

Establishment of the Regional Platform for Benchmarking in Higher Education Initial Proposal

Petrovac, Montenegro, May 25, 2012

We, representatives of HEAs and HEIs from the Region (at the moment we take the notion of “Region” in the generic sense to be defined more closely in due course) met in Petrovac, Montenegro on 25 May 2012, on the occasion of International Conference on Higher Education Reform: Towards Regional Roadmap in Structural Reform, organised under the scheme of the STREW Tempus Project and Novi Sad Initiative.

In order to foster collaborative solutions and strong partnerships in higher education in the Region **we representatives of HEAs and HEIs** from the Region present at the Petrovac Conference **agree** to include in the agenda of the next meeting in Dubrovnik the issues related to the establishment of **Regional Platform for Benchmarking in Higher Education** aiming to

- **advance** the Region's reputation as a generator of world class knowledge and high quality of graduates in support of economic, social and cultural well being,
- **foster and encourage** strategic level debate and a **Regional 'collective voice'** for higher education that resonates regionally, nationally and internationally;
- **add value** to higher education in the Region by facilitating collaborative action and sharing good practice,
- **benchmark solutions** in higher education structural reform
- **initiate a regional network** for exploitation of the opportunities and strategic issues facing the higher education sector

In particular, the **Regional Platform for Benchmarking in Higher Education** will focus on

- advances in professionalisation of internal university management and administration
- introduction of new collaborative means in enhancing internal quality beyond currently established views
- developing public-private partnerships for excellence
- collective convergence of the Region's Higher Education Institutions with the EHEA via new institutional arrangements

We also agree to

- continue to explore further steps concerning the establishment of the **Regional Platform for Benchmarking in Higher Education** and its structure, as an input for the next meeting in Dubrovnik
- establish a Follow-up Group responsible for preparation of the next meetings in Dubrovnik in September 2012,
- bring this initiative to the attention of Regional Cooperation Council, European University Association and International Association of Universities in order to facilitate the next steps

This agreement towards the establishment of the **Regional Platform for Benchmarking in Higher Education** can be considered as a part of a wider Regional agreement to be issued under the scheme of STREW Project and Novi Sad Initiative: **Joint Regional Roadmap on the Higher Education Structural Reform**, building on our rich and diverse regional academic heritage and clear democratic will of regioan governments to work together in partnership, promoting the exchange of good practice.