

## NEW METRICS FOR EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA: CHALLENGE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

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We present new trends in evolution of the European Education Area as a possible framework for development of recently established Belarus-Uzbek Intersectoral Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications (BUI).

### INTRODUCTION

European Commission (EC) President von der Leyen committed to making the European Education Area (EEA) a reality by 2025 [1]. Education is the foundation for personal fulfilment, employability, and active and responsible citizenship. The right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning is proclaimed in the European Pillar of Social Rights as its first principle. The Union is resetting its growth strategy, based on sustainability, with green and digital transitions as its transformative drivers. Education is at the heart of the European way of life, strengthening social market economy and democracy with freedom, diversity, human rights and social justice. In July, the European Council agreed an unprecedented recovery package to counter the effects of COVID-19 on our economies and societies, and to promote Europe's strong recovery and the transformation and reform of our economies. In that context, investing in education, training and the effective use of skills will be crucial to support Europe's economic and social prosperity. The Covid-19 pandemic has major impacts on education and training systems over the world. It is exposing over 100 million Europeans, who are part of the education and training community, to new and challenging realities, ways of learning, teaching and communicating. It is essential to prevent the health crisis from becoming a structural barrier to learning and skills development impacting on young people's employment prospects, earnings, as well as equality and inclusion for the whole of the society. Member States as well as other countries including Belarus and Uzbekistan seek cooperation to build resilient and future-looking education systems, setting the corresponding reference system.

### EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA

The Commission proposes to consolidate ongoing efforts and further develop the European Education Area along six dimensions (Figure 1). In this paper we outline only some of them.

- **Quality:**

Quality education equips young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to thrive in life and to cope with the manifold challenges they will face. At EU level, the vision for quality in education includes digital competences, which is a prerequisite to thrive in life, to find fulfilling jobs and to become engaged citizens. It is interesting to mention that in 2019, a fifth of young persons in Europe reported not to have basic digital skills.

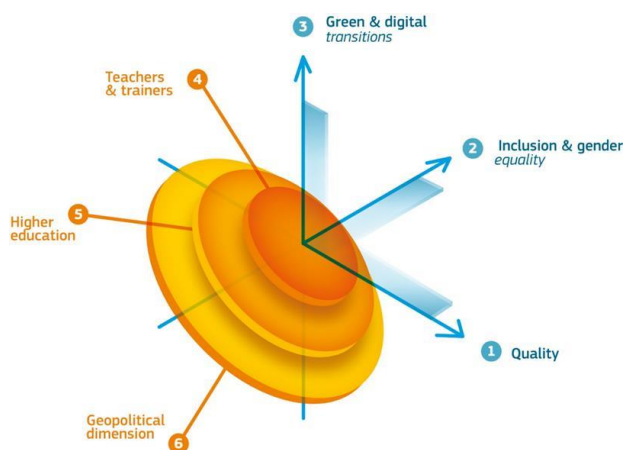


Figure 1. 6-th Dimensional Model of EEA

- **Green and digital transitions:**

Digital competence is a must, the more so in a post-Covid-19 world. Practically all further learning and jobs in all sectors will require some form of digital skills.

- **Teachers and trainers:**

Teachers, trainers and educational staff are at the heart of education. They play the most important role in making education a fruitful experience for all learners. The vision for the education profession within the European Education Area is one of highly competent and motivated educators who can benefit from a range of support and professional development opportunities throughout their varied careers. Within the European Education Area, teaching and training should be valued professions. International mobility of students, teachers and teacher trainers should become part of teacher education to broaden the access to the diversity of quality teaching approaches.

- **Higher education:**

Student and staff mobility has progressively opened up higher education and strengthened the basis for structured cooperation. The Bologna process played a driving role for internationalization and mobility. The added value of mobility is clear: evidence shows that a study-abroad experience helps significantly career prospects. 80% of Erasmus+ graduates are employed in less than 3 months after graduation. However, only 5% of students can have the Erasmus+ experience. The European higher education systems should aim at closer and deeper cooperation between higher education institutions, which could lead to more joint curriculum development and common courses and would enable learners to move more easily between education systems in different countries thereby developing a pan-European talent pool, including in cutting-edge scientific disciplines and technologies such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and high performance computing. A policy framework across borders that allows for seamless transnational cooperation, which will enable alliances of higher education institutions to leverage their strengths, pooling together their online and physical resources, courses, expertise, data and infrastructure across disciplines. Higher education institutions as central actors of the “knowledge square”: education, research, innovation and service to society, playing a key role in driving the Covid-19 sustainable cooperation. They mobilize multi-disciplinary teams of students and academics through a challenge-based approach, in close cooperation with research, business and civil society. European Universities will pool together their online and physical resources, courses, expertise, data and infrastructure to leverage their strengths and empower the next generations in tackling together the current challenges that Europe and the world are facing. They promote all forms of mobility (physical, online, blended) as well as multilingualism. High-quality international cooperation [2] in education and training is also vital to address existing and emerging global challenges.

EC considers digitalization is a revolution for how we live, teach, learn, work and communicate. Education and training have to become fully digital-proof to make the most of new technologies and teaching and learning methods. At the same time, Europe’s education systems will play a crucial role in alleviating the risks and harnessing the opportunities of new technologies and artificial intelligence. The forthcoming Digital Europe Program envisages funding to support the need for digital experts.

Higher education institutions in Europe are at the heart of both the European Education Area and the European Research Area and particularly well placed to connect them together. In line with the Digital Education Action Plan, it will strengthen the digital skills and competences’ needs of students, staff and researchers. Apart from innovation linked to research, it is equally important to ensure innovation in student-centered learning and teaching (SCLT) and more flexible and modular learning and career pathways, creating ecosystems as interactive systems of multiple elements supporting the design and the implementation of study programs and courses (Figure 2) [3].

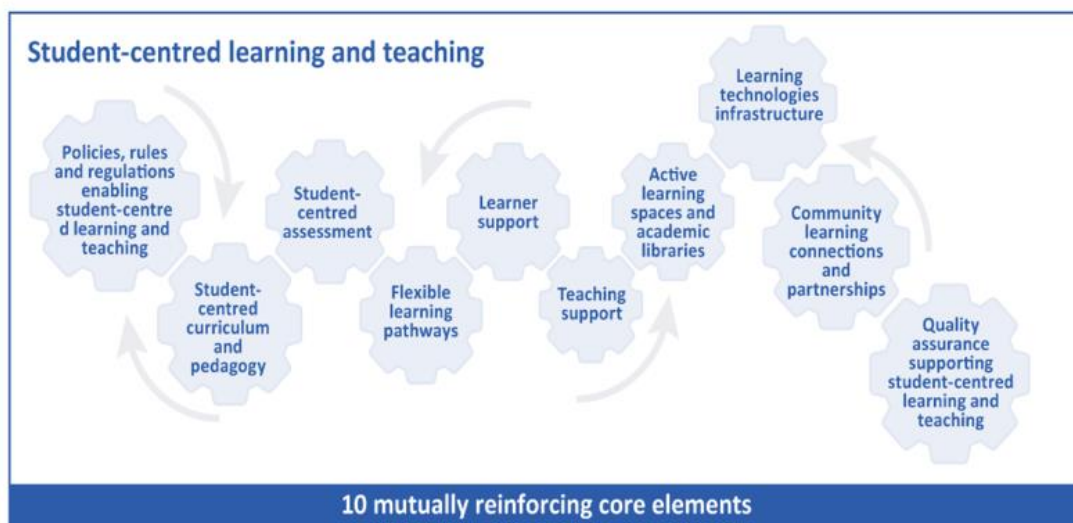


Figure 2 – Structural SCLT Model

Actions under the Digital Europe Program will support cooperation between academia, research and business in specific digital areas, with a view to reinforcing these ecosystems to attract, train and retrain talents. The Commission will also examine together with the Member States and stakeholders the development of a European Degree that could provide a framework to ease the delivery of joint degrees of Universities alliance, automatic mutual recognition of higher education and training qualifications, the outcomes of learning periods abroad. Such an approach may play a crucial role in development of joint and multi-degree programs and solving correspondence problems pointed by us [2].

## CONCLUSION

BUI follows the above presented trends in EEA and provides a perspective for the future of engineering education and leadership [4] development in the Republic of Uzbekistan as well as for further internationalization of higher education in Uzbekistan [5]. Furthermore, joint work of the Belarusian and Uzbek higher education institutions will help contribute to the geopolitical positioning of Uzbekistan as an educational hub that implements international educational programs in Central Asia according the Presidential Decree of Republic of Uzbekistan (August 8, 2019).

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