

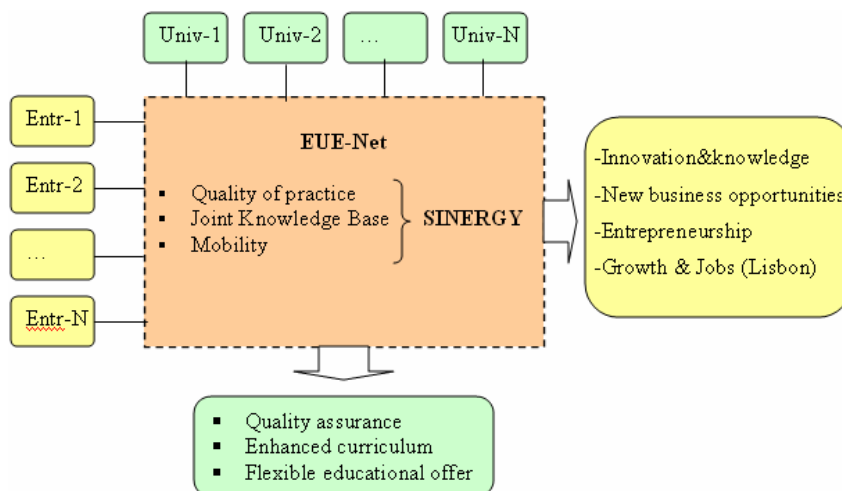
## Enhancing the transfer of know-how: European strategy for closer cooperation between the academia and small enterprises

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It is a reality nowadays that the Universities prefer the cooperation with large industries because of the simple and low cost approach. However, this context clearly discriminates the micro-enterprises and SMEs. While craft and SME's represent 98% of enterprises in Europe the Universities owe to pay a higher attention to this sector.

As an alternative to the Asian and North American models of "Knowledge & Technology Valley", which will have in Europe its counterpart in the European Research Institute, the European University-Enterprise Network (EUE-Net) proposes an approach based on a networking principle, to address the needs of small business sector.

The target is to create a University-Enterprise (U-E) cooperation framework characterized by structured institutional arrangements and the emergence of new patterns of academia-business interaction. A significant feature targeted at this level of cooperation is that, while it attenuates the boundaries between universities and



**Fig.1.** The proposed EUE-Net cooperation model

enterprises, it should also blur the boundaries between teaching, research and entrepreneurial activities, creating an interdependent organizational environment. This level of cooperation is more than simply university and enterprise cooperation, it should represent a shift toward collaboration within shared knowledge systems, a possible model of which is presented in figure 1.

For the complex topic of University-Enterprise cooperation, EUE-Net has adopted a 3-dimensional strategy, the axes of which are oriented towards the critical issues

of the Lisbon strategy: Jobs-Growth-training.

- For the first issue – Jobs – the target is the achievement of a network of Career Development Centre's (CDO's) in Europe with a unified employment database. While currently there are several hundreds of operational CDO's in Europe, they are the main mediation instrument for the graduates and world of work. Networking these organizations and achieving an assembled database at European level has the potential to provide a veritable employment barometer in Europe showing "in real time" the offer and demand in terms of graduate profiles and enterprise available positions, information of crucial importance for the economy growth as well as for the Universities to adapt their educational offer according to the needs of enterprises.
- For the second issue – growth – the aim is promotion of entrepreneurial mentality within University sector through an increased participation of entrepreneurs in the academic life, to enhance the entrepreneurial mentality within academics and graduates but also for the entrepreneurs to take advantage of the University cooperation.
- For the third issue – training - an important aspect that needs urgently to be addressed at a European level is the organization of **practical placement of students** in an institutionalized manner. This must be result in improvement of the Quality Systems of both Enterprises and Universities such as to properly regulate the traditional cooperation in the field of practical placement of students. A better understanding of the role of practical placement in line with the Lisbon strategy, as well as a framework for quality represents urgent needs in Europe.

In line with its second strategic axis, EUE-Net has recently developed the first experiments of mobility of entrepreneurs in University. The experiment involved two Italian entrepreneurs looking to expand their business abroad, who undertook short mobility stays in Romania at the University Transilvania of Brasov. They attended some courses of interest together with the students, delivered some lectures with the academics about entrepreneurship and finally with some interested students approaching graduation, the entrepreneurs sketched the first lines of their possible business expansion in Romania. The friendly welcome within the University and the careful design of their schedule demonstrated that modern pedagogical concepts like "learning by doing" and "learning by teaching" could be successfully applied in designing rich teaching & learning experiences for entrepreneurs, students and academics at the same time, in an excellent U-E cooperation scheme.

### References

- [1]. Talaba D. *University-Industry cooperation in the Knowledge based society*. Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International EUI-Net Conference on: "Teaching and Research Synergy", 4-6 May 2006, Tallinn, pp.7-13.