**Higher education research and higher education policy – future look**

Chair and moderator: John Brennan, Open University Business School

Panellists:

Janja Komljenovič, University of Ljubljana

Martina Vukasović, University of Oslo (Centre for Education Policy, Beograd)

Paul Ashwin, Lancaster University

Pedro Teixeira, University of Porto

Terhi Nokkala, University of Jyväskylä

The panel will address the questions of the relationship between HE research and HE policy making and its future developments from the perspective of young researchers from different regions in Europe. The panelists are invited to offer personal views and share personal experiences from researching and working in the area of HE Studies.

Questions for panel discussion

1. We have just come from CHER2012; one of the two main academic conferences in the area of HE Studies in Europe. What are your impressions about the development of the field of HE Studies? What are the key topics? What is the main discourse? What research is considered important, relevant?
2. Let’s have a quick round of some of the classic topics in HE research. Please give your views on what is happening with this topic: is it still hot, is it fading out, is it changing into something else, which aspects of that topic are most highlighted?
   1. HE internationalisation
   2. HE system diversity vs. convergence
   3. Governance
   4. Financing
   5. HE reforms/policy making
   6. Students
   7. Academics
   8. Teaching and learning

1. HE Studies is a rather young research area. Sometimes it is being blamed for not being rigorous enough when compared to the more established research areas within political science, sociology, etc. Is it too dominated by policy and practice? What is your opinion on that?
2. Is there already a critical mass of researchers in HE studies that identify themselves as such? Or do we have political scientist, organizational theorists, sociologist, etc. which also do HE research?
3. What are your impressions about the funding available for HE research in Europe? On national level, as compared to other parts of the world?
4. What is the relationship between science and policy in HE research? How is the “politics of knowledge” reflected in the context of our research area? There are a variety of institutions and organisations that claim to be delivering knowledge. And then there are politically mediated interests within the politics of knowledge. Finally, there is a perceived shift in value systems characterized especially by emphasis on “robust knowledge” with external criteria of validity, and on “useful knowledge” (as decided by the user). Is such a new contract in the politics of knowledge present equally everywhere or are there differences between national contexts?

What is the role and the capacity of HE research institutes in this context? How does it work in different national contexts?