

“AQUA-TNET”

The aquaculture, fisheries and aquatic resources management thematic network in education and training

The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 called for the establishment by 2010 of a coherent, compatible and competitive European Higher Education Area, attractive for European students and for students and scholars from other continents. The European Education Ministers identified six action lines in Bologna and added three more in Prague in May 2001: the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles, the establishment of a system of credits, the promotion of mobility, the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance, the promotion of the European dimension in higher education, lifelong learning, higher education institutions and students, and promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

The Bologna process addressed not only national governments, responsible for the education systems in their countries, but also the higher education sector, the individual universities, their associations and networks. In the summer of 2000, a group of universities has taken up the Bologna challenge collectively and designed a pilot project called **"Tuning educational structures in Europe"**. The Tuning project addresses several of the Bologna action lines and notably the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the adoption of a system based on two cycles and the establishment of a system of credits.

AQUA-TNET is a multidisciplinary thematic network that unites the academic and vocational aspects of the Bologna reforms and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area in the field of aquaculture, fisheries and aquatic resources management.

The network is funded under the European Commission Socrates Erasmus programme, from 2005-2008, and currently consists of 109 partners, representing universities, training organisations, associations and research performers working in the above mentioned areas. It is

coordinated by Ghent University and serviced by AquaTT. One of AQUA-TNET's major aims is to become the Tuning reference for the aquaculture, fisheries and aquatic resources sector. To this end, there are six themed workpackages encapsulating the changes taking place in all three Bologna cycles:

- Masters and Masters of Science curriculum development
- PhD curriculum development and assessment
- Transparency in Teaching and Education
- Student mobility
- Innovation in Teaching (e-learning and ICT technologies and their role in joint degrees)
- Languages and Linguistic Diversity

Each workpackage receives input from three additional working groups, which represent horizontal issues and include industry, research and consumer needs.

Project acronym:

AQUA-TNET

Full title of Project:

AQUA-TNET – Thematic Network for Aquaculture, Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management

EU contract number:

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“SMALL DYNAMIC
WORKING GROUPS MEET
REGULARLY IN CORE
GROUP MEETINGS TO
DEVELOP SPECIFIC
PRODUCTS AND NETWORK
RESULTS”

Small dynamic working groups meet regularly in core group meetings to develop specific products and network results.



AQUA-TNET WORKPACKAGE MEETING,
GENT, JUNE 2006

The platform also includes the AQUA-TNET education portal, www.aquatnet.com, and the AQUA-TNET newsletter. These run alongside the established Training News – a monthly electronic newsletter that provides updates and announcements on training and education initiatives, workshops, courses and upcoming industry events – and PISCES TT Jobs, which is an online recruitment service for employers and potential employees in aquaculture and related sciences. Using a secure website, employers can advertise vacancies and prospective employees can post CVs and apply for jobs. Other deliverables include educational resources, reports on current reforms and latest developments, publications and online self-tuition language learning modules.

At their Convention in Salamanca in March 2001, the European universities have declared that “European higher education institutions recognise that their students need and demand qualifications which they can use effectively for the purpose of their studies and careers all over Europe. The institutions and their networks and organisations acknowledge their role and responsibility in this regard, and confirm their willingness to organise themselves accordingly within the framework of autonomy”. And furthermore “Higher education institutions endorse the move towards a compatible qualification framework based on the main articulation in undergraduate and postgraduate studies”.



THE AQUA-TNET WEB SITE.

AQUA-TNET deliverables pool different elements of the Bologna, Copenhagen and Lisbon processes and will benefit the entire sector, involving the production sector, consumers, educationists, researchers and NGOs.