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English-medium instruction in Europe

Brussels, 4 December 2014

Theme

A rare phenomenon at the turn of the century, English-medium instruction (EMI) has become a systemic feature in some European countries, particularly at the Master level. Even though the growth curve now shows signs of flattening, English-taught programmes have become immensely numerous and popular in the last 15 years. This ACA European Policy Seminar will present, amongst other things, the key findings of ACA's latest (2014) Europe-wide surveys of this form of tuition. There are some surprises in store.

But the seminar will present far more than the recent ACA study. In an opening presentation, Adrian Veale of the European Commission will tackle the difficult question which language - or languages - Europe's new global outreach strategy ("Europe in the world") should use to attract the world's young talents to Europe's universities and colleges.

One part of the seminar is devoted to linguistic quality issues, which we will attempt to tackle in a `hands-on` manner. Karen Lauridsen, of Aarhus University, is presenting the results of the Europe-wide project Intluni, which seeks to improve communication in the class-room - of students and teachers alike. Janina Cünnen, of the University of Freiburg in Germany, is going to present a new certificate for those teaching in English. Marjorie Castermans, of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, will showcase this university's efforts in training professors in an EMI setting.

The seminar will also address a danger often underrated: the lack of a minimum proficiency in the local language, which isolates international students once outside the classroom. This issue has consistently been identified as the biggest language challenge for foreign students in all ACA studies. We will present one or two examples of good practice which address this problem.

We will end this seminar with a provocative piece: a speech of by Ulrich Ammon, the highly reputed researcher in sociolinguistics and dialectology, who in later life turned his attention to the trend to publish and to teach in English. We expect him to make a strong case for a qualified form of multilingualism.

ACA European Policy Seminars are a trademark of ACA. These events bring together practitioners and policy makers: Participants are mainly from higher education institutions, but also from national governments, international organisations and NGOs. We expect 100 or more participants and very lively discussions.

44th in the series "European Policy Seminars" of the Academic Cooperation Association