

EMREX Newsletter, May 2020

Introduction

At our meeting in Warsaw this year we worked on the year plan and discussed presentations for conferences. 2020 started as a busy year with many interesting events, such as the GDN conference in New Delhi or EUNIS in Helsinki. Five weeks later the world changed completely. Almost everything that seemed so normal to us stopped instantly and was not allowed anymore.

These dark times remind us of what is truly important in life, such as family and good health. I hope that you and your loved ones are in good health. To quote and hold on to a Leonard Cohen's lyrics: *"there is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in"*. This will pass and life will get back to normal, I am sure of that.

All the best and keep safe,

Jan-Joost Norder
Chair



One of the regular on-line meetings of the EMREX Executive Committee (from the top left: Poland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands)

EMREX Executive Committee meeting in Warsaw on January 14-15th 2020

The annual physical meeting of the EMREX Executive Committee was held in Warsaw, Poland, 14-15th of January. There were many topics to discuss, among others, changes in the EMREX statutes, realization of the work plan for 2019 (most of the activities have been done or are well under way) and strategy for 2020 (in particular how to professionalize EMREX and to strengthen the EMREX brand), change requirements for ELMO, getting financial aid, which would help us to keep the administrative tasks running. The EMREX portal was refreshed, in particular documents like the *EMREX handbook* and the *Technical guide to EMREX* were renewed.

As a remainder, the Executive Committee of EMREX consists of the following members:

- **Jan Joost Norder** from DUO (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, Netherlands) – chairperson,
- **Geir Vangen** from UNIT (Norway) – vice chair,
- **Tor Fridell** from LADOK (Sweden) – secretary,

- **Janina Mincer-Daszkiewicz** from the University of Warsaw (Poland),
- **Jukka Kohtanen** from CSC (Finland).

The election for new Executive Committee will take place in the next Annual Assembly on 15th of June 2020.

Submission for EUNIS 2020 conference in Helsinki

Sharing of student data in the “European Universities” alliances with EMREX

The European Commission has launched an initiative called “European Universities” alliances with the goal to enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education and boost cooperation between institutions, their students and staff. There are currently 17 funded alliances with 114 participating institutions. The initiative is designed to explicitly strengthen mobility of students and staff. Therefore there is a need for a mechanism for sharing student data. **EMREX is here to help!** It is an easy-to-implement way to transfer student records between institutions. The transfer itself is very straightforward and the receiving party decides how the data should be made useful, be it just transcript of records or diplomas of double/joint degree programs.



European Universities EU logo and 4EU+ Alliance with the University of Warsaw

EMREX Annual Assembly June 15th 2020

The original plan was to host our Annual Assembly during the EUNIS conference in Helsinki, but due to the COVID-19 outbreak this is not possible anymore. At our meetings we had many discussions about the possibilities for the meeting — postpone it to September/October or carry online. Our first thought was to postpone until autumn, but it is still unsure how the world will look then. Furthermore it was difficult to find a suitable conference where you, our members, would also attend. Postponing to 2021 was not an option for us, because we don't want to lose contact with our members. After all you elected us and decided what we need to do for the EMREX network. That's why we decided to hold an online meeting.

The Annual Assembly will take place on the 15th of June 2020 at 10.00-12.00 CET, a week after the online EUNIS congress. The most important issue on the agenda is, next to yearly report and forecast for 2021, the (re)election of all the positions on the EMREX Executive Committee. Two years go by very fast. The Executive Committee would also like to increase the group with two members.

The following positions are up for election:

Position	Period
Chair	mid 2020 – mid 2022
Vice-chair	mid 2020 – mid 2022
Secretary	mid 2020 – mid 2022
2-4 board members	mid 2020 – mid 2022

The Executive Committee should have a strong presentation of technological, educational and business insight. Any suggestions from/for people who are interested and could give their time for a common and important cause are welcome!

If you are interested we would like to receive your brief letter of interest (why would like to join the board) before the 29th of May 2020. You can send your nomination to info@emrex.eu. If you have any questions regarding the election and/or positions you can contact Jan-Joost Norder at janjoost.norder@duo.nl.

Additional information can be found here: <https://emrex.eu/general-assembly/>.

EMREX Statutes

The EMREX statutes are under revision and the Executive Committee will propose the revised statutes in the next annual assembly. The proposed statutes will be delivered to the EMREX network beforehand and any comments and questions are welcomed. A need for changing the statutes was recognized as the network has been growing and the service has become established. Through the revised statutes e.g. joining the network will become easier and creating more value to the network is encouraged.

ELMO and EUROPASS

In April 2018, the EU countries adopted the Commission's proposal to revise the Europass framework. As part of this work, the Europass digital credentials infrastructure (EDCI) is being implemented, to support transparency of skills and qualifications.



Some of the functionality of EMREX will overlap with EDCI, and to ensure the connectivity between these two infrastructures, a liaison has been set up to explore this relation.

The data model for EDCI has already been aligned with the ELMO/EMREX standard. A task to compare the ELMO and EDCI formats has been initiated, and the result is available on GitHub

<https://github.com/european-commission-europass/Europass-Learning-Model/tree/release/0.9.0/Correspondence%20Tables/ELMO>

Concrete examples of diplomas defined by both ELMO and EDCI formats will be produced as part of this liaison.

PIM project in Germany (by Hans-Joachim Feil hans-joachim.feil@capgemini.com)

The project PIM (Platform for International Student Mobility), headed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, aims to provide a digital service that supports German and foreign students who wish to study abroad or in Germany. PIM will create an overarching framework and ensure that all existing

services (e.g. EMREX) can be readily integrated. The main user groups to be supported by PIM are students and university staff.

A centrally coordinating and controlling part of PIM is responsible for ensuring the provision of the following functionalities and services, as well as organizing the necessary (core) processes accordingly:

- Integration of access and self-service functionality for students (e.g. interface to the portal system / OZG functionalities, long-term account).
- Storage functionality for personal artifacts of students.
- Standardized structured provision of information, especially study and module information for student applications.
- (Further) development of services (e.g. module digitization and databases) and standards (e.g. authenticity features of digital educational certificates, information offered by universities).
- Control and support of user-centered data exchange, including the recognition processes (e.g. digital credentials, recognition histories).

The architectural decisions to have a central platform and decentralized university systems will be based on the once-only principle, as well as university autonomy and students' data sovereignty.

In order to be successful in the long term, the platform needs to be able to connect to solutions on all levels. The data exchange formats (e. g. EMREX) will be interoperable and adaptable, both in the context of the decentralized environment in Germany, as well as the European and international contexts.

These requirements were designed in the previous phase of the project until the end of 2019, where a comprehensive concept for the platform was created and first experiences with prototypes were made. For example, the student data exchange between a Norwegian and a German university was tested on the basis of EMREX.

In the recently started "transfer" phase, a minimum viable project (MVP) is being developed to ensure user centricity and optimize the platform before approaching a broader rollout. A number of selected partner universities are involved in the process, which is being led by the Technical University of Berlin and the Georg August University of Göttingen. Concrete use cases have been identified to be implemented in the MVP, which will also be functional for the eventual launch of the platform's productive operation. One of these use cases is the workflow concerning the recognition of study credits. Another example is a central database of study modules. An important condition is ensuring compatibility with the German Online Access Act (OZG), which requires public services to be digitized by 2022.

German NCP in production

We are happy to announce that in January University of Göttingen as the first German university went into production with EMREX, delivering data to the network through a NCP. University of Göttingen is part of the German PIM-project (Platform for International Student Mobility), and more universities from this project is already included in the EMREX test environment.



Greece – a new EMREX member

As a follow up from the December newsletter; GUnet from Greece has now become member of EMREX. GUnet is in a phase of testing EMREX with a NCP covering all Greece universities.



EMREX and GDPR

Just a heads-up for those building *National Contact Points* (NCP) or already having one in production.

The EMREX protocol itself is inherently GDPR compliant, as the results owner is in charge of the whole process and does active choices in every step when sharing data with third party. However, it is important that every NCP implementer makes sure that enough information of what data will be transferred, especially personal information, is presented to them upfront.



ELMO 1.5

ELMO version 1.5 was launched in January. This includes some extra attributes for the learner, to serve some of the needs of the new German participants.

More details can be found here: <https://github.com/emrex-eu/elmo-schemas/releases/tag/v1.5.0>

- Added support for additional fields on the learner (placeOfBirth, birthName, currentAddress, gender).
- Signature on the elmo element is now optional.

Technical documentation for EMREX is upgraded.

The left screenshot shows the 'Apply for an EMREX Membership' form. It includes fields for Organization Name, Logo, URL, Main Contact Name, Email, and optional contact details. It also has a section for 'Apply as a full Member or Associate Member?' with a radio button for 'Associate'. The right screenshot shows the 'Admin View' of the portal, featuring a search bar and a grid of member cards. Each card displays the organization's logo, name, approval status, full name, country, and URL.

Apply for an EMREX Membership in the EMREX portal

Upgrade of the EMREX portal

The portal has had a small upgrade in beginning of May 2020 with a digital option to apply as an associate or full member. As a new member you can easily fill in a form with details about your organization, contact person and logo. This way we hope to lower the threshold and make it easier for parties to join the network. The added benefit is that the network gets an accurate and up-to-date database.

Do you have questions about the website? Please send an e-mail to info@emrex.eu.

Get in touch

EMREX portal is available at emrex.eu. To contact us write to info@emrex.eu. To get support write to support@emrex.eu.