



TREE Thematic Network -Teaching and Research in Engineering in Europe

The Socrates-Erasmus Thematic Networks (TN) were introduced to promote strategic reflections on scientific, educational and institutional issues in higher education. Three such TNs, one after the other, have been concerned with topics of transversal interest for all branches of Engineering Education (EE): H3E (1998-2000), E4 (2000-2004) and TREE -Teaching and Research Engineering in Europe (2004-2007).

Contributing to the development and the enrichment of the European dimension in Engineering Education (EE), constituted the *global goal* of TREE. In other words to enhance the compatibility of the many diverse routes to the status of Professional Engineer which exist in Europe and, hence, to facilitate greater mobility of skilled personnel and integration of the various situations throughout Europe. It must be emphasised that, according to the spirit of the Bologna Declaration, enhanced compatibility does not imply uniformity, and it was certainly not intended to lead to a reduction of standards to the best common level that can be found.

The activity of the TN TREE, made up by some 110 higher education Institutions and Associations, has been developed along four main lines:

- A. the tuning line (new curricula for the two-tier structure of higher education, tools for quality assessment and assurance, accreditation, extension of ECTS);
- B. the education and research line (status and promotion of doctoral studies, role of research activity in EE, value of research oriented project work);
- C. the attractiveness of EE line (for young people, especially women, for extra-EU students, by special initiatives such as joint/double degrees);
- D. the sustainability line (sustain EE institutions by, e.g. developing continuing education, and/or open and distant learning opportunities, but also study ways to make valuable tools, identified during the TN, self-sustainable)

The results of TREE will be reported in the forthcoming publication "*RE-ENGINEERING ENGINEERING EDUCATION IN EUROPE*" (*Volume and CD Rom*), as well as through the already operational web site www.unifi.it/tree. The publication, which will transversally cover all sectors of Engineering Education in Europe, will be available by the end of November 2007.

This volume, accompanied by a CD Rom, will presents the results of three years of works in the frame of the Thematic Network TREE which was activated and financed in the frame of the SOCRATES Programme in the period 2004-2007. Further information can be obtained contacting tree@unifi.it

In order to take advantage of the results of TREE, a new project called "Dissemination of TREE Thematic Network Results" (TREE-diss for short) with the aim of disseminating the outcomes of TREE, has been approved by the DG Education and Culture at the European Commission among the Accompanying Measure of the Life Long Learning Programme for the year 2007-2008.

It is expected that also the above mentioned publication "*RE-ENGINEERING ENGINEERING EDUCATION IN EUROPE*" will be spread throughout Europe during this dissemination phase of TREE.

It is foreseen that such dissemination will be a powerful tool to touch issues that contribute, among others, to enhance the European dimension of Engineering Education, to improve strategies for a better cooperation between higher education and enterprises and to focus the attention on the "knowledge triangle" of education, research and innovation.

The very heart of the dissemination will be constituted by four regional conferences, open to the large public of European Higher Education Professionals, students and stakeholders. During each one of these events a general part will be devoted to the presentation of TREE as a whole and specialised parts will be targeted to the work of the relevant activities. This will be the mean to spread TREE results all around Europe, also in places geographically less represented inside the Network's partnership, which have been less involved in the initiatives towards the real establishment of the European Higher Education Area as far as Engineering is concerned, promoting at the same time the intercultural dialogue in preparation of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

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