



***The First Annual Conference
13-14 February 2014
Amsterdam***

Newsletter 2, December, 2013

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CHAIN5 WAS FOUNDED !

The CHAIN5 Community was founded on the 9th of December, at exactly 14.28 hours, in Amsterdam. It was established by 12 experts on 'level 5 qualifications' from 7 European countries. The proposal made by Leido to have such an international community for this kind of programme, was adopted unanimously. It is absolutely necessary to have a common 'platform' to talk about ongoing developments concerning the role of level 5 in issues like lifelong learning, flexible learning pathways, permeability between VET and HE, mixing non-formal and formal learning, the use of validation of informal learning, and so on.

Stakeholders

The foundation of CHAIN5 was of course celebrated later that afternoon, having taken this step and knowing that a lot of stakeholders of level 5 qualifications will be involved in activities we will explore in the coming years. They may be stakeholders from the labour market, private and public institutions for HE, VET and non-formal learning, and from the students' side – and also, where relevant for activities by the CHAIN5-community, organizations coordinating a qualifications framework or responsible for quality assurance procedures (looking at all kinds of qualifications delivery at level 5 and the institutions offering them). Of course we welcome also experts in this field and drawn from more politically focused associations, depending of the subject for a working group, a seminar, a workshop and all other instruments which can use 'level 5' in the right way for the right agenda.

Mission Statement

During the meeting in Amsterdam we tried to formulate important ingredients for the mission statement of CHAIN5. They can be discussed in February. Here are some of them:

- *the exchange of good practices in education,*
- *the diversity of the implementation of such links internationally and mostly in Europe,*
- *the relation and relevance of Level 5 in the Bologna process,*
- *the relation and relevance of Level 5 to the labour market: having an independent, non-political meeting place for best practices concerning qualifications at level 5, having the specific position of them in different countries in mind, emphasising the things we have in common – to be discussed with our relevant stakeholders with an open mind in a trustful setting.*

Joining CHAIN5 ?

At the moment we have already more than 45 members, from 19 countries and/or associations all over Europe. By the way, 'membership' means that there is an interest in what CHAIN5 is aiming for, to learn more about the start-up of the community and/or to take part already in activities. It is for free, so at no cost other than the investment in time. Of course there are expenses for travelling, hotel and so on – and a balancing contribution to an activity like a seminar or conference (meetings for working groups can be organized for free, having them held in the venue of a partner institution (helping us in this was to keep the costs low as possible).

If you are interested in joining CHAIN5, as a member as described here – on an individual basis or representing an organization, association, institution, network... - you can download a form from www.chain5.net – and send it to info@leido.nl. Your e-mail will be confirmed and if you have added questions we will send you the answers in a few days.

You will receive the newsletters, invitations for activities and in case of taking part in one of the thematic working groups (after the seminar in Amsterdam) the agendas for meetings. Again, without obligation from you and/or your organization. We believe in a community like we have in mind for CHAIN5: bringing organizations, researchers, experts, networks and other stakeholders together to exchange ideas, experiences, good practices and recent information to support national and regional developments.

The First Conference in Amsterdam

We announced already in the first newsletter the first CHAIN5 annual conference, to be held in Amsterdam on the 13th and 14th of February. Leido is working hard on the programme, together with a small group of experts. Here we give an outline of the programme (and we will update it regularly) and relevant practical information (but in the next newsletters we will give more details).

Programme

The preliminary programme is as follows:

Thursday 13 February

- 12.00 – 13.00 Registration, coffee and snacks
- 13.00 – 13.45 Welcome and opening session
- 13.45 – 14.20 Presentation: CHAIN5 as a community: organization, ideas, challenges...
- 14.20 – 15.00 Presentation: Role of level 5 qualifications in national strategies on LLL – an overview of recent developments in Europe
- 15.00 – 15.30 Break
- 15.30 – 16.30 Reflections on both issues: Is CHAIN5 an answer to the challenges Europe is facing, using level 5 qualifications, from the point of view of stakeholders of the L5-community
 - the labour market and lifelong learners
 - VET (youngsters and adult learners)
 - HE (public financed and private – and SCHE as a formal degree in 2015)
 - NCPs (involved in NQFs and linking non-formal qualifications to levels)
- 16.30 – 17.15 Three country cases – short presentations by national experts
- 17.15 Closing of the first part of the conference
- 19.00 Optional dinner (more information about it in the next newsletter)

Friday 14 February

- 09.00 – 09.30 Registration, coffee
- 09.30 – 10.00 Presentation of the outline of a proposal in Erasmus – and the role of CHAIN5 and its members and partners – based on the mission statement
- 10.00 – 11.00 Workshops - round 1 - CHAIN5 : Aims and stakeholders (what and who) - networking
- 11.00 – 11.30 Break
- 11.30 – 12.30 Workshops - round 2 – CHAIN5: Aims and activities (what and how) – planning (see annex for possible issues to be discussed in both rounds - more later...)
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

- 13.30 – 14.00 Reporting of the workshops: Conclusions and recommendations to CHAIN5
- 14.00 – 14.25 The first 'General Assembly' of CHAIN5: formal decisions, coming activities, launching of the website
- 14.25 – 14.30 Closing of the conference

An extra programme for those who are willing to participate in CHAIN5 in a more practical way and able to contribute to the organization:

- 14.30 – 14.45 Break
- 14.45 – 15.30 Discussion on: who is doing what, and how
 - Board / Council / membership
 - Erasmus+ and proposal
 - Next seminar
 - Communication
- 15.30 – 16.00 Conclusions and agreements...

Practical information

- If you want to participate in the conference, please fill in the registration form to be found on www.chain5.net and send it before the 21th of January to info@leido.nl. Registration after that date is also possible but then the rule is 'full = full' (having the planning of this all in mind).
- The *participation fee* is 90 euro. This includes all catering during the seminar.
- The seminar will be held in *Amsterdam*. We have an option for two venues (not in a hotel, for your information, so we don't have a 'conference hotel'), depending of the number of participants, in the center of Amsterdam.
- Both venues can be *easily reached by tram or metro* from Amsterdam Central Station (or any other public transport), and by foot from a hotel in the center.
- Flying to *Amsterdam Schiphol* is the best option (4 trains per hour to Amsterdam), but you can also fly to Rotterdam Airport (then by bus to Rotterdam Central Station and from there to Amsterdam, but this will take at least 1 hour extra).
- We will give a list with *hotels* in the next newsletter you can book yourself. But our experience is that if we pre-book rooms, there are always cheaper arrangements using websites like booking.com or by contacting a hotel directly.
Examples of hotels close to the venue are: Ibis Amsterdam Center Opera and Eden Hotel, Amstel. But there are more – also small – hotels in that part of Amsterdam for a reasonable price during that week; and there are a lot of trams connecting hotels in other parts of the city with the center...
- Also in one of the memos we will send later to the participants we will give some maps including *the directions to the venue*.

Project under Erasmus+

In the recent weeks the programme for Erasmus+ has been launched. There are documents published for the key activities and about the formats to be used for the proposals. Level 5 (looking at the broad range of qualifications and providers) is a hot item, now and in the years ahead of us in this economic situation, with a need for more higher skilled people of all ages. CHAIN5 can be seen as a good base for an application under Erasmus+, having already members from more than 19 countries and (inter)national networks (SCHE, HVET, HE, private providers, and so on).

On Friday the outline for a possible proposal for a project on the role of level 5 in countries and at an international level will be presented – and discussed. Organizations and other stakeholders can join the working group in the afternoon to discuss the proposal and the way how to be a partner in the project. The deadline is 30 April. This will give us as CHAIN5 the possibility to write a good proposal, with support of very experience researchers in this kind of projects!

Conference website

The website for the conference is: www.chain5.net. During the seminar we will present the official website for our community: www.chain5.eu.

Annex

Issues that will be on the agenda in Amsterdam, looking at interesting themes and activities for CHAIN5 – based on the mission statement:

- Challenges for *Chain5* in bringing together associations, organisations, national networks, experts and other stakeholders involved in 'level 5 issues', in some creative way...
- Discussing and using the outcomes and conclusions of a study by Cedefop on the position and the use of qualifications at level 5 in Europe – planned to be published by the end of this year...
- Level 5 and (inter)national strategies on Lifelong Learning...
- SCHE as a formal degree within the European Higher Education Area...
- Permeability between VET and HE...
- Cooperation with the 4 VET-associations in Europe...
- Instruments and level 5 qualifications, needed for more flexible learning pathways...
- Level 5 qualifications and their strong relevance for the labour market...
- Sharing good practices at a national level...
- Organising an international seminar on level 5 for formal and non-formal qualifications.