The Centre for Cross Border Studies

Cross-Border Higher Education Co-operation in Ireland and Europe

20-21 May 2004 Slieve Russell Hotel, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan

The conference will also hear about the progress of Universities Ireland, the new body set up in summer 2003 to improve co-operation between the nine universities on the island of Ireland, and about the cross-border experience of the Institutes of Technology in the Republic of Ireland.

The Öresund University consortium, which was founded in 1998, aims to become a major Scandinavian and European science region, and to increase the quality and efficiency of all participating institutions by opening up their courses, libraries and other facilities to all students, teachers and researchers. It is largely based on the use of ICT as a bridge to create research and learning centres across the Öresund region, thus improving interaction between researchers, developing distance learning and disseminating information to trade and industry.

The Confederation of Upper Rhine Universities (EUCOR), founded in 1989, is one of the first trans-border university confederations in modern Europe. It provides a single student ID card for the participating institutions, with students from partner institutions having the right to take courses and use university facilities as students at host universities. Among its success stories have been joint courses in biotechnology and pharmaceutical medicine, and joint research projects in earth sciences, neurological science, archeology and climate studies.

In the spirit of European co-operation – and under the auspices of the Irish Presidency of the European Union – one of the main aims of this conference is to assist institutions of higher education on the island of Ireland to learn from the ‘good practice’ of colleagues in other parts of the EU who are more experienced in cross-border co-operation, joint teaching and learning, and university-industry links. Further information is available in the conference briefing paper.

Contacts

Patricia McAllister, Conference Organiser, Centre for Cross Border Studies, 39 Abbey Street, Armagh BT61 7EB, Northern Ireland
Tel: 0044 (0)28-37-512990
Fax: 0044 (0)28-37-511721
(048 from the Republic of Ireland)
Email: p.mcallister@qub.ac.uk
Website: www.crossborder.ie

Andy Pollak, Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies, Centre for Cross Border Studies, 39 Abbey Street, Armagh BT61 7EB, Northern Ireland
Tel: 0044 (0)28-37-511550
Fax: 0044 (0)28-37-511721
Email: a.pollak@qub.ac.uk

Slieve Russell Hotel, Golf and Country Club
Ballyconnell, Co Cavan
Tel: 00353 (0)49-9526444
Fax: 00353 (0)49-9526046
Email: slieve-russell@quinn-hotels.com

This conference has been organised by the Centre for Cross Border Studies on behalf of a committee drawn from the Department of Education and Science (Dublin), the Department for Employment and Learning (Belfast), Universities Ireland, the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology, the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges and the National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland Student Movement. The North/South trade and development body, InterTradeIreland, is also associated with this conference.

Fourth North/South Higher Education Conference

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Mr Noel Dorr, former Secretary, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs

Ms Síle de Valera TD is Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science. She became a member of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and was seconded to set up and head the new North/South Executive in 1997. He joined the Industrial Development Board as Executive Director responsible for inward investment. He was appointed Head of the Northern Ireland Science Park Foundation. His main research interests are in cancer, DNA repair and research policy, and in 1996 he led the University of Ulster biomedical sciences team which won the highest possible five star rating in the 1996 UK Research Assessment Exercise. He has held visiting professorships at the University of California, the University of Malya and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

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Mr Noel Dorr is the former Secretary of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. He entered the Department as a Third Secretary in 1966 and served in Brussels and Washington, and then as Assistant Secretary and Deputy Director of the Civil Service in the Department of Foreign Affairs. In 1996 he became the Irish Foreign Minister’s personal representative on the EU intergovernmental conference which negotiated the Amsterdam Treaty.

Dr Beat Münch is Assistant to the Rector of the University of Basel. He has been the representative of the University of Basel on the EUCOR Secretariat since the European Confederation of Upper Rhine Universities was founded in 1989. As a postgraduate he specialised in the analysis of the language of mass media and taught linguistics at the Romanisches Seminar of the University of Basel. In 1989 he was appointed head of the University’s Department of Public Relations.

Mr Bengt Streijffert has been Dean of Örebro University since 2000 and CEO of Örebro Science Region since 2001. He has been a leading figure in European University Co-operation in the Upper Rhine Valley.

Mr Paul Hannigan has been Director of Letterkenney Institute of Technology since 1998. He began work as a lecturer in Economics and Human Resource Management in Dundalk Regional Technical College in 1997. In 1992 he was appointed head of the Department of Business Studies in Dundalk, RTC. Mr Hannigan is a member of the Higher Education Authority and of the board of the Central Applications Office in the Republic of Ireland. He is the current Chairman of the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology.

Mr Kenneth Bloomfield is the former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. He was appointed as the NI Civil Service in 1952, and served as private secretary to three successive Stormont finance ministers. He was Secretary to the 1974 power-sharing Executive, and subsequently became Permanent Secretary of the Departments of the Environment and Economic Development. In 1984 he was appointed Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Second Permanent Under Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office. After retiring from the civil service in 1991, Sir Kenneth served in several prominent public positions, notably as BBC National Governor for Northern Ireland and Victims Commissioner, leading to his report ‘We will remember them’ in 1998. He was first chairman of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council.

Mr Liam Neill is Chief Executive of the North/South trade and business development body, InterTradeIreland. He started his early career in the Northern Ireland Department of Health and Social Services before joining the Department of Economic Development in 1984. In 1990 he was seconded to establish and head up MCO, the public sector marketing company. In 1997 he joined the Industrial Development Board as Executive Director responsible for inward investment. He was seconded to set up and head the new North/South Trade and Business Development body (later to be called InterTradeIreland) under the 1998 Belfast Agreement, and was confirmed as CEO of InterTradeIreland in 2000.

Cross-Border Higher Education Co-operation in Ireland and Europe

Cross-Border Co-operation in Ireland and Europe

This conference will examine two significant European initiatives which have linked universities and higher education institutions across national borders in order to work together on joint teaching, research, university-industry links and regional development, and on improving cross-border student mobility. These are the EUCOR University consortium involving 14 higher education institutions in eastern Denmark and southern Sweden, and the Öresund University Confederation, bringing together seven universities in the Upper Rhine region of northern Switzerland, eastern France and south-western Germany.

Biographies of Speakers and Conference Chairpersons

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