Centralised Support to the Network of Higher Education Reform Experts

Centralised Support to Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE)

SPHERE Annual Conference

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY REFORM FOR IMPACT

4-5 December, 2023

Barcelona

Hosted by the University of Barcelona and OBREAL

An initiative implemented by the SPHERE Team:

OBREAL Global

eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

The SPHERE Initiative

SPHERE aims to:

- consolidate the coordination and training of the HERE network so that they are able to achieve their goals, which includes:
  - Contribute to the implementation of reforms in higher education in line with the EC policies and national objectives in HERE countries
  - Provide updated information and specific training regarding EU higher education policies and reforms, corresponding to the needs of the HERE;
  - Organise cooperation and networking between the National HERE Teams and between them and EU Experts;
  - Disseminate the results of on-going EU projects and identify fields of interest to be addressed in upcoming calls for proposals in line with EU and National Educational Policies.

The SPHERE Team

SPHERE - Centralised Support to Higher Education Reform Experts

Consortium of OBREAL Global (coordinator) and the European University Association:

- Team largely retained from SPHERE 2015-2021
- **Team Lead**: Michael Gaebel (EUA)
- **Academic Experts**: Elizabeth Colucci, Nicolas Patrici, Howard Davies
- **Lead Project Manager**: Nicole Font (OBREAL Global)
- **Project managers** (Georgraphic and Thematic): Lika Glonti (OBREAL Global) and Gohar Hovhannisyan (EUA)

- EU expert pool: Retained and expanding

The SPHERE Team

OBREAL Global is an association of higher education institutions, university associations and research centres with an inter-regional mandate and membership scope, committed to strengthening South-South- North cooperation within and between regions.

https://obsglob.org/

*Twitter @OBREAL_*

Represents more than 850 universities (including institutional members in twelve of the SPHERE Partner Countries) and national rectors' conferences in 49 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation.

https://eua.eu/

Twitter: @euatweets

SPHERE 2 | The overall policy framework

Covid 19 aftermath and impacts

- Digital transformation, online learning, online project management
- 40% of SPHERE activities (including TAM) online

EU policy focus on EU Green Deal, digital transformation and democracy and values, including access and inclusion

Continued impact of the Bologna Process (new and old priorities) on the HERE countries

Emergence of the European Education Area and related initiatives

- European University Alliances and the European approach to micro-credentials
- Mobility
- Sustainable growth and jobs: skills, entrepreneurship, employability

Geopolitical context

- Affects eligibility and operations of HERE Teams
- Propels discussion of new/renewed priorities: Migrants and refugees in higher education, HE in crisis situations, collaborative online integrated learning, values….

SPHERE activities | Overview (3 years)

- 6 Thematic Seminars (2 virtual)
- 6 Study Visits (two virtual)
- 3 international large-scale conferences
- 3 Online annual HERE gatherings
- 5-6 Technical Assistance Missions for each of the 25 Partner Countries and follow-up activity for each (40% virtual/hybrid)
- Mapping of national work plans
- Development and maintenance of a HERE Website and virtual community (under construction)
- Production of 3 publications
- Dissemination and communication

SPHERE event descriptions and objectives

Seminars will be organised as international events tackling a HE reform theme, providing theoretical background and showcasing diverse approaches and examples

The study visit will be a more detailed, hands-on activity. It would offer an in-depth look at a specific institution in its context, and how it manages a theme or topic (such as inclusion in international mobility, student participation in governance, university research management, industry collaboration

Conference would be both a “recap” event, showcasing lessons learned from the year, TAM results and synergies with related E+ projects, as well as a forecasting event for the following year, and offer networking and peer learning opportunities.

Structure of SPHERE activities

EVENTS 2023

1 Virtual Seminar and Launch Event: LEARNING & TEACHING in a POST-COVID Context: The Status Quo |3-4 May 2023

- 307 people registered

Online annual gathering of the HERE Team | 19-20 September 2023 | Webex

- Aprox. 160 participants
- Recorded video and presentations will be available on the Website (Closed space)

1 Physical Study Visit: Learning and teaching: innovation, digitalisation, and international collaboration | 15-16 July 2023 hosted by the UCLouvain

- 32 participants (14 NEO and 18 HERE)
- Presentations will be available on the website (Closed space)

1 Physical Seminar: Towards the 2024 Tirana Ministerial Conference: Implications and points of interest for higher education systems in Partner Countries neighbouring the EU | 7-8 November 2023 hosted by the University of Sarajevo

- 31 participants (11 NEO and 20 HERE)
- Presentations will be available on the website (Closed space)

1 Physical Annual Conference: Higher education policy reform for Impact | 4-5 December in Barcelona

- 61 nominees
- Resources and presentations to be available on the website
- Video recording

+ NEO Survey to replace 2023 Annual Work Plan | March 2023

+ NEO Virtual Meeting | 30 March 2023 on EC Teams channel

+ NEO Networking Meeting | 13-14 June 2023

SPHERE
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Interrelation of SPHERE2 Annual Programme with National Work Plans and EU/EHEA developments

This Annual HERE Conference

- Provide a space for reflection and assessment related to the re-launch of the SPHERE contract in 2023, notably in relation to the policy topics identified and the types of events and activities organised.
- Provide a specific focus on the topic of greening in higher education, presenting and discussing the preliminary results of a study that SPHERE has been requested to produce by the European Commission.
- Offer an information and practice sharing space for current reform priorities linked to the HERE Team annual work plans, as well as a space for promoting relevant EU projects connected to these reforms.
- Forecast the 2024 SPHERE work plan and overarching theme and assess the interests and needs of the HERE.

Thank you!

Any questions or doubt, please contact:

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