



EU-Russia Digital Roundtable

New Models of Educational Processes Organisation, Novel Educational Practices and Internationalisation in the Post-COVID Reality

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW OF THE EVENT

The Roundtable took place on 24 November 2020 on the joint initiative of the EU Ambassador to Russia Markus Ederer and the Governor of Tomsk Region Sergey Zhvachkin.

The Objective was to share experience obtained by higher educational institutions as well as student and business communities in the EU and Russia during the period from March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, to November 2020. Participants of the Roundtable were expected to exchange best practices and to articulate policy recommendations to higher educational institutions, governmental and public bodies.

The event attracted over 600 participants from Russia and the EU.

The Roundtable was co-chaired by Laurent Bochereau, EU Delegation Counsellor for Science and Technology, and Lyudmila Ogorodova, Tomsk Region Deputy Governor for Science and Education. The EU and German Ambassadors to Russia Markus Ederer and Geza Andreas von Geyr, as well as the Head of the RF Ministry for Science and Higher Education Department Natalia Trukhanovskaya, gave welcoming speeches at the opening ceremony.

Keynote speakers, moderators and discussants at the Roundtable included representatives of seven Russian universities and seven universities from EU countries (Finland, France, Germany and the Netherlands) as well as representatives of the European Commission, the RF Ministry of Science and Higher Education, National Erasmus+ Office, DAAD, Nuffic Neso, Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association, Association of European Businesses, European University Association, St. Petersburg Foundation for Innovation and Youth Initiative Support, Centre for Strategic Research Foundation, and representatives of student and business communities.

The Round table discussion was organised around three thematic tracks reflecting the most significant challenges to the educational process during the pandemic:

1. New challenges for the educational process, including:

- The teaching and academic profession in the digital age
- Student inequality issues and development support
- Online education and graduate qualification: the business view and expectations

2. Academic mobility, including:

- Incoming and outgoing international academic student mobility
- “Virtual Mobility” as an alternative and supplementary form of international student mobility
- Student preparedness to digital formats of mobility

3. Safe campus, including:

- Trends and challenges for the modern campus: finance, strategy, governance and use of space
- Best practices: the re-organisation of campuses operations and engagement of students
- Concepts of the new future: infrastructure and design, student support and mental health

OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the Roundtable discussion it was decided to publish best educational practices developed by EU and Russian universities during the pandemic on the *Global Universities Keep Learning* website, pending availability of the English language version:

<https://keep-learning.globaluni.ru/keep-learning/practices>.

A number of key messages and recommendations to several stakeholders in the EU and Russia was also formulated by the Roundtable participants.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

- In comparison with other sectors in society, higher education has adjusted well to the pandemic. In some ways, COVID-19 has created a heightened sense of urgency regarding issues such as openness, transparency, accessibility and the use of science-based knowledge.



- Students are rapidly becoming key actors in the educational process: digitalisation makes competition for students truly global and strengthens their demand for personalised educational tracks. Student/professor interaction is not diminishing, but is assuming new forms.

- In the future, there will be a demand for even stronger multidisciplinary skills. The basic mission of education has not changed. Connections between higher education and the business environment are crucial.

- Despite the pandemic, sustainable development goals remain important for

higher education (e.g. the European Green Deal, Sustainable Development Goals).

- Several useful documents were referred to by the keynote speakers: [Analytical report “HIGHER EDUCATION: PANDEMIC LESSONS. Prompt and strategic measures to develop the system”](#) (in Russian), [Communication on the European Education Area](#) (in English), and EU’s [Digital Education Action Plan \(2021-2027\) – Communication](#) (in English).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES:

- ✓ The COVID-19 pandemic has created the necessity to put students more in the center of the educational process. Challenges faced by students under these given circumstances are to become the subject of special research.
- ✓ The pandemic has shown that not enough progress has been made so far with the digitalisation of education. In the future, it will be important to develop a pedagogy where students work together using digital tools and environments. This approach also supports mental health issues.
- ✓ Universities should be active in using AI, virtual reality and other modern tools to engage learners.
- ✓ Excessive screen time should be avoided in order to promote both teachers' and students' well-being. Instead of lecturing online, universities need to develop new forms of learning. Micro modules of learning (video clips, engaging tasks, self-tests) could be among such examples.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS:

- ✓ The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated student inequality. Students with inadequate life management skills and self-regulation face big challenges. Regional equality and equal opportunities for all students are important for societies (including equal access, internet infrastructure and future perspectives). Student resilience and the well-being of young people are to be among the core elements of educational policies.
- ✓ The philosophy of the educational process is evolving due to changes in the student's role in the digitalised era. National/subnational educational policies need to reflect this tendency through the introduction of corresponding regulations, new systems of incentives and performance indicators, as well as the allocation of funding. There is also a need to support comparative international research on the transformation of higher education in pandemic and post-pandemic period.

ACADEMIC MOBILITY

- Physical mobility will continue to exist, but the share of digital components and hybrid formats will grow.
- Blended and online formats of academic mobility are to be regarded as a new instrument for its further evolution.
- New challenges for multilateral and bilateral partnerships (new mobility



drivers, principles of reciprocity) will emerge and they are indeed already taking shape.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES:

Interested universities from Russia and the EU are to form a working group to develop a Virtual Mobility Concept, including:

- ✓ analysing present legal regulations and norms in Russia and the EU to determine the status of students taking part in virtual mobility programmes;
- ✓ making an inventory of virtual mobility models/ patterns and developing proposals for contextualising different models;
- ✓ examining best practices and developing recommendations in terms of the possible enhancement of virtual international mobility programmes by enriching the academic experience and adding elements of “virtual socio-cultural immersion” in non-academic environments including ethical standards;
- ✓ considering options for financial support under current mechanisms for virtual and blended forms of international student mobility between Russia and the EU, in particular, for mobility programmes lasting up to three months and network educational projects;
- ✓ developing models of internationalisation at home in relation to content, student activities and pedagogical behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS:

- ✓ New models of virtual/blended international mobility should be encompassed in the relevant publicly funded programmes (e.g. the EU’s Erasmus programme, bilateral exchange programmes).
- ✓ Reciprocity should be ensured as regards allowing students, who are taking part in international mobility programmes, to enter and leave their country of study.
- ✓ 5G infrastructures should be rolled out on campus to enable all students to participate in virtual collaboration formats and be supported at national/subnational and university levels.

SAFE CAMPUS

- Campuses are not only physical buildings but also places forming communities. Social interaction between students and informal face-to-face interaction cannot be transferred into digital formats.



fosters functional and social connections with the outside world.

- Most students feel safe when they are on campus, but they have to limit their communication with family and friends. Together with social limitations and overall pressure in pandemic times, this has a negative effect on health.

- The spatial design of campuses should contribute to optimising their performance in terms of education; this requires safe social interaction in public spaces, disease prevention and health promotion, the creation of an environment that enhances professional and social synergies, and

RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES:

- ✓ Long-term campus management strategies should be evaluated and adapted with a strong emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness.
- ✓ Students should be actively involved in the process of developing Covid-19 measures on campuses.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS:

- ✓ An international ‘campus preservation programme’ should be developed. Among other things, this programme is to embrace the introduction of a system of psychological safety and emotional comfort on campus, and the preservation of the culture of scientific research and laboratory practice.
- ✓ National/subnational educational policies are to develop measures preparing healthy campuses for future (and probably more aggressive) pandemics, also in terms of mental health.
- ✓ Strategic decisions have to be made on how to reconfigure campuses, adapt to new challenges and build a resilient, versatile, and functional campus infrastructure.
- ✓ Sufficient and sustainable public investment in university infrastructure is needed to support digital and green campus development. Greater institutional autonomy, e.g. the capacity for a more flexible allocation of internal funding or to own/buy/sell property is key to successful campus transformation.

ANNEX: PROGRAMME OF THE EVENT

(click on the speakers' names to view their presentations)

Digital Round Table “NEW MODELS OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS ORGANISATION, NOVEL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND INTERNATIONALISATION IN THE POST-COVID REALITY”

Tuesday, 24 November 2020, 11:00 – 14:00 (Moscow time)



PROGRAMME

Co-Moderators: **Lyudmila OGORODOVA**, Vice-Governor for science-educational complex of Tomsk Region
Laurent BOCHEREAU, Head of S&T Section, EU Delegation to the Russian Federation

11:00 – 11:20	Welcome and introduction by Valery FALKOV , Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation Markus EDERER , European Union Ambassador to the Russian Federation Sergey ZHVACHKIN , Governor of Tomsk Region Géza Andreas von GEYR , German Ambassador to Russia
11:20 – 12:15	SESSION 1: NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Teaching and the academic profession in the digital age* Supporting student development in the new environment* Inequality issues* University funding
	Moderated by Daria KOZLOVA , First Vice-Rector, ITMO University, and Kirsti LONKA , Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Helsinki, Finland
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:	Stefaan HERMANS , Director for Policy Strategy and Evaluation, European Commission – DG Education and Culture Eduard GALAZHINSKIY , Rector, Tomsk State University
EXPERTS:	Isak FROUMIN , Head of Institute of Education, HSE University Alexander FEDOROV , Rector, Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University Alexander RUDIY , President of the Proobraz Fund Hanna SNELLMAN , Vice Rector, University of Helsinki, Finland Philippe MAURIN , Head of International Affairs, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France Jouni AHONEN , Vice Rector, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland Michael AKIM , Board Member of the Association of European Businesses (AEB)
12:15 – 13:10	SESSION 2: ACADEMIC MOBILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Joint educational activities with foreign partner universities during the pandemic and beyond: aspects of interaction, plans and expectations* Incoming and outgoing student mobility: benefits for students and possible difficulties for universities in view of its significant decrease or absence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implementation of the Erasmus+ programme during the pandemic and beyond <p>Moderated by Olga OLEJNIKOVA, Director, National Erasmus+ office in Russia, and Victor KOKSHAROV, Rector, Ural Federal University</p>
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:	<p>Ivan PROSTAKOV, Vice Rector for International Relations, HSE University Klaudia KNABEL, Head of Scholarship Programmes Northern Hemisphere, DAAD Bonn, Germany</p>
EXPERTS:	<p>Taisya POGODAEVA, Acting Vice-Rector, University of Tyumen José RAVENSTEIN, Senior Policy Officer, Nuffic NESO Netherlands Tessa FLATTEN, Vice-Rector, TU Dortmund University, Germany</p>
13:10 – 14:00	<p>SESSION 3: SAFE CAMPUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Trends in modern campuses: finance, university strategy, management challenges, etc. * Best practices: campuses re-organisation * Concepts of the new future: design, mental health, etc. <p>Moderated by Natalia TRUNOVA, Vice President, Center for Strategic Research Foundation, Head of Spatial Development, and Cor WAGENAAR, Professor, Head of the Expertise Center Architecture, Urbanism and Health, University of Groningen, Netherlands</p>
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:	<p>Nikita ANISIMOV, Rector, Far Eastern Federal University Thomas ESTERMANN, Director for Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development, European University Association</p>
EXPERTS:	<p>Sergey SALKUTSAN, Director General of St. Petersburg Foundation for Supporting Innovations and Youth Initiatives Irina CHELOKHSAEVA, student of the “Digital Economy” Master’s degree programme, University of Tyumen Elise TARVAINEN, COO, Isku Active Learning, Finland Wolfgang MASTNAK, Professor, University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, Germany Alexandra SOKOLOVA, Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA) Representative for Russia</p>