



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

Specialize and set the standards: College of Europe as a 'niche' example

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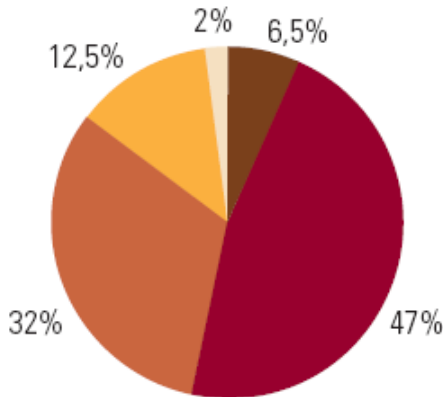
Overview

1. education and training for empowerment and employability at all levels
2. the College of Europe's position in the European academic landscape
3. quality through specialisation
4. quality via 'europeanisation'
5. setting the standards: the College mindset
6. setting the standards: innovation and change
7. the College' performance
8. the alumni's ('anciens') performance
9. are there no drawbacks?
10. lessons for this conference

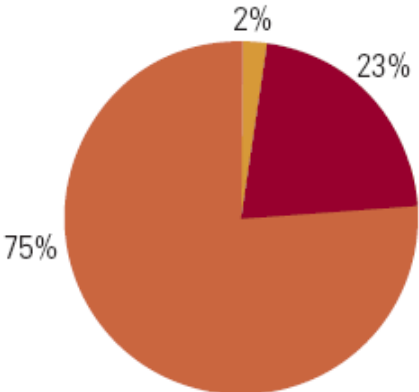
Education and training key for Europe

- good that Spanish presidency is focussed on the fundamentals of Europe's growth and jobs
- at the macro level, well-developed skills at ALL levels and a capacity to absorb as well as generate sophisticated knowledge and technology, and contextualize it in one's own environment, is THE foundation for a healthy economic future of the Union
- at micro level, E & T (again at every level of skill) is especially about employability and empowerment of individuals
- it is at this microlevel where the College of Europe's contribution is found
- hopefully, with positive externalities for European integration via the quality of the work of over 1100 anciens in EU bodies

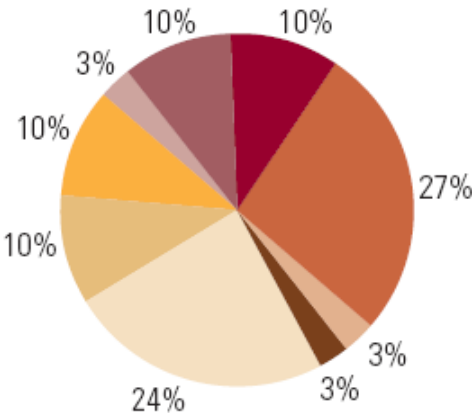
Statistics



Knowledge of languages *
Connaissance des langues



Previous university degree(s)*
Diplôme(s) universitaire(s) antérieur(s)



Alumni by activity sector
Anciens par secteur d'activité

The position of the College of Europe

- i. in the European academic landscape, the College of Europe (=CoE) has long assumed a 'stand-alone' position
- ii. founded in 1949, and not linked to any university, fully European from the start (when E & T were still strictly and solely national)
- iii. it has developed into a 'post-university' (super) specialisation of one year in European integration
- iv. currently with four departments in Bruges (ECO, POL, LAW, DIPL/IR)
- v. and interdisciplinary EU studies in Natolin (Warsaw)

The position of the College of Europe (2)

- vi. student body [of 400-plus students] with full European coverage and many 'Neighbourhood' countries [next year, all of the latter, now that sholarships become available] (55 nationalities)
- vii. very international body of professors (33 countries)
- viii. specialised in teaching, with 'flying professors' (140+) and only tiny resident academic staff
- ix. besides profound/specialised teaching in two languages (E/F), under pressures (time/hours/quality) typical for top schools, student live and (inter-)act internationally in a tight 'community' for over 10 months; anciens always find this last point extremely useful

Quality through specialisation

- recognised quality ('excellence'?) requires a long-term strategy, and must be 'earned'
- CoE search for quality is driven by 'specialisation'
- without (super) specialisation, the College would never have survived a 'stand-alone' status for 6 decades
- CoE is totally dedicated to European integration, its history, legal development & techniques, economics and political economy, politics and institutions, its external relations and diplomacy → in these, we lead in teaching
- we refrain from covering other areas ('stick to core business')
- BUT we consciously stimulate courses and (many) activities outside the EU focus in order to understand societal trends, openness to the world, euro-scepticism, cultural diversity (present inside the College too!), etc..

Quality through 'europeanisation'

- right from the start in 1950 (37 students), the CoE embraced 'europeanisation'
- of its mission, its teaching staff and its students as well as its financing
- this was before any European institution had been established, except the just born Council of Europe
- the CoE student body is a fully-fledged micro-Europe with all the mutual learning and adaptation that this brings
- it also instills ambition into the students
- 'europeanisation' of the professors and academic assistants amounts to a permanent quality guarantee, because flying professors have only one-year contracts and we are free to substitute; find the better and most suitable professors; also assistants are temporary and carefully selected
- however, europeanisation and flexibility amount to a guarantee; the upshot of having reputable professors is actually 'reasonable stability', not large and frequent changes in the body of teachers

SETTING THE STANDARDS: the College mindset

- the roots of the CoE mindset can be traced to its initial quasi-monopoly in advanced teaching in European integration
- the first decades, research and teaching on European integration worked hand-in-glove
- my favourite example is 1969 Nobel laureate Jan Tinbergen who was the first economist publishing a fully-fledged book on European economic integration, which he wrote (in the early 1950s) while teaching at the College
- when competition in European integration teaching emerged everywhere in universities (helped by Jean Monnet chairs later), the CoE mindset was to set the standards, to move up its ambition, deepen its specialisation (via depts), widen its range of specialised course offerings (over 165 courses all on EU-related aspects), greatly tighten the study year, enhance the student study-loads
- as well as enhance its conference and seminar programmes, and more systematic guest-speakers calendar

SETTING THE STANDARDS: innovation and change

CoE has remained dynamic, with innovation and change

- modernisation: modern teaching methods, extensive use of student (PP) presentations, occasional role-plays, change of the library (electronic), students in CoE decision bodies, etc..
- europeanisation: after the fall of communism, CoE moved to central Europe: Natolin opened in 1994
- finer specialisation:
 - new department in Bruges (DIPL/IR)
 - ELEA (law and econ.s for EU) now 6 years old
 - new 'business & EU' specialisation
- (slightly) more resident staff
 - with far heavier programme and pressures, more resident staff required
- re-introducing explicit link with research
 - all depts. now have WP series
 - conference books series
 - Global Competition Law Centre

THE COLLEGE' PERFORMANCE

- how do you 'benchmark' a stand-alone institution like the CoE, acting as a leader in its domain?
- informal/anecdotal evidence like CoE reputation with EU leaders and top COM officials; successful competition, without protection by a (well-known) university?
- due to BOLOGNA and the increased salience of formal recognition [which the CoE never needed!] the College has now been accredited, in great detail
- the verdict is clear: *'the quality of the study programmes is of a high standard and this is in no small measure due to the high quality of the staff teaching in the study programmes, with its specific form of recruitment of numerous very well qualified part-time 'flying professors'*
- even if the CoE neither fits the Flemish/Dutch university model nor the peculiarity of national university rules/decrees! [but the legal status of the CoE in Flanders being (partly) subsidised, and in Poland, where MR is required for diploma recognition, needed formal accreditation in 2009]

THE COLLEGE' PERFORMANCE (2)

	EIS	POL	ECO	IRD	LAW
Level and orientation of the objectives of the programme	G	G	G	G	G
Relationship between aims and objectives and contents of the programme	G	G	G	G	G
Requirements with regard to the professional and academic orientation of the programme	G	G	G	G	G
Coherence of the programme	E	E	E	E	E
Coordination of structure and contents	G	G	G	G	G
Quality of staff	G	G	G	G	G
Material facilities	E	E	E	E	E
Student support and guidance	G	G	G	G	G
Involvement of staff, students, alumni and the professional field	G	G	G	G	G
Level that has been achieved	E	E	E	E	E

E = excellent, G = good; source: VLIR CoE accreditation, 2009

THE ALUMNI'S (ANCIENS) PERFORMANCE

- successful in specialised labour markets, including EU-related circuits in Brussels and national capitals, public affairs (or EU) functions in multinationals and international organisations, as well as consultancy and leading law firms
- determinants of high performance:
 - a) best (none PhD) training on EU/integration
 - b) 'esprit-du-Collège' (intensity of intercultural cooperation/interaction in a small community)
 - c) languages; proven ability to perform under pressure; comfortable with competition and fierce debates

ARE THERE NO DRAWBACKS?

- in a SWOT analysis, one can identify weaknesses
- CoE 'stand-alone' focussed on (EU) teaching comes with a price: stand-alone WITH RESEARCH and STRONG RESIDENT CORE PROFESSORS would at least triple the budget and would thus require more ambitious ownership [now, we are 'dirt-cheap']
- here, the EU has a deal: its subsidises the EUI, EIPA and the CoE only if they stick to their core business
- It leaves the CoE without (much) research, without (many) permanent professors, and without a PhD superstructure
- With BOLOGNA now 'levelling the playing field', the CoE will have to adjust once again: NOT because we have difficulty with 'advanced masters', but the relative attractiveness of the CoE after a 4-year- study is reducing

LESSONS FOR THIS CONFERENCE?

- a mindset of ambition, resilience and competition is rewarding, even when you are 'stand-alone', and have to practice a 'low-cost model'
- europeanisation, combined with the right (quality) incentives, is a recommendable route to 'excellence'
- (deep) specialisation pays; avoid to dilute your 'core business' and do (merely) what you are good at, while remaining open to the wider intellectual environment
- many universities nowadays have 'foreign' students (Erasmus/Mundi/foreign PhDs, etc..) but intercultural interaction tends to be weak indeed. It is still worth it, no doubt. The CoE demonstrates that enhanced cultural (inter)action has much more profound/lasting effects in a small academic ('College') community