

## COMMITTED TO THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Senior adviser Kari Seppälä, University of Turku  
Vice-President of **eucen**

LIFELONG LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
Belgrade 3.3.2017



### Lifelong learning and social dimension

#### What does **COMMIT** understand by ULLL?

*ULLL is the provision by Higher Education Institutions of learning opportunities, services and research for: the personal and professional development of a wide range of individuals - lifelong and lifewide; and the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region. It is at university level and research-based; it focuses primarily on the needs of the learners; and it is often developed and/or provided in collaboration with stakeholders and external actors.*

Definition from the BeFlex project (Agreement number 2006/0073-001-001, Socrates)

#### What does **COMMIT** understand by Social Dimension?

*The social dimension of ULLL can be located on two dimensions: the **individual** and the **collective**. The goals on the **individual** level are to provide a socially just access, retention and success process for students, lifelong learners and university staff. On the **collective** dimension the goal is to transfer relevant academic knowledge to society and enable groups of people inside and outside university to build an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable society.*



## COMMIT project

### Aims

- Enhance the social dimension of higher education
- Support promoting and monitoring attainment
- Embed the social dimension in the strategies and practice of universities
- Promote commitment to change in universities

### Core activities

- Adaptation of ALLUME tools for social dimension
- Training for and implementation of 12+2 developmental and peer learning visits
- Transversal analysis of data collected from the use of tools and during visits
- National and European learning events

### In a nutshell

- 01 October 2013 - 31 May 2016
- Contractor and Coordinator: **eucen**
- 12 full partner universities
- LLP ERASMUS/Multilateral projects

<http://commit.eucen.eu/>



## COMMIT tools

Strategy process tool

Benchmarking tool

Strategy content tool

Tool for monitoring attainment



## COMMIT policy reminders

**University lifelong learning as a part of society and university**

**Steering higher education institutions towards lifelong learning and social engagement**

**Essence and quality of lifelong learning supporting social dimension**



## University lifelong learning as a part of society and university

1. The necessity and joy of learning throughout life is a constant driving force for society and universities. LLL can make a major contribution to the social dimension of higher education institutions, especially when it is embedded into the entirety of university strategic processes.
2. While lifelong learning can serve as a mechanism of income generation for universities, its fundamental essence is to offer possibilities for adult learners and partner organisations.
3. Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) contributes to the social dimension of the university.
4. Effective and high-quality implementation of the lifelong learning agenda also requires renewal of university organisation culture and practices.



COMMIT ■

### **Steering higher education institutions towards lifelong learning and social engagement**

5. Lifelong learning needs political support at the European, national and regional level.
6. External inputs into the university's decision-making can enrich the value-base of universities.
7. Modification of internal structures as such will not necessarily mean a great potential for lifelong learning.
8. Support from university leadership is the most significant facilitator of lifelong learning and social dimension.



COMMIT ■

### **Essence and quality of lifelong learning supporting social dimension**

9. The expertise of various specialists and purposeful cooperation with stakeholders and networks are key success factors of lifelong learning and social dimension.
10. Higher education institutions have neither a monopoly on knowledge production nor on learning environments, but they would benefit from cooperation with other suppliers of learning possibilities.
11. Lifelong learning can only be legitimate inside confirmed quality assurance systems.
12. A fertile research agenda and a functional framework of data production, collection and utilization should be key priorities of lifelong learning and social dimension at the national and European level.



## **Quality assurance of university engagement, case University of Turku**

1. Documented definition of the mission and its functions
2. Overall picture of the activities
3. Strategic aims
4. Focus and implementation of development
5. Legitimate structure
6. Clear links to executive functions
7. Involvement of staff and students
8. Practical support functions
9. Workable networks to society

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

