

**4th EM-iDEA Conference,
Novi Sad, Serbia, 3rd October 2012**

Plenary Session 2: Results and outcomes of the EM-iDEA 'Needs Analysis' Activity

Abstract: This session was led by Professors José María Peiró and Vicente Martínez-Tur of the University of Valencia, both of whom are members of the EM-iDEA project and the project's Steering Committee. The Needs Analysis activity is central to the project as it will inform the project on the kinds of services which the Concilium should provide, by identifying the needs of its potential members. Six members of staff from the University of Valencia have been working on the activity, and they have been aided by Francesco Girotti of the University of Bologna. The original presentation used during the presentation of the activity's results and outcomes is available at <http://www.em-concilium.eu/conferences.html>, by clicking on the aforementioned speaker's names. This can be read in tandem with this report.

General summary: The activity consists of four main phases. The first phase supplied the initial input via a dedicated workshop at the first EM-iDEA Conference at Ghent University in November 2011. Phase two identified the main topics, i.e. the 'needs', to be considered and analysed. This was done using a DELPHI methodology to narrow the topics down to six main fields, which are 'Advocacy', 'Lobbying', 'Services and Brokerage', 'Vision and Strategy', 'Visibility, Image and Reputation', and 'Internal Communication and Networking'. These six areas were then examined by way of two surveys (phase three), the first was a survey of a reduced group of 20 experts and again used a DELPHI rationale, and the second was a conventional survey (the 'General' survey) in which 128 people participated. The participants in the latter survey were members of the EM community at large and represented 47 different countries. The final phase is the writing and publication of the final report for the activity, which the activity's task force members have now begun working on.

Observations: In the DELPHI survey, the experts rated the area 'Visibility, Image and Reputation' as the most important and as having the highest priority. Following this were the 'Advocacy' and 'Lobbying' areas. This was the case for both experts involved in Action 1 and Action 2 programmes. Experts involved in Action 1 programmes attached more importance and priority to all six areas than those involved in Action 2.

From the results of the General Survey, areas A (Vision and Strategy) and D (Visibility, Image and Reputation) were jointly rated as the most important. That the former be considered most important was to be expected, however that area D be considered as important was more surprising. This time round, participants in the survey representing Action 2 programmes rated all areas as more important than those representing Action 1 programmes. In addition, participants representing third country institutions rated all areas as more important than those representing European institutions. Third country representatives also emphasized the 'Services' area, which can be read as demonstrating that they are enthusiastic about the idea of the Concilium and of being members, and that there is a certain expectation in these countries vis-à-vis the project. If the results of the Experts

Survey and General Survey are compared, we can see that the Experts were more aware of the importance of Advocacy and Lobbying.

Professor José María Peiró introduced the concept of Social Capital Theory, and the distinction between two types of Social Capital: Bonding and Bridging. He likened the areas of 'Internal Communication and Networking' and 'Services' to Bonding Social Capital, i.e. that these link people together with others who are generally like them, who are in the same social or professional group as them. The other areas, in particular 'Advocacy' and 'Lobbying', are more representative of Bridging Social Capital, meaning that they link people together across a social (or professional) divide. This is because advocacy and lobbying carried out by the Concilium would be in the interest of all members, regardless of their professional category.

Both surveys showed that participants were aware of the importance of a coherent vision and strategy for the Concilium, but given the ongoing discussions on the future of the European policy on Education and in particular in European Higher Education, this is something which will be quite difficult to plan. In light of this, Professor Peiró stressed the need to look at our strengths and weaknesses and to analyse our current environment; both the threats presented and the opportunities it can offer. As regards the new European Union programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, Professor Peiró spoke of four possible outcomes by way of example: 1) the current situation continues and the EM brand name is kept; 2) the brand name is kept but the programme and its features are altered; 3) the brand name is discarded but certain features of the programme are kept; 4) the brand name is discarded and there is a complete overhaul of the programme.