



european community

NEWS

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EC AND U.S. BOOST COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Antonio Ruberti, EC Commissioner for Science, Research and Development and Education, and US Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley met today in Washington to discuss developments of mutual interest in the areas of higher education and vocational training. They agreed to launch a new initiative that will add a European dimension to cooperation and exchanges between universities in the United States and the European Community.

The initiative, which will be introduced on a preparatory basis by the start of the 1993/94 academic year, will provide support for up to 30 consortia or partnerships of EC and US higher education institutions to cooperate (at institutional and faculty level) in the design of collaborative teaching programs, course credit transfer measures, and visiting fellowships for teaching staff. It will then be reviewed by the EC Council of Education Ministers to decide if the EC can proceed jointly with the US in a more permanent way.

To be selected, each consortium must submit a joint proposal which promotes and enhances existing inter-institutional collaboration along these lines. Priority will be given to applications in the subject areas of EC-US relations, environmental studies, natural sciences, business studies combined with a second European language, and history. Successful applicants will be notified by early September.

After meeting with Secretary Riley, Commissioner Ruberti said, "The initiative we have taken today is a new departure in international academic cooperation. On our side, it will draw on the considerable experience already gained in the Community from a wide variety of programs for cooperation in education and training. This shows the the European Community is not only concerned with the removal of barriers to the free flow of goods, services and capital, but also encourages the cross-border movement of scholars and ideas. We hope this original and unique form of cooperation will prove to be a major milestone in transatlantic relations."

Secretary Riley commented, "We now live in a global economy. It is important that our students foster relationships with their European counterparts. Education provides an appropriate venue to nurture these relationships....I am delighted that we are stepping up efforts to provide more of our students and teachers with the challenging academic opportunity to study abroad."

The consortia can be new or developed from existing links between US and EC member state higher education institutions. They must include at least one US partner and at least two EC partners from different member states. Many of the 600 EC educational institutions the Commission is inviting to apply already have experience of cooperation in networks established by Community programs such as Erasmus (Community network for academic cooperation and exchanges), or Comett (program for university-industry cooperation for training for technology diffusion).

The initiative gives substance to the intentions laid down in the November 1990 Transatlantic Declaration which defined education, particularly academic exchanges, as one of the areas which EC-US cooperation might be strengthened.

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Office of Press and Public Affairs, EC Delegation

Washington. 2100 M Street NW 7th Floor Washington DC 20037 / Telephone (202) 862-9500 / Fax (202) 429-1766

New York. 3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza 305 E 47th Street New York NY 10017 / Telephone (212) 371-3804 / Fax (212) 688-1013

Commissioner Ruberti and Secretary Riley also agreed to exchanges of experience relating to the transition from education to the working world.

The Secretary and the Commissioner placed emphasis on cooperation in the field of vocational and continuing training. They reviewed the outcomes of the 1992 Joint Conference on "Schools and Industry: Partners for Quality Education" held in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. They agreed that a second joint conference should be held in the spring of 1994 in the United States which would focus on "Global Competition: Raising the Image of Vocational Technical Education." These conferences include government policy makers, educators and representatives of business, industry and the trade unions.

US INSTITUTIONS INTERESTED IN APPLYING SHOULD CONTACT THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AT:

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW, Rm 3100
ROB-3
Washington DC 20202-5175

tel. 202-205-0082

Press Contacts:

Ella Krucoff
(202) 862-9540

Maeve O'Beirne
(202) 862-9549