

## EM-iDEA Newsletter - Edition 1 – January 2012

The EM-iDEA project is run by Erasmus Mundus coordinators, for Erasmus Mundus coordinators. With this newsletter, the EM-iDEA project team intends to inform anybody with an interest in the Erasmus Mundus programme on the project's recent activities.



The **first EM-iDEA Conference** took place on the 23rd November 2011 in Ghent, Belgium. Under the motto 'Bring 'EM together!', 130 participants from Europe and beyond came to Ghent University to discuss their experiences in the Erasmus Mundus programme. Details of the conference programme can be found on the EM-iDEA project [website](#), with **links to all presentations and to the specific workshop reports**. Below we give a short description of the day's events.

The morning session of the conference started off with a welcoming speech by Ghent University's Rector, Prof. Paul Van Cauwenberge, stressing his firm support of the project's goals in light of the commitment of Ghent University in Erasmus Mundus. Next, Project Coordinator **Prof. Boas Erez** (Bordeaux I) briefly introduced the EM-iDEA's **project goals and structure**.

The project team had the honour of presenting as the following speaker **Mr. Vito Borrelli, DG Education of the European Commission**, who voiced his high expectations on the outcomes of the project, in particular with regards to the establishment of a representative organisation of Erasmus Mundus coordinators. He also seized the moment to give a brief introduction into the European Commission's proposal for the new [Erasmus for All programme \(2014-2020\)](#), which was published the very same day.



The next item on the programme was an **open plenary discussion**, introduced by Prof. Boas Erez. It made reference to the original set-up of the Erasmus Mundus programme in 2004, which still has not lost its relevance: how can joint programmes help make the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) more attractive? Comparing the EHEA to a fruit salad proved provocative enough to obtain input from participants from within and outside Europe. In the ensuing discussion diversity was proclaimed

as a richness, but one that needs thorough explaining in order to retain its attractiveness outside Europe.

The morning session was concluded with presentations by Erasmus Mundus coordinators on their day-to-day work and the problems they are facing: [Prof. Roel Baets](#), EMA1 Coordinator at Ghent University, spoke about his **thought-provoking experiences** with the Erasmus Mundus Brand Name. [Dr. Artur Schmitt](#) represented the point of view of the EM Action 2 coordinator at the University of Granada and [Dr. Raymond Nijmeijer](#) of Twente University gave insight in his operations in both Action 1 and 2.

The lunch break offered opportunity for **discussion, poster sessions and interviews**. In the afternoon four parallel workshops were held, each introduced by project members. The themes were carefully chosen to appeal to both Action 1 and Action 2 coordinators and to serve the final goals of the EM-iDEA project, being the establishment of an independent association of Erasmus Mundus coordinators.

[Workshop 1](#) investigated into the possible **synergies among EM coordinators** within an institution and how this could serve as a model for collaboration between coordinators on an association level. Moreover, [Andries Verspeeten](#), Action 1 Officer at Ghent University's International Relations Office, and [Elisabeth Axell and Ulrika Qvist Mathiesen](#), both Action 2 Coordinators at Lund University, posed the question as to the possibility for synergies between Action 1 and Action 2 coordinators.

[Workshop 2](#) connected to one of the EM-iDEA project activities and inquired on how to best identify the **needs of the EM community**, under the guidance of [Prof. José María Peiró and Vicente Martínez Tur](#) from University of Valencia.



Since its start the Erasmus Mundus programme set the increase of the attractiveness of the EHEA as one of its main goals, the cooperation with Third Countries being one of the means to this end. High time then to raise the question on how the programme is currently being **perceived outside of Europe**. This was the topic of [Workshop 3](#). Introductions were given by [Panambi Abadie](#), who spoke for the Association of Universities Grupo

Montevideo, and [James Otieno Jowi](#) from the African Network for the Internationalization of Education.

[Workshop 4](#) focused on the final goal of the EM-iDEA project, i.e. the establishment of an independent association of EM coordinators. The participants were asked to give their input on the role such an **association of EM coordinators** could play. A presentation was given by [Gwenaëlle Guillerme](#) from Ecole Centrale Paris on three main roles that an association of coordinators would ideally perform, i.e. 'Sharing Experience', 'Collecting Data' and 'Giving Coordinators a Voice'.

The day ended with a closing plenary session where all workshop coordinators briefly presented the conclusions. As the most direct outcome - a result of Mr. Borrelli's appeal and of Workshop 4 -, Prof. Boas Erez announced that a **position paper** will be drafted in time for the next conference where a

workshop will be dedicated to finalizing this paper. Topics will be the use of brand names and their sustainability, the level of grants, and EU student participation levels in Action 1 programmes.

We thank all conference participants for their **active participation** and for their feedback. It will assist the project team in fine-tuning the content to the needs of the Erasmus Mundus coordinators. In the meantime preparations are being made for the EM-iDEA conference at **Lund University** in Sweden, which will take place on **30<sup>th</sup> of March 2012**. More information will follow shortly.

Next to the conference organization, project activities are ongoing. In the framework of the conference, the EM-iDEA project team as a whole conferred on the **management** of the project, whereas participants in the project activities 'survey of tools and services' and 'needs analysis' joined together for their specific agendas.

In the very near future, a **questionnaire** will be sent out to Erasmus Mundus project coordinators, asking them to render their experiences with tools and services catering specifically to the coordination of Erasmus Mundus projects. Likewise, in the project activity 'Needs Analysis' work is proceeding within a focus group of experienced Erasmus Mundus Coordinators, based on the Workshop in Ghent.

The first EM-iDEA conference set the overall tone. The following conferences will deepen the discussion on specific topics while work proceeds on the project activities. With your help, the EM-iDEA project will become a success, at the service of the entire Erasmus Mundus Community.

See you in Lund!

The EM-iDEA Project Team