

Notes from Joint Degrees / European Degree workshop

(Chair Marjaana Mäkelä, secretary Virpi Laukkanen, short comment speeches from Heta Koski and Esko Koponen)

Main takeaways from European Degree Forum (Virpi)

The discussion in the European Degree Forum (Florence 20th-21st November) highlighted different perspectives from the point of view of Universities/HEIs, Governments/Policy makers, Employers and Industry, and Student organizations. From the Forum a *Florence Pledge* was designed to highlight these perspectives.

These key issues were emphasized regarding the development of European Joint Degrees:

- **Flexibility** is needed both from HEIs and government to overcome regulatory and administrative barriers.
- **Labor market relevance and employability of students** need to be ensured; therefore, the participation of work life organizations and industry is vital in development and implementation of programmes.
- **Inclusiveness and student participation** are also vital both in development and implementation phase of joint programmes.

The discussions in the workshop

There was vivid and diverse discussion in the groups, and these were the main takeaways:

- 1) We should focus more on developing good systems, guidelines and regulations to develop good quality joint programmes instead of focusing on development of single degree programmes. Now every organisation is using a lot of time and effort to solve same challenges.
- 2) It is important to find the right counterparts in each partner university. We need committed and right people for the development phase both in our own HEIs and in the consortium. Also, the commitment of leadership is very important.
- 3) National level guidelines are needed! We should build on already learned best practises in stead of starting new programme initiatives always from the scratch. For this it is also important that we can find the information from one source. Now there are e.g. several Teams where the discussion on joint degree development is going on.
- 4) We should find ways to make Finnish legislation more flexible in cases of European joint degrees, especially if they have European Approach accreditation. Would it be possible to make exceptions without changing whole higher education system?