



# **Socrates-Erasmus Thematic Networks: Challenges and Issues at Stake**

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# Thematic Networks: Main Aspects

- (What do Thematic Networks do?)
- **Impact and outcomes**
- **Future** of Thematic Networks
- Other networks
- TN **Targets**



# Thematic Networks

- major innovation of Socrates-Erasmus programme
- deal with forward-looking, strategic reflection on the scientific, educational and institutional issues
- TN model has been successfully adopted in other strands in the same programme and in other programmes - research networks
- European integration integral and a very pronounced European dimension



# TN Outcomes

- many institutional synergies created
- mobilisation of universities' intermediate structures (faculties, departments)
- coordinating a TN is not an easy task ....
- a central infrastructure needed combined with decentralisation and the sharing of work, even if not all partners invest equally in the activities of the network
- some networks have problems ensuring transparency and overall coherence of the project and its results



## TN Tasks: Mapping and enhancing education

- Describing, analysing, and comparing existing teaching methods
- Defining and experimenting with new teaching methods
- Identifying existing teaching material and placing this at the disposal of the members of the network with the aid of databases
- Producing or updating translating and disseminating new teaching material
- Activities in the field of quality assurance



## TN Tasks: Facilitating European cooperation

- Assessing the **state of the art** in European cooperation, identifying needs and obstacles and ways to overcome them
- Setting up **tools** (the use of ECTS, new models of coordination, Europeanisation strategies)
- Promoting the production of **European modules**



## TN: New Tasks

- **"Europe of Knowledge" and the "Bologna Process"** put a new emphasis on the need to pool resources and to create centres of excellence at higher education level
- foster **internal European development** and stronger **links with other continents**
- has implications for the tasks TNs may take up in future



# TN: Four New Tasks (1)

- 1) define and update **generic and sectoral competences** using the method of the Pilot Project "**Tuning Educational Structures in Europe**"
  - TUNING phase one (2001/02) was built on the previous experience of a series of Thematic Networks. Now it is **up to the TNs to take the Tuning results further.**
  - One of the tasks of TUNING phase two will be to transfer its methodology to existing and future Thematic Networks.
  - phase three of the TUNING project is not envisaged



## TN: Four New Tasks (2)

- 2) Promote **synergies between teaching and research**  
- encouraging universities to integrate research results in their teaching and link Socrates TNs with the Networks funded by the Research DG
- 3) Reinforce the **link between education and society**, bring together public-sector, scientific and professional players, contribute to the European innovation capacity
- 4) Create **links with other continents** on activities within the scope of TNs "Complementary Activities" in the Commission proposals "Erasmus World", from 2004



## Some TN Targets

- being open, as far as possible, and working in such a way that existing and new members can become involved and benefit from working together
- being representative of the European academic world.
- operating in a climate of responsible management and decentralised organisation as far as possible (applies in particular to the large TNs)
- **an impact analysis of TNs will be undertaken**



# HERODOT Targets

- confirmed commitment to HERODOT – what do you want to be involved in?
- establish framework and desire for continued activity
- identify opportunities for collaboration
- seeking partnerships and collaboration
- links to others .... more networking .. challenge
- **bids for EU funding** – research network, Framework 6, other sources



# Research Networks (FV)

- *training networks* for promoting training-through-research especially of researchers at pre- and post-doctoral level
- *thematic networks* for bringing together different parties e.g. business, users, universities, research centres around a given Science & Technology objective - include co-ordination networks between Community funded projects
- For more information see <http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/management/particip/v-gfp2.htm#I>



## Research Networks (F6)

- *training networks* for promoting training-through-research especially of researchers at pre- and post-doctoral level
- *thematic networks* for bringing together e.g. manufacturers, users, universities, research centres around a given Science and Technology objective, will include co-ordination networks between Community funded projects
- for more information see <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/>