

Sigrun Nickel
Thorsten Zdebel
Don F. Westerheijden

Joint Degrees in European Higher Education

Obstacles and opportunities for transnational programme
partnerships based on the example of the German-Dutch EUREGIO



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Contact:**EUREGIO**

Jan B. Oostenbrink

Email: j.oostenbrink@euregio.de

CHE Centre for Higher Education Development

Dr. Sigrun Nickel

Email: sigrun.nickel@che-concept.de

CHEPS Center for Higher Education Policy Studies

Dr. Don F. Westerheijden

Email: d.f.westerheijden@utwente.nl

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AVP	Advanced and Virtual Prototyping
CUNE	INTERREG IIIA Companies' and Universities' Network in Europe project
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DFH-UFA	Deutsch-Französische Hochschule (German-French University)
EMOTIS	Enschede-Münster-Osnabrück Technology, Innovation and Study Centre
EUA	European University Association
EUAS	EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences
Saxion	Saxion Hogeschool (University of Applied Sciences) Enschede
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Vice-Chancellors' Conference)
IFM	International Facility Management
ISCM	International Supply Chain Management
MIWFT	Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie (North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Innovation, Science, Research and Technology)
MWK	Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture)
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders)
OCW	Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)
POT	Physical and Occupational Therapy
SBRM	Small Business and Retail Management
ZEvA	Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover (Hannover Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency)

Introduction

The purpose of the present study is twofold: (a) to make empirically based recommendations to decision-makers in HEIs (higher education institutions) and funding organisations on the development of transnational study programmes, and (b) to point out to higher education policy-makers what obstacles still exist to HEI partnerships in Europe. The Bologna Process, which has been running for almost ten years, is designed not only to standardise programme structures and implement common quality standards for teaching and studying¹ in the 46 member states but also to promote Europe worldwide as an attractive place to study. To achieve this, the participating higher education systems need to transcend national boundaries and converge. A good indicator of success in meeting this challenge is the ability of HEIs to plan and implement joint degrees, i.e. joint study programmes, in partnership. As the ensuing pages show, however, transnational HEI partnerships in European higher education still suffer from a number of curricular, legal and cultural problems. Suggesting solutions to these is another aim of this paper.

The recommendations are based on experience of the CUNE (Companies' and Universities' Network in Europe) project, which was subsidised as part of the European INTERREG IIIA programme² and administered by EUREGIO,³ a Dutch-German association of local government authorities. Towards the end of CUNE two higher education research institutes, CHE (Centre for Higher Education Development, Germany)⁴ and CHEPS (Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, the Netherlands)⁵ were commissioned to evaluate the results of the project. The evaluation was based on study of documents, self-reporting by the participating HEIs and guided interviews with all the status groups in the project (cf. Nickel/Westerheijden/Zdebel 2008). This was supplemented by a comparison of the Dutch and German higher education systems (Nickel/Witte/Ziegele 2007; see also 4.1). Under CUNE the idea was that a partnership of two German *Universities of Applied Sciences* and a Dutch *hogeschool* would develop and try out a number of bi-national programme models. In this way CUNE was designed to serve not only educational but also long-term regional policy aims. The

¹ European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Cf. http://www.enqa.eu/pubs_esg.lasso.

² The INTERREG IIIA programme was an EU-initiative. For more information see <http://www.interreg.euregio.de/>. The INTERREG IIIA programme ran from 2001 to 2008. From 2009 it is to be continued in INTERREG IVa: <http://www.deutschland-nederland.eu/seiten/index.cfm>.

³ EUREGIO is a Dutch-German association of 130 towns, municipalities and administrative districts. It has been working to develop and strengthen cross-border structures since 1958. For more information see <http://www.euregio.de> and <http://www.euregio.nl>.

⁴ CHE is an institute for higher education research and consultancy, founded by the German Rectors' Conference and the Bertelsmann Foundation. For more information see <http://www.che.de>.

EUREGIO organisation expected the development of German-Dutch study programmes to have positive medium-term effects on the economic and employment situation in the German-Dutch border area, and for this reason the CUNE project was funded by the EU's INTERREG IIIA structural fund.

To extend the perspective beyond the case study the second part of this study presents and analyses findings from European joint degree funding schemes (cf. Zdebel 2008).⁶ Various subsidy schemes to promote international HEI programme partnerships have been under way in the Bologna states since 2001. Initially they tended to support individual projects to develop joint curricula, but from 2004 the aid increasingly went to the development of joint degrees, i.e. programmes run by a number of HEIs from various states. This was motivated by the expectation that joint degree programmes would have a bottom-up positive effect on the convergence of a European higher education system. The results of CUNE are an element in this development and are therefore placed in the context of European higher education reform in the ensuing pages.

⁵ CHEPS is an affiliated institute of the University of Twente in Enschede specialising in higher education research. For more information see www.utwente.nl/cheps.

⁶ This publication is a Master's thesis on the subject of joint degrees produced at the University of Saarland for the Master of Evaluation programme. Contact: thorsten.zdebel@uni-weimar.de.

1 Experience of the INTERREG IIIA Companies' and Universities' Network in Europe project (CUNE)

1.1 Description of project⁷

1.1.1 Funding context and project environment

CUNE was a project of EMOTIS (Enschede-Münster-Osnabrück Technology, Innovation and Study Centre), a German-Dutch partnership of Universities of applied sciences. It began in 2002 and ended in summer 2008. The aid provided under the INTERREG IIIA programme was €2.1m.⁸ Most of that went into bi-national programme development between the University of Applied Sciences⁹ Osnabrück, the University of Applied Sciences Münster and Saxion Hogeschool Enschede.¹⁰ Once successfully implemented, the programmes would serve as a basis for a joint cross-border HEI as an umbrella brand of the project partners. The management team of the INTERREG IIIA programme, which operates from the EUREGIO office, expected both the German-Dutch Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and the EUREGIO University to have long-term regional policy benefits, namely greater cross-border integration of HEIs and businesses in the EUREGIO area and concomitant positive effects on employment.

Figure 1 The EUREGIO border area



Source: <http://www.euregio.de/>

⁷ The description and analysis of the CUNE project below avoids extensive quotation in order to protect the privacy of interviewees.

⁸ Not all the funds were used in the end. Altogether the budget was reduced to €1.6m.

⁹ The German *Fachhochschulen* call themselves in English „Universities of Applied Sciences“.

¹⁰ For more information on Fachhochschule Osnabrück see <http://www.fh-osnabrueck.de/>. For more information on Fachhochschule Münster see <https://www.fh-muenster.de/hochschule/index.php>. For more information on Saxion Hogeschool see <http://de.saxion.edu/>.

As an idea for a project, CUNE was already being discussed before 2002 by the boards of governors of Saxion and Osnabrück, which had good experience of collaboration behind them. They wanted to continue this under the Bachelor's/Master's system and expected European higher education reforms to facilitate cross-border collaboration. The partnership was joined by University of Applied Sciences Münster in 2002. Issues of co-funding in the partner countries delayed the project launch, with the result that CUNE did not start operating until 2004.

CUNE was launched at an early stage of the Bologna Process. The education systems in the Bologna states were on the brink of the first reforms of degree structure. When the project application was submitted at the beginning of 2002 the details of how the reforms would take shape in the two member states were not known. This period was generally typified by the same mood of change and integration that characterised the CUNE project. To begin with, this 'Bologna euphoria' went hand-in-hand with high expectations of European higher education reforms. For example, in October 2003 the Education Ministers of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Netherlands signed the Münster Declaration on joint academic and research relations between the Flemish Community, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the *Länder* of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia, which sets out the following educational policy objectives (Wielenga 2006, pp. 45-48).

- Increasing the mobility of students and teachers
- Developing joint programmes under the Bachelor's/Master's system, in particular removing bureaucratic and legal hurdles to the development of joint programmes
- Promoting common assessment standards and quality assurance mechanisms, in particular expanding collaboration between accreditation agencies

The movement of students between the Netherlands and Germany is relatively one-way: in 2005, for instance, the Netherlands headed the league of target countries for German students going abroad, just ahead of Great Britain and Austria.¹¹ The German guest students are most interested in programmes at Dutch *hogescholen*. In the opposite direction, relatively few Dutch students go to study in Germany:¹² the Netherlands only ranked 36th in 2005 as a country of origin of foreign students in Germany.

¹¹ According to data from the Higher Education Information System (HIS = Hochschulinformationssystem), a total of 11,896 German students were studying in the Netherlands in 2005, 11,600 in Great Britain and 10,174 in Austria.

<http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/daten/4/2/1?lang=en>

¹² In 2005 a total of 1,570 Dutch students were enrolled at German HEIs. Up to 2007 there was a slightly falling trend.

<http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/daten/2006/1/2/1>

In terms of the relative number of foreign students from the two partner countries in the reference year 2005, 21% of all German students abroad were studying in the Netherlands, whereas only 13% of all Dutch students abroad were enrolled at Dutch HEIs.¹³ A similar ratio is found among holders of Erasmus scholarships. The reasons for this skewing, according to the latest status report on the effects of the Bologna Process on academia in the Netherlands/North Rhine-Westphalia, lie in (a) declining interest on the part of Dutch students in the German language and (b) the good mentoring and attractive programmes available at Dutch *hogescholen* (Wielenga 2006, p. 24). Such inequalities in student flows are not unusual in the German border areas, however, and they differ markedly in extent.¹⁴

1.1.2 The aims of the project

CUNE's initial priority was to create a cross-border collaborative HEI, the EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences. There have been more or less permanent collaborative relations between the project partners since 1997, first under the name of ENOTIS and from 2002 under the EMOTIS label. The idea was to consolidate and formalise the partnership through CUNE so that it could set itself up as a provider of bi-national programmes.¹⁵ The establishment of a cross-border HEI of this kind was in the interest of the grant-giving bodies, which expected it to result in an example of European integration that was visible to the public. Initially the idea was shared equally by the boards of governors of Enschede and Osnabrück, in the hope that a bi-national HEI would be recognised by the European Union and subsidised during the start-up phase. First, however, as the basis of the bi-national *HEI* five cross-border study programmes were to be developed and implemented, thus demonstrating its functionality in practice. The subjects of the proposed programmes were confined to those that would make a long-term cross-border contribution to the economy of the EUREGIO area. As regards the programme model, the institutions focused on a joint degree system in which the participating HEIs would provide a single programme to which each partner contributed components (in the form of modules or entire semesters). The students would form a joint learning group, taking seminars jointly at all the partner HEIs during the

¹³ The calculations are based on data from the HIS/DAAD at:

<http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de>

¹⁴ Only data from 2004 are available for comparison: whereas almost half of all Poles and Austrians studying abroad chose Germany as their target country, in the same year only 11% of all German students abroad studied in Austria and fewer than 1% in Poland. Comparing this with Denmark, 9% of all Danish students abroad studied in Germany, whereas only 1% of all German students went to Denmark. The ratio is more or less balanced only in the case of France (both approx. 11%).
<http://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de>

programme. This way of organising studies could be termed a rotation system (Zdebel 2008, p. 46). The CUNE partners saw it as being more innovative than the tried-and-tested alternative of enabling regular student exchanges to take place between a number of independent national study programmes (cf. 2.3.1). The idea was to implement the following five programmes under the rotation system:

Table 1 Planned bi-national CUNE programmes

Programme	International Supply Chain Management (ISCM)	International Facility Management (IFM)	Physical and Occupational Therapy (POT)	Advanced and Virtual Prototyping (AVP)	Small Business and Retail Management (SBRM)
Type of degree	MBA	M.Sc.	M.Sc.	M.Eng.	B.A.
Administered by	Osnabrück	Münster	Osnabrück	Saxion	Saxion
ECTS credits	5 semesters (120 ECTS)	4 semesters (120 ECTS)	4 semesters (120 ECTS)	2 semesters (60 ECTS)	8 semesters (240 ECTS)
Type of programme	Career-integrated	Full-time/follow-on Master's	Full-time/career-integrated	-	Full-time

In line with the general trend in the development of joint degree programmes, the project focused on Master's programmes (cf. 2.3.2). In addition to various Master's degrees, CUNE tried developing a Bachelor's programme and first-degree and sandwich programme models. The programmes would meet the following criteria: *joint curriculum development*, leading to *international basic qualifications*, *multilingual approach*, *progressive teaching methods* and an *innovative bi-national accreditation process*. Both the long-term objective of creating a cross-border HEI and the regional policy benefits to the cross-border economy and labour market relied on the success of the programme models.

1.1.3 Labour market

CUNE was administered by the three boards of governors of the HEIs jointly, each of which entrusted a member of staff with project coordination.¹⁶ At operational level in the

¹⁵ Three options were discussed for the EUAS: the setting-up of a joint trust; the creation of a joint subsidiary; and a partnership in the form of a 'virtual HEI' focusing entirely on practical collaboration on joint study programmes.

¹⁶ 0.5 FTE each at Fachhochschule Osnabrück and Fachhochschule Münster; two staff members working one day a week at Saxion Hogeschool.

project the teachers of the three HEIs worked together on developing the programme models in five bi-national working groups. A political advisory board was assigned to the project as an external steering group, on which members of the Ministries of the *Länder*,¹⁷ the INTERREG management team and other regional authorities sat, thus establishing a link with the political level. In addition to performing advisory functions it was to provide CUNE with the necessary higher education policy scope and feed back the findings of the project promptly to the policy-makers. It also shared responsibility for assessing the progress of the project and releasing funds for particular phases of the project.

Right from the start there were marked cultural differences between the Dutch and German teaching staff. In the *hogeschool* system the teachers (lecturers) are employees and required to obey orders from management. The German professors, on the other hand, are civil servants and independent in their research and teaching activities. The resulting divergencies in self-image and work conception played a crucial role when collaborating on the development of the programmes in the bi-national working groups.

1.1.4 Subsidy system

CUNE was funded under a scheme to aid the economies of the inner-European border regions. The subsidy system applied in the INTERREG IIIA scheme differs from other higher education subsidy schemes supporting similar projects such as Erasmus Mundus or the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). These specific subsidy schemes each support singular programmes, which can compete for grant aid (cf. 2.4.3). The CUNE HEIs, on the other hand, received the aid for a package of five programmes, and the grant aid was spent mainly on programme development, less on programme implementation.¹⁸ The project was divided into phases lasting a number of years, each with particular goals. In order for funds to be released for each subsequent phase of the project a report had to be submitted to the INTERREG IIIA management team at EUREGIO. In contrast, similar subsidy schemes such as Erasmus Mundus and the DAAD require certain prerequisites to be met before funds are released.

¹⁷ Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture) Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie (North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Innovation, Science, Research and Technology).

¹⁸ The support, then, is mainly for staff and mobility costs, the costs of accreditation and of support measures during the launch phase (marketing etc.).

1.2 Results of the project

1.2.1 Development and implementation of joint degrees

1.2.1.1 MBA International Supply Chain Management (ISCM)

ISCM, a post-professional logistics sandwich programme, was successfully implemented by the three participating HEIs.¹⁹ Positive factors, according to those responsible for the programmes, were the comparatively large degree of freedom to design the degrees for post-professional programmes and the fact that they are funded with course fees that cover the full cost.²⁰ Curriculum development was also facilitated by the comparatively well-developed international standardisation of course content in the MBA field, which enabled the HEIs to act with a great degree of confidence.²¹

In hindsight, the participants in both partner countries regarded the joint curriculum development process as productive, as the competences of the HEIs complemented one another. The result was a curriculum that provides for mobility phases in the two partner countries. During their course of study students 'rotate' from one HEI to another in a joint bi-national student body.

ISCM has some unusual features: the normal course duration, with 120 ECTS credits for five semesters, is a semester longer than that of a full-time programme. This is due to the difficulty of dividing up the workload suitably for the students on work placements. The Master's thesis is therefore deferred to the fifth semester. Contrary to what was originally planned, ISCM does not confer a true joint degree in the form of a joint certificate but the national degrees of the HEIs at which the students were enrolled, as the legal basis does not exist at present in the Netherlands for a joint degree certificate. A double degree, the usual alternative, was not welcomed by all the HEIs as suitable, given the profile they wish to present. It would however be to the advantage of graduates on the bi-national labour market to be awarded a degree from both the German Universities of Applied Sciences and the Dutch *hogeschool*.

ISCM is indicative of the problems of student recruitment that often occur in the European context: with eleven students (seven German, four Dutch) it was utilising less than half its capacity at the time of the evaluation. This is not unusual for a relatively new Master's programme. The students themselves indicated, though, that they were

¹⁹ For more information see www.mba-iscm.org.

²⁰ Although Saxion, because of its funding system, does not receive any public funding for the programme, it was interested in being involved in the programme for two reasons: the learning effects ('building experience with foreign partners') and the symbolic value to the *hogeschool's* profile ('symbol is worth investing in').

²¹ In 1997, i.e. before the official start of Bologna, 19 countries passed the MBA Guidelines as a quality assurance tool. In the economic sciences there is similarly the CIDD Consortium, a Europe-wide association of HEIs with the aim of developing joint degrees (cf. Schüle 2006).

more interested in the international course content than the bi-national profile of the ISCM programme. Moreover, they expressed a wish to have half of it taught in English; they were not so interested in the languages of the partner countries. In the area of promoting foreign languages ISCM is generally still in need of adjustment.

For internal quality assurance the HEIs each apply their own internal evaluation routines to the components they provide. There is no integrated approach to internal quality assurance, as aimed at in the full programme. An approach of this kind is set out in the European subsidy schemes. Given ISCM's relatively early stage of development this is merely a task for the future. A successful outcome of the project was the bi-national accreditation of ISCM. The agencies involved, the Dutch NVAO²² and the German ZEvA,²³ collaborated on a joint procedure in 2006 which accredited the programme as a whole. This approach corresponds to the state of the art in external quality assurance of joint degrees (cf. 2.3.1). Compared with two separate national accreditation procedures it made for a marked saving in cost and work for the HEIs. It was not without its problems, however: whereas the Dutch accreditation was unconditional (NVAO 2003, p. 17), the accreditation by the German ZEvA was conditional upon raising the *work experience* entrance requirement from one to two years, thus changing the previously uniform entrance requirements.

1.2.1.2 M.Sc. International Facility Management (IFM)

The IFM Facility Management programme was implemented at the two German Universities of Applied Sciences, Münster and Osnabrück. By implementing this programme Saxion would have created in-house competition, as it has been running a Master's programme in Facility Management as a franchise from Greenwich University in Great Britain for some time, and this franchise programme is important to Saxion financially. Saxion nevertheless participated in developing the programme, which in addition to course content from Germany and the Netherlands included other bi-national elements: the second semester was synchronised with the franchise programme at Saxion so as provide a mobility window for students and teachers. This way of organising the programme is based on the logic of the *synchronisation system* for joint degree programmes (cf. 2.3.1).

It was not possible to implement IFM under the synchronisation system, however, as the strategy does not work in practice. There has been no student exchange, as

²² The Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie – comparable to the German Akkreditierungsrat – the highest accreditation authority.

German students would have to pay €5,500 to study at Saxion, and waiving this course fee – aside from the loss of financial benefit – is difficult because Saxion cannot make independent decisions on the franchise programme, since it acts as a subcontractor of Greenwich University. Exchanging lecturers is also problematic, as guest lecturers in Germany are paid as '*Lehrbeauftragten*' (lecturers not on the teaching staff) and the remuneration amounts to no more than an allowance. Thus staff of Saxion would purchase this mobility at the cost of a financial sacrifice.

The intercultural nature of IFM relates first and foremost to course content and teaching method. In Germany the subject of Facility Management tends to be seen from a technical engineering perspective. The Dutch input gave the programme a service-centred facility management angle. Moreover, the teaching method benefited from the competence-based learning that the Saxion teachers contributed to the curriculum. Overall, however, those involved rated the bi-national element of the implemented programme as minor, and this corresponds to the perception of the students (who were all German). The bi-national nature of the programme, then, was in no way responsible for the choice of programme; what tipped the balance were the international course content and the guest lecturers.

1.2.1.3 M.Sc. Physical & Occupational Therapy (POT)

The POT physiotherapy programme was dropped during the accreditation procedure, as the assessors of the German ZEvA agency, among other things, did not envisage a market for the programme in the Federal Republic.²⁴ The original idea was that it would be implemented jointly by Saxion and Osnabrück, but nothing came of this. The reasons for failure of bi-national implementation are conflicting interest between the partner HEIs and difficult political constraints. In the health field the German Universities of Applied Sciences tend to see Saxion as a competitor. In the Netherlands the health professions had hitherto been regarded more as academic disciplines than in Germany, which was a particular attraction for German students. Even before CUNE, Saxion had been offering a Bachelor's in Physiotherapy. Master's programmes in general are not normally available from Dutch *hogescholen* and receive no public funding. Osnabrück wanted to fill this gap with the planned Master's in POT and had already developed a course outline internally before CUNE was launched.

²³ Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover (Hannover Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency).

²⁴ Those responsible for the programme at Fachhochschule Osnabrück, unlike the external assessors, saw no lack of labour market demand for POT graduates in Germany. Rather, the ZEvA assessors did not reflect the innovative concept of the programme in their accreditation.

Saxion was more interested in a bi-national Bachelor's than a Master's programme in POT, not only because of the legal situation but also because of its funding system. Saxion subscribed to the Master's-level proposal that covered the full cost as long as it had the prospect of being able to award a Master of Science jointly with Osnabrück, but *hogescholen* are not permitted to award this type of degree. Seemingly there was an initial agreement on making an exception to this rule, but in the end the competent body (the NVAO) did not sanction the award of a M.Sc. Saxion therefore withdrew from the POT programme.

The political situation in Lower Saxony was difficult, as the then federal states government's Higher Education Optimisation Plan did not support the programme. The political situation was similarly difficult in North Rhine-Westphalia, where the Health Ministry had a restrictive approach to the regulation of education in the health professions at the time. By participating as a 'subcontractor' (i.e. organising regular teaching events by teachers from Münster), however, Münster succeeded in bringing about a more academic profile for the health professions in North Rhine-Westphalia.

1.2.1.4 B.A. Small Business and Retail Management (SBRM)

SBRM was the only Bachelor's programme in the CUNE project that was actually developed. At Bachelor's level a particularly tricky set of problems was revealed, with incompatible programme models and higher education funding systems (for more details cf. 1.3.1). Because of the differences in systems the SBRM project group was not able to achieve consensus in the areas of *programme capacity*, *entrance requirements*, *student enrolment*, *normal course duration* and *funding*. Other obstacles were differing interests and starting points.

Even before CUNE, Saxion had been running a Bachelor's in SBRM aimed at company founders and their successors. The innovative teaching approach is based on a purely project-based course of study, made possible by the *hogeschool* lecturer system.²⁵ Against the background of the different organisational status of the staff of Dutch *hogescholen* and German Universities of Applied Sciences there was an intercultural conflict regarding the self-image of the teachers involved ('lecturer' vis-à-vis 'professor').

²⁵ As a member of a German HEI board of governors interviewed said: 'Lecturers have the advantage that mentoring is available on call 40 hours a week, so a purely project-based course of study is possible without a curricular blueprint.'

1.2.1.5 M.Eng. Advanced & Virtual Prototyping (AVP)

AVP was a proposed interdisciplinary programme at Master's level (for designers and engineers) based on an innovative approach to virtual industrial design. The main problem with the project was the combination of programme development with the creation of a centre of expertise to serve SMEs, which made AVP the largest CUNE project. This combination of aims resulted from differing interests. The German Universities of Applied Sciences wanted a Master's programme, for which Saxion, however, did not envisage any market. Given their general interest in research partnerships they were less interested in the programme than the bi-national centre of expertise, which was expected to open up long-term contacts in the regional economy.

Because of the intensive nature of the concept, which required a combination of a programme and a centre of expertise, and the challenging interdisciplinary and intercultural communication between the academics involved, those involved in the project were unable to reach agreement, and AVP was dropped in March 2006.

1.2.2 Foundation of the EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences

The CUNE partnership agreement signed on 23/06/2005 set out the creation of a EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences (EUAS) as the goal of the project. By then, however, there was no question of institutional recognition by the EU, instead the aim was 'sustainable funding partly from EU funds'.²⁶ The EUAS activities were to be carried out under an umbrella brand, the EMOTIS German-Dutch HEI Partnership. The organisational structure on which the partners agreed was a 'virtual HEI' with the following characteristics:²⁷

- It should be based solely on practical collaboration on programmes.
- It 'should remain organisationally an integral part of the partner HEI concerned'.
- It would be able to meet the demand of a sustainable structure if it was based on long-term agreements and the ring-fencing of funds could be ensured.

Evidence that a virtual HEI was the preferred organisational structure for EUAS can be found in the EUREGIO progress reports for 2005 and 2006: 'Hitherto the first step towards achieving the goal has been seen as the "most informal" variant of a "virtual"

²⁶ Boards of governors of Fachhochschule Osnabrück, Fachhochschule Münster, Saxion Hogeschool (2005): Partnership Agreement for the CUNE project, 23/06/05 (unpublished), p. 1.

²⁷ Fachhochschule Osnabrück, Fachhochschule Münster, Saxion Hogeschool (2004): Revised application for the second phase of the CUNE PJ, 13/10/04 (unpublished), pp. 8-9.

EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences, i.e. a strategic alliance [...].²⁸ The same attitude to EUAS is also evinced in the EUREGIO progress report for 2006,²⁹ in which the project partners undertook to continue developing EUAS intensively from March 2007. Nothing came of this, however.

Because of the problems of implementing the bi-national programmes the planned cross-border EUAS lacked any foundation. The only truly bi-national programme model that was implemented was the ISCM post-professional Master's. IFM is offered separately in Germany and the Netherlands, but the curriculum does include bi-national components. POT failed in the national accreditation procedure after the bi-national development phase. SBRM and AVP did not reach the accreditation stage.

1.3 Obstacles to bi-national programme development

1.3.1 Incompatibilities between the higher education systems

Critical to the success of the CUNE project were the differences between the German and Dutch higher education systems, especially as regards *admission, programme structure, degrees, funding and quality assurance*.

1.3.1.1 Admission

There are no limits on capacity in the Netherlands of the kind found in Germany based on curricular norm valuation (student places per professor); instead staff complements are adjusted to actual student numbers. Dutch *hogescholen* are thus able to respond more flexibly than German *HEIs*. Moreover, as a result of the German Capacity Regulation (*Kapazitätsverordnung*), *HEIs* do not develop any ambition to admit more students than is necessary. Another difference between the Dutch and German higher education systems lies in the entrance requirements for students. Dutch *hogescholen* are very keen to attract 'non-traditional students', i.e. people with work experience who do not have the equivalent of an *Abitur* (entrance qualification for Universities) or *Fachhochschulreife* (entrance qualification for Universities for Applied Sciences resp. *Fachhochschulen*).³⁰ While it is possible in principle to enter higher education in

²⁸ Fachhochschule Osnabrück, Fachhochschule Münster, Saxion Hogeschool (2006): Fifth Progress Report of INTERREG IIIA on the CUNE project (unpublished), p. 3.

²⁹ Fachhochschule Osnabrück, Fachhochschule Münster, Saxion Hogeschool (2007): Sixth Progress Report of INTERREG IIIA on the CUNE project (unpublished), p. 3.

³⁰ Admission to higher education from vocational school is particularly promoted by the 'doorstroom' (follow-on) policy (see Wielenga 2006, p. 38).

Germany too without an *Abitur*,³¹ in practice few *HEIs* avail themselves of this option, as they are often full up and students without an *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* moreover need special mentoring, which would place an additional burden on professors.³²

1.3.1.2 Programme structure

The Bologna reforms have not fundamentally changed the programme structure at Dutch *hogescholen* (cf. Alesi, Bürger, Kehm, Teichler 2005, p. 51; Westerheijden et al. 2008). They continue to offer four-year programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree and comprising 240 ECTS credits. The first year of the Bachelor's programme is reserved for the 'propaedeutic' (*propedeuse*/foundation course), which is an important component both didactically and strategically. It provides a compressed overview of the course content, not only serving a didactic purpose but also enabling promising students to be selected.³³

Although four-year Bachelor's programmes are also permitted in Germany (KMK 2003, p. 6) at Bachelor's level *HEIs* offer predominantly three-year programmes comprising 180 ECTS credits (Alesi et al. 2005, p. 29). To even out the time difference between German and Dutch Bachelor's programmes the German partners in the CUNE project suggested making the propaedeutic year separate for German students, thus shortening their course duration by one year. Saxion rejected this proposal, however, because of the significance of the propaedeutic year in its curriculum.

At Master's level the main problem lies in the fact that while Dutch *hogescholen* are permitted to offer Master's programmes, they do not receive any public funding for them and can therefore only offer them if they charge course fees that cover the full cost. The financial pressure in this area is particularly high, therefore. Aside from this, given their four-year Bachelor's degree system Dutch *hogescholen* tend to offer one-year Master's programmes so as not to exceed a total course duration of five years/300 ECTS credits. The German *Universities of Applied Sciences*, on the other hand, prefer a two-year system. For a time North Rhine-Westphalia even had a ministerial decree that laid down three-year Bachelor's and two-year Master's programmes.

³¹ In the Netherlands with a senior secondary vocational (MBO) certificate, in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony with a master's certificate under the apprenticeship system or proof of work experience plus an entrance examination (see Wielenga 2006, pp. 36-38).

³² According to Wielenga (2006, p. 38) German *Universities of Applied Sciences* often deny admission to Dutch applicants from vocational schools.

³³ Leszczensky, Orr, Schwarzenberger, Weitz 2004, p. 121: the authors note that the propaedeutic year ends with a recommendation (often binding) on the continuation of the student's studies. Since the changeover to the dual degree system this is no longer a legal requirement in the Netherlands (Alesi,

1.3.1.3 Types of degree

Collaboration between German *Universities of Applied Sciences* and Dutch *hogescholen* is hampered by the fact that the two systems award different types of degrees. As a result of the Bologna reforms German *Universities of Applied Sciences* and Universities are permitted to award Bachelor's and Master's degrees with the specification 'of Science/of Arts'. In the Netherlands these degrees are reserved solely for Universities; *hogescholen* award degrees specified by subject (e.g. Bachelor of Physiotherapy/Commerce etc.), which is only permitted for post-professional Master's programmes in Germany. Saxion, in order to develop its profile, was certainly interested in awarding a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in partnership with a German HEI, but the Dutch policy-makers did not allow the *hogeschool* the scope required.

In the initial phase of CUNE the necessary legal foundation did not exist in the Netherlands for a joint degree in the form of a single document from all the participating HEIs. This shortcoming has meanwhile been remedied.³⁴ At the time multiple degrees were only legally valid if the students were awarded separate national certificates from the partner HEIs. Nevertheless the CUNE project did not succeed in establishing a true joint degree or double degree but merely, as in the case of ISCM, the award of separate German and Dutch degree certificates.

1.3.1.4 Funding

In both Germany and the Netherlands the proper enrolment of students is the precondition for a programme to be publicly funded. Simultaneous enrolment at more than one *HEI* ('multiple enrolment') is not permitted. This was a drawback particularly from Saxion's point of view. The reason behind it is the highly competitive state funding of Dutch *hogescholen*: they do not receive any basic institutional funding, only blanket funding for Bachelor's programmes based solely on actual teaching activity. The factors taken into account are the number of students in the propaedeutic year (workload-based) and the number of graduates and length of study (result-based), provided they were enrolled at the *hogeschool* for three uninterrupted years.³⁵ Students who take time off e.g. to enrol for a semester abroad at another HEI thus represent a financial loss.

Bürger, Kehm, Teichler 2005, p. 54). Universities and *hogescholen* apply selection mainly in their own interests, as the number of dropouts in higher semesters has negative financial repercussions.

³⁴ Until 2006 Dutch law did not provide for joint degrees. They were not formally prohibited but to some extent were treated by HEIs as if they were (Bienefeld, Gruszka, Zervakis 2006, p. 6). This shortcoming was remedied by the time of the amendment of Dutch higher education legislation in 2006.

Under the German federal system higher education funding differs from one *Land* to another. As a rule, however, German *HEIs* do receive basic institutional funding (for personnel and non-personnel costs: Leszczensky 2003, pp. 4-5). Nevertheless, higher education funding in Germany is performance-based; the budget allocation based on indicators is comparatively smaller. In Germany both new enrolments (workload-based) and numbers of graduates (result-based) are taken into account. Unlike under the *hogeschool* funding system the indicator-based budget allocations are capped, ranging as a rule from 5% to 15%. This results in differing incentives: '*hogescholen* are keen [...] to admit as many first-year students as possible, bring as many students as possible to graduation as quickly as possible, and "separate out" dropouts and students transferring to other HEIs as quickly as possible' (Leszczensky et al. 2004, p. 123). For German *Universities of Applied Sciences*, on the other hand, the benefit of having additional students is markedly less; they are more interested in limiting their admission capacity, as is usual in the German system.

Given this background, Saxion was particularly interested in developing and establishing Bachelor's programmes, as it is only these that bring in state funding: the more enrolments, the more money. They do not receive state funding, on the other hand, for Master's programmes. The German project partners, conversely, were more interested in the development and establishment of Master's programmes. The reasons for this are not really financial; they have more to do with the desire of German *Universities of Applied Sciences* to achieve higher academic status. Whereas Bachelor's programmes underline the applied nature of *Universities of Applied Sciences*, Master's programmes are more attractive from the point of view of professors, as they involve working at a higher level of reflection.

It was only the ISCM post-professional Master's programme that was able to bridge the difficult gap between the differing system-based interests of the CUNE project partners. The German and Dutch students remain enrolled at their home HEI for the entire course duration and can matriculate at the partner HEIs as guest students. This system, however, only works in programme models that do not receive public funding.

Another important difference is the role played by course fees in the institution's budget. During the CUNE project the course fees varied from one country or *Land* to another. In the Netherlands they amounted to €1,500 per academic year. In Lower Saxony there were no course fees as yet, and North Rhine-Westphalia only charged fees to long-term students. The German *HEIs* have now started charging tuition fees of

³⁵ There is a differentiated calculation system for the factor 'students leaving higher education' that takes into account whether a degree has been gained and the length of study (see Leszczensky, Orr, Schwarzenberger, Weitz 2004, pp. 121-3).

€500 per semester per student, but the financial incentive to admit students is still somewhat greater in the Netherlands than in Germany.

1.3.1.5 Accreditation

The fact that the ISCM post-professional Master's programme was actually accredited in a bi-national procedure shows that cross-border external quality assurance is possible. The procedure was carried out in collaboration between the two agencies, the ZEvA in Germany and NVAO in the Netherlands. The HEIs were required to draw up an accreditation application (for the entire programme) and submit it to both agencies. A bi-national group of assessors then carried out an on-site inspection: this only took place at one of the three HEIs (Osnabrück), although representatives of all the participating HEIs were present. In this respect the procedure is in line with the approach laid down in the European quality assurance projects for joint degrees³⁶ and the German Accreditation Council's conditions for the accreditation of programmes with double or joint degrees.

Differences emerged between the analytical focus of the two agencies: whereas the NVAO focused more on teaching methods, the ZEvA paid greater attention to the qualifications of the teaching staff. There were also differences in the sets of criteria, the length of the accreditation cycle (six years in the Netherlands, four years in Germany) and the cost of accreditation, which is borne as a rule by the HEIs. Also worthy of note are the differing consequences of accreditation in the two partner countries: whereas in the Netherlands the accreditation of a programme also determines whether it will be publicly funded, in Germany this decision is to some extent reserved for the Ministry of the *Land* concerned. Also, a programme cannot be accredited conditionally in the Netherlands (Schwarz/Westerheijden 2004, p. 312). On the German side, conversely, the accreditation was conditional upon raising the *work experience* entrance requirement from one to two years, resulting in differing entrance requirements being applied in the two partner countries.

³⁶ First and foremost the Transnational European Evaluation Project II (ENQA 2006) and the European Masters New Evaluation Methodology (EUA 2006).

1.4 General conclusion from CUNE

The main aims of the CUNE project were threefold:

- a. *To establish and develop a partnership between the EMOTIS HEIs*
- b. *To change higher education policy so as to make it easier to run bi-national programmes in Germany and the Netherlands*
- c. *To stimulate the labour market and economy in EUREGIO*

The outcome of the CUNE project as regards these points is ambivalent. It enabled the three participating HEIs to explore future areas of collaboration and get to know one another closely in terms of course content and teaching approach. Of the total of five bi-national programme models planned, one – the ISCM post-professional Master's programme – was implemented fully as a bi-national programme and one Master's degree programme – IFM – with a limited bi-national element. Nevertheless, once the CUNE project ended the boards of governors indicated that they wished to continue collaborating in the EMOTIS partnership. Bi-national research projects are to feature more prominently in future.

In terms of the Bologna Process the CUNE project has a clear added value in permitting learning effects to take place that will further the convergence of European higher education. CUNE revealed a multiplicity of problems regarding the convergence of European higher education in the area of study and teaching from which other actors at European HEIs and higher education policy-makers can draw conclusions on which to improve their practice. The learning effects relate to both intercultural communication between those involved and major differences in higher education funding and political constraints.

The project showed, for instance, that state higher education funding in Germany and the Netherlands hampers transnational programme partnerships. Because of the state funding system, Dutch *hogescholen* operate far more economically than German *Universities of Applied Sciences*. Saxion was interested in setting up Bachelor's programmes because of the public funding that it receives solely for these. They proved to be particularly difficult to implement, however, with the result that the German project partners favoured Master's programmes, which in turn were a risky proposition for Saxion because of the funding system. Conflicts of interest arose and the two German partners won out over their Dutch partner. As a result, of the total of five bi-national programmes planned, four were Master's and only one a Bachelor's. This change in objectives reduced the attractiveness of the CUNE project to Saxion.

Being a service-oriented provider, Saxion regards the EUREGIO border region as a market to target and accordingly markets its services there offensively, meeting with great interest on the part of German students. Although the course fees are somewhat higher than in Germany, German students are evidently attracted by the good mentoring, practically-oriented course content and the didactic (project-based) approach in the Netherlands. The German *Universities of Applied Sciences*, on the other hand, led by academic drift, would like to move away from their traditional focus purely on teaching and come closer to the academic profile of Universities. This was also clear from the status consciousness of teachers: whereas lecturers in the Netherlands tend to see themselves as employees of a practice-oriented and service-oriented organisation, German professors enjoy constitutional freedom in research and teaching, combined with the expectation of high intrinsic dedication. The difference between the self-image of the Dutch and German teachers frequently caused communication problems during the programme development process.

The structural problems outlined here were pointed out to the policy-makers several times during the CUNE project, but this did not result in the harmonisation of state higher education policy required taking place, neither in the Netherlands nor in the German *Länder* of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The feedback needed between the CUNE project partners and the political authorities was supposed to be provided by a project advisory board, on which educational and regional policy representatives of the Netherlands, North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony sat. The advisory board's external supervision functions entailed both assessing the progress of the project and releasing funds for forthcoming phases of the project and providing the required educational policy conditions and scope for project activities.

All in all, the CUNE project failed to meet the high initial expectations. The way it turned out showed that the problems of developing bi-national programmes were underestimated at first. This may have been due to the general 'Bologna euphoria' and the high expectations of European higher education reform that went hand-in-hand with it. From 2000 to 2002, when the groundwork was being done for the project, it was not yet clear how the Bologna reforms would turn out in the two partner countries. In 2002 all programmes at Dutch *hogescholen* were transformed en bloc into Bachelor's programmes without any major modifications to programme structure (Alesi et al. 2005, p. 49). In Germany, on the other hand, it was not until the end of 2003 that the structural regulations of the Conference of Education Ministers enabled HEIs to act with confidence (ibid.). At the time of the project launch, then, the 'inconsistent logic behind the introduction of multi-tier programmes' (ibid.) was not yet clear.

Here again the main reason may be that CUNE did not have the anticipated stimulating effects on the economic and employment situation in the German-Dutch border area. It takes a fairly long time, however, for the development and implementation of programmes to have a measurable widespread positive impact on the cross-border economy and labour market. The measurable effects of education policy measures, then, depend on various external environmental factors, and even under favourable conditions they are only felt in the long term.

A feasibility study before the launch of the CUNE project might have heightened awareness of the problems of developing and implementing joint degrees. There were also some weaknesses in the CUNE subsidy system, though: the funding was highly process-oriented, i.e. it was the development work that was supported and not the implementation of the bi-national programmes. On top of this, no binding criteria were laid down for the outcome quality of the programmes being developed. To ensure that the programmes had long-term regional policy relevance these criteria could have included at least the following:

- A minimum input to the implementation of each programme by each HEI (in a network of three HEIs, for instance, one-third of ECTS in actual phases abroad, or at least a full semester)
- A minimum of events geared to the acquisition of intercultural skills (i.e. language courses in the national languages, an introduction to the partner countries' national culture in general and subject cultures, availability of internships abroad)
- Proper documentation of the intercultural added value of the study programme in the form of the corresponding type of degree (i.e. at least a multiple degree, if not a joint degree)

Evidently the project management relied on accreditation when it came to quality control of the programmes (owing to lack of knowledge of the higher education system). This was a problem, as there are no criteria for verifying the intercultural added value of study programmes, whereas it is on this intercultural added value that the long-term regional policy benefits of the project are based.

2 Joint Degrees as an element in the Bologna reforms

CUNE was a project that was designed not only to contribute to strengthening the German-Dutch economic area but also to clarify the opportunities of and obstacles to the Bologna reforms taking place. In this context programme structures throughout Europe have been switching over since 1999 to a common 'three-cycle system',³⁷ comprising three academic tiers: Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Doctorate. At Bachelor's and Master's level schemes to promote joint degrees, i.e. programmes offered by HEIs jointly with international partners, have been under way for seven years. The next chapter gives an overview of the stage of development that this special area of the Bologna Process has reached, thus pursuing the aim of placing the CUNE project activities in a broader European policy context.

2.1 European policy objectives and expectations

Joint degrees have been on the agenda of all the Bologna conferences since Prague 2001 and four international expert seminars of the Bologna Follow-Up Group.³⁸ The main higher education policy objectives on the agenda were to promote student mobility (Bologna Action Line 4), European cooperation on quality assurance (Action Line 5), to establish a 'European dimension' in higher education (Action Line 6), and to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of higher education in future (Action Line 9) (Ministry of Education and Science in Sweden 2002, p. 4). The aim of joint degrees is to promote convergence between the higher education systems of the Bologna states in a special way: as a bottom-up tool developed and implemented by the HEIs themselves, they should strengthen intercultural understanding and allow HEIs in the Bologna states to come closer together (Rauhvargers, Tauch 2002, p. 28).

At the same time they aim to bring a tangible intercultural added value to the higher education stakeholders. Students expect them to provide an efficient period of study abroad without lengthening their course duration, enhanced with language and other support. Joint degrees are designed to offer them a suitable environment in which to acquire both subject and general intercultural skills, thus making them attractive to the labour market.

³⁷ For more information see the official Bologna web site:
<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>

³⁸ The Bologna Follow-Up Group organizes, among other things, two-yearly conferences of ministers to monitor the Bologna Process. For more information on the work of the Bologna conferences cf. EUA 2003, pp. 55-56; EUA 2005, p. 17; EUA 2007, pp. 30-31. A list of the seminars and sources is given in the Appendix.

For the HEIs the aim of the study programmes is to give them an advantage in the competition for students that extends to the non-Bologna states. Through international networking the HEIs can disseminate organisational innovations, optimise the range of programmes they offer and develop the skills of their staff. On top of this, plans to set up joint degree programmes enable them to attract funds from state subsidy schemes.

2.2 Terminology

The term 'joint degree' is ambiguous,³⁹ applying both to a certificate issued jointly by the participating HEIs and to a jointly implemented study programme. To 'do what it says on the box', fulfil their promises, joint degrees need to be distinguished from other types of international collaboration such as franchise programmes, international curriculum development partnerships and simple student exchange. The criteria for a true joint degree are that the participating HEIs develop the curriculum jointly, each set aside some of their own teaching capacity for the study programme and organise an institutionalised exchange of students – features which occur individually in the other types of collaboration mentioned but not in this combination.

In a *franchise programme* an HEI commissions another educational institution to implement its study programme. The subcontractor teaches the students and as a rule receives the course fees, whereas the examinations are held by the franchisor,⁴⁰ as the subcontractors are often not authorised to award the particular degree but wish to include it in their programme portfolio so as to be competitive. An example from the CUNE project is Saxion's Facility Management franchise programme.

Under this system, then, there is no joint curriculum development but a transfer. Student mobility is not required, as the teaching activities take place at the subcontracted HEI. For a joint degree, on the other hand, it is essential that the participating HEIs offer students compulsory mobility phases with course content that fits into a self-contained thematic course of study without lengthening the course duration. In this sense the only true joint degree in the CUNE project was the post-professional Master's programme in International Supply Chain Management.

³⁹ There is no standard nomenclature in German for programmes offered jointly by HEIs from different states: as well as 'joint degree' the terms 'programmes with double degrees' (BMBF, Greisler 2008), 'transnational programmes' (ZEvA, Reuke 2008, p. 1) and 'integrated international programmes' (DAAD, Schmeken 2008, p. 1) are used.

⁴⁰ An example is the franchise system of the Dutch *hogescholen*, which often enter into partnerships with British HEIs (Rauhvargers/Tauch 2002, p. 34).

2.3 Typology

2.3.1 Provider structure

Joint degrees differ from normal study programmes in their provider structure, being run by at least two HEIs in different states. The joint development of the programme by more than one HEI permits the compulsory reciprocal exchange of students mentioned without lengthening the course duration.⁴¹ Within this framework there are two basic systems (cf. Ministero dell' Istruzione dell' Università della Ricerca 2003, pp. 1-2). The differences between them lie in the independence of the study programme. Under the *synchronisation system* the partner HEIs each offer a full study programme with course content that is synchronised in particular programme phases. As a result there are a number of programmes, thus permitting flexible student mobility. In the CUNE project a system of this kind was tried in the IFM programme (cf. 1.2.1). Under the rotation system implemented in the CUNE ISCM programme, on the other hand, the partner HEIs each provided only parts of a single coherent study programme (cf. 1.2.1).

Table 2 Joint degree systems

	Synchronisation system	Rotation system
Programme organisation	An independent programme is set up in each partner country. Certain course components (up to the entire curriculum) are synchronised for the purpose of exchange of students.	The partner countries do not have independent study programmes. The individual components offered by the partner HEIs combine to form a self-contained study programme.
Mobility	Study abroad can be chosen flexibly, depending on the provider structure. Students do not form a joint student body. Students (especially in larger consortia) do not have to study in all the partner countries.	The HEIs for the periods of study abroad are predetermined. Students in a cohort rotate between the HEIs as a joint body, at least in certain programme phases. Students spend periods of study in all the partner countries.

Source: Zdebel 2008

The differing logic of the systems results in different stipulations regarding the size of provider networks and the flexibility of the mobility phases. In the EUA Joint Masters Project, for example, the larger provider networks (with more than 10 institutions) worked on the principle of the synchronisation system, whereas the smaller ones (with

⁴¹ Major factors here are coordinated curricula and automatic recognition of students' work in all HEIs in the provider network.

less 6 or 7 institutions) generally worked on that of the rotation system (EUA 2004, p. 15). Thus larger networks are possible under the synchronisation system than the rotation system, and students do not necessarily have to pass through all the partner HEIs. Within larger consortia students can be offered flexible mobility options, whereas under the rotation system course duration places practical limits on the number of collaborating HEIs.⁴²

In general the provider network needs to be formalised to some extent. The minimum laid down by the German accreditation system is agreement between the participating HEIs on a joint education programme – as a rule a written partnership agreement of an authentic nature (cf. Akkreditierungsrat 2004, p. 2; Friedrich 2006b, pp. 8-9; Ministry of Education and Science in Sweden 2002a, p. 5). Ideally this document should set out a funding strategy and funding commitments on the part of the participating HEIs that ensure the long-term continuity of the joint study programme. The formalisation of the provider structure needs to be seen in connection with the programme's development status: in the EUA Joint Masters Project, for instance, we saw that the networks tended to start small and informal then gradually expand and become more formalised (EUA 2005, p. 15). In the long term such formalisation endeavours could lead to an international HEI partnership, such as the one the CUNE project aimed to achieve with the EUREGIO University of Applied Sciences, or of the kind implemented as the Bodensee Hochschule.⁴³

Another important point as regards structure is to what extent particular institutional requirements (enrolment system, charging of tuition/course fees, teaching reports, quality assurance, accounting) and administrative activities (support for students before and during mobility phases, marketing, information and administration) are standardised and centralised. Experience so far suggests that centralising institutional regulations and support services is advantageous, as this enables students from different countries of admission to be provided with a coherent study programme. This is hampered to some extent by the differing national structural regulations in the Bologna states, however.⁴⁴

⁴² The practical limitation under the rotation system results from the minimum length of individual mobility phases. Students should experience at least one full course cycle abroad. Every additional mobility phase increases the burden on both students and the participating HEIs, so substantial fragmentation of the course of study would not be worthwhile.

⁴³ For more information see www.bodenseehochschule.com.

⁴⁴ Incomprehensibly, a distinction is made between the two systems for subsidy purposes but it has no consequences. In principle the rotation system ought to place much greater demands on the centralisation of institutional regulations etc., as there is only one study programme. Under the synchronisation system, conversely, a number of programmes run in parallel. In themselves they can each be assigned to a national education system; all that is needed is standardisation of course components.

Binding regulations exist in the area of quality assurance, and a number of pilot projects have been carried out on this (cf. 2.4), based on the view that there needs to be a central approach to quality assurance for joint degrees. Both internal and external quality assurance procedures should therefore not assess the isolated components at the individual HEIs but the study programme as a whole (cf. ENQA 2006, pp. 6, 24; EUA 2006, p. 11). As regards accreditation procedures, then, the national accreditation agencies should have an international group of assessors carry out a joint single accreditation procedure. In CUNE the ISCM programme was accredited by a procedure of this kind (cf. 1.2.1). This, combined with internal quality assurance measures, provides a basis for the recognition of students' entire work within the provider network and of degree qualifications in the national education systems involved.

2.3.2 Programme model

The programme structure for joint degrees is covered by the Bologna regulations on the Bachelor's/Master's system.⁴⁵ A distinction is made between applied and research-oriented programmes. In Germany there is a distinction at Master's level between programmes that follow-on from the respective Bachelor (*konsekutiv*), non-follow-on programmes (*nicht-konsekutiv*) and post-professional programmes (requiring postgraduate work experience: *weiterbildend*). The studies available show that joint degree programmes are more common at Master's than Bachelor's level. The average normal course duration is 40 months for a Bachelor's and 22 months for a Master's degree.⁴⁶ Thus in terms of the ECTS system the possible Bachelor-Master's combinations can be expected to comprise 180+120, 210+90 and 240+60 credits.⁴⁷

A special feature of joint degrees is the form the degree certificate takes. This, combined with the Diploma Supplement,⁴⁸ should reflect the intercultural added value of the programme. The following types of degree certificate are recommended internationally for this purpose (UNESCO, Council of Europe 2004, p. 4):

⁴⁵ Informally the former 'diploma' system as well as joint doctoral programmes were also discussed (Ministerio dell' Istruzione, dell' Università e della Ricerca 2003, p. 4). The old diploma system is increasingly being replaced with the Bachelor's/Master's system. Joint doctoral programmes, on the other hand, have so far been a marginal phenomenon.

⁴⁶ Maiworm 2006, pp. 3-6. The data in this study are not representative: programmes with Germany as the partner country are over-represented. The averages given therefore no doubt result from the fact that more three-year than four-year programmes at Bachelor's level and more two-year than one-year programmes at Master's level were surveyed.

⁴⁷ The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) measures the workload of events, modules, semesters and study programmes in a standardized manner. 30 ECTS credits usually represent one semester. The number of credits leading to a Master's degree should not usually exceed 300 (except e.g. in Medicine).

- (a) A joint degree certificate in addition to one or more national degree certificates from the participating HEIs
- (b) A joint degree certificate issued by all the HEI providers without additional national certificates
- (c) One or more national degree certificates as the sole official proof of the qualification gained

This recommendation has deliberately been formulated in broad terms to avoid excessive regulation of programmes. Option (b) defines the 'true' joint degree as an independent joint degree certificate. The findings to date indicate that this is seldom the case, i.e. in less than one-fifth of programmes; standard practice is to award a number of national certificates from the participating HEIs (cf. Rauhvargers, Tauch 2002, p. 31; Maiworm 2006, pp. 16-17; Schmeken 2008, p. 26). Neither of these were achieved in CUNE, so graduates only received a degree certificate from the HEI at which they were enrolled (cf. 1.3.1).

For joint degrees it is essential to guarantee a minimum of transparency and comparability: (a) graduates need to be guaranteed a level of qualification that is recognised in the partner countries as being appropriate for the type of degree, and (b) students from different countries of admission should be offered a feasible programme that opens up prospects for them on the European labour market or in academia. In this connection ECTS credits and Diploma Supplements are important and widespread tools.⁴⁹ The formal regulations on programme organisation and student recruitment, on the other hand, are less often standardised: the majority of programmes do not have joint course and examination regulations (Maiworm 2006, p. 18).⁵⁰ In only half of cases are the entrance requirements the same in all the countries of admission – aside from the fact that to some extent state eligibility for admission to higher education works differently in the participating countries (EUA 2004, p. 19; Maiworm 2006, p. 18).

2.3.3 Curriculum

Joint degrees exist in principle in every subject. The top three are the economic sciences, engineering sciences and law (Rauhvargers, Tauch 2002, p. 31; Maiworm

⁴⁸ The Diploma Supplement is an additional document, introduced as a result of the Bologna reforms, that sets out the graduate's skills. In the case of joint degrees it is important that the Diploma Supplement should reflect the intercultural added value of the programme.

⁴⁹ This is the case with all the programmes in the Joint Masters Project (EUA 2004, p. 15) and the DAAD-subsidized programmes (Schmeken 2008). According to two surveys of joint degree programmes (Rauhvargers, Tauch 2002, p. 36 and Maiworm 2006, p. 18) the majority of programmes have ECTS credits and Diploma Supplements.

⁵⁰ This also applies to the DAAD-subsidized programmes (Schmeken 2008, pp. 32-33).

2006, p. 5; HRK 2007, p. 17). In the Joint Masters Project there was a tendency towards interdisciplinary subjects and specialisations in certain professions (EUA 2004, p. 16), and this tendency was also seen in CUNE. The intercultural added value of the programmes was based on course content as well as the periods of study abroad. The intercultural nature of course content is expected to come about as a result of joint curriculum development by the participating HEIs, taking the Dublin Descriptors and the Tuning project, supported by the European Commission as part of its Socrates programme, as points of reference. The Dublin Descriptors define a skill level for graduates of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes as an internationally accepted guideline (Westerheijden & Leegwater, 2003; NVAO 2003, p. 16). The Tuning project, implemented by a number of European HEIs, on the other hand, developed an international standard for the definition of learning outcomes and subject-specific and generic competences for a number of subjects.⁵¹

In joint curriculum development the differing logic of the synchronisation and rotation systems places different demands on the complementarity of the specialist competences of the partner HEIs. Under the synchronisation system the competences need to be comparable in the programme phases being synchronised, otherwise there is less motivation to take course components at HEIs that are less competent than the home HEI. The rotation system, on the other hand, ideally permits complementary competences to be pooled, as the HEIs specialise in particular components which they teach to the entire international student cohort. Under the synchronisation system, then, curricula only need to be standardised in the mobility windows, whereas under the rotation system a curriculum standardised among the HEIs is needed, like the one implemented in the CUNE ISCM programme.

Particularly relevant to joint degree curricula are general and subject-specific intercultural content, general and subject-specific foreign language teaching when preparing for or supervising study abroad, and, where appropriate, compulsory internships or support with finding internships abroad. As regards foreign languages, the available studies indicate that most courses are given in the national languages of the participating HEIs, with English as a third language. The students interviewed for the CUNE evaluation were overall less interested in the national languages than in course content being taught in English. The German-French University, conversely, placed special emphasis on teaching the national languages (cf. 4.2): its bi-national study programmes include compulsory general and subject-specific foreign language teaching in the languages of both partner countries and internships abroad.

⁵¹ Gonzàles, Wagenaar 2005, p. 6. The subjects are Business Administration, Chemistry, Earth Sciences (Geology), Education Sciences, History, Mathematics and Physics.

2.4 Findings from European implementation initiatives

Since 2001 the setting-up of joint degree programmes in European higher education has been encouraged by various initiatives, specifically the implementation of expert seminars, subsidy schemes and additional modules as well as considerations regarding the quality assurance of joint degrees. The main actors are the European Union (EU), the European University Association (EUA), the European Network in Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA). Meanwhile a series of findings and recommendations on joint degrees in European higher education have been published: these are presented below.

2.4.1 Studies and pilot projects

At the start of the Bologna Process the expectations for joint degrees were high. In the ensuing period empirical studies and pilot projects helped to bring them down to a more realistic level. The 2007 Bologna conference in London, for instance, found that the anticipated effect of joint degrees in stimulating student mobility in European higher education was unlikely to occur for the time being. It was improbable, moreover, given the resource intensity and modest student numbers⁵² that larger student cohorts would be taught in programmes of this kind. To change this, the HEIs would need to provide more generous sources of funding (EUA 2007, pp. 30-31). All in all, then, in the European context joint degrees remain an *avant-garde*.⁵³

The studies and pilot projects carried out on the subject of joint degrees in European higher education revealed various problems of implementation, due particularly to the fact that the programmes cannot be assigned unequivocally to a national education system (for more on this subject see 2.5).

2.4.2 Recommendations

Since the start of the Bologna Process progress has been made in the Bologna states on a number of legal areas relating to joint degrees. An international milestone was reached in the form of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Recommendations on the

⁵² The point of reference is the study by Maiworm 2006, p. 6. The – non-representative – survey of joint degree programmes in the Bologna states came up with 24 as the average (median) number of students.

⁵³ Joint degree programmes account for 2.2% of the total of about 12,000 programmes at German HEIs (HRK 2007, p. 16). In 2007/2008 the DAAD subsidized 97 programme partnerships of HEIs from 35 countries (Schmeken 2008, p. 9). In 2008 Erasmus Mundus is subsidising a total of 103 Master's programmes (Wuttig 2008, p. 13). According to a poll of representatives of the Bologna Follow-Up Group

Recognition of Joint Degrees, which were appended to the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁵⁴ on 9 June 2004. They provide international definitions as a basis for the amendment of national legislation, which did not take joint degrees sufficiently into account in the initial phase of the Bologna Process. They recommend that the national education policy-makers eliminate legal obstacles to the development of joint degrees and provide as much scope as possible for programme structures and types of degree.

A further step was the 10 Golden Rules for New Joint Master Programmes, published in 2004 by the European University Association (EUA) in the wake of its Joint Masters Project (EUA 2004, p. 23). These bring together the experience from the EUA pilot project and make empirically-based recommendations to HEIs which are considering developing joint degrees. Nationally the 10 Golden Rules were adopted in February 2005 by the German Vice-Chancellors' Conference in its Recommendations of the HRK on the Development of Double Degrees and Joint Degrees (HRK 2005, p. 6). The economic sciences have their own international consortium, the Consortium for International Double Degrees (CIDD), which has published recommendations on development (Schüle 2006). On top of this, each international expert seminar has made its own recommendations on joint degrees, but the EUA's 10 Golden Rules are the most notable ones to date. Although they have no legally binding force, they serve as guidelines because of the authority of the actors responsible for them.

Progress has also been made in international quality assurance. The EUA's Joint Masters Project produced an approach to internal quality assurance for joint degree programmes with its European Masters New Evaluation Methodology (EMNEM; cf. EUA 2006, p. 4). The external quality assurance approach was developed in the Transnational European Evaluation Project II of the European Network in Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). This is particularly relevant to programme accreditation, which is a compulsory external quality assurance procedure in most of the Bologna states (Schwarz, Westerheijden 2004). A step forward internationally in the procedural reliability of programme accreditation was made in the form of the Principles for accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes (Rauhvargers, Tauch 2004, pp. 36-37) of the umbrella organisation of European higher education accreditation agencies, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), and the German Accreditation Council's regulations on the Accreditation of Programmes with Double Degrees and Joint Degrees (Akkreditierungsrat 2004).

in 2006, France and Italy, with participation in 550 and 310 programmes respectively, are among the European countries most active in the area of joint degrees (Bienefeld, Gruszka, Zervakis 2006, p. 3).

2.4.3 Subsidy schemes

Specific international and national subsidy schemes also provide targeted incentives to the development of study programmes. The most important international actor is the European Union, whose Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus subsidy schemes are particularly relevant to joint degrees. These schemes have enabled a shift in subsidy policy to take place. Since 1995 Erasmus has been promoting not only student mobility but also more informal international curriculum development partnerships focusing on existing programmes (Wuttig 2008, pp. 4, 8-10). This subsidy policy was revamped in 2004 with the introduction of Erasmus Mundus, which supports the development of new integrated Master's programmes offered by a partnership of at least three HEIs from different states. Erasmus Mundus also permits HEIs and students from non-Bologna states to take part (*ibid.*, p. 12).

We are also seeing a gradual opening-up to a wider circle of subsidised countries in the national subsidy scheme of the German Academic Exchange Service (the DAAD's Integrated International Programmes with Double Degrees) (Schmeken 2008, p. 13). This scheme has been subsidising the cost of developing study programmes and the mobility costs of students and teaching staff since 1999. Another subsidising body is the German-French University (DFH-UFA), a bilateral umbrella organisation that supports programmes offered by HEIs in the partner countries of Germany and France and optionally other partner countries. It is particularly interesting in that its subsidy criteria define the intercultural added value to students comparatively clearly.⁵⁵

There are differences in the policies of these schemes: while Erasmus Mundus, being an international subsidy scheme, supports multilateral partnerships of at least three partner HEIs from different states, the DAAD and DFH-UFA also support bi-national partnerships. Joint degrees in all subjects are supported in principle. The programme structure should correspond to the two-tier Bachelor's/Master's system, though Erasmus Mundus only supports Master's programmes. The DAAD and DFH-UFA set store by joint course and examination regulations for students from different countries of origin. As their degree qualifications students should be awarded either separate national certificates from the participating HEIs (i.e. a multiple degree) or a joint degree as an independent certificate from all the participating HEIs.

⁵⁴ This international convention regulates the recognition of national degree qualifications in a European framework (UNESCO/Council of Europe 2004).

⁵⁵ For more information on the subsidy criteria of the German-French University see: <http://www.dfh-ufa.org/1161+M54a708de802.html> (downloaded 25/06/08 at 18: 47).

The DFH-UFA sees the intercultural added value for students as lying in general and subject-specific linguistic skills in German and French and 'exposure to another academic, working and everyday culture'. To guarantee these benefits the subsidized programmes need to offer subject-specific, linguistic and organisational preparation for the stay abroad, compulsory internships abroad and support to graduates with their subsequent academic development and their entry into the German-French labour market.

The compulsory mobility of students and to some extent teaching staff is determined by the nature of the provider network. The Erasmus Mundus subsidy criteria place particular emphasis on this, expecting students to spend periods of study in at least three countries and similar mobility of teaching staff. The DAAD and DFH-UFA schemes merely require regular student mobility between at least two partner HEIs, but they expect students to pass through the study programme in a joint, mixed bi-national student body. There is no standard requirement as to the length of the phases abroad in relation to the normal course duration: Erasmus Mundus does not lay down any such criterion; the DAAD lays down that 'about half the course duration' should be spent at the partner HEI in the case of bilateral partnerships; the DFH-UFA, on the other hand, requires 'temporally balanced compulsory periods of study'.

2.5 Obstacles to implementation

The studies and pilot projects reveal various obstacles to the implementation of joint degrees in European higher education. Based on the experience of the EUA's Joint Masters Project these problems are due less to inadequacies on the part of the provider networks than to incompatibilities between the European higher education systems (EU 2004, p. 13). Joint degrees thus still face the problem of the inadequate harmonisation of European higher education. Given the differences between the national state higher education systems, suitable solutions need to be found to balance the interests of the partner HEIs.

2.5.1 Funding and accreditation

Joint degrees are much more resource-intensive than national study programmes, entailing e.g. higher development and running costs as well as mobility costs for students. The development costs could be cushioned to some extent by subsidy schemes,⁵⁶ but in the long term joint degree programmes need to be self-funding. Their long-term continuity is complicated by the fact that the national higher education funding systems of the Bologna states administer course funding (based on type of HEI) differently (Zgaga 2004, p. 3). A good example of this in practice is INTERREG IIIA's CUNE project, where a large proportion of the planned study programmes failed

⁵⁶ Under Erasmus Mundus selected study programmes each receive €15,000 a year for a period of five years, after which they can reapply.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/univ/index_de.html

The DAAD subsidizes joint degrees in a phased procedure. The maximum grants are €10,000 in the preparatory year, €50,000 per year in the four-year try-out phase, and €50,000 per year in the final establishment phase for a maximum of three years.

partly because of the differences in state funding, which place Dutch *hogescholen* in a different competitive position from their German *Hochschule* partners (cf. 4.1).

Basically there are two requirements for state funding: state recognition of the degree qualification and the proper enrolment of students. State recognition of the degree qualification is problematic to some extent because the Bologna states have implemented different programme structures and degrees, and moreover many states do not have a legal basis for awarding suitable types of degree certificates (true joint degrees and multiple degrees; cf. 2.5.2). Enrolment is problematic because many funding systems do not sanction mobility phases for students. Enrolment at more than one HEI is usually not possible (Rauhvargers/Tauch 2002, p. 38; EUA 2004, p. 13). Funding contributions from students are also administered differently: many states do not charge course fees in some cases, or the ratio between state funding and the amount of funding provided by students varies markedly.

The numbers of students on joint degree programmes are comparatively low. This is due partly to capacity limitations in some Bologna states, but there are also general problems of recruitment, such as those found in the CUNE ISCM programme (cf. 1.2.1).⁵⁷ Many things point to relative lack of interest on the part of students and problems with finding potential students who have suitable qualifications. In some cases there are visa problems in the case of non-EU students, who are increasingly being targeted by subsidy policy. The mobility costs of students are not always covered by scholarships or state student loans.

As regards quality assurance for joint degrees, accreditation procedures are the first problem. There are procedural uncertainties, though they could be resolved pragmatically.⁵⁸ Pilot projects and binding regulations are also making for progress in this area; what is still lacking at present are criteria for assessing the intercultural added value of programmes (Friedrich 2006a, p. 6). It is more important, however, that accreditation agencies verify that programme structures conform with the national structural regulations, as well as enforcing a minimum standard for content. The consequences of accreditation differ, often affecting the internal policy of a programme and its public funding.

A good example of this is the entrance requirements for the CUNE ISCM programme. In the proposed programme they would have been the same in both partner countries, but this uniformity was eventually lost as a result of the accreditation procedure. The problem lay in the differing consequences of the accreditation procedures in the two

<http://www.daad.de/hochschulen/internationalisierung/doppelabschluss/05169.de.html>

⁵⁷ Similar recruitment problems were also observed with the Erasmus Mundus programmes.

⁵⁸ Cf. Reuke 2008 on the procedural reliability of the German accreditation system.

partner countries: whereas conditional accreditation is possible in Germany (the German ISCM accreditation was subject to the condition that the *work experience* entrance requirement be raised from one to two years), it is not possible in the Netherlands (i.e. the decision is a yes/no one without conditions).

In general the need for accreditation often results in lack of flexibility in the design of programme structures, as lack of accreditation owing to formal shortcomings places the public funding component in jeopardy. In future, however, it is likely that study programme accreditation will give way to accreditation or auditing of HEIs (or their quality management systems) as a whole (as in the case of German system accreditation) and the focus will be more on internal quality assurance procedures, where the problems are less acute at present.

In all these problem areas, however, we need to make a distinction as to which joint degree system is being implemented. The synchronisation system would seem to be less development-intensive but more resource-intensive overall. It involves running a number of programmes, which thus make use of more capacities than a single one. The activities of the individual HEIs can be regarded as independent programmes, making it easier for them to conform with the national structure (even if the uniformity of the programme as a whole suffers as a result). The synchronisation system envisaged in CUNE, on the other hand, would seem to be more development-intensive and less resource-intensive overall. It involves running only one study programme, in which the incompatibilities between national structural regulations resulting from the participation of a number of HEIs with different national backgrounds have to be harmonised internally.

2.5.2 Programme design

The problems with the formal programme models for joint degrees lie in incompatible programme structures and types of degree and the lack of a legal basis for the awarding and recognition of suitable types of degree certificates. In the Bologna states the normal course durations for Bachelor's and Master's programmes have been implemented with an 'inconsistent logic' (Alesi, Bürger, Kehm, Teichler 2005, pp. 6, 19-20). Programmes in the Bachelor's/Master's degree system range from 180+120 to 210+90 and 240+60 ECTS credits, in addition to various special types. We cannot take it for granted, then, that HEIs in the Bologna states use similar programme models. In many countries HEIs have a certain degree of latitude,⁵⁹ but they usually adhere to the

⁵⁹ According to data from the German Conference of Education Ministers (KMK 2003, p. 6) the full spectrum can be utilized at both *Universities of Applied Sciences* and Universities. This is not the case in

normal system in the country of origin with a view to recruiting students from their catchment areas. In this respect the incompatibilities found at Bachelor's level in CUNE are a typical problem (cf. 1.3).

To some extent the degrees that HEIs in the Bologna states are permitted to award also differ. In Germany, for instance, the strict distinction between Universities and *Universities of Applied Sciences* was abolished as a result of the Bologna Process. Both types of HEI are now permitted to offer research-based and applied programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level. The standard degree nomenclature is Bachelor/Master of Science/Arts/Law/Engineering plus post-professional degrees (MBA). The situation in the Netherlands has developed differently, however: the functions of Universities and *hogescholen* there are more clearly differentiated. Although Dutch Universities offer the same types of degree as German Universities and *Universities of Applied Sciences*, Dutch *hogescholen* usually offer practice-oriented Bachelor's programmes specified by subject (Bachelor of Physiotherapy/Commerce etc.).

Another problem is the recognition of appropriate types of degree certificates that reflect the fact that joint degrees are run jointly by more than one HEI. State recognition of a 'true' joint degree as an independent certificate from the responsible HEIs has long been a problem, as the higher education legislation in the Bologna states did not provide for this possibility. As an alternative, HEIs have awarded types of degree that were unproblematic (Rauhvargers, Tauch 2002, pp. 36-40; EUA 2004, p. 13). By now the legal problems should not be so acute: a poll of the Bologna Follow-Up Group in 2006 and the Stocktaking Report of the 2007 Bologna conference in London indicate that there are no longer legal recognition problems in the majority of the Bologna states (Bienefeld, Gruzka, Zervakis 2006, pp. 3-4; BFUG 2007, p. 35).

2.5.3 Course content

As regards course content, it is not so much the development of content that is problematic as the framework in which curriculum development takes place. Problems include the non-standardised measurement of workloads in terms of ECTS credits and the lack of uniformity in some cases in the understanding of learning outcomes in terms of subject-specific and generic competences. A practical problem is overlapping course content that diminishes the efficiency of the study period abroad (EUA 2004, p. 15).

the Netherlands, where Bachelor's programmes take four years at *hogeschool* and three years at university (Alesi, Bürger, Kehm, Teichler 2005, p. 51).

Also, in general the logistical work involved in joint curriculum development should not be underestimated.

3 Overall conclusion

As the preceding chapters have made clear, there are now a host of findings on obstacles to and opportunities afforded by joint degree programmes in European higher education. The results of the CUNE project add new aspects to the existing experience and moreover give other HEIs with similar plans a valuable opportunity to learn from the practical experience. All in all, this leads to the following recommendations on the development and implementation of joint degree programmes.

3.1 Recommendations on the subsidisation of joint degrees

Joint degree programmes offer students a high degree of individual utility by (a) enabling them to study abroad without any substantial lengthening of course duration and (b) increasing their chances on the labour market as a result of the intercultural experience gained there. As a tool to promote mobility within Europe, however, they are not very effective. These programmes tend not to have a broad impact because of their resource intensity and the low average student numbers. More attention needs to be paid to developing ideas on less expensive programmes, possibly with a lower threshold. At the same time it needs to be pointed out that the high resource intensity of joint degrees is substantially influenced by political obstacles and the big differences that still exist between national higher education systems. Overcoming these hurdles costs the actors at the HEIs a lot of time and energy. Further harmonisation of the European higher education system is thus urgently needed if joint degrees are to have a positive effect.

International programme development projects should not be tied up right from the start with wider (economic policy) objectives; the international development and implementation of study programmes is demanding enough on its own, given the current state of implementation of the Bologna reforms. Wider benefits can anyway only be expected in the long term.

If a funding plan is confined to a particular target area it should be available to all the HEIs in that area, thus multiplying the options for the programme providers and increasing the likelihood of the programmes being implemented.

If a funding plan for the development of programmes in a particular target area is to be tied up with expectations of long-term regional, structural or economic policy benefits, a feasibility study should be carried out independently of the HEIs to see whether the

plan meets with adequate interest on the part of students. The students on the CUNE programmes were clearly more interested in the international orientation of their studies than in bi-national regional policy benefits.

The subsidisation of projects to develop and implement programmes transnationally should be outcome-driven, as otherwise they will not provide enough incentive to close networking and the satisfactory balancing of interests in the provider network. The specific subsidy schemes of Erasmus Mundus, the German Academic Exchange Service and the German-French University (see 4.2) offer a point of reference here, as they provide phased grants that individual projects can compete for.

The subsidy scheme should be based on formal quality criteria that lay down precisely what intercultural added value the programmes should have compared with national study programmes. Intercultural added value is not usually assessed in accreditation procedures, as there are no universal criteria for it. Points of reference for the design of criteria are the activities taking place in the European framework (see 2). A formal quality yardstick is always dependent on the broader political aims of the funding body and should therefore always be specifically tailored to them.

Projects with larger budgets require careful monitoring and prompt strategic decision-making. The project documents should always reflect the latest realistic project objectives.

3.2 Recommendations on the development and implementation of joint degrees

In particular, projects with the aim of implementing a number of programmes transnationally require support at political level. If this support is absent in just one partner country this can affect the flexible design of programme models. As long as the national education policy-makers are unlikely to relax the structural constraints, advantage should be taken, above all, of the scope afforded by experimental clauses in national higher education legislation.

In the provider network there should be negotiation on the economic scope of HEIs and the minimum contributions the individual HEIs are willing to make to a study programme. To increase reliability of expectations, a potential probable worst-case scenario should be identified or a logframe developed with clearly defined critical preconditions that could lead a partner to withdraw from a project.

In the case of international plans for the development of study programmes a feasibility study should first be carried out to identify a potential framework of feasible – i.e.

fundable – programme models before beginning to design the content. Although this is incompatible with an ideally content-based approach to curricula and programme models, given the problems of international programme development it is this pragmatic approach that should be adopted.

When developing a curriculum, the requirements laid down by national quality assurance systems for the completed programme should always be observed: these, together with resources such as Tuning and the Dublin Descriptors, provided a framework for programme development (cf. 2.4).

It must be ensured that the teachers for the international programme being developed see one another as equal partners (as regards decision-making competence, status and level of qualifications), so that a foundation of mutual trust can develop.

The HEIs involved in programme development should discuss the pros and cons of different types of degree (simple national degree certificate/multiple degree/joint degree) both to potential graduates and to the strategic interests of the HEIs. A true joint degree in the form of an independent joint degree certificate is not necessarily the best option from many points of view (acceptance on the labour market, the value of the degree as a label for the HEI). If the function of Diploma Supplements is taken seriously, the debate concerning the nature of degree certificates is less compelling, as the intercultural added value of the programme can be documented by a precisely worded Diploma Supplement.

In the case of particular programmes, if the partner HEIs are not convinced that their competences and interests are complementary a joint degree programme under the synchronisation system is more advisable (cf. 2.3.1). Although this is relatively more resource-intensive, it is less high-risk and in the long term it opens up the possibility of developing the partnership. The mutual dependencies involved in a joint degree under the rotation system are much greater.

4 Appendix

4.1 Comparative overview of the Dutch and German higher education systems⁶⁰

4.1.1 The Netherlands

State policy

Philosophy	Since 1985 White Paper on the basic philosophy behind state policy on higher education, which gives HEIs a high degree of autonomy (Jongbloed 2005). Combination of egalitarian tradition regarding admission to higher education (a state-guaranteed right) with competitive elements: right of initiative to create student places rests with HEI, no mentoring standards, higher education funding largely per student. National coordination and capacity management until 2003 by national advisory body (ACO = <i>Adviescommissie Onderwijs</i>); function currently exercised provisionally by Ministry.
Differentiation by type of HEI	Universities and <i>hogescholen</i> . Since 1992 common legal framework (WHW = <i>Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek</i> , Higher Education and Research Act) but separate state allocation of funds.
Role of legislation	Entrance requirements and procedures laid down in WHW. Higher education funding systems laid down by parliament, national uniform level of course fees laid down by law, student funding by a special act (<i>Wet Studiefinanciering</i>).
Role of state actors	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MOCenW = <i>Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap</i>) plays vital role; strong parliamentary involvement in decisions on higher education policy. More far-reaching structural changes are decided upon at four-yearly intervals in a comprehensive development plan for the entire higher education system (HOOP = <i>Hoger Onderwijs en Onderzoeksplan</i>) by everyone involved (organisations of HEIs and students, employers' representatives and academic organisations) in a dialogue chaired by the Ministry.
Role of profiling as a guiding principle	Attempts to coordinate profiling by way of ACO (see above) and by the Universities and <i>hogescholen</i> in consultation with one another. The idea of profiling guides the right of initiative of HEIs on the design and curricular development of programmes, strengthened by the accreditation system, which allows a good deal of freedom. State subsidy schemes for policy innovations and currently greater selection of students.

Admission

Facts and figures: percentage of age cohort	56% (Net entry rates 2004 Tertiary Education Type A, OECD Education at a Glance 2006), approx. one-third of students at universities, two-thirds at <i>hogescholen</i> .
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⁶⁰ This describes the situation in the two states at a time that was relevant to the implementation of CUNE. The synopsis is a revised version of the international comparative study, Nickel et al. (2007), *Universitätszugang und -finanzierung. Empfehlungen zur Weiterentwicklung der österreichischen Hochschulsteuerung*. In: Badelt, Christoph/Wulz, Heribert/Wegscheider, Wolfhart [eds.], *Hochschulzugang in Österreich*. Graz.

Philosophy	<p>Admission to higher education is an entitlement guaranteed by the state, with free choice of place of study for school-leavers with appropriate qualifications. Strict segmentation as a result of separate secondary school paths to University and <i>hogeschool</i> with early streaming of pupils. Choice of subjects at Universities restricted by subject packages at secondary level II (since 1999). Regulation of excess demand by number rationing (in practice nationally only in a few subjects at University; locally <i>hogescholen</i> are free to set numbers).</p> <p>Admission to higher education regulated nationally by the WHW.</p>
Criteria	<p>'VWO' (pre-University school) for university, 'HAVO' (higher general secondary school) or 'MBO' (vocational school) for <i>hogescholen</i>. Choice of subjects at University limited since 1999 by the four VWO subject packages (Culture and Society, Economics and Society, Nature and Health, Nature and Technology). Additional subject-specific requirements only customary for a few <i>hogeschool</i> programmes (Art, Music).</p>
Procedures	<p>Student places are applied for and allocated through the Informatie Beheer Groep, which sets a national limit (<i>numerus fixus</i> or <i>numerus clausus</i>) if the demand exceeds the number of places. Hogescholen can impose a local limit themselves, but only if the demand is more than 25% higher than the previous year. The funding system also provides a strong incentive to do this without any apparent reason. National limits (<i>opleidingsfixus</i>) are only applied to university programmes, but local limits (<i>instellingsfixus</i>) also to <i>hogeschool</i> programmes (the former especially to medical programmes and Psychology). Both are imposed by the government (with input from the professions and taking the labour market situation into account).</p> <p>In the case of national programme limits there has traditional been a lottery procedure weighted by average marks, supplemented since 1999 by quotas for <i>hogescholen</i> to apply their own selection procedures and select the best school-leavers.</p>
Major reforms	<p>Since 2004/05 pilot projects to increase selection by HEIs ('Unlimited Talent', 'Selection at the Door'; 'top Master's' programmes): an amendment to the law was proposed for 2006 but proved controversial and was finally withdrawn.</p>

Higher education funding

Facts and figures	<p>Direct and indirect expenditure on tertiary education from public and private funds (A+B): 1.5% of GDP (OECD national average 1.4%); approx. two-thirds of higher education funding direct from the Education Ministry.</p>
Philosophy behind state higher education funding	<p>The guiding principle is demand-based higher education funding, but to date it has been inadequately implemented. This will change with the planned comprehensive reform of higher education funding (see Current reforms) (Jongbloed 2005).</p> <p>Overall budgets for HEIs, containing research (two-thirds) and teaching (one-third) components for Universities, but only teaching funded in the case of <i>hogescholen</i>. Additional incentives to recruit students in the form of fees that go directly to the HEIs (Kaiser, Vossensteyn & Koelman 2001). Research component continues traditional <i>de facto</i> inequalities based on staff complements (Jongbloed 2005).</p> <p>Additional research funding for Universities via the research council</p>

	(NWO = <i>Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek</i>), which pays salaries of researchers inside and outside Universities directly and awards project funding on a competitive basis. The HEIs also receive money from research and teaching contracts (Kaiser et al. 2001).
Agreed targets/indicator-supported fund allocation	Indicator-supported fund allocation, separate systems for Universities and <i>hogescholen</i> Funding of University teaching: since 2000 'performance-based funding model' (PBM): 37% of teaching funding is carried forward on a historical basis, 50% based on degrees awarded and 13% based on newly enrolled first-year students. The system has three levels of teaching funding: 1. low (social sciences and humanities), 2. high (engineering and natural sciences) and 3. (medical programmes). Since 2002 separate accounting for first-year students and graduates of Bachelor's and Master's programmes; funding components allocated pro rata (ratio 2: 1). Ratio between the three levels (1:1, 5:3). Additional state funding for two-year research Master's programme on application basis. Funding of <i>hogescholen</i> : largely based on numbers of graduates and actual course duration, thus also result-based. Only Bachelor's.
Demand-based funding/'Money follows students' principle	Funding for teaching traditionally includes a significant per-student component linked to the numbers of new enrolments and graduates (as incentives to recruitment and graduation). Since the changeover to the Bachelor's/Master's system (2002) based on Bachelor's and Master's graduates.
Fees as a funding tool	Course fees of €1,495 per student per year (2005/06) which remain with the HEI (no differentiation in terms of type of HEI, subject or Bachelor's/Master's) provide an incentive to recruitment.
Major reforms	Around 2005 comprehensive reform of admission to higher education towards 'more flexibility, more freedom of choice, more quality' was discussed at the instigation of the Education Ministry (MOCenW 2004b). The plans include integrating higher education funding for Universities and <i>hogescholen</i> at Bachelor's level and making it more demand-based particularly at Master's level, also with a view to international student mobility and in connection with the differentiation of course fees at Master's level as discussed (see Student funding) (Boezerooy 2003, MOCenW 2004a, 2004b).

Student funding

Philosophy	Moderate, equal fees for all State non-means-tested basic student funding for all, but with performance incentives. Additional support based on social need; also student loans (for <i>hogeschool</i> students up to Bachelor's level and University students up to Master's level).
Fees	Course fees of €1,495 per head per year (2005/06) which remain with the HEI (no differentiation in terms of type of HEI, subject or Bachelor's/Master's).
Subsidy tools (loans, scholarships)	Public student funding is administered by the Informatie Beheer Groep and comprises three components: (1) Basic grant (<i>basisbeurs</i>) in the form of a loan for the nominal duration of the programme, which is converted into a scholarship if the student meets the pass criteria (50% of the required credits in the first year and the degree qualification gained within ten years – the latter to take account of the increased trend towards part-time work and other

	<p>activities alongside studies)</p> <p>(2) means-tested (based on parental income) additional grant (<i>aanvullende beurs</i>), which is received by about 30% of students</p> <p>(3) an additional voluntary loan (<i>rentedragende lening</i>) with a subsidised interest rate (Kaiser et al. 2001, Vossensteyn 2005).</p> <p>Amounts of the three components (2005/06; living/not living with parents respectively): basic grant: €75.70/€233.08; additional grant: €221.37/€241.43; voluntary loan: €258.69/€258.69</p> <p>Having gained their Bachelor's degree, graduates can choose whether to convert the loan into a scholarship and enter employment (irrevocable) or allow the loan to continue and apply for grant aid for their Master's degree. Age limit: 30 years for the start of the Master's programme, no interruptions permitted thereafter.</p>
Current reforms	Differentiated course fees at Master's level being discussed by the policy-makers (among other things in connection with 'top Master's programmes' – usually research-based programmes of excellence that are competitive internationally).

Capacity and supply management

Facts and figures: size of system (HEIs, students)	<p>14 Universities (185,000 students)</p> <p>44 <i>hogescholen</i> (350,000 students) (NUFFIC 2005)</p>
Philosophy	<p>Universities plan new programmes locally (right of proposal); national coordination is carried out by a central committee based on criteria such as national demand management, hypercompetition of supply, worthwhile degree of differentiation (<i>'macrodoelmatigheid'</i> = macro-efficiency). Programmes 'approved' in this way are entered in a national register (CROHO) and state-funded (in line with the system described above). This approval is independent of accreditation, which is only a quality check: there can be high-quality programmes for which there is no national demand and which therefore remain unfunded, as well as programmes that 'fail' accreditation but are nonetheless funded because there is a great national demand (e.g. teacher training, where there is a national debate on quality shortcomings).</p>
Procedures	<p>Until 2003 the controversial verification of macro-efficiency was entrusted by the state to an advisory commission on study programmes set up by law (ACO = <i>Adviescommissie Opleidingen</i>). Since then the function has been 'parked' at the Ministry (Huisman 2005; Huisman, Beerkens & Goedegebuure 2003).</p>

4.1.2 Germany

State policy

Philosophy	<p>Admission to higher education is a state-guaranteed fundamental right.</p> <p>The federal system leaves its mark on higher education policy: higher education funding is a matter for the <i>Länder</i> (apart from research funding and building of HEIs, in which the Federal Government is involved, also student funding). There is no federal policy on capacity management, but mentoring is standardised throughout the federation. No direct financial compensation from the <i>Länder</i> for</p>
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	student flows.
Differentiation by type of HEI	There is a common legal framework for Universities and <i>Universities of Applied Sciences</i> as a rule, but the fund allocation systems are still separate in some <i>Länder</i> .
Role of legislation	Legal regulations at federal and <i>Land</i> level play a dominant role in the standardisation of mentoring and criteria and procedures for admission to higher education.
Role of state actors	Ministries of <i>Länder</i> play a critical role in higher education funding, with the Ministry and HEIs as 'negotiators'. <i>Länder</i> parliaments formally pass HEI budgets, but do not play any significant <i>de facto</i> role in policy.
Role of profiling as a guiding principle	Profiling has recently been an important guiding principle in policy but is incompatible with the federal Capacity Regulation (KapVO). In some cases there are new procedures for admission to higher education, agreed targets and indicator-supported fund allocation for this purpose.
Current reforms	<p>KapVO is coming under increasing pressure from reforms such as the changeover to the Bachelor's/Master's system; alternatives are being discussed.</p> <p>As part of the reform of the federal system the Federal Government decided in 2006 that the federation's competences in the area of higher education should be drastically reduced and the Higher Education Framework Act (HRG = <i>Hochschulrahmengesetz</i>), which applies throughout the federation, be abolished. This would mean the end of the federation-wide framework for admission to higher education; instead, all decisions would be taken at the level of the individual <i>Länder</i>.</p>

Admission

Facts and figures: percentage of age cohort	37% (Net entry rates 2004 Tertiary Education Type A) + 16% Type B (OECD Education at a Glance 2006).
Philosophy	<p>Admission to higher education is a state-guaranteed entitlement with free choice of place of study and subject for school-leavers with appropriate qualifications; restrictions on admissions only permitted in line with highly regulated, constitutionally-based procedures such as the Capacity Regulation (KapVO) and Curricular Standards (CNW). Excess demand regulated by means of rationing.</p> <p>Admission to higher education still regulated throughout the federation under the Higher Education Framework Act (HRG); previously exhaustive, since summer 2004 open, catalogue of entrance requirements.</p>
Criteria	<i>Abitur</i> (Baccalaureate) for Universities, subject-specific <i>Hochschulreife</i> (entrance qualification) for all <i>Universities of Applied Sciences</i> and relevant University programmes, <i>Fachhochschulreife</i> for <i>Universities of Applied Sciences</i> . Traditionally no subject-specific entrance requirements (except for Art, Architecture, Music, Sports), no tests.
Procedures	Direct application to <i>HEIs</i> for subjects without or with a local <i>numerus clausus</i> (NC); student places applied for and allocated through a central authority (ZVS) in the case of programmes with a federal NC (at present only Biology, Psychology, Pharmacy and medical subjects). Federal NC currently for approx. 3% of programmes, local NC for 43%.

Current reforms	<p>The 7th HRG Amending Act in summer 2004 and successive amendments to the higher education acts in the <i>Länder</i> have increased the right of selection of HEIs and of the best school-leavers for programmes with both a federal and a local NC (other criteria permitted in addition to <i>Abitur</i> grade; higher proportion of places awarded based on performance instead of waiting list or place of residence).</p> <p>Reduction of length of schooling up to <i>Abitur</i> from 13 to 12 years in progress in almost all <i>Länder</i>.</p>
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Higher education funding

Facts and figures:	Direct and indirect expenditure on tertiary education from public and private funds (A+B): 1.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD national average 1.4%).
Philosophy	<p>Currently changeover to lump sum funding, based on cash flow analysis.</p> <p>In most <i>Länder</i> the majority of state higher education funding, staff salaries, is still paid directly by the state; only a small portion is allocated via formulae or agreed targets (except in Brandenburg, Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate). This is used to promote additional higher education policy priorities.</p> <p>State research funding is largely separate, via the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (DFG).</p> <p>To date hardly any use of fees as a policy or funding tool (see Current reforms).</p>
Agreed targets/indicator-supported fund allocation	Various combinations of agreed targets and indicator-supported fund allocation in the <i>Länder</i> , but usually only small amounts of money involved (see above). The latter include both performance and workload-based components.
Demand-based funding/'Money follows students' principle	Traditionally underdeveloped as a result of supply-based Capacity Regulation and direct state-funded staff budgets. In some cases per-student components in the formula-based part of the fund allocation systems.
Fees as a funding tool	Since the decision by the Federal Constitutional Court (BVG = <i>Bundesverfassungsgericht</i>) in January 2005 <i>Länder</i> have been permitted to charge course fees. Some <i>Länder</i> are planning fees of €500 per semester; these should mostly go directly to the HEIs, although social measures and fallback reserves also have to be funded from them.

Student funding

Philosophy	To date admission to higher education free of charge as the philosophy behind expansion and social justice; in addition, state grant for living expenses of students from low-income groups (BAföG = <i>Bundesausbildungsförderung</i>). BAföG can be taken abroad after first two semesters.
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Fees	Since the January 2005 BFG decision. <i>Länder</i> have been permitted to charge course fees also for regular programmes or exempt HEIs from charging them. Seven <i>Länder</i> decided to introduce them in the winter semester 2006/07, summer semester 2007 or winter semester 2007/08 area-wide (albeit in some cases only for first-year students) (Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Hessen – situation in November 2007). The scheme is controversial and in one case (<i>Land</i> Hessen) has already been withdrawn, or modified as in the case of the <i>Land</i> Hamburg. Fees for post-professional Master's programmes and long-term students, on the other hand, are widely accepted.
Subsidy tools (loans, scholarships)	Loan and scholarship systems for course fees are being developed; national loan of max. €650 per month from Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), also schemes run by <i>Länder</i> , HEIs and the private sector. On top of this there is still the BAföG state student grant, which is a combination of a scholarship and a subsidised loan; the maximum grant (€585) only just covers living expenses. The total loan is limited to a maximum of €10,000. 16% of students receive BAföG, 25% at some point in the course of their studies. Can be taken abroad after two semesters of study in Germany (BMBF 2006/Vossensteyn 2004). To a smaller extent scholarships are awarded to highly gifted students by state and church-funded organisations, in this case without a loan component.

Capacity and supply management

Facts and figures: size of system (HEIs, students)	261 HEIs (members of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference) 1,963,108 students (Statistisches Bundesamt 2004/05) of which two-thirds at University, one-third at <i>Fachhochschule</i> .
Philosophy	Supply-based. Capacity management by <i>Länder</i> , not federal. Federal standards for mentoring to ensure equality of opportunity in admission to higher education and maximise the utilisation of HEIs' existing capacities (staff).
Procedures	Regional planning via HEI development plans/agreed targets, in some cases also approval of individual programmes. State agreement on allocation of student places, <i>Länder</i> Capacity Regulations (KapVO) and Curricular Standards (CNW) on the full utilisation of existing capacities.

4.2 Comparison of subsidy criteria

Subsidy criteria of Erasmus Mundus, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), German-French University (DFH)

Dimension	Erasmus Mundus subsidy criteria (2004-2008) ⁶¹	DAAD subsidy criteria 2008 (Schmeken 2008, p. 10)	DFH subsidy criteria 2008 ⁶²
Network structure	'Institutions from three states collaborate on an integrated Master's programme'	(The context of the description indicates that at least one German and one foreign HEI collaborate in the programme.)	(The context of the description indicates that at least one German and one French HEI collaborate on the programme.)
Formalisation	-	-	-
Degree of integration	-	'Joint course and examination regulations and examinations'	'Balanced, complementary curriculum coordinated between the partner HEIs, with joint course and examination regulations'
Mobility	'Exchange of students and teaching staff'	'About half the course duration at the partner HEI' 'Students form a joint student body'	'Education in two or three national education systems with their national institutional, academic and subject cultures and working, teaching and learning methods' 'Temporally balanced compulsory periods of study in the partner countries, as a rule in a joint student body' 'Mentoring of students, especially during their stay in the partner country'
Subject	All subjects	-	-
Transparency and comparability	60-120 ECTS credits	-	-
Type of degree	Double, multiple or joint degree	Double or joint degree	'Acquisition of two or three equivalent, nationally recognised degrees within the normal course duration laid down nationally'
Inter-cultural added value	-	'Intercultural added value'	'Acquisition of both general and subject-specific linguistic skills in at least the two partner languages,

⁶¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/univ/index_de.html
Downloaded 13/12/07 at 14:33.

⁶² <http://www.dfh-ufa.org/1161+M54a708de802.html>
Downloaded 25/06/08 at 18:47.

			<p>German and French'</p> <p>'Compulsory internships in the partner country'</p> <p>'Subject-specific, linguistic and practical organisational preparation for the stay abroad'</p> <p>'Exposure to another academic, working and everyday culture'</p> <p>'Support for students' and graduates' subsequent academic development and with their entry into the French or German labour market'</p>
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4.3 INTERREG IIIA's CUNE project: key data

Partner	<p>University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück</p> <p>Fachhochschule Münster</p> <p>Saxion Hogeschool Enschede</p>
Funding source	<p>Mixed funding:</p> <p>50% from INTERREG IIIA</p> <p>10% from each of the responsible national/<i>Länder</i> Ministries</p> <p>20% from the participating HEIs</p>
Budget	<p>Total of €2.1m at the start of the project; reduced to €1.6m during the course of the project. The largest budget allocation was for staff costs.</p>
Timetable	<p>Project initiation phase started 2002.</p> <p>Official project launch in 2004.</p> <p>Official end of project summer 2008.</p>
Aims of project	<p>To try out and implement a bi-national HEI as an umbrella brand of the project partners.</p> <p>Development of system and setting-up of five bi-national study programmes.</p>
Results of project	<p>One programme model was implemented based on the planned bi-national profile. Another programme was implemented nationally with bi-national components. Development work on three programmes was halted on account of unfavourable constraints.</p> <p>The bi-national HEI lacked a basis because of structural problems with the programmes.</p>

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