

**FREIZEITWISSENSCHAFT IN DEN EU-PROGRAMMEN
„ERASMUS“ BZW. „SOKRATES“**

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Europeanisation of leisure and tourism education at the University of Gent

1. Introduction

Universities are, by nature of their commitment to advancing knowledge, essentially international institutions, but they also have to answer the demands of their local society. Neither of these expectations is new. What is new is that each has been increasing so fast in strength at the same time. The scholar is now becoming less the citizen of one nation alone and more a citizen of the academic world; thus he or she is living more and more in two worlds: the international and the regional (Kerr, 1990).

In spite of the fact that currently a period of greater internationalisation of learning appears to be developing, with more world-wide exchange of scholars, students and ideas than ever, and also more and more with the support of supra-national agencies, nevertheless internationalisation has penetrated unevenly into different areas of study.

Every one can observe how some fields are now fully international and how others are still almost equally local. Kerr (1990) distinguishes the following crude categories:

1. Areas of world-wide uniformity in the content of knowledge, as in mathematics, science and engineering. In some areas, all leading scholars even seem to know each other;
2. Areas of intra-cultural similarity of knowledge, as in the study of history and of the classical literature of each civilisation. These cultural loops of knowledge include particularly the Western and the Oriental, with many subdivisions;
3. Areas of intra-national particularity, as in domestic law, public administration, education and social welfare – all marked by great diversity in national content. Diversity may also follow the methodology employed.

According to Kerr (1990) faculty members within these three categories (some are in two or even all three) differentially travel to differently located conferences; write for and read different sets of journals of international, or intra-cultural, or intra-national orientation; know colleagues around the world, or within their culture, or at the national level or even only at regional and local levels. This is quite evident in talking with them and in reviewing their records. In the first category, scholars every-

where all know the same things; in the second, they know many of the same things within their cultural area and little outside it; and, in the third, they know some of the same things within their own society and usually nothing outside it.

In the United States they sometimes speak of three types of faculty members: the 'cosmopolitans', the 'locals' and the 'home-guard'. The first ride the jets to national and international meetings; the second drive their cars to regional and local conferences and appointments; and the third stay on campus sitting on committees and some of these provide the good citizenship on which academic institutions so greatly depend. Once again, individual faculty members often fall into more than one of these categories. And the first group, at least, should, from an intellectual point of view, be further divided into the international cosmopolitans, the intra-cultural cosmopolitans, and the intra-national cosmopolitans (Kerr, 1990).

Why these differences, particularly among faculty members, field by field, in their distribution by categories of international involvement? Why have some fields been left behind?

Language is one reason. The mathematicians are most favoured, and the scientists next, they can say more with fewer words than the sociologists.

Content is a second one. Mathematics has a single content, law has several contents. Lack of interest is an additional barrier.

How universities may advance the internationalisation of learning in areas as tourism, culture and leisure. This is a must, given the inherent international nature of the subject.

For universities the European Commission's initiated programmes create an opportunity to develop an international orientation. In this article we will describe a number of initiatives, which were made possible through one of the E. C. programmes, namely the Erasmus programme.

First, we shall describe the development of a new European course programme for leisure, culture and tourism on a post-graduate level (the so-called European Homo Ludens Master's Degree). Then we will describe how we have organised, as far as the graduate level is concerned, the mobility of the students and the teachers to further the internationalisation of the classroom and the curriculum. Previous to these, I will give an overview of the Erasmus programme.

2. The ERASMUS Programme

ERASMUS is both the name of a famous medieval scholar and the acronym of the name of the programme: European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students.

The ERASMUS Programme was launched in 1987 following a decision of the European Council. The central element of the ERASMUS Programme is furthering student mobility within the EU. In 1987, the long-term aim fixed that eventually 10% of

all European students would spend a period of their study in another country of the EU. This objective of a substantial growth in intra-community student mobility is at the heart of the Erasmus programme. Assuming that there were about six million students studying for about four years on average, the annual number of exchange should represent 150.000 to reach that goal. In 1993/94 approximately 54.500 students were awarded an Erasmus grant (Teiehler, 1996). This figure is impressive, but falls short of the ambitious goal formulated in 1987.

The ERASMUS Programme provides grants to cover the additional costs for studying in another country of the E.U. for a period of between three months and one year. As a rule, students receive this financial support only if they are mobile in the framework of an „Inter-university Cooperation Programme (ICP)“ approved by the ERASMUS-bureau. Financial support is only awarded if the cooperating university departments agree to recognise their students' study achievement abroad upon return. The partner universities also have to accept that students do not pay tuition fees at the host university.

The Inter-university Cooperation Programmes (ICP's) supported by ERASMUS involve not only student exchange, but also exchanges of university teachers, joint development of new curricula and the mounting of short intensive programmes.

Staff mobility programmes provide an opportunity for teaching staff of one university to teach in a partner university in order to make a substantial contribution to the latter's regular teaching programme.

Universities seeking to work out jointly a new curriculum, in its implementation in all the partner institutions are also eligible for support. Support for the associated organisational and travel costs is available for jointly organised short intensive full-time teaching programmes bringing together students and teaching staff from several countries of the European Union, with preference being given to genuinely „multi-national“ projects in terms of participation, focusing on a specific theme not normally available at any one of the participating universities alone, which can contribute to the dissemination of knowledge in rapidly evolving or new areas of study (Absalom, 1990).

It should be noted that „university“ in this context means every institution of higher education that is officially recognised in the respective country.

Student and staff exchanges in the framework of the ERASMUS Programme began in autumn 1987. In 1994 it was decided to incorporate these activities into the SOCRATES Programme, which puts all support activities of the E.U. in the field of higher education (except research) under one administrative roof. SOCRATES supports a wider range of university cooperation activities.

Leisure and tourism are relatively small areas of Erasmus activity. ERASMUS statistics indicate that the number of tourism and leisure students participating in exchange programmes grew from 182 in 1989/90 to 463 in 1992/93. Estimates indicate that the number of students moving in 1993/94 will be in the region of 700. In spite of this impressive growth, tourism and leisure students still account for less than 1% of the total ERASMUS student mobility programme (Richards, 1995).

The total number of universities involved in tourism and leisure exchange programmes was, according to Richards, 43 in 1989/90, compared with 123 in 1993/94. Over the same period, there has also been a slight geographic shift in participation, away from the „Golden Triangle“ (U.K., France, Germany) and towards peripheral regions, in line with the general policy of the ERASMUS programme. The proportion of Golden Triangle universities fell from 40% in 1990 to 33% in 1994. This compares with about 46% of participation from these countries in the ERASMUS programme overall in 1993/94.

The number of student mobility programmes in leisure and tourism has grown from 3 in 1988 to 19 in 1994 (Richards, 1995).

3. The European Homo Ludens Master's Degree (1990-1993)

„Homo Ludens“ is the title of a masterly book written by the Dutch philosopher of culture Johan Huizinga (1872–1945). In this book he supported the view that man is as much a homo ludens (a playing man) as a homo faber (a working man).

We borrowed the title „Homo Ludens“ to name different European educational projects concerning leisure that we developed during the last 10 years. In this article we will give a description of two of these projects. The first, the **European Homo Ludens Master's Degree**, is a one-year postgraduate university education in leisure, culture and tourism jointly realised by 28 universities from 11 European countries. The second project concerns the **European Homo Ludens Module** at graduate level at the University Gent.

The motivation for the European Homo Ludens Master's Degree

Interviews with professors from 21 universities in 9 countries and with 24 representatives of important national and international organisations in the leisure, culture and tourism sector showed that there is a need for university graduates from various disciplines with a supplementary education in leisure, culture and tourism. In other words there seemed to be a need for a university postgraduate education in leisure, culture and tourism which is admissible for people who completed a full university education (4 to 5 years): e.g. geographers, sociologists, economists, planners, philologists, historians, psychologists, educationalists etc.

Moreover it was found that with the transnationalisation of industries in the field of leisure, culture and tourism and the growing importance of international governmental bodies courses with an international dimension will be more and more necessary in the future. This international dimension should take shape in the educational system in different ways. The international perspective should not be limited to the content of the courses but should also enhance the employability of the students in an international workfield. This can best be achieved by an educational system in which students and lecturers of different nationalities form a learning community to-

gether in which they experience a variety of cultural perspectives. Furthermore study abroad for part or the whole of the education is necessary to learn to live and work in an international cultural context.

It was also found in our comparative study of university curricula that tourism and leisure have evolved from very different starting points, as also Richards (1995) concluded. Tourism courses have, largely developed from a hotel and catering background, and have come to be located mainly in management or business studies environments. Leisure courses, on the other hand, have developed from a sociological or educational studies perspective. The study of leisure behaviour as well as of the management of the facilities and the policy in the area of leisure and „tourism for pleasure“ (as described by the W.T.O.) have so much in common, that we choose for an integrated curriculum leisure and tourism for pleasure (excluding business tourism etc.).

Leisure activities (tourism included) can refer to culture (e.g. cultural tourism, cultural leisure activities) as well as sports. Since tourism and culture is not always regarded as a certain kind of leisure activity we always explicitly mention tourism and culture next to leisure.

An education for positions as manager, policy-maker, planner, programmer or socio-cultural animator demands a multidisciplinary approach in which the disciplines involved are studied as much as possible in mutual coherence and education asks an emphasis on the applied and practical dimension of the relevant disciplines. To realize the multidisciplinary approach of leisure, culture and tourism it is necessary to integrate the various contributions from the different disciplines in a different way than simply present the concepts and theories from each discipline next to each other. This can be done by translating the topics with which each discipline occupies itself separately into a problem setting which is more encompassing than the own and which permits to lump together the study of leisure without each discipline losing its own identity. Thus this fundamental problem setting should also encompass the various disciplinary approaches in their wholeness and result in gained insights supporting and completing one another. This means that an education programme should not be a compilation of separate lectures of a variety of professors.

Finally a service and hospitable attitude and a quality awareness are essential aspects of all positions in the leisure, culture and tourism service. Explicit attention should be paid to these aspects because contrary to the Far East they are not part and parcel of our culture. When we say „quality“, we not only think of client service quality but also of the concern about the ecological consequences of leisure and tourism.

The search for the operationalisation of these and other desirabilities of a university education resulted in the development of a concept for a European postgraduate course instead of a „local“ course for Dutch-speaking students at the University Gent.

To realize this European postgraduate we started in 1986 with the development of a network of universities which were willing to realize jointly a new European postgra-

duate curriculum. Later on we called this network the Homo Ludens Network. This network which in 1990 consisted of professors from 14 universities in 7 European countries expanded in 1993 to a network of 28 universities and colleges of higher education from 11 European countries.

The ultimate aim of the Homo Ludens educational project was to develop a joint curriculum for a single European Master's degree in leisure, culture and tourism studies jointly awarded by all participating universities and equivalent institutions of the Network. This aim and the above-mentioned features are not that easy realised.

Before starting this ambitious European project, we jointly organised in the month of September 1990 a short intensive full-time teaching programme, bringing together students and teaching staff from the Homo Ludens Network, focusing on a specific theme not normally available at any one of the participating universities alone.

Run-in for the main project: a European seminar on „Mass Tourism: A Challenge for European Tourism Policy“ (Sitges – Barcelona 12-15 September 1990).

During one week, the professors of the Homo Ludens Network gave lectures to an international group of students. During this seminar, topics with which each separate discipline occupies itself were translated into one common topic: an innovative European Tourism Policy for Mass Tourism. The following aspects of mass tourism were discussed: (a) the social facet (mass tourism in various European countries, evolution of the demand and the supply side); (b) the economic aspect (commercialization and internationalization of European tourism, the public and private sector, the economic impact of tourism); (c) policy and planning (necessity of spatial, ecological, and temporal planning, regional, national, and European policies); and (d) quality tourism (tourism as a service industry, conditions for quality tourism, cultural, social and ecological protection, alternatives for mass tourism, and quality management).

To emphasize the genuinely „multinational“ feature of the Homo Ludens project, the seminar was not organized at the university which took the initiative for the project (i.e. Gent, Belgium) but at a holiday resort in Spain, Sitges. On the basis of the experiences with jointly organizing of this seminar, the organizational concept of the one-year program was adjusted. The Homo Ludens Network began with the one-year program in November 1990.

The purpose of the European full-year postgraduate university programme.

The purpose of the Homo Ludens Master's Degree programme is to prepare students for senior planning and leadership positions in the tourism industry, leisure and cultural organisations, in both private sector businesses and public sector organisations.

Admission requirements and the real student population

In European countries, different education structures make it very difficult to specify the admission requirements for a postgraduate. The students must have a university degree in any discipline at graduate level. But what is graduate level at university level? In Belgium, for example, this means that a psychology student has completed a five-year university education. In the U.K., there are students who finish a university education in three years. Do students from British polytechnics have the same level as university students?

It was decided that the Homo Ludens programme is admissible for students having a degree in any discipline at university graduate level after at least 3 years study (c.g. „licentiate“, „docto randus“, „bachelor“, etc.). Advance knowledge, experience, or previous qualification in leisure and tourism studies is not a precondition for entering the program. Thirty-one students during the academic year 1990–1991, 27 students in 1991–1992 and 41 students in 1992–1993 entered the programme. For the academic year 1993–1994, 81 student send in an admission formular. The students came from Belgium, Canada, Finland, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Structure of the programme

The postgraduate programme takes one full-time academic year and is divided into two parts:

- the Introductory Study and
- the In-depth Study.

The Introductory Study starts in October and runs until the end of January. Because of the big differences in foreknowledge of the students coming from all possible disciplines and from different universities and polytechnics, introductory courses are given which have to be followed by all students (a total of 225 contact hours) during the first term. In this part a common framework in the study of leisure and tourism is to put forward. Various fundamentals of leisure and tourism are taught on an interdisciplinary basis.

The subjects which are taught are the following:

1 Structures and the Organisation of Leisure and Tourism

- a. Professions in the leisure and tourism fields;
- b. The structure, organizations, and special characteristics of the tourism industry;
- c. The structure and organizations for arts, culture, sports, and other leisure services.

2. Theories and Concepts in Leisure and Tourism Studies

- a. History of leisure and tourism;
- b. Philosophical aspects in leisure and tourism studies;
- c. Psychology of leisure and tourism;

- d. Sociology of leisure and tourism;
 - e. Life style theory;
 - f. Tourism and recreation geography;
 - g. Ecology of tourism and recreation;
 - h. Demographic aspects of leisure and tourism;
 - i. Economics of leisure and tourism;
 - j. Interventions in leisure and tourism (agology);
 - k. Effective communication;
 - l. Theories and concepts of informing, guiding, animation, and leisure education; and
 - m. Methodology and didactics of cultural and tourism animation.
3. Introduction to Policy, Planning, Management and Programming for Leisure and Tourism
- a. Welfare policy and leisure;
 - b. Regional planning;
 - c. Transport and tourism law;
 - d. Tourism policy;
 - e. Marketing and its application to leisure and tourism;
 - f. Project development in leisure and tourism;
 - g. Planning models;
 - h. Service operations management.
 - i. Quality management.
4. Introduction to Research Methods in Leisure and Tourism Studies.

During the Introductory Part all students study at the University of Gent (Belgium) and get lectures from professors coming from universities and polytechnics of the Homo Ludens Network.

The In-depth Study

The leisure and tourism sector demands professionals for various positions. The Homo Ludens postgraduate programme aims at training for four position groups: (1) management, (2) policy and planning, (3) research, (4) education and animation positions. It is impossible to prepare students in one year for these four positions at the same time. Therefore students have to choose one option out of four which prepares them for one of the above-mentioned positions. In 1992-1993, students can choose from three options: (a) management, (b) policy and planning, and (c) education and animation (agology). Per option, students have to follow 135 hours of lectures. In addition to this, they work individually or in groups on projects which are relevant to a practical situation.

The content of the programme per option is the following:

1. Leisure and Tourism Planning and Policy
 - a. Planning alternatives and product development strategies for outdoor recreation and tourism;

- b. Resort development;
 - c. Urban and cultural tourism;
 - d. Tourism and environment;
 - e. Destination marketing; and
 - f. Geographical information systems.
2. Leisure and Tourism Management
- a. Strategic management in leisure and tourism;
 - b. Project development in tourism;
 - c. Financial management in leisure and tourism organizations;
 - d. Tourism management in public institutions, associations, and private organizations;
 - e. Leisure and tourism marketing;
 - f. Management of quality in leisure and tourism organizations; and
 - g. Human resource management.
3. Leisure and Tourism programming, education and animation (agology)
- a. Theories and concepts of informing, guiding, animation, and education in leisure and tourism;
 - b. Objectives of animation and leisure education;
 - c. Methodology and didactics of cultural animation;
 - d. Animation and leisure education for specific target groups;
 - e. Programming in leisure and tourism services;
 - f. Improving the quality of leisure and tourism services; and
 - g. Innovation in leisure and tourism services.

From centralised to decentralised programme.

During the first year (1990–91) in which the new postgraduate programme was organized, all students stayed for the whole academic year at the University of Gent and received lectures from professors coming from universities and polytechnics of the Homo Ludens Network. During the academic years 1991–92 and 1992–93, students stay only for the Introductory Study in Gent (three months) and move for the In-depth study to another University. Each in-depth study option was organized in another country to teach the students to live and work in a different cultural context than the one in which they grew up. For the option Policy and Planning, the University of Wageningen (the Netherlands) was host university; for the Management option, the University of Surrey (Guilford, U.K.) was host university and for the option „Agology“ it was the University of Gent (Belgium). The „Agology“ option was organized in Gent because no other host university could be found.

At the host university during the in-depth study, students receive lectures both from professors from the host university and from universities of the Homo Ludens Network.

The In-depth Study runs over a period of about three months. Afterwards, students have to do field work during eight weeks in an appropriate setting in the field of leisure-

re and tourism, chosen in connection with the dissertation. The field work is not primarily meant as a practical stage; emphasis is given to research and problem-solving activities. The field work is seen as an integration of research and problem solving; it provides primary material for the research of the student as well as a usable solution for a concrete problem of the field work placement. The field work and the research work are reported in a dissertation. In mid-September, the students are requested to return to the University of Gent for the oral presentation of their dissertation.

The year planning of the academic year 1992-93 was as follows:

Table 1

Introductory Study			October until December
Location University of Gent Belgium			
Examination			January
In-depth Optional Study			Februar until April
PLANNING AND POLICY	MANAGEMENT	PROGRAMMING AND LEADERSHIP IN LEISURE SERVICE SYSTEMS (AGOLOGY)	
Location: Agricultural University Wageningen (NL)	Location: University of Surrey Guilford (UK)	Location: University of Gent (B)	
Dissertation			May until September
Presentation of Dissertation Location: University of Gent			end of September

Simultaneous with the decentralisation of the course programme, also the management of the in-depth study was decentralised. Each in-depth optional study was coordinated by the host university, respectively Gent, Surrey and Wageningen. The overall coordination of the **Homo Ludens** Master's Degree during the first three years (1990–1993) was fulfilled by the author of this paper. As was agreed on at the start of the project every three years, the overall co-ordination and the hosting universities for the introductory and in-depth study had to rotate. As a consequence the overall co-ordination was taken over by the University of Wageningen for the academic year 1993–1994.

The Educational Principles and Educational Activities of the Programme

The programme is designed to assist students to develop a multidisciplinary mindset with respect to leisure and tourism. Students from different disciplines work together to develop creative solutions to interdisciplinary problems.

The programme is also designed to be problem- and practice-oriented and vocational. Orientation and exemplary learning are the two general principles which structure the teaching activities in a complementary way. This means, on the one hand, that students will get a general overview and orientation of the field and in different disciplines. On the other hand, students can acquire a more in-depth knowledge by means of exemplary projects, field work, and thesis which will enable the study of specific themes and problems. „No man is an island on himself“; rather, the learning process is a collective experience. Students should share their knowledge with other students by means of group work.

The language of instruction

Because English and French are the most frequently studied foreign languages in European secondary schools we chose English as the instruction language. A few courses are given in French. Prior to the study period abroad, some students do not feel sufficiently prepared to actively take part in workgroups and writing a thesis in English. During the in-depth study period in Gent they could follow an intensive course in English. The overall improvement of language proficiency during the study period was impressive.

ERASMUS grants

The ERASMUS-programme subsidized during three years (1990–1993) not only the student mobility but also the teaching staff mobility, which makes the **European postgraduate programme Homo Ludens** possible. During the academic year (1993–1994) only the student mobility was subsidized by the Erasmus-programme. Because the **Homo Ludens** Network could not take over the costs for the staff mobility the original concept was no more feasible.

From 1993–1994 the Homo Ludens project was no more continued at postgraduate level. A new Homo Ludens concept on **graduate level** and only involving exchange of students between **all** participating institutions of the network was developed.

Evaluation of the Homo Ludens project

The European Homo Ludens Master's degree was successful in various respects. Twenty eight universities from eleven countries developed a joint innovative curriculum for a single European postgraduate programme in leisure, culture and tourism. The course programme was normally not available at any one of the participating universities alone. It gave university students from eleven European countries, who had already graduated, the opportunity to specialise in the field of leisure, culture and tourism. From an ongoing evaluation research with students who graduated 3 to 5 years ago, the programme appears to be highly appreciated.

But the *organisational* concept proved to be too fragile. The success of the Homo Ludens project rested mainly on the goodwill and the personal commitment of 35 individual scholars. In some cases the central authorities of their universities are little interested in the Homo Ludens project because it is not a jointly developed curriculum, with a view to its *incorporation or implementation in the partner institutions*. It is a single programme *rotating* as far as the host institutions are concerned. Moreover, maximum 2 to 3 students from each university could be admitted. Finally, the project was almost exclusively dependent upon Erasmus support for the students' as well as for the staff mobility. Next to the Community support there was limited financial aid from our research center at the University of Ghent. To ensure the continuity of the project commitment and financial support from the participating universities were necessary. Therefore, another organisational structure is needed, which we will describe next.

The European Homo Ludens Master's degree should have been supported only by 3, maximum 4 universities, which could in this way function as host universities for the introductory part and the in-depth study part, as described above. Two further alterations are necessary. First, lectures are no longer given by the 35 scholars from the 28 universities, but by the staff of each of the host institutions (to avoid travel costs). In this way, only the students have to travel. Secondly, the programme is by preference admissible for the graduates of the 3 or 4 universities involved and where the students register as postgraduate students.

The Community aid should have been kept up until the organisational concept was revised in the above mentioned way by three or four universities. But the financial support from the Erasmus programme ended in 1994 for the following reasons: we quote from a letter from the Erasmus office: „...at every evaluation round the Erasmus administrator involved certainly highly appreciated the network and the programme as such“ but „the total number of students exchanged is too small“ ... „you have a one year programme which for foreign students turns out to be substantially cheaper in Ghent than in their own university. The consequence of this being that

most people register in Ghent and that in this way no or insufficient mobility or inter-university exchange in the Erasmus sense of the word occurs.“

Indeed, in 1992–1993 only 16 of 41 students have registered in their home university as postgraduate student. The other students registered in the university of Ghent for two reasons. First, the registration fees at their home university (especially in the UK) are very high and the Erasmus scholarship is very low. A registration as a regular student at the university of Ghent and renouncing an Erasmus scholarship proved financially more advantageous for them. Secondly, in several partner universities a registration as a postgraduate student in leisure, culture and tourism was simply not possible.

The Erasmus office also found that „only half of the number of the partners apparently participate actively in the exchanges“, hereby referring to the lecturers. Indeed, not all the scholars who work on the development of the programme at the plenary meetings, actually give lectures each year. This restriction was necessary for financial reasons. The Homo Ludens Programme received, as all Erasmus projects, only a small portion of the funds it needed. However, we did not want to abandon our project, so savings were necessary. This meant restricted staff mobility.

4. Student exchange at graduate level at the University of Ghent from 1993 onwards

From 1993–1994 onwards we participate in three Erasmus networks on leisure and tourism at the **graduate** level.

The first network is the continuation (till 1993–1994) of the Homo Ludens project, discussed in preceding section. It concerns now only student exchange on graduate level.

The second network on „Applied Leisure Studies“ coordinated by Prof. Dr. R. Popp (Salzburg), concerns student and staff exchange and development of new curricula.

The third one „Homo Touristicus“, coordinated by the author, concerns also student and staff exchange and development of new curricula.

Before discussing the organisation of the student and teacher exchange, we will discuss in following paragraphs the educational model of the agology study in Ghent.

The course programme agology at the University of Ghent

Agology is a social science dealing with the study and research of **purposive social interventions** aiming at improving the quality of life, such as social work, adult education, community development, youth work, socio-cultural animation, cultural development, social administration, leisure education, leisure counselling, programming leisure services, tourist information.

Agology at the moment is a fully recognized science in Dutch and Belgian universities, as a discipline formally on a par with psychology, sociology and political science.

ces. It is not a part of other disciplines. It has a graduate programme. It has also its scientific periodical „*Sociale interventie*“ (*Social Intervention*).

Agology is an *action* science. In this respect it may be compared to disciplines like sciences dealing with management, or planning, which also produce knowledge for action.

The course programme agology at the University Gent is offered at the graduate level. After two years of studies on an undergraduate level (*kandidatuur*) in educational sciences, students make a choice out of three possible options : agology, special education and (school) education.

The agology course programme at the **graduate** level takes **three years** and consists of the following components: compulsory courses for all agology students and optional courses.

Compulsory courses for all agology students :

- basic sciences, e.g. research methodology, deontology, comparative education, family education, education philosophy, psychiatry, development psychology.
- general agology courses : master science courses encompassing the entire field of social intervention : agology theories, organisational agology, welfare policy;
- special agology courses : different courses related to each of the workfields, e.g. theory and practice of youth work, socio-cultural work, arts education, leisure services, tourism services, adult education, social work, community work, youth protection, youth welfare.

● *Optional courses:*

Besides the above mentioned, compulsory courses students at the graduate level have to choose ten courses relating to their personal interests. These may be selected from the entire course programme on offer at the Universiteit Gent or at any other university, also abroad.

As a consequence of this course structure students can attend in other universities courses involving contents *not available* at the home institution. Because the Department of social, cultural and leisure agology at the University of Gent is partner in various ERASMUS-networks, students can attend their optional courses in a foreign country. For example: adventure education or outdoor education in Tornio (Finland). The ERASMUS-student exchange programme means in this context expanding students course choice.

Project work, fieldwork and thesis writing are further means of building up – as a student – one's specialisation.

In this way a student could specialize in for example leisure, culture or tourism agology.

Specialisations within agology

One of the specialisations within agology is agology of leisure and tourism, for the first time introduced as a university course in Belgium in 1971 by the author of this

paper. Agology of leisure and tourism examines how opportunities for a leisure experience that improves the quality of life can be optimized.

Leisure agology forms as it were a science encompassing the entire field of intervention in relation to leisure (in the broader sense including tourism, sports and culture as leisure). Within the framework of leisure agology attention is paid to the study and research of the individual types of interventions e.g. youthwork, leisure education (in primary school, community schools), socio-cultural work, museum education, animation (in sports clubs, holiday centres, youth centres, ...) leisure informing and counselling, guiding (guided city tours, tour holidays), programming in leisure services and holiday facilities planning of leisure and tourism facilities at the community and regional level, recreational therapy. This approach has the advantage that it is easier to keep in contact with developments in other countries where they concentrate on the study of specific types of interventions or where – usually on historic grounds – they have come to a different combination of activities. This is very important for the exchange of students.

Bringing the European dimension into the classroom

The Europeanisation of the classroom is not so easy. The reasons are the following. The propensity of our students to go and study abroad is low, while the agology course programme seems to experience difficulties in attracting many foreign students. The Dutch language is an obstacle, because it is a minority language, and considered by foreign students not „worth studying“.

To solve this problem, we offer parallel to the above mentioned three year graduate agology programme in Dutch, also a courses module in English (the so called Homo Ludens module). This English course programme is meant for both foreign ERASMUS-students who come to Gent and for Gent University students who choose this optional course module in English. These students participate in a real international classroom (in 1995–1996: 6 foreign students and 12 Flemish students chose this module).

The Homo Ludens module involves:

- a. participation in three introductory courses (in English):
 - European trends relevant for leisure, culture and tourism (30 hours)
 - Programming in leisure, tourism and cultural services (30 hours)
 - Management of quality in leisure, tourism and cultural services (30 hours)
- b. visits to European institutions and to Belgian leisure, culture and tourism services
- c. participation in a project group focusing on cross-cultural research on programming in one particular workfield. The students opt for one of the following workfields: youth centres, cultural centres, arts centres, social tourism centres, holiday clubs, holiday villages, shortbreak holidays and cultural tourism.

Participation in this project group consists of:

- literature research and analysis on the chosen workfield (e.g. cultural centres) in Belgium *and* another country

- fieldwork research
- writing a report on the analysis of literature and the fieldwork. This report may be written in either Dutch, English, French or German.

The objectives of the module is, to acquire:

- knowledge about structures and trends in leisure, culture and tourism provisions in the European Union;
- in-depth knowledge about one workfield in two different countries;
- competence in literature research for solving a practical problem in one of the work fields mentioned above;
- competence in writing a report in English for managers in a specific organisation.

Next to the parallel *Homo Ludens* course module in English we also switched to English as instruction language for two obligatory courses from the Dutch programme. We did this in agreement with the domestic students. This decision is motivated on the one hand by our wish to improve the accessibility of the curriculum for foreign exchange students. On the other hand, through adopting an international language as medium of instruction, we wish to prepare domestic students for a study abroad and stimulate their use of English as a professional language. As not to make the degree of difficulty too high, the students were given a list of vocabulary with specific professional language. During the lessons there were also discussion sessions about essential points. If there appeared to be communication problems, the basic idea was repeated in different terms.

Still, a switch from Dutch to English entails a number of problems. For the lecturer it implies a strong increase of workload in terms of preparation time and mental energy. For the students who speak English well, the lower speech rate of the lecturer and the repetitions are very disturbing. For a limited number of students English constitutes a serious handicap. Therefore we decided in the future to give the obligatory courses no longer in English.

The above described organizational model of part of the course programme enables the integration of the European dimension in the classroom.

We have internationalized the classroom in a third way. We stimulate our students to go abroad in their fourth year. That means that they are back at the university in their fifth year. These returning students can share their experience from abroad in discussions and even give a presentation during our normal lessons. Furthermore foreign ERASMUS professors come to give lessons in the normal course programme.

The previous section dealt with the more conspicuous forms of Europeanisation. Less noticeable are new contents of courses, jointly developed course material with a European focus or dimension, and the teaching and learning style.

A limitation for the internationalisation of the content of the curriculum is frequently the lack of cross-cultural teaching material. The Erasmus projects discussed in the preceding paragraphs have resulted in the production of new textbooks, which are used as course material:

- *Mass Tourism: A Challenge for European Tourism Policy*, edited by W. Faché, contains the revised lectures given by the partners during the intensive course of the same name. This course material was only available in photocopies and was later on largely included in the following reader together with the lectures given in the in-depth study part of the Homo Ludens master's degree: *Tourism and Spatial Transformations, Implications for Policy and Planning*, edited by G. J. Asworth and A. G. J. Dietvorst.
- *European Trends Relevant to Leisure and Tourism*, written by W. Faché and taught in the partner institutions of HomoTouristicus.

Two other textbooks, one about product innovation and one about quality management in tourism.

In an international group of students it appears that students from different countries have very different learning styles. The learning style of a Flemish student, for instance, compared to that of a group of Finnish students proves to be more reproduction oriented. For the Finnish students learning is seen as use of knowledge (application oriented) and construction of knowledge. It is important to bring this up for discussion in an international group of students after a few lessons in order to evaluate possible problems or even to prevent them from dropping the course. The distinction between four different learning styles, made by Kanselaar et al. (1996), proves to be very fruitful:

- Undirected (hardly any processing strategy, a lack of regulation, ambivalent learning orientation, learning viewed as cooperation with fellow students and as being stimulated by education).
- Reproduction oriented (processing strategy is oriented towards memorising and analysing, external regulation, learning is certificate- or self-test oriented, learning is seen as intake of knowledge).
- Meaning oriented (processing strategy is oriented on relating, structuring and critical processing, self-regulation, learning oriented, learning seen as construction of knowledge).
- Application oriented (concrete processing, both external and self-regulation, learning is profession oriented, learning is seen as use of knowledge).

The discussion with students with different learning styles also proved to be very fruitful for the students themselves. They enriched their learning style through the interaction with fellow students, who had a different learning style. We, as lecturer, also changed our teaching and evaluation method.

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Zum Thema „Freizeitwissenschaften in den EU-Programmen ...“ findet sich im vorliegenden Band ein kurzer Bericht über das ERASMUS-Projekt „angewandte Freizeitwissenschaft ...“. (siehe „Mitteilungen des Ludwig Boltzmann-Instituts für angewandte Sportpsychologie und Freizeitpädagogik“)