

On behalf of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER), the Centre for Education Policy Studies of the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the Centre for Education Policy (Serbia) hereby invite you to the conference:

## **Higher Education and Social Dynamics**

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual CHER conference welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions to the theme and encourages researchers from across Europe and beyond to take part in the conference at the unique occasion of celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers.

The 25<sup>th</sup> CHER conference will take place in Belgrade, Serbia, on 10, 11 and 12 September 2012 and is jointly organized by the Centre for Education Policy Studies of the University of Ljubljana and the Centre for Education Policy from Belgrade.

The conference is followed by the Ljubljana Symposium on September 13 at the University of Ljubljana.

Four tracks are foreseen under the conference theme:

- I. The role(s) of higher education institutions in contemporary society
- II. The effects of the wider societal dynamics on higher education
- III. Higher education at the borders of Europe
- IV. Core themes in higher education research

Further information about the conference and symposium programme, including practical information, can be found on the website: [www.cher2012.rs](http://www.cher2012.rs).

### **Conference Tracks**

The conference theme *Higher Education and Social Dynamics* is uniting the three tracks, along which the conference will be organised.

*Track I. The role(s) of higher education institutions in contemporary society*

Throughout history, institutions of higher learning have played a number of roles, including transmitting, producing and conserving knowledge, selecting and educating elites, facilitating social cohesion, transmitting high culture, feeding the labour market with skilled workforce and so forth. Today it seems that there is a growing disparity between what society expects from higher education, on the one hand, and what higher education provides society with, on the other. In parallel, it has been argued that the traditional pact between higher education and society is undergoing significant change, while there is striking diversity in response among institutions of higher education with respect to this change.

The questions arising under this theme are ample. How do higher education institutions perceive their role(s) in contemporary society? In what way and to what extent does higher education affect wider social dynamics? In what way do contemporary higher education institutions select and educate future elites and, more widely, the student body as a whole? Has the role of universities as conservers of knowledge and culture changed and if yes, in what way? To what extent do today's higher education institutions contribute to equality in our societies and/or to social reproduction? The European policy level increasingly sets targets to improve the social dimension of higher education. What does the emergence of this actor level tell us about the transformation of higher education in Europe?

*Track II. The effects of the wider societal dynamics on higher education*

It is generally acknowledged that in the last several decades virtually all aspects of the way in which our societies function have been affected by the changes in technology, communication and information. The advancement in these domains of human activity has been unprecedented. The social, economic and political changes arising in the meantime have shifted the dynamics of and relationship between human institutions. Consequently, the nature, purpose and internal forces at work within higher education institutions have shifted too.

The discussion under this track would seek to answer some of the following questions. In what way do higher education system-level policies reflect expectations from higher education? In what way do higher education institutions respond to the external demands? How do they react to change essentially outside their walls, but directly or indirectly affecting them and/or provoking change in their practices? What effects on teaching and learning processes that arise from the influence of the outside world can we identify? Has the role of teachers changed and how? Are today's students different and how does this affect the learning process?

### *Track III. Higher Education at the Borders of Europe*

Most of the research on higher education being carried out nowadays addresses cases and phenomena that takes place in Western countries, i.e. the USA, Western Europe or countries like Australia, which among other things makes for a rather distorted “European” profile in the sphere of higher education research. The aim of this track is to address the conference theme with research conducted in Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe and by doing so attempt to rebalance the European profile of higher education research and at the same time contribute to current debates.

This track seeks to answer questions such as the following: What characterises higher education systems in these regions? How do these characteristics relate to those of the Western Europe and the rest of the world? In what way are international and European trends reflected in these systems and how do their institutions respond to these trends?

### *Track IV. Core themes in higher education research*

This track is meant to accommodate high-quality proposals pursuing themes of continuing relevance in higher education research that are not directly connected with the conference theme.

## **Submission of Proposals**

Participants are invited to submit paper or panel proposals of relevance for the conference theme. All proposals will be peer reviewed and a selection will be made until mid-May 2012. The acceptance of proposals will be announced no later than 15 May 2012.

*Paper presentation* refers to a presentation delivered by one to two authors or collaborators on a particular research topic. Each paper presentation accepted will be given 30 minutes for presentation and discussion.

*Panel presentation* refers to a series of 3-4 presentations delivered by a group of authors or collaborators on a particular research topic. Each panel presentation accepted will be given 90 minutes for presentation and discussion.

Submission for both paper and panel presentations is open from 23.1 until 19.3.2012 (15:00 CET).

Form of proposal for papers and panels:

- The proposal should be between 600 and 800 words (excluding the information on authors and references).
- The proposal should contain (in the following order): (a) title of the paper, (b) list of authors (the initial of each author's name, followed by full surname), (c) authors' institutional affiliation, (d) full address of the institution of the first author, (e) authors' e-mail addresses (only the first listed author will be contacted), and (f) body of the proposal.
- The body of proposal should include the conceptual and theoretical background of the research presented, the methodology used and the conclusions. A list of references should be included at the end of the document.
- Proposals should list one or two tracks in which they might fit. This is to recognise that papers may address a combination of issues and it will give the conference organisation more opportunities to accept proposals.
- The author first listed should be the presenting author.
- All abbreviations should be spelled out when first used.
- The font used should be Arial 12 or Calibri 12.
- Proposals should be single spaced and sent as .doc, .docx or .pdf.

A maximum of two proposals will be accepted from one person as the first author and these have to be in different tracks.

If you opt for a panel presentation, please bear in mind that at least 3 panel members are expected to be involved.

All proposals should be submitted using the web form at [www.cher2012.rs/proposal-submission/](http://www.cher2012.rs/proposal-submission/).

### **Important Dates**

Proposals may be submitted from 23 January until 19 March 2012 (15:00 CET).

Acceptance of proposals will be announced no later than 15 May 2012.

The deadline of early registration will be 30 June 2012.

Registrations will not be accepted after 31 July 2012 (also applies for Ljubljana Symposium).

Full papers should be sent no later than on 31 August 2012.