

## **University networking for knowledge based society**

### *1. Starting points for discussion*

**The aim of the co-operation between the universities that are participating in the Ionian-Adriatic Initiative (IAI) is to foster the four basic missions of European universities: the emergence and transmission of new knowledge, the dissemination and use of achievements of educational and research processes that are made possible by new technologies. By observing the Bologna guidelines, it will be possible to implement the newly established university networks to the regional level, thus stimulating a closer target-oriented co-operation between the economic sector and educational and research processes, as well as establishing a link between the market of knowledge and that of labour.**

The first step towards the above mentioned objectives is the formation of study programme curricula that are based on the principles of comparability, exchangeability and selection. It is important not only to establish co-operation between various universities and nations, as well as the labour market, but also to monitor and evaluate study outcomes. The co-operation between the IAI partners should therefore lead to the formation of study programmes that will observe the speciality of the wider European area and that will enable mobile students to choose those programmes that are needed by the economy of the IAI region and prepared by the IAI university members.

### *2. IAI fields of co-operation*

The idea is that the first meeting within the round table, defining the possible fields of co-operation and creating the conditions to realize the set activities, will be of no effect if the same participants do not meet once again in spring 2004. The meeting in spring would examine the first results of the co-operation and the effectiveness of individual activities.

At the meeting in October, the Higher Education Group could examine and define the activities in the following fields:

- a) Study without borders** (establishing the extent of comparability of study programmes and mobility of students, academic staff and researchers)

1st Round Table »Education and Inter-University Cooperation«  
Portorož, 27- 28 October 2003

In addition to the several exchange networks established by the Bologna process (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci), there are also others (Ceepus). The networks make possible for academic staff to teach as visiting professors, whereas students can form their own tailor-made curriculum. The postgraduate level offers a number of possibilities to conduct joint postgraduate programmes and research.

**b) New technologies in education**

With distance learning and the use of virtual systems in research and education having been well established (UniAdrion), the field could be enlarged by students' projects to establish their own virtual co-operation within the IAI.

**c) Centres of knowledge and economic competitiveness** (co-operation between universities and companies to realize certain study programmes)

The Group aims not only to exchange experiences gained in monitoring the Bologna process and establishing links between the IAI universities in various fields, but also to set up centres of students' personal career development. In addition to offering activities that will assist students during their course of study (tutorship, practical training, research projects, familiarising with the labour market, direct co-operation with possible employers, establishing individual's career potentials, meetings with graduates in the same programmes), the centre will launch an on-line portal for employment opportunities. The centre will also promote regional and national mobility, develop social competence and organizational skills, foster intercultural communication, and thus play an important role in forming the common European Higher Education Area and increasing the competitiveness of young people on the labour market.

The University of Primorska intends to establish as part of its institutional and organizational structure other centres (i.e. centre of training entrepreneurs and target groups for the needs of the economic sector and tourism, language and intercultural communication centre, ...). The centres will enable the IAI to implement new higher education strategies.