

# ECCE Concept Paper



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## Introduction:

The intent of this concept paper is to advocate for small, operational international career service consortia. In order to serve that purpose we document here the establishment of a career service consortium between five higher education institutions in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK within the strategic partnership framework of the ERASMUS+ Key Action 2, outline our main learnings and make suggestions how other institutions can apply those learnings to their specific contexts.

## Context for Career Service Consortia need:

From a European perspective we can see several developments that move HEIs into a position that suggests further internationalization and cooperation between local career services to cope with rising needs and demands:

- Bologna-process: Push for Career Services in Europe
- Facilitating international student work mobility becomes more and more challenge for HEIs (e.g. since 2007 ca. 437000 SMPs: more than 77.700 alone last year)
- Start of „new“ industry: ca. 1000 % growth of English taught study programmes since 2002 in Europe, integration of international students into labour markets becomes a more pressing topic on the agenda
- Mobility puts pressure on traditional service and information structures
- Depending on where in Europe – very different conditions when it comes to strategic value of career services in HEIs

Main challenges: finances, staff resources, networks, language, training, scalability of services:

- 8000:1 (Students per Career Service Officer for example in Germany makes large scale individual service unlikely to impossible)
- Few really reliable company networks to facilitate streamlined international placement opportunities (focus usually national or local, hardly international)
- No real professionalization standards for career services from a European perspective
- Depending on country it is not a given that everyone (or sometimes anyone) in a career is able to communicate professionally in English

### Case study: European Centre for Career Development & Entrepreneurship (ECCE)

**Starting Point:** EBC Hochschule (initiator and coordinator of ECCE) is a private multi-campus Business School in Germany, which has integrated mandatory internships abroad in all management study programmes (ca. 400 to 500 internships abroad per summer to facilitate). Unclear division of responsibilities between international office and career service left room for improvement for delivery of service.



## Aims from EBCs perspective:

EBC Hochschule wanted to create an Outbound-Mobility oriented service that allowed them to advise their students inhouse competently for their core mobility countries and offer them current information, larger networks and training.

Additionally they aimed to create synergies between career guidance (often admin) and entrepreneurship (often academic). To implement and test such a service, EBC decided form a career service consortium instead of trying to cover all needs through local resources. Therefore they initiated the ECCE-project.

### Project description:

Within the ERASMUS+ scheme the consortium-members wanted to develop a network of European Career Services to share information and resources on local labor markets. They also wanted to train local Career Service staff to provide home students with optimal support when seeking employment or launching businesses within Europe. To achieve this they set up a series of workshops, summer schools and network meetings where knowledge was accumulated and distributed on a continual basis. All measures were and are still implemented under the common brand "European Centre for Career Development & Entrepreneurship" (ECCE).

### Overall objectives:

- Internationalize career services & widen their scope of international and academic cooperation
- Improve career services through specific training
- Improve student employability
- Enhance mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff
- Enable graduates to access different European labor markets
- Enable graduates to build businesses in different European countries
- Share local resources in order to provide a broader net of knowledge and resources to all involved students and institutions

### Envisaged Results:

1. Every student has the opportunity to access information on labour markets, established application practices, business etiquette and job postings and can expect from his career service that they will be able to provide assistance always on an up to date basis.
2. Every career service has at least one staff member who can provide this knowledge and is able to students, colleagues and superiors in matters of the European labour market whilst keeping in regular contact with European colleagues.
3. The ECCE is established as a cooperation framework for inter-institutional staff and student development.

### Partners:

- Regent's University London
- PSB Paris School of Business
- Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
- Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano
- EBC Hochschule

### Criteria for partner selection:

- Main countries receiving interns
- Already good partners
- Similar priorities
- Specific expertise

### Outputs & Actions:

(Please check [www.ecce.network](http://www.ecce.network) for detailed descriptions)

- European Career Guide
- Online Platform
- Staff trainings
- Summer Schools on Entrepreneurship from European perspective
- Development of European Career Adviser Curriculum

### Funding:

- KA2-strategic partnerships ERASMUS+
- University funding
- Some KA1 (for external workshop participants)
- n the future: KA1, Spin-offs, universities



### **Major Learnings for transfer:**

The main challenge for a consortium is not so much the creation of technical resources and tools to share but to foster a team spirit across universities and countries and to keep this spirit alive over time and personnel turnover. The advantage of small consortia compared to larger associations is that the colleagues know each other faster and better. ECCE works now as a sort of second-level support. A Spanish student goes still to the Spanish career advisor. The career advisor has been trained by his international colleague but if there are questions that can't be answered about e.g. Germany, the Spanish advisor can turn any time to the German colleague. In order to really operationalize this, we recommend:

1. Invest a lot of time in choosing partners
2. Invest especially in the beginning time in trust and team building measures
3. Create co-dependencies
4. Implement clear and regular communication between project members
5. Engage your team in creating common resources in order to foster team identity and ownership
6. Create opportunities for the team to come together in person regularly
7. Creation of common resources more time intensive than production cost. Many platform features could be substituted through free online tools.
8. Use a train-the-trainer methodology for at least some staff training modules
9. Staff trainings can be financed through KA1

