



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BOARD

Brussels, 06 FEB. 2009  
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## Opinion

**Title**                      **Impact Assessment on: Communication on University–  
Business Cooperation**

**(draft version of 8 January 2009)**

**Lead DG**                      **EAC**

### **1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion**

#### **(A) Context**

Education and training is a crucial factor in achieving the overall objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. In 2006 the Communication “Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation” highlighted the key role universities play in Europe’s future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. The Council in its Resolution on "Modernising Universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy" agreed to nine key success areas and invited the Commission to support the Member States, including through encouraging partnerships between universities and industry/private sector. The implementation of the modernisation agenda for higher education has been defined as one of the priority themes for 2009 – 2010 in the updated Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training. The crucial role of education, innovation and research for Europe was also highlighted in the economic recovery package which was endorsed by the European Council in December 2008. This Communication draws policy conclusions from the dialogue with stakeholders and outlines issues to be addressed in the next phase.

#### **(B) Positive aspects**

The IA is clear and written in non-technical language. The case for best practice diffusion is well argued.

#### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

*The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments will be transmitted directly to the author DG.*

**General recommendation: The report needs further work on a number of key issues. First, it should establish clearly that the planned initiative is part of the University Modernisation Agenda and should maintain this perspective coherently throughout the different steps of analysis. Secondly, the report should develop more**

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**fully the content of policy Options 2 and 4 by specifying the actions and Community programs that they involve. The report should also clarify whether the options are of alternative or complementary nature.**

**In its written exchange with the Board, DG EAC accepted many of these recommendations.**

**(1) Establish clearly that the planned initiative is part of the University Modernisation Agenda.** The report should explain more clearly the overall policy context, so that the problem definition makes clear that the planned initiative is an integral part of and contributes to the existing University Modernisation Agenda (as explained in DG EAC's written exchange with the Board). The report should maintain this perspective coherently throughout the different steps of analysis. In this context and to ensure overall consistency, the report should clarify the conceptual difference between Option 2 'Specific action *within* the framework of existing measures' and Option 3 '*Focused* policy action on EU level'. As both options foresee *focused* action *within* the framework of existing measures, the only difference currently seems to be the intention to publish a policy document under Option 3.

**(2) Develop more fully the content and nature of policy Options 2 and 4.** With respect to Option 2 the report should indicate which "specific actions" (e.g. structured partnerships, specific projects) would be conducted, what would be the "relevant priorities" (e.g. sharing best practice, modernisation of university governance structures), which would be the "existing Community programmes" (e.g. New Skills for New Jobs, Life long Learning) involved, and how these measures would interact with each other. As regards Option 4, the report should describe in more detail the "specific actions" that Member States would be invited to undertake. The report should also discuss whether it would be reasonable to complement some of the actions under Options 2 or 3, which are relatively easy to implement (voluntary actions of Member States supported by the coordination at the EU level) with certain of the more ambitious actions under Option 4 (committed and targeted actions at the Member State level). If so, such a 'combined option' should be included as a distinct option and assessed against the baseline scenario.

**(D) Procedure and presentation**

The report should explain why a public consultation was not considered necessary, and provide a summary of the internal and external consultation in the main part of the report. The report should explain all abbreviations and should use the references to the main policy concepts consistently. The report should clarify the aim of the planned survey in 2010.

**2) IAB scrutiny process**

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External expertise used	No
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