil, and VM may be a complement as well as true alternative.

In the session of Latin American experiences, several works were presentd from Fundacao de Apoio a Universidade de Sao Paolo, Universidad Central de Chile and Universidad de la República de Uruguay. Note that these case stydy points that the Joint production of learning resources and titles is helpful for external recognition of these Institutions. Another factor is the **mutual trust** between institutions, as a key factor to promote these common activities and the mobility program, fostering the win-win relation among partners.

The last session panel focused on **public policy strategies for virtual mobility**. The most relevant issues was:

- The support of goverments and institutions is crucial for Virtual Movility enhancement and development.

- Virtual Mobility democratize access to International currícula experiences, interdisciplinary and intercultural Studies. It also may promote social inclusión.

- VM may enhance the researchs and innovations, adopting global Solutions to local/regional knowledge management.

Conclusions

In the context of modernisation of HEIs, several areas can obtain benefits from VM as a complement of ophysical mobility, to enhance the researches and capabilities and to offer new opportunities to students.

Concluding, the three key issues to be taken into account to achieve a succesful VM implementation are the followings:

- **Intercultural** dialogue as intrinsic feature of VM, and a way of recognitionof diversity.
- **Ensuring active participation** of stakeholders of different institutions.
- **Strong communication aptitude** to promote sinergies and collaboration schemes. Current VM tools are, in fact, relevant artifacts to promote this goal.
- **Sensibilization of HEI academic staff** about the benefits of VM for future and trends towards modernisation.

Chapter 5

Community Building using Social Networks

1. INTRODUCTION

The creation of a stakeholders community of leading practitioners, policy and decision makers and researchers is clearly a challenge in the framework of promoting virtual mobility, between Europe and Latin America Higher Education Institutions. The aim is the creation of a community of practice (CoP) *in the sense of group of people who come together to learn from each other by sharing knowledge and experiences about the activities in which they are engaged* (Preece 2000).

In order to stimulate a lively community, we have organised different type of small size events in countries with different nature and purpose, covering therefore a representative sample of Europe and Latin American countries. The most relevant events are:

- Integration seminar in Granada, Spain 2nd of July, 2009. This is the first pilot meeting with a wide range of audience.
- Policy Seminar in Mexico (22th of January, 2010) The target

- audience are decision makers and academic staff to overview the Latin American point of view.
- Workshop of "New Challenges For Foster Cooperation And Internationalisation Of Curricula" on The Annual Academic Cooperation Asociation (ACA) conference at Cordoba, Spain (17th of May, 2010) in collaboration with its Spanish member organisation Universidad.es. The target audience are decision makers in Higher Education Institutions to promote (international) mobility without brain drains.
- Workshop seminar in Puerto Rico, (22th of June 2010) in the framework of Virtual Educa. The main audience were education professionals with representation of all the countries.
- Local Seminar in Buenos Aires (7th of July, 2010) with decision makers at national level.

In parallel with these activities, we are in contact with related project to promote common goals and increase of networking and sharing experiences. The most relevant experiences in common are:

- Experiences with **VIRQUAL** (Integration Of The Virtual Mobility And European Qualification Frameworks In HE Institutions) and **NET-ACTIVE** (credit transfer in virtual mobility) in the ACA 10th Annual Conference at Cordoba, Spain.

- Experiences and outcomes with **HEXTLEARN** (Higher Education exploring ICT use for Lifelong Learning) and **OPAL**

(Open Educational Quality Initiative) in the EFQUEL Innovation Forum, (8th September 2010)

Once we have collected and identified interested existing communities, involvement of networks, Higher Education Institutions, experts, practitioners and policy makers interested and active in the field of Virtual Mobility for international cooperation, the next step is the creation of a virtual space for dialogue and invitation targeting representatives of the community to the project relevant events, the management of contacts, and announcing news relevant to the activities of the community.

2. Design of the Online Community

Online communities is a virtual space where people come together to get or give information or support, to learn, to discuss, to be with others online. Nowadays these communities are quite popular and growing faster as well as the number of users involved within. However, we should follow some strategies and rationales to capture the inherent features of such community. The relevant factors are: people, purpose and policy to promote communication as essential factor in community (Bacon 2009). So therefore, your community needs to build a set of resources to facilitate communication, discussion, and the sharing of ideas and best practices. In many cases these resources are online facilities, such as mailing lists, forums, and discussion channels.

In case of our community, to promote discussion and communication we have identified three main dimensions in the aim of increasing the potential use of Virtual Mobility. Figure 3 shows the policy, research and community of practice dimensions and related concepts related within.
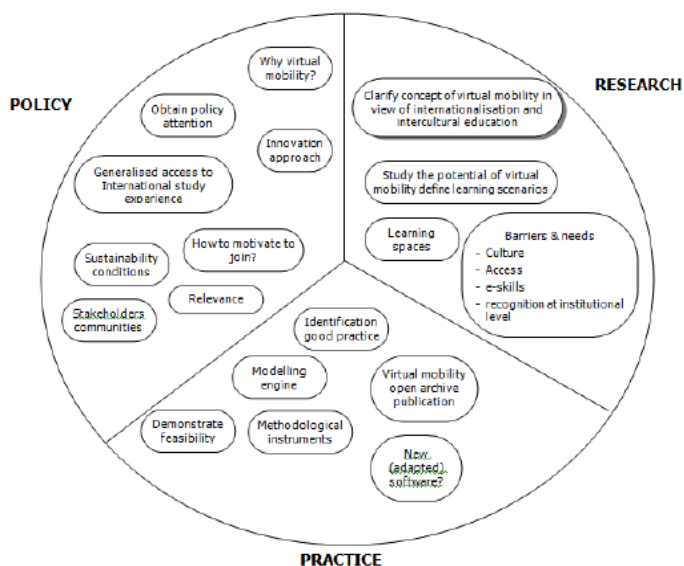

Figure 1. Scopes of the virtual mobility

The main goal of this community is to constitute as a meeting point to collect useful information related to virtual mobility, share experiences, and the creation of informal groups for collaborations. With this aims, the relevant features we should take on mind are the creation rich media sharing repository of resources allowing the discussion.

This goal motivates the design of a website as a social network. In this case, the site is built based on users (with a profile) and reflecting social relations among people, (sharing interests and/or activities). This is an informal user-centric point of view of the community. Users can freely choose their "friends" to share their state and resources. Figure 2 represents a preliminary sketch of a user profile.
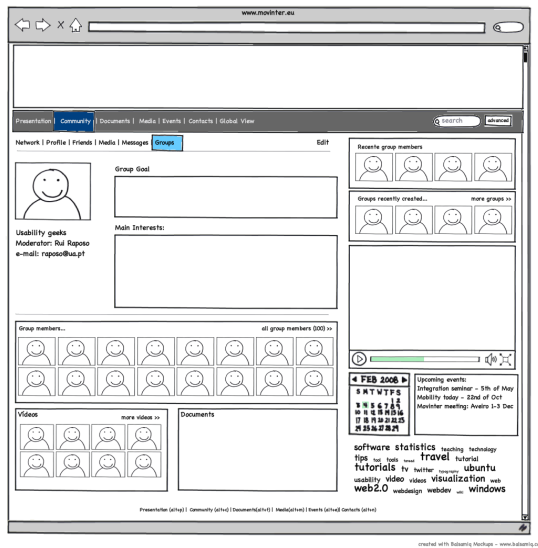

Figure 2. User profile

The second level of hierarchy is the group as a informal collection of user with common interest. These groups can be open to all or restricted. These groups are a dynamic model to put in common certain knowledge, which is shared for several type of users.

Figure 3. Movinter Groups

Finally, the information is shared with the aims of collaborate among users (with annotations, comments, ratings, etc.). One of the most relevant information sharing is the proposal of best practice case studies. This proposal is open to the community and anyone can comment and rate it.
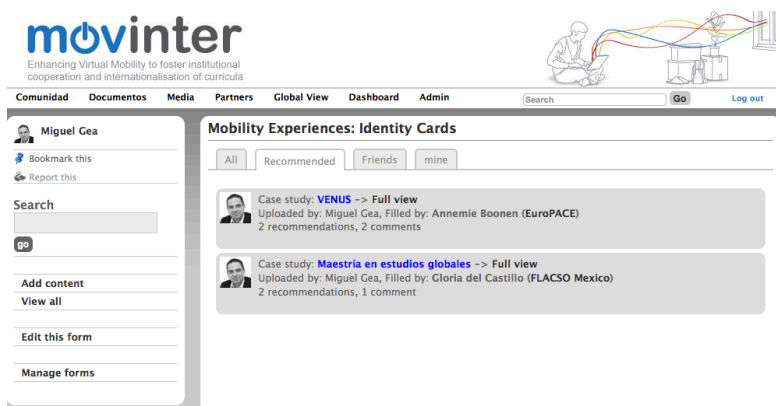

Figure 4. List of best practices case study (with comments and recommendations)

This community is growing faster during this year. Nowadays, we have collected more than 200 users. An interesting resource is a best-practice collection of virtual mobility experiences, where community collects, rates and suggests case studies. Up to now, we have identified more than 50 experiences. Now we are involved on identifying how to create bottom-up synergies from these users to universities and with other related communities.

These task are completed with online questionnaires to indentify the user's knowledge on Virtual Mobility related activities. The web page is: http://elearning.ugr.es/surveys/

3. Implementation

The implementation of such community was not an easy task. First of all, we decide to test and evaluate several tools to suit our requirement. Online social networks such as Facebook or Ning may be easy to perform and maintain, but in the other hand, there were not enough feasible to create our own structure of information. The decision adopted was the use of elgg Open Source Social Networking Platform. Elgg provides a powerful data model based on PHP and MySQL making the creation of different entities simple and flexible. We have used more than 35 widget tools to create powerful media pages and custom forms with annotations. Currently, we are using elgg 1.7.1, Version, with more than 30 bookmark, 17 event calendar, 75 files and 50 user defined forms.

We have used Google analytics to have an overview of the incomming acces to the community. Figure 5 shows the overall

acces to the website on 2010 (January-September) according to the
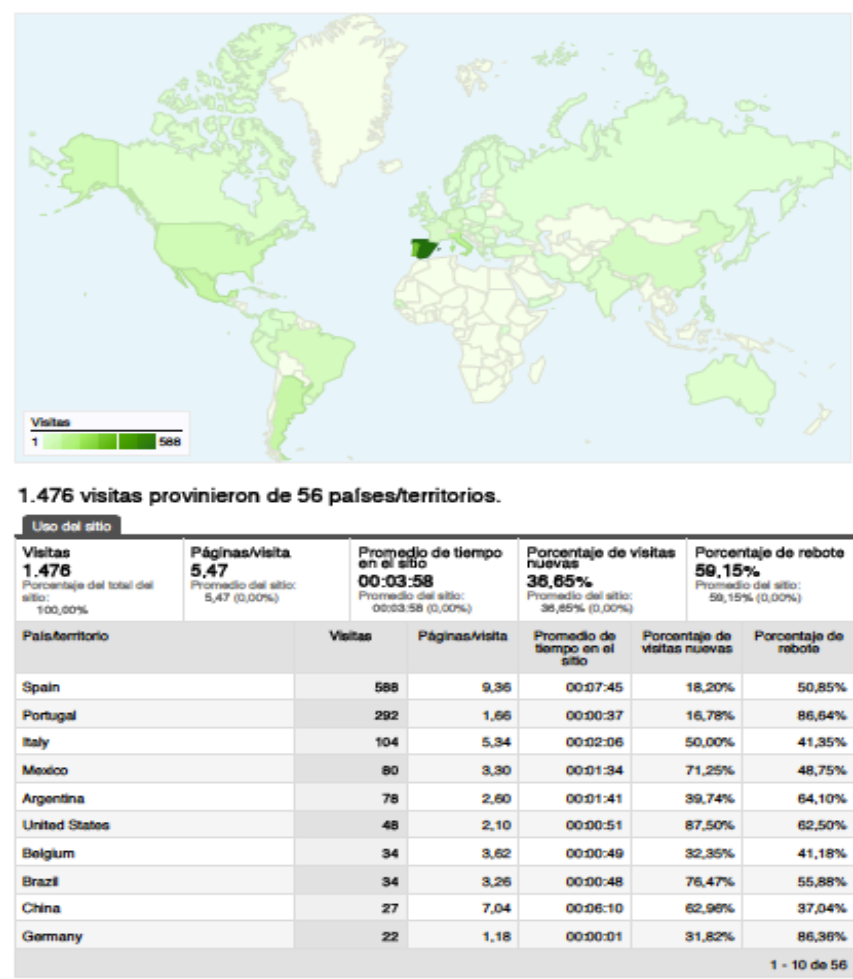of the country of procedence.

1.476 visitas provinieron de 56 países/territorios.

Uso del sitio

| Visitas **1.476** Porcentaje del total del sitio: 100,00% | Páginas/visita **5,47** Promedio del sitio: 5,47 (0,00%) | Promedio de tiempo en el sitio **00:03:58** Promedio del sitio: 00:03:58 (0,00%) | Porcentaje de visitas nuevas **36,65%** Promedio del sitio: 36,65% (0,00%) | Porcentaje de rebote **59,15%** Promedio del sitio: 59,15% (0,00%) |

País/territorio	Visitas	Páginas/visita	Promedio de tiempo en el sitio	Porcentaje de visitas nuevas	Porcentaje de rebote
Spain	588	9,36	00:07:45	18,20%	50,85%
Portugal	292	1,66	00:00:37	16,78%	86,64%
Italy	104	5,34	00:02:06	50,00%	41,35%
Mexico	80	3,30	00:01:34	71,25%	48,75%
Argentina	78	2,60	00:01:41	39,74%	64,10%
United States	48	2,10	00:00:51	87,50%	62,50%
Belgium	34	3,62	00:00:49	32,35%	41,18%
Brazil	34	3,26	00:00:48	76,47%	55,88%
China	27	7,04	00:06:10	62,96%	37,04%
Germany	22	1,18	00:00:01	31,82%	86,36%
					1 - 10 de 56

Figure 5. Access to community accordig to the country of origin

These data relfects an clear interest in the target areas of the Project: Europe and Latin America, with representation of 29 countries. Also, the uses acces (show in figure 6) is maintained regularly during these two years. Note that we are also adding new contents and functionality on 2010, so we expect to improve these results on this year.

Figure 6. Numero of users 28/08/09 – 19/09/10

4. Networking

Networking means the collaboration with related Project to achieve common knowledge and mutual understanding. We have closely collaborate with the following network projects.

- OPAL: Open Educational Quality Initiative, targeting Higher Education and Adult Education. Website: http://www.oer-quality.org/. Contact person: Mr. Ulf-Daniel Ehlers (EFQUEL, Belgium)
- NETACTIVE: AIESAD-EADTU Credit Transfer In Virtual and distance Education. Website: http://www.net-active.info/. Contact person: Fernando Monge (UNED, Spain)
- VIRQUAL: Integration of the virtual mobility and European

qualification frameworks in HE and CE institutions. Website: http://virqual.up.pt/, Contact person: Ana Dias (Universidade do Minho, Portugal)
- HEXTLEARN: Higher Education exploring ICT use for Lifelong Learning. Website: http://www.hextlearn.eu. Contact person: Andras Szucs (EDEN, Hungary)
- MOVINTER web page: http://www.movinter.eu
- Virtual Mobility questionaires: http://elearning.ugr.es/surveys/

5. References

- Preece, J. (2000) Online Communities: Designing Usability, Supporting Sociability. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

- Bacon, J. (2009): "The art of Community", 1st edition, O`Reilly media, Inc 1005 Gravenstein Highway North, Sebastopol.

- Elgg open source social networking engine http://elgg.org/

Chapter 6

Experiences & Good practice

Introduction

Considering the main aim of the project to support the exploitation of the potential of Virtual Mobility to internationalise curricula and learning experiences, the first phase of the desk research included the listing and description of projects and initiatives in the field of Virtual Mobility. These projects and initiatives were then studied and served as background information and input for further analyses. They also formed an important source of information for the selection and description of practical experiences and in the later stage for the selection of good practices on Virtual Mobility. The work process and the criteria for the description of the experiences and the selection of good practice are described below and structured as follows:

♦ Overview of recent projects and initiatives in the field of Virtual Mobility (short description of ongoing and past projects)
♦ Methodology of experience mapping

Overview of recent projects and initiatives in the field of Virtual Mobility

CBVE - Cross Border Virtual Entrepreneurship

October 2007 - September 2009

The main objective of CBVE is to enhance the professional skills of students by lifelong, open and flexible, didactically-innovative and pedagogically-rich learning approaches, with a specific focus on the development, extension and expansion of entrepreneurial skills. CBVE is to pilot entrepreneurship in a novel way, as prospective part of the curriculum for students not (longer) part of traditional cohorts. It includes the training of trainers as well i.e., the upgrading of entrepreneurial skills of academic staff involved. The project aims to address the needs identified previously, such as filling the blank spot (for) where no structured entrepreneurial training opportunities and external network liaisons with business are in place, and where no flexible learning approaches regarding entrepreneurship are in place for reaching students outside traditional cohorts.

Partners

- ♦ EADTU
- ♦ Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia (UNED) (ES)
- ♦ Estonian E-University
- ♦ University of Miskolc (HU)
- ♦ Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO (IT)
- ♦ Marie Curie Sklodowska University (PL)

http://www.eadtu.nl/cbve/

Supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme, Erasmus

EPICS

2009 - 2010

Virtual Mobility is improving accessibility to other university courses European wide and enables students to individualise and specialise their study programmes. All this within a virtual learning space with in principle no restrictions of the universities to visit. In the EPICS project partners will work towards mainstream provision of Virtual Mobility by offering international courses clearly as integral part of the university study programmes.

The main objective is to work from Virtual Mobility projects towards a Virtual Erasmus programme. To institutionalise mainstream provision of Virtual Mobility we will develop the supporting infrastructure of a European Portal for International Courses and Services (EPICS).

Project partners:

♦ EADTU (NL
♦ Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia (ES)
♦ EuroPACE ivzw (B)
♦ Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in higher education (SE)
♦ Open Universiteit Nederland (NL)
♦ Open University (UK)
♦ Estonian Information Technology Foundation (EE)
♦ Université Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO (IT)
♦ Universidade Aberta (PT)
♦ Anadolu University (TR)
♦ Zentrum for Fernstudien Schweiz (CH)

Project website http://www.eadtu.nl/epics/?cId=home

Project supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission

Europe Now

ongoing

Europe Now is an initiative of the Central Ceepus Office. CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program) is a very successful regional

exchange programme, operating since 1995 and with 15 member states today. CEEPUS complements EU educational programs and has always enjoyed excellent relations with international student initiatives. These positive experiences have led to the idea of a joint community for alumni of a wide range of European exchange programs. The project is also supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, the OEAD (Austrian Exchange Service), and ARGE Europäisches Forum Alpbach und Zentrum fu□r Soziale Innovation. It is a new web platform (launched in 2008) for European mobile students and alumni of a wide range of European exchange programmes. "Europe-now" is focused on European themes: visions of a future Europe, ideas, experiences and recommendations can be communicated and discussed via different communication channels: discussion boards, blogs and photoblogs, testimonials and a competition on the subject "How Exchange Changed My Life" are waiting to be used. Various community functions such as "Let's meet" or chats complement the options of "Europe-now".

http://www.europe-now.eu

EU-VIP - Enterprise-University Virtual Placements

October 2009 – September 2011

EU-VIP aims to enhance the quality, efficiency and impact of international work placements, thereby boosting interaction between HEIs and enterprises and using the advantages of the newest technologies.

The project will develop and provide the necessary (technical, pedagogical, organisational) models and services for both (1) virtual mobility activities to prepare and follow-up students who go

physically abroadfor a placement and (2) fully virtual placements, from selection, preparation, execution to follow-up.

Project partners:

- ♦ Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)
- ♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
- ♦ Teknillinen korkeakoulu (FI)
- ♦ Erhversakademiet Lillebaelt (DK)
- ♦ EFMD (BE)
- ♦ EADTU (NL)
- ♦ FernUniversität in Hagen (DE)
- ♦ Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven (BE)
- ♦ Laurea Ammattikorkeakoulu (FI)
- ♦ Zachodniopomorska Szkoła Biznesu (PL)
- ♦ Turun yliopisto (FI)
- ♦ Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna (IT)
- ♦ Università degli Studi di Padova (IT)
- ♦ Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (NL)
- ♦ Coimbra Group (BE)
- ♦ BEST (FR)

Supported by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme – ERASMUS Multilateral Projects Co-operation between Universities and Enterprises

Magalhães network

Ongoing

Under the umbrella of ALCUE, The Magalhães network is a bilateral initiative in the fields of Higher education and scientific mobility initiatives. The idea of J. William Fulbright to exchange university students between different countries in order to promote international understanding and so achieve global peace and prosperity has been tremendously successful, and has inspired other similar programs.

Based on the successful experience of the EU Erasmus-Socrates program and at the same time following recommendations from the

ALCUE initiative between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, a number of leading European and LA&C universities in the fields of engineering and architecture have started this cooperation network.

The official language of the network is English and its name is Magalhães, in the original Portuguese spelling, as a recognition to Ferdinand Magellan, the first person who circumnavigated the earth, and with appreciation to the diacritical mark typical of the Spanish and Portuguese language.

More information https://vri5.rec.upm.es/magalhaes/default.aspx

Mobi-Blog - The European Weblog platform for mobile students
2007 - 2009
The Mobi-Blog project (20072009, coordinated by Virtual Learning Centre of the University of Granada) is developing a weblog service for European mobile students, which enables students to tell their story and read about others' experiences during their exchange programme. The weblog contains all aspects of mobile students, like motivation, social issues, communication and cultural issues, organisational and administrative problems.

Mobi-Blog will produce:

♦ A self-sustaining web-based multi-lingual European service for mobile students. It will support a growing number of weblogs about the experience of studying abroad, with positive examples of overcoming motivational, social and cultural barriers to mobility;

♦ An online guide for students which outlines their real life experiences of barriers to mobility and how they got around them, linked to the compelling first-person testimony in the blogs;

♦ A community network of universities in Europe using the product developed within their mobile studies information services.

By producing these outputs Mobi-Blog envisages to increase students' motivation for doing mobile studies in Europe, to provide structured information for actors in higher education, to raise awareness about the topic, and to provide a model for an adequate use of weblogs and peer-to-peer software in general for learning and education.

Project partners:

♦ CEVUG Granada (ES)
♦ Lambrakis Foundation (GR)
♦ Scienter (ES)
♦ Institute for Innovation in Learning FIM (DE)
♦ Amitié (IT)
♦ IPAK (SL)
♦ Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli TKK (FI)
♦ University Reading (UK)
♦ IREA (RO)

Project website: http://mobi-blog.eu

MoreVM - Ready for Virtual Mobility

2007 - 2009

The MoreVM project (2007–2009, coordinated by College of Business DOBA Maribor) aims to facilitate virtual mobility, encourage participation and enhance efficiency of virtual mobility in higher education. It addresses the needs of two main target groups: potential virtual mobility students and (smaller) colleges/universities. Core objectives of the project are enhancing students' performance in virtual mobility students for virtual mobility, raising awareness of the importance of virtual mobility, provide support for colleges/universities in organising virtual mobility, strengthen the cooperation among them and encourage them to develop joint programmes. The MoreVM project will produce four main outcomes:

♦ Pre-virtual mobility support phase (including introductory course for potential virtual mobility students, cultural survival kit and preparatory course for virtual mobility coordinators) which is dedicated to testing, initiation of virtual mobility and preparation of the two target groups;

♦ Virtual mobility coordinator profile which covers roles, functions and responsibilities of university/college staff in order to provide efficient support for potential virtual mobility students;

♦ Virtual mobility supervision scheme which will help colleges/universities to exchange information about students' performance in order to prevent drop-outs and increase their performance by using appropriate counselling and motivation techniques;

- ♦ Project portal allowing content update by students and participating partners and containing among others the pre‑virtual mobility courses.

Partners
- ♦ College of Business DOBA Maribor
- ♦ OU-NL School of Management
- ♦ OULU University of Applied Sciences
- ♦ Newton College

http://morevm.org/project/about

Supported by the Lifelong Learning Erasmus Virtual Campus Programme

MoveIT - Seminars Promoting Virtual Support for Mobile Students

1 November 2009 – 31 October 2010

The MoveIT project, coordinated by EuroPACE, will keep blended/virtual mobility and e-coaching methodologies for the support of physically mobile students high on the agenda of the different European stakeholders by promoting and dissemination best practices and activities of former projects in the field.

To this end, the Move-IT project will organise two seminars on blended mobility, two webinars on e-coaching and a Forum on "Coaching exchange students from a distance".

Project partners:
- ♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
- ♦ Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)
- ♦ Coimbra Group ASBL (BE)

Supported by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme – ERASMUS Accompanying Measures

Re.ViCa Reviewing Traces of European Virtual Campuses

0ctober 2007 – September 2009

Re.ViCa aims to make an inventory and to carry out a systematic review of Virtual Campus initiatives of the past decade within higher education at European, national and regional levels. Re.ViCa looks not only at currently operational Virtual Campuses, but also at the legacy and impact within higher education generally of those Virtual Campus initiatives that have ceased activities. Furthermore, Re.ViCa identifies relevant parameters and success factors for evaluating and comparing Virtual Campuses, based on thorough research and expert input and organise in-depth discussions at various stages of the project, to incorporate the input of different interest groups and stakeholders.

An International Advisory Committee, consisting of European and non-European experts in the field of Virtual Campuses, are invited to comment on the findings of the Re.ViCa research. Finally, Re.ViCa wants to compare in-depth studies of European cases to selected non-European initiatives in order to refine and elaborate parameters and success factors and to formulate a set of action points that can be applied to ensure the realisation of future successful European Virtual Campus initiatives.

The results of the Re.ViCa research are published on a wiki, which aims to become one of the largest repositories on the topic of Virtual Campus. In September 2009, the project will conclude with the publication of a Virtual Campus Handbook including guidelines, best practices and recommendations and aimed at decision makers, government, education authorities, eLearning industry, research community and Virtual Campus management.

Project partners:

♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
♦ Katholieke Universiteit Leuven - AVNet (BE)
♦ ATiT bvba (BE)

- ♦ Helsinki University of Technology, TKK Dipoli (FI)
- ♦ FernUniversität in Hagen (DE)
- ♦ Université de Strasbourg (FR)
- ♦ University of West Hungary - College of Geoinformatics (HU)
- ♦ International Telematic University UNINETTUNO (IT)
- ♦ Matic Media Ltd (UK)

Project website: http://revica.europace.org

Project wiki: http://www.virtualcampuses.eu

Supported by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme – ERASMUS – Multilateral projects – Virtual Campuses

VertebrALCUE

December 2008-November 2011

The VertebrALCUE Project aims to contribute to the development process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Systems (HES´s) and the implementing process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE in Spanish) by exploring and strengthening different levels of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level.

The project, counting on a good number of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Latin America and Europe as partners, intends to design principles, model structure, action plan, evaluation criteria and verify feasibility conditions, for a "vertebrating model" for the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America (LA) and the European Union.

The VertebrALCUE model will explore and strengthen different levels (institutional, national and regional) of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation. All partners are meant to establish a prototype ALCUE Unit within their

institution which will participate in the feasibility studies of the National Coordination Units and will be involved in the design and evaluation activity for each Vertebralcue component.

Vertebralcue is not to be intended as an extra academic network but a hub which can facilitate and induce a structure for the interlinking of the existing networks and the shaping of the ALCUE space. The specific activities implemented in the VertebralALCUE cooperation infrastructure, following the priorities of the ALFA III Programme, will be addressed to support the reform and modernisation of higher education institutions and systems in the beneficiary countries, as well as their quality, accessibility and relevance.The Project will also contribute to support the integration among universities, enterprises, local government and society, thus contributing to local development and social cohesion.

Coordinator: University of Bologna

Partners from European Union

♦ Scienter (SCIE), (joint coordinator)
♦ Karl-Franzens University of Graz (GRA)
♦ Universidade de Coimbra (UC)
♦ Universidad de Granada (UGR)
♦ Universitat Politecnica de Valencia (UPV)
♦ Fundacio Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears (FUEIB)

Partners from Latin America

♦ FLACSO Argentina
♦ Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (UNQ)
♦ Universidad Tres de Febrero (UNTREF)
♦ Universidad Loyola (LOB)
♦ Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidiscipliarios (CEBEM)
♦ Instituto Internacional de Planejamento Educacional (IIPE)
♦ Fundacao de Apoio a Universidade de Sao Paulo (FUSP)

- Universidad Central de Chile (UCCH)
- Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH)
- Asociacion Colombiana de Universidades (ASCUN)
- Universidad Antonio Narino (UAN)
- Universidad Nacional (UNA)
- FLACSO Ecuador
- Universidad Tècnica Particular de Loja (UTPL)
- Asociacion Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educacion Superior (ANUIES)
- FLACSO Mexico
- Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM)
- Universidad Centroamericana (UCA)
- Centro de Estudios de Derecho, de Economia y Politica (CEDEP)
- Universidad Autonoma de Asuncion (UAA)
- Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru (PUCP)
- Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)
- Universidad de La Republica (URE)
- Universidad Simon Bolivar (USB)

Project website http://www.vertebralcue.org/index.php?lang=en
Supported by the Alfa III programme

VIRQUAL Network for integrating Virtual Mobility and European Qualification Framework in HE and CE Institutions

January 2009-December 2011
The project of this network proposes to help educational and training institutions to achieve Virtual Mobility and to guarantee EQF implementation through e-learning, aiming at finding specific obstacles in institutions and proposing concrete and innovative

solutions. It will promote cooperation and joint work among partner organizations and will link with related initiatives. It will address other educational networks to help the dissemination of the results.

More specifically, the objectives are:

♦ To define, exemplify and promote discussion about using e-learning as a scenario to foster national and international collaboration of HE /CE organizations to achieve virtual mobility implementation.

♦ To critically assess and exchange results, ideas and innovation about European, national and local policies and initiatives in the area of Virtual Mobility, aiming at identifying obstacles and facilitators for collaboration.

♦ To cooperate in the elaboration and implementation of concrete Virtual Mobility scenarios, by establishing partnerships among the network institutions, and providing solutions and specific tools for different processes and stakeholders involved in the process.

♦ To elaborate, implement, make available and disseminate tools to analyse, support, manage at Institutional level, contributing to improve the Virtual Mobility in Europe while trying to implement EQF requirements.

It is expected that through the results of this project network, other European HE and CE institutions will find guidance, case studies and tools to integrate Virtual Mobility in their practices, contributing to the construction of a realistic European Learning Space.

The project is organized in twelve workpackages that cover all activities of the project.

The core group is composed by four subject interest groups (SIG) that address the main objectives of the network:

♦ SIG 1: Virtual Mobility, ECTS and E-learning.

♦ SIG 2: Research.

- SIG 3: E-learning and evaluation of Learning Outcomes of EQF.
- SIG 4: E-learning and EQF.

Project partners:
- Universidade do Porto (PT)
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (ES)
- Technische Universität Wien (A)
- Eesti Infotehnoloogia Sihtasutus (EE)
- Gábor Dénes Fiskola (TR)
- Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi – Sürekli Eğitim Merkezi (TR)
- Universidade Aberta (PT)
- TecMinho – Associação Universidade-Empresa para o Desenvolvimento (PT)
- Verein zur Förderung des Einsatzes Medien in der Aus- u. Weiterbildung (A)

Project website: http://virqual.up.pt

Project supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. It is being financed by the LLL programme of the Socrates projects in Key Activity 3 concerning ICT/Network.

B. Finished projects

BEING MOBILE Disseminating Virtual Mobility for Students and Teachers

November 2005 – December 2006

Being Mobile (2005-2006, coordinated by EuroPACE ivzw) aimed to raise awareness amongst representatives from all teaching and training sectors about how European cooperation in education can be heightened through virtual mobility. The take-up of virtual mobility was promoted through making available the results of previous European Commission funded projects and similar initiatives in this field, fostering international collaboration in education and

motivating others to follow their example. The project managed a targeted dissemination activity, in the form of a workshop, a conference and the publication of a best-practice manual "European Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility". The manual includes short summaries of innovative and model projects or initiatives with a specific focus on replicable outcomes.

Project partners:

- EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
- ICWE gmbh (DE)
- ATiT bvba (BE)
- TietgenSkolen (DK)
- SPACE network (BE

Project website: http://www.being-mobile.net

Supported by the European Commission - DG Education and Culture under the Socrates – Accompanying Measures Programme

BENVIC - Benchmarking of Virtual Campuses

2001 - 2002

The Benvic project was focused in the establishment of evaluation criteria in order to achieve the Quality Standards for Virtual Campuses. Within a benchmarking approach of virtual campuses and virtual universities, one of the basic elements is the description of each "instance" (concrete realisation) of the virtual campus/virtual university concept in a more or less standardised way. Only then it becomes possible to position various instances and/or to "measure" the performance of each instance in a comparable way. The framework for such standardised description is a typology: a set of key elements and their interrelations.

Such a typology is not a once and for all result. Technology changes constantly, and so do educational concepts and settings. A typology must take such changes into account and the present product should therefore be considered as a typology that will be changed in future in function of the description of the organisations that enter the BENVIC benchmarking exercise.

More specifically, the goals were

♦ To develop, test and establish an education approach to evaluation of "virtual campuses" experiences throughout Europe, particularly those involved in the Socrates ODL Programme;
♦ To promote a collaborative network able to implement evaluation through comparison and benchmarking;
♦ To develop a competence map related to the design and implementation of "virtual campuses";
♦ To promote the new knowledge and approach made available by the project to the European Academic Community.

Project partners

♦ Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
♦ The Tavistock Institute
♦ Scienter Italy
♦ Association of European Universities (CRE)
♦ Leuven Institute for Innovative Learning (LINOV)
♦ FIM Psychology
♦ Multimedia Support & Communications Centre Univ College London

For more information Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
http://www.benvic.odl.org/

CSVM - Cross Sector Virtual Mobility

2006 - 2008

Stimulating European Employability Through Cross Sector Virtual Mobility CSVM is a project submitted by EADTU and partners to the 2006 EC Leonardo Da Vinci Programme. The CSVM consortium consists of 10 partners stemming from seven European countries (BE, ES, EE, IT, HU, PL and NL) added with supportive organisations (to name: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Agency and Labour Centre). The aim of the project is to develop innovative forms of online internships. The activities of the project consist of testing and evaluating these forms of learning. The objective of CSVM is to facilitate distance education students to enter into online working, stimulate their employability, and provide distance educational systems with increased business and market connectivity. The specific aim of the project is to establish a sustainable mechanism for interaction between the business and the distance education sector so as to enhance the inflow of knowledge in distance education and the employability of distance education students on the labour market. The project is to establish a unique European Portal which is to be the access point for Virtual Internships in distance HE. The CSVM project with its Virtual Internship Portal intends to contribute to the Lisbon Strategy and the Copenhagen Declaration in the sense of realising (be it a small part of) the emergence of a European labour market and a modernisation of the European education and training system.

Partners

♦   European Association of Distance Teaching Universities

♦   ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

114

- Estonian E-University (EITF)
- Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia (UNED)
- e-Collegium Foundation
- University of Miskolc
- Università Telematica Internazionale UNINETTUNO
- Open University of the Netherlands
- Universiteit Maastricht
- Maria Curie Sklodowska University

Project website http://www.eadtu.nl/csvm/

Project supported by Leonardo da Vinci programme

E-MOVE – An operational conception of virtual mobility

2006 - 2007

The E-MOVE project (2006-2007, coordinated by EADTU) focused on four separate types, models and scenarios for organising virtual mobility: (1) organising a pool of international courses: choosing courses from different foreign institutions, (2) building a Virtual Community: creating virtual mobility in the framework of an international learning experience by ICT within a course, (3) creating an international virtual space for joint courses and joint programmes with international partners and (4) facilitating European access to suitable and relevant courses for continuing professional training and development. The project explored the critical success factors of these four types of Virtual Mobility and implemented these in real Open and Distance Teaching courses. It worked on two interrelated and parallel running action lines: 'Observatory' and 'Implementation'. The result of the implementation action line (test-beds and case studies) is an overview of possibilities, constraints and good practice within the implementation of the four models of virtual mobility. The observatory, consisting of experts in distance education and virtual mobility, analysed, harmonised and integrates

these results in examples of good practice and actual implementation.

In supporting the implementation of virtual mobility also a European information sharing portal was established for library and information support to students and staff operating in virtual mobility. Project results are gathered in a "Guide to Virtual Mobility".

Project website http://www.eadtu.nl/virtualmobility/

ESMOS – Enhancing Student Mobility through Online Support

2005 - 2007

The aims of the ESMOS project (2005-2007, coordinated by the University of Salford) were to develop, evaluate and model the usage of Virtual Learning Environments and online technologies to support students in mobility situations (study exchanges and work placements) throughout the European Union. The ESMOS project hoped to improve the quality of student's mobility experience by providing them with a high level support through the means of Virtual Learning Environments and other online technologies. The partnership has firstly carried out an in-depth analysis of existing practices of mobile students' support, use of technologies, the factors that affect students on placement and an understanding of the relationships which need to be developed between the universities and their placement organisations in order to identify where and how virtual learning environments (VLEs) and other online technologies can be utilised effectively. Based on this needs analysis, a methodology for international mobility has been developed using a variety of technologies and online tools, such as blogs, wikis, SMS, MMS and virtual classroom applications along with VLEs. It is elaborated to become a Model for the Virtual Support of Mobility Students, with protocols and guidelines for each type of technology. These guidelines and protocols were also being tested in a number

of real–life case studies, alongside online tools for staff and students to help them to overcome pedagogical barriers when entering new learning situations.

Project website http://www.esmos.eu

EUNITE European Universities Network for IT in Education

October 2000 - January 2008

EUNITE was initiated in October 2000 by a joint effort of EuroPACE 2000 and Coimbra Group following the VirtUE (Virtual University for Europe) project (Ten TELECOM) recommendations. It was a strategic alliance between eight universities. For various reasons, two universities left the network after some years, whereas the remaining universities narrowed the original objectives and activities towards virtual mobility. EUNITE was aimed at the implementation of ICT in teaching and learning through the creation of a co-operative network of universities with the objective to provide a wide range of ICT supported offerings in teaching and learning: a "European Virtual Campus" (EVC). The EVC should be used for exchange of courses, sharing of courses and joint development of programmes and courses.

Its general goals were:
- ♦ to promote the use of ICT as tools for improving teaching and learning in higher education,
- ♦ to capture the market for life-long learning on a university level,
- ♦ to enhance and develop the co-operation of the EUNITE universities in these fields.

In achieving these goals EUNITE wanted to develop the following opportunities for co-operation:
- ♦ the innovation potential of ICT for on-campus higher education,

- new ways for open and distance learning,
- the internationalisation of learning programmes,
- enhanced inter-university networking in the provision of courses and programmes/curricula, and the production of learning materials.

Strategic Alliance between

- Aalborg University (DK)
- Universidad de Granada (ES)
- FernUniversität Hagen (DE)
- Teknillinen Korkeakoulu (FI)
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (B)
- Lunds Universitet (S)
- University of Strathclyde (UK)
- Universiteit Twente (NL)

Initiative taken by

- EuroPACE 2000
- Coimbra Group

Memorandum of understanding http://www.europace.org/articles and reports/EUNITE MoU.pdf

Euromove

The Euromove project, funded within the framework of the EU Minerva Programme, had the objective of identifying existing Virtual Mobility Activities (VMAs) in Higher Education in Europe in order to elaborate a first classification and to produce a practical guidebook for universities which will list all types of possibilities offered by Virtual Mobility. The main aim of the EUROMOVE project is to pave the way for the introduction of new approaches to virtual mobility in the context of a Master's type course developed in partnership with four European universities (in the field of materials engineering).

The aim is to examine the various virtual mobility models that could

be introduced in the context of training courses developed by all the universities belonging to the partnership.

A more general objective when the models have been finalised will be to test their feasibility, initially within the partnership itself, but also outside it with a representative sample of Europe's higher education establishments.

The partner universities, associated in a graduate engineering programme, also run a joint European Master programme in Advanced Materials Science and Engineering which has been awarded the European "Erasmus Mundus" label. The four universities providing this course are principally concerned to work towards the establishment of a capacity to supplement the existing physical mobility arrangements with additional virtual mobility facilities giving students access to all or part of some of the modules of the proposed curriculum (with an accreditation system based on ECTS credits).

The main objectives of the Euromove project were to:
♦ Identify existing Virtual Mobility Activities (VMA) and characterise them;
♦ Elaborate a first classification of VMA;
♦ Disseminate the project results.

Project partners:
♦ Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine (FR)
♦ University of Saarbrucke (DE)
♦ Polytechnical University Catalunya (ES)
♦ Lulea University of Technology (SE)
♦ Amitié (IT)

Project website: http://euromove.inpl-nancy.fr/

Project funded within the framework of the EU Minverva Programme

Let's Go! *(Real Mobility)*

2007 - 2008

A project Making Mobility a Reality for All Students and Staff The Let's Go project (2007-2008, carried out by Education International and ESU) was launched to ensure that the issues that teachers and students face when going abroad to study, teach or research are brought to the centre of political debate. While the higher education community is aware of different problems, action is required from (governmental) institutions dealing with immigration, employability and social security. The results of successful projects surrounding mobility therefore need to be communicated to a wider public. The Let's Go Campaign promoted mobility of students and staff to provide momentum for change and provided information on the benefits of mobility as well as push for the removal of barriers to mobility.

The project activities comprised:

♦ Campaign materials and national campaigns carried out jointly by teacher and student unions;

♦ An interactive wiki-style website in which students and staff can exchange knowledge on mobility and share good and bad practices;

♦ A mobility barometer, featuring the different mobility situations for both students and higher education and research personnel in each country within the European region;

♦ The "Let's Go! – Where to now?" Mobility Campaign Conference (Lille, France) finalising the campaign.

http://www.letsgocampaign.net
http://data.ei-
ie.org/Common/GetFile.asp?ID=5756&mfd=off&LogonName=Guest

NetACTIVE Credit Transfer in Virtual and Distance Education

2005-2007

The main purpose of the NetACTIVE project (2005-2007, coordinated by UNED in cooperation with EADTU and AIESAD) was to increase the number of virtual mobility students from third countries towards European distance and blended masters. In order to accomplish this objective, NetACTIVE disseminated the virtual and distance course offer and developed student exchange tools, based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The main outcome of the project was the ACTIVE Handbook of Good Practices in Virtual Mobility (an intercontinental approach) "Bases and proposals or good practices in Virtual Mobility". It is a guide for the use of the ACTIVE Virtual Mobility Schema, describing good and effective models and procedures of academic mobility and recognition, how to establish agreements, how to use the documents and how to deal with the possible difficulties.

The ACTIVE Handbook "NetACTIVE: bases and proposals for good practices in Virtual Mobility (an intercontinental approach)" is a guide for the use of the ACTIVE Virtual Mobility Schema, describing good and effective models and procedures of academic mobility and recognition, how to establish agreements, how to use the documents and how to deal with the possible difficulties.

Partners

♦ UNED
♦ OU-UK
♦ Asociación Iberoamericana de Educación Superior a Distancia.
♦ Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance, France.
♦ European Association of Distance Teaching Universities.
♦ Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México.

- Universidad Nacional Mar del Plata, Argentina
- Universidade Aberta, Portugal

Project website: http://www.net-active.info

REVE – Real Virtual Erasmus

January 2005 – December 2006

The REVE project (coordinated by EuroPACE ivzw) aimed to enhance the impact and efficiency of traditional Erasmus programmes through the development and support of Virtual Erasmus actions. For this purpose, two main actions were undertaken by the collaborating partners:

- Virtual mobility course actions, in which 'Real Virtual Erasmus' is implemented on the basis of new as well as improved existing courses and programmes, with the right blend of virtual and real collaboration between students, teachers, and other knowledge workers across institutional and national borders;
- Horizontal support actions that enable and provide the necessary services to the first action line: development and implementation of the necessary technological, organisational and pedagogical tools, techniques and services, models and procedures, training.

The main output of the REVE project is the "Virtual Mobility Manual" that introduces Virtual Mobility with all its aspects and advantages to teachers in higher education, to support them while implementing this new aspect of mobility in their course and thus giving students the opportunity to broaden their learning experience. Therefore the manual includes practical examples of Virtual Erasmus courses with best practices, information on working collaboration models and

implementation procedures including those related to key aspects such as localisation, accreditation and agreements.

Project partners:
♦   EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
♦   Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE)
♦   KHKempen (BE)
♦   Aalborg University (DK)
♦   FernUniversitaet Hagen (DE)
♦   University of Granada (ES)
♦   Helsinki University of Technology (FI)
♦   BEST (Board of European Students of Technology) (FR)
♦   Faculty of Geoinformatics, University of West-Hungary (HU)
♦   University of Rome-La Sapienza (IT)
♦   Consorzio NETTUNO (IT)
♦   College of Management and Public Administration Zamosc (PL)
♦   Warsaw University of Technology (PL)
♦   Escola Superior de Comunicação Social (PT)
♦   EDEN (UK)
♦   University of Strathclyde (UK)
Project website: http://reve.europace.org
Supported by the European Commission - DG Education and Culture under the eLearning Programme

SPUTNIC - Seminars Promoting the Use of Technologies for Networking and International Collaboration

January 2007 – December 2007
SPUTNIC aimed at raising awareness about the beneficial impact of the (pedagogically sound) implementation of new educational

technologies that enhance international networking and collaboration for an institution, its staff and its students.

By spreading know-how in those educational technologies from successful Minerva and other Socrates projects that boost international cooperation and by providing a theoretical background as well as practical models and hands-on experience, SPUTNIC wished to stimulate teaching staff to engage in initiatives on international mobility and international cooperation.

As for activities SPUTNIC aimed at targeted dissemination of existing training materials, guest presentations and best-practise demonstrations from current and passed Socrates projects as well as training materials available at the partner institutions through face-to-face and highly practical training activities supported by a public, interactive training website.

The SPUTNIC project ended December 2007. Main outputs and activities were the following:

♦ A series of four training seminars broadcasted through videoconferencing and streamed live on the internet, on topics as Web2.0, Virtual Mobility, Streaming media and Videoconferencing.

♦ Two large-scale dissemination workshops, one at the EDEN conference (June, Naples) and one at the Online Educa conference (November, Berlin)

♦ A student symposium organized by the Board of European Students of Technology (June, Gothenburg)

♦ An interactive website that functions as a repository of good examples, training materials and EC projects on Virtual Mobility, Web2.0/Social Software, Streaming Video/Media and Videoconference.

Project partners:

♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)

- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven - AVNet (BE)
- Helsinki University of Technology, TKK Dipoli (FI)
- EDEN (UK)
- BEST (FR)
- ICWE (DE)

Project Website: http://sputnic.europace.org

Supported by the European Commission - SOCRATES - Accompanying Measures

SUMIT – Supporting Mobility Through ICT

2006 - 2007

The SUMIT project (2006-2007, coordinated by UNICA) project aimed at supporting the objective of 3.000.000 Erasmus students by 2011 through the organisation of a seminar on virtual aspects related to mobility in one of the new member states (University of Warsaw, Poland). The SUMIT partnership envisaged setting up a seminar which highlighted and exchanged best practices on virtual aspects related to mobility during three stages: before, during and after (mobility). The objective was to show universities in the targeted countries how ICT can be used to enhance the quality of the student and the university experience of exchange, which, eventually, will help to increase numbers (in and out) of Erasmus students. The main activity of the project consisted in the organisation of the seminar as such targeted towards university staff involved in International Relations, Erasmus Coordination, e-Learning, libraries and IT services as well as to student associations. The outcomes of the seminar were published in the conference proceedings: "Enhancing Student Mobility In A Digital World. Sharing experiences in An Enlarged Europe".

http://www.eduser.eu/02_projects_sumit.php

http://www.unica-network.eu/docs/eu-SUMIT-publication_BW_to_print.pdf

VENUS Virtual and E-Mobility for Networking Universities in Society

March 2006 – February 2008

The VENUS project aimed:

♦ to internationalise prestigious courses, with international scope and importance, in each member university through Virtual Mobility, open to both students and citizens. The content focused on promoting European citizenship, collaboration and personal development

♦ to implement two different models of international virtual seminars (a seminar series during the academic year and a one-week summer school) and evaluate their sustainability

♦ to enhance international clusters of educational institutions each strongly embedded in regional networks, in order to stimulate inclusion of citizens. Through the elaboration of the contents on two levels (general European and region specific) the European identity was enhanced and at the same time local aspects were valued.

♦ to become a world-class example of cross-border collaboration between higher education institutions, businesses and citizens. The overall objective was to create a sustainable best-practice example of the 'Faculty of Extension', extended both in the sense of methods and target public.

The VENUS project ended February 2008. All project results are collected in the VENUS Handbook entitled 'Virtual Seminars. Creating New Opportunities for Universities'. The handbook is based on the experience of the project partners who organised Virtual Seminars on a broad range of European subjects and a Summer School. The handbook as well as the summary booklets and recommendations in English, French and German can be downloaded at the VENUS project website. The recordings and background materials of the

VENUS Seminar series "Global Issues for the European Citizen" as well as the VENUS Summer School on "The use of Social Software in Education and Business" are available at the VENUS seminars website.

Project partners:

♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
♦ Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – AVNet (BE)
♦ ATiT bvba (BE)
♦ University of Cologne (DE)
♦ Helsinki University of Technology, TKK Dipoli (FI)
♦ University of West-Hungary, Faculty of Geoinformatics (HU)
♦ West Pomeranian Business School (PL)
♦ Technical University of Kosice - Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics (SK)
♦ Consorzio Nettuno (IT)

Project website: http://www.venus-project.net

VENUS seminars website: http://www.venus-seminars.net

Supported by the European Commission - DG Education and Culture under the eLearning Programme

VICTORIOUS - Virtual Curricula Through Reliable Interoperating University Systems

2005-2006

The Victorious project (coordinated by Coimbra Group) was an in-depth analysis consisting of feasibility tests in three different areas that are key to opening the door to large-scale implementation of virtual mobility: Quality, Interoperability/Open Standards, and Digital Repositories and Resources.

The Victorious project used physical mobility in a digital world as a proxy for virtual mobility. It researched how mobile students and

university staff can deal with varying organisational systems and ICT facilities at different European universities. This was investigated through two surveys and feasibility tests (pilots). The student survey probes the student's experience of differing ICT facilities when on exchange. The survey has been followed up by a university survey which focuses on the institutions' view on and priorities in ICT facilities. The pilots deal with six possible solutions to identified issues, which include: (1) quality of information about the host university, (2) making courses more 'visiting student friendly', (3) interconnections between virtual learning environments, (4) making course choice from remote universities easier, (5) sharing digital identities between universities and (6) remote access to the full digital services of the home university. The outcomes of the Victorious project are gathered in the final report "Student Mobility in A Digital World" including an extensive report on the surveys and the pilots and guidelines for students, universities and policy makers.

http://www.victorious-project.org
http://www.coimbragroup.
eu/victorious/VIC%20Final%20Report%20print%20version.pdf

VirtUE - Virtual University for Europe
1996 - 1998
The VirtUE project was proposed as a feasibility study for the development and implementation of a networked (or distributed, Euro-ISDN based) virtual university for Europe in cooperation between classical universities, open universities, technology providers and telecom partners. The project addressed on-campus students at all levels and off-campus students at postgraduate level.

Two distinguished parts could be identified in this distributed virtual university: the joint academic network and the services network. The

joint academic network (taken up by the three networks in the project, EuroPACE 2000, Coimbra Group and Consorzio NETTUNO) had three functions:

♦ Universities would provide learning and teaching materials, courses, and programmes to the virtual knowledge pool;
♦ Through thematic of regional clusters, universities would jointly design curricula and jointly develop courses and programmes;
♦ Universities would take up available materials to respond to the learning/training needs of students, graduates, companies and society at large.

The services network (a function of EuroPACE) would create all necessary services (infrastructure, technical platform, etc.) and offer them to the users. Within the distributed virtual university, three conceptual models of network-based educational services (making use of ISDN) were introduced:

♦ Virtual class and campus.
♦ Network for flexible open and distance learning.
♦ Network for on-demand learning.

Project partners
♦ EuroPACE (B)
♦ Coimbra Group (B)
♦ Consorzio NETTUNO (IT)
♦ FernUniversität Hagen (DE)
♦ Alcatel Bell (B)
♦ Helsinki Telephone Company (FI)
♦ International Education Centre IBM (B)
♦ Telecom Italia. (IT)

No project website available.

For information http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/VirtUE

Project was funded by the European Commission under the TEN-ISDN Programme

VM-BASE – Virtual Mobility Before and After Student Exchanges

October 2006 – September 2008

VM-BASE, was a two-year project that started 1 October 2006. The project was carried out with the support of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, under the Socrates/Minerva programme. The VM-BASE project aimed to raise the quality of student exchanges by offering virtual support, both before and after the physical mobility. Virtual support was used to prepare and follow-up the mobile student, as a complement to the existing exchange programmes. In this way, the project supported teachers in coaching exchange students at a distance (ecoaching). The project started with a study giving an overview of the state-of-the-art in virtual exchange support measures and a needs analysis, making an inventory of student and teacher needs. The major activity of the project consisted of several pilots focusing on the orientation and selection of students, preliminary courses for students preparing for a physical exchange and examination facilities at the end or even after the exchange. Next to the pilots the need and feasibility of a Virtual Alumni Association for Erasmus students was being investigated. All project results are presented in this manual.

Project partners:

♦ EuroPACE ivzw (BE)
♦ Katholieke Universiteit Leuven - AVNet (BE)
♦ Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven (BE)
♦ Coimbra Group ASBL (BE)
♦ ESU – European Students' Union (BE)
♦ University of Tartu (EE)
♦ BEST - Board of European Students of Technology (FR)

- University of West Hungary - Faculty of Geoinformatics (HU)
- Helsinki University of Technology, TKK Dipoli (FI)
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences (FI)
- University of Edinburgh (UK)

http://vmbase.europace.org.

Supported by the European Commission under the Socrates-Minerva Programme

Methodology of experience mapping

In the goals of the Project, we are envolved in the evaluation and documentation of selected best practices on Virtual mobility to analyse with stakeholders key issues in the implantation of these experiences. Figure 1 shows the several stops Howard the recopilation and creation of such results, living at the end of the project general guidelines and a model to implement such best parctices in each HEI.
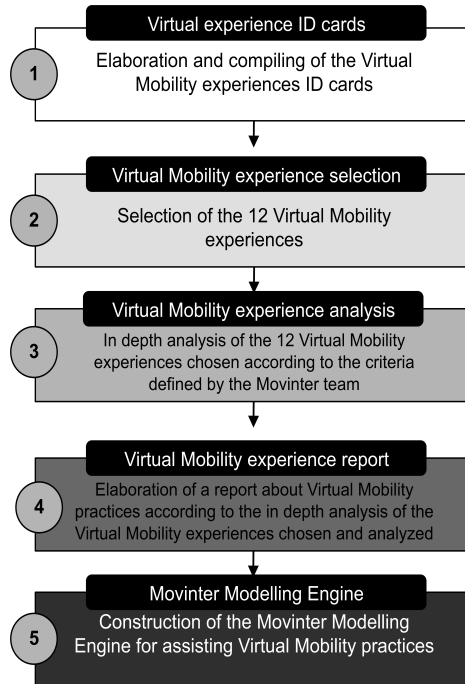
Figure 1: The 5 phases of the Action Plan.

The description of projects, initiatives and programmes in the field of Virtual Mobility formed the first initial step in the desk research phase that preceded the actual Virtual Mobility experience mapping (phase 1). On the basis of the initial desk research, literature review and análisis, the partners were asked to make a selection of approximately 50 practical experiences in the field of Virtual Mobility in Latin America and Europe. While the initial phase included more theoretical frameworks and projects, this phase lead to the description of very practical experiences. For each of the experiences the five key components of Virtual Mobility identified by Movinter were considered: i.e. Interactivity and communication,

International student groups, International teaching groups, Use of appropriate technological solutions, Multicultural exchange.

Further the procedure to collect interesting practical experiences considered the different priority levels as described hereafter and shown in the table below.

♦ **Priority 1** - those experiences made between European and Latin American HEIs with at least five of the nine main components of virtual mobility identified during the brainstorming session.

♦ **Priority 2** - those experiences relevant for the number of components detected (more than 5) but geographically out of the reference area (EU-LA) and those experiences in the area EU-LA but having less than 5 elements.

♦ **Priority 3** - those experiences which have some components but outside the reference area (EU-LA).

♦ **Priority 4** - regarded those experiences made by other institutions (non HEI) but relevant for a specific aspect.

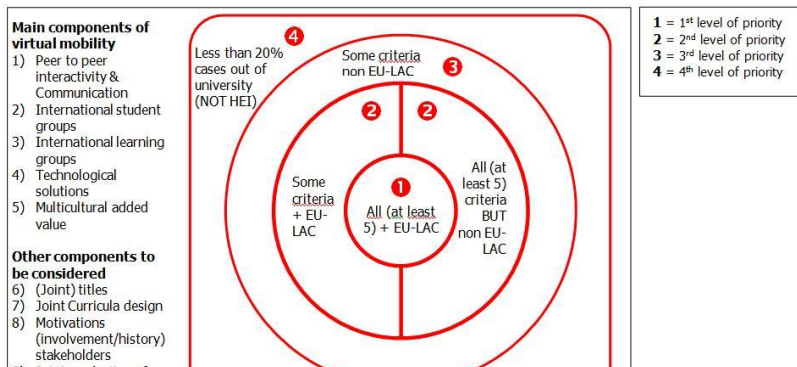Thus the experiences cover the main geographical areas and the key issues addressed by the project.

Figure 2: Priority levels

The experiences identified are available online on the MOVINTER website[11] in the Community/Experience section[12].

The content of the ID-Cards was under constant update due to participation of European and Latin American relevant representatives of policy makers, leading practitioners and researchers.

Thus the following experiences were described (for full description see website) and this list can continuously be updated during the project by the community.

From Virtual Mobility practical experiences to VM good practice

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[11]   http://www.movinter.eu

[12]   http://elearning.ugr.es/elgg/mod/form/my_forms.php?form_view=all&id=212

The continuing multilevel interaction with stakeholders in the field has enabled Movinter to refine some of the criteria for the further analysis and selection of 12 VM Good Practices out of the long list of practical experiences. This refinement has led to the understanding that besides the relevant components, dimensions and aspects of Virtual Mobility illustrated in the figures above, there is an impelling need to define core dimensions capable of boxing specific contexts, activities and agents involved in the global Virtual Mobility experience.

The core dimensions considered include:

◆ Policy (i.e.: accreditation measures, legal issues overcome, credit system adopted)

◆ Administrative related issues (i.e.: how the students register, how are the experience is managed from an administrative point of view)

◆ Teacher related issues (i.e.: where are they from, how many are they, how do they prepare and teach their subjects, how to they interact with the students, with each other and with the HEI administration)

◆ Student related issues (i.e.: where are they from, how many are they, how do they take their classes, exams, essays and projects, how to they interact with the teachers, with each other and with the HEI administration)

◆ ICT use (i.e.: ICT solutions used, how and why, how students and teachers are prepared to use these solutions and helped out when they have problems)

◆ Curricula related issues (i.e.: scientific areas, what is taught, how is it taught, how the curricula was constructed)

◆ Multicultural Exchange (i.e.: where, how and if it happens)

As decided by the partnership and described in the approved Action Plan, these core dimensions, were used as criteria in the

selection process of the 12 VM Good Practice experiences to be analysed. Obviously alongside the components, the following were used as criteria in the selection

♦ dimensions and components of Virtual Mobility
♦ relevance of the concept of Virtual Mobility

Finally, during the desk research conducted by the MOVINTER team when compiling the approximately 50 ID-Cards, another criteria emerged and turned out to be important for the selection and description of the VM Good Practice, i.e. the **Accessibility of information** (i.e.: how accessible was the information on the experience on the web) and whether direct contact with the organisers or initiators of the experiences would be possible.

We have a preliminary selection of best practices:

♦ CAMPUS VIRTUAL DEL CONSEJO LATINOAMERICANO DE CIENCIAS
♦ CEDDET
♦ EUROCLASS PROJECT
♦ EVICAB - EUROPEAN VIRTUAL CAMPUS FOR BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING
♦ HISTORY ONLINE
♦ INTERN PROJECT - VIRTUAL STUDENT PLACEMENTS
♦ LAW-ICT
♦ MAESTRIA EN ESTUDIOS GLOBALES
♦ NETACTIVE
♦ VIRTUAL CAMPUS PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPUS VIRTUAL DE LA SALUD
♦ VIRTUALEDUCA IBERFORM CAMPUS VIRTUAL
♦ VIRTUE

- ANTOGAFASTA
- EDUCARED INTEGRA - RED ESCOLAR VIRTUAL PARA ALUMNOS MIGRANTES
- GUADALAJARA
- MONTERREY
- VERACRUZABA

The next phase of the project will include the detailed analyses of each of the 12 selected cases, that should enable a clearer understanding of what must the dealt with and assured in each dimension when implementing a VM experience. This information will be reported in the final documents of the project as well as the website.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and References

7.1. Conclusions

In order to extract the potential of Virtual Mobility in the next decade, MOVINTER would sees the need to further:

♦ Develop, document and promote good practice of Virtual Mobility
♦ Include Virtual Mobility elements in examples of international cooperation amongst higher education institutions.
♦ Propose Virtual Mobility actions within existing policies and programmes (Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Alfa, etc.)
♦ Invite top academics to take part in virtual mobility experiences
♦ Involve student unions in the debate on virtual mobility to get inputs and support to the equity potential of virtual mobility.
♦ Invite virtual mobility 'Alumni' to witness their experience
♦ Develop a case for virtual mobility at all relevant international organisations
♦ Create sustainability conditions for best practice
♦ Develop a quality assurance approach for virtual mobility

- Set participation objectives for virtual mobility by 2020 and commit stakeholders to their achievements

This document constitutes the most relevant outcomes of the project prepared for the final conferece at Granada, 27-28th of September.

This document and results will be enriched with the debate fo these full two days meeting focused on virtual campuses, virtual mobility, current state and trends for futurre.

7.2. Interesting links and reference documents

Selection of manuals on Virtual Mobility

Bijnens, H., Boussemaere, M., Rajagopal, K., Op de Beeck, I. & W. Van Petegem (eds.) (2006) European Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility. A best-practice manual. 2006, EuroPACE ivzw, Leuven.
http://www.being-mobile.net/pdf/BM_handbook_final.pdf

Bijnens K., Michielsen C., Rajagopal K. (eds.), *Virtual Mobility Manual. How to teach internationally from your own desk*. Leuven, December 2006.
http://reve.europace.org/drupal

Op de Beeck I., Bijnens K., Van Petegem W. (eds.), *Home and Away. Coaching exchange students from a distance. A best-practice manual on blended mobility.*EuroPACE ivzw, 2008, Leuven.
http://vm-base.europace.org/attachments/Blended_mobility_manual.pdf

Reynolds S., Rajagopal K.& Schreurs B.(eds.), *Virtual Seminars. Creating New Opportunities for Universities*. 2008, EuroPACE ivzw, Leuven.
http://www.venus-project.net/images/Venus_gids_v05.pdf

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