

An international collaboration on the development of a joint master's degree in cross-media journalism: the eMEDia project

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Abstract

This presentation aims at introducing an ongoing Tempus project, entitled eMEDia, as one good example of international collaboration on the development of a joint master's degree in cross-media journalism. eMEDia is an institutional cooperation project co-funded by a European Commission grant under the Tempus IV programme between December 2013 and November 2016. It is based on a strong European and Mediterranean partnership with its 5 Tunisian and 4 European partner institutions. The project mainly envisages contributing to the modernization of the higher education sector in Tunisia through a bottom-up and participatory approach for the design and piloting of a joint master course in cross-media journalism.

As it has been observed at a worldwide scale over the years, journalism has played a crucial role in promoting democracy and democratic development. Therefore, related educational programmes are considered essential instruments in ensuring qualified well-trained journalists. This has created an urgent demand for new generation of cross-media journalists having up-to-date qualifications related to using new media and new social networks. In this regard, Tunisia has become the eMEDia target country due to its central role in the transformation of Middle East and its large number of media institutions. Nevertheless, higher education in Tunisia,

despite on-going efforts for reform, still faces structural problems and it offers a low number of degrees addressing cross-media journalism. Within this context, eMEDia is addressing the modernisation of the higher education sector in Tunisia along with the designing and piloting of a joint master course in digital journalism, as well as providing the teachers with the required skills through a set of capacity building initiatives.

eMEDia is composed of three interwoven stages: (1) research, (2) teacher training and (3) curriculum development and implementation. During its research phase, the project aims at exchanging best practices in the field of higher education and cross-media journalism by means of a good practice review. In the second phase, which is based on teacher training, it targets to build capacities of teaching staff through a training framework which includes an online resource repository for training faculty, and online social space for discussion and study visits. The third phase involves the development of curricula in cross-media journalism based on a wide consultation with teachers, students, professionals and media experts. Finally it envisages to set-up and to offer a joint or multiple master program in cross-media journalism to 90 students (with and without a journalism background) in Tunisia, which includes an alignment study period. The master course requires 2 years of study, which correspond to 120 ECTS credits. The first year will be piloted during the lifetime of the project.

The joint master program in cross-media journalism seeks to develop digital and cross-media skills in a glocal perspective, focused on the local community and considering global interests. The learning objective is defined as developing and strengthening the capability to use video, audio, text and new communication platforms (social media, blogs, etc.) to produce journalistic content.