

**ICT as facilitator and enabler for the cooperation Universities – Business  
Sub-topic to:**

**Working Topic 3. Bi-regional Collaboration between Institutions of Higher Education and their relations to society**

by

Dr. Margaretha Mazura, Secretary General, EMF, the Forum of e-Excellence

***Introduction:***

With the use of the Internet and mobile devices, ICT – Information and Communication Technologies – transformed from a mere technology to a commodity that acts as facilitator and enabler at all levels.

In the context of the cooperation between Universities/Academia with Businesses/Productive sector on both sides of the Atlantic, there can be identified three main lines of action that are enabled by ICT:

***1. Ubiquitous access to information***

The Internet created a bottom-up revolution of free content that is ubiquitously available. The Internet as encyclopedia, knowledge creator, knowledge transmitter, educator and trainer is no more fiction. This supports academia and business in equal terms. Be it for searching research results or patent search, what in former years took weeks can now be done in hours. This power of information is currently not fully tapped on due to some restriction of research results for non-research or non-academic purpose. Opening up academic and research information can create an information source for innovation as in particular SMEs are looking for research results that can be carried to the market.

*Topics for papers can be (but are not limited to):*

- *Examples of opening research databases for use of the productive sector*
- *Ways to promote research results for market take-up*
- *Educative content for businesses etc.*

***2. Knowledge exchange***

Mobile devices and the Internet made communication independent of the location of the user. Hence, information and knowledge exchange are easier than ever before. Add to it the (relatively new) paradigm of sharing information i.e. providing your knowledge for free to other users, a perfect mix of academia and business would lead to a knowledge base without limits.

*Topics for papers can be (but are not limited to):*

- *Methodologies for an effective and efficient knowledge exchange between Academia and Business*
- *Examples of successful knowledge exchange*
- *"Content is king" – but for whom? Etc.*

***3. Inclusion***

Internet is the most democratizing "invention" worldwide. Those that have access to the Web, have access to everything. But do all have access to it? The societal element of ICT is on the one hand to enable all people to gain access to the Internet, on the other hand, to make them digitally literate to know how to use it. This is valid for social exclusion (remote areas with no access to higher education), technological exclusion (no money to buy a PC) or gender exclusion (women have no access to become computer-literate; or they work in environments that are not provided for with technology).

*Topics for papers can be (but are not limited to):*

- *The role of academia and business to provide access to the Web for all*
- *Examples of successful (social, gender, technological) inclusion*
- *Free curricula to become computer literate – do they exist? Etc.*