

## 0. Introduction

A thriving higher education system is vital for economic and social development, and universities have an important role to play in creating knowledge and training future leaders. With increased globalisation, higher education institutions are looking beyond their own borders towards other countries and regions with which they both compete and collaborate.

Europe, which has undergone its own higher education reform process over the past 10 years, has an increasing interest and responsibility to reach out, contribute to development discussions in other regions and build effective higher education partnerships. With the emergence of several Asian economies and the political push for higher education development within the region, there is growing demand for Europe-Asia academic cooperation, student and staff exchange, and information on higher education systems and academic opportunities.

This includes a discussion on the role of higher education and research in developing countries, and the bi-regional programmes and policies and that have inspired concrete institutional development and lasting international partnerships.

### Project and Objectives

The EU-Asia Higher Education Platform (EAHEP) has been facilitated by the Asia-Link Programme, a programme of the European Commission established in 2002 to generate regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in Europe and developing countries in Asia. The programme aimed to develop new and existing partnerships between European and Asian universities and promote study opportunities in Europe through joint European higher education promotion fairs.

EAHEP specifically aimed to complement these partnership projects through the following measures:

- Develop a sustainable forum (on internet and through meetings) for disseminating project results, lessons learned, and good practice gained under Asia-Link and similar vehicles for EU-Asia higher education cooperation;
- Provide information on (a) the practical issues of higher education cooperation, and (b) the common challenges faced by HE administrators and HE policy-makers in Europe and Asia;
- Highlight the role higher education cooperation can play in development, particularly in least-developed countries in Asia;
- Assist EU and Asian higher education institutions and organisations in preparing for increased student and academic mobility between the two regions, and/or between Asian countries.

The project was jointly implemented by the **European University Association (EUA)**, the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**, and the **Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic)** in 2008 and 2009.

Asian countries eligible for EAHEP funding were Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Maldives, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Brunei, Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Singapore, South Korea could be associated to EAHEP activities but were not directly eligible for funding.

Eligible countries in Europe were Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, FYROM, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The project addressed the university community, higher education organisations and government agencies and consisted of a series of events organised mainly in Asia:

- European Higher Education Fairs and symposia in New Delhi, November 2008 and in Bangkok, November 2009;
- A round table on *Autonomy, Governance and Management in Higher Education in Asia and Europe*, 25-26 November 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam;
- A round table on *Regional higher education cooperation in the next decade: The Bologna process and Europe-Asia dialogue*, 1-4 July 2009, Brussels, Belgium;
- A workshop on *Doctoral and Graduate Education in Asia and Europe*, 8-9 December 2008, Beijing, China;
- A workshop on *Student Mobility, joint degrees and Institutional Development*, 16-17 February 2009, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;
- A workshop on *International Partnerships in Higher Education: Policies, Practices and Lessons Learned*, 8-9 June 2009, Jakarta, Indonesia;
- A workshop on *Quality Assurance in Asian and European Higher Education – Opportunities for Inter- and Intra-Regional Cooperation*, 27-29 October 2009, Bangkok, Thailand.

A website provided information on the outcomes of these events, and more general information on higher education systems in Europe and Asia, study and research opportunities, cooperation projects and initiatives, and funding schemes. [www.eahep.org](http://www.eahep.org)

## This publication

The present publication is a collection of articles drawing from the EAHEP workshops, round tables, and symposia and written by participants.

The articles are organised in three main thematic sections. The first section (Chapters 1.1. to 1.2) deals with Opportunities and Benefits for EU-Asian Academic Collaboration, with particular focus on four subthemes: the Globalisation of Knowledge; Joint Degrees and Student Mobility; and Doctoral Students. The second section (Chapters 2.1 to 2.3) covers Challenges in the Institutional Context of EU-Asian Academic Collaborations, with special focus on three subthemes: Recognition of Qualifications; Quality Assurance; and Intellectual Property Rights. The final section of the publication (Chapters 3.1 to 3.3) addresses Sustainability of EU-Asian Academic Collaboration, with specific attention to three

subthemes: Key foundations of collaboration; Key findings from evaluations and reviews of international academic partnership programs; and Financial sustainability.

While the articles discuss the recurrent themes of these events, they are not representative of the perceptions and judgments of all participants and contributors, but rather illustrate individual academic perspectives within the context of the project's overriding objectives. They should be considered alongside the outcome reports of the various events, posted at [www.eahep.org](http://www.eahep.org). It is hoped that such vibrant academic discussion between the two regions will continue to develop in the future beyond the time-line of the project itself and in a variety of international fora.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the authors who enthusiastically responded when we asked them to contribute. Without their hard work this compilation would not have been produced. The editors see it as an honor to have been given the opportunity to bring together some of the ideas and experiences as they were expressed during the presentations and discussions in the EAHEP round tables, symposia and workshops. We hope it will be a valuable tool for readers engaged in Europe-Asia higher education cooperation.

This publication has been coordinated and compiled by Nuffic on behalf of the EAHEP consortium. The editorial committee of Nuffic wishes to thank the consortium partners EUA and DAAD for their support with the production. Special thanks are also due to Nuffic colleagues Eric Beerkens, Ad Boeren and Mtinkheni Gondwe for the proof reading and valuable comments. Last but not least, we would like to thank Annamaria Trusso of the EUA for revising the style and use of English.

**Jenneke Lokhoff and Nico Evers**  
**Editorial Committee**