European higher education systems increasingly have to change the way they operate due to the revolution in information and communication technologies, the financial crisis, global competition and pressure on budgets. One of the most significant changes in response to these challenges has been the development, both in concept and practice, of the “Entrepreneurial University” which puts greater emphasis on innovation in all areas, from research to teaching and learning, knowledge exchange, governance and external relations.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a critical role to play in promoting local economic development by providing education that promotes entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviours, providing support to graduates and staff interested in starting up businesses, rendering research relevant for society, engaging in knowledge exchange, and by acting entrepreneurially themselves as institutions. While higher education institutions in Europe are beginning to introduce strategies and practices in this area, the progress is uneven, both across and within countries, and efforts are needed to spread the most promising initiatives and level up performance. The guiding framework for the entrepreneurial university jointly developed by the OECD and the European Commission is a great tool for higher education institutions to assess their entrepreneurial and innovative potential.

In Autumn 2015, when the Ministry of Human Capacities entered into an agreement for an HEInnovate country review, the HEInnovate guiding framework was already known in Hungary. Because of the active role of the Tempus Public Foundation, 20 HEIs had participated in HEInnovate workshops. Being one of the first countries to participate in this international initiative is, in itself, a great opportunity for Hungarian higher education, at institutional level and at the public policy level too. At institutional level, beyond the primary benefit of being present on the international scene, introducing and applying the HEInnovate tool has furthered dialogue and thinking within institutions.

The Tempus Public Foundation, as co-ordinator of European Educational Co-operation programmes, is highly engaged in encouraging and assisting the participation of Hungarian HEIs’ in the learning and co-operation network of HEInnovate activities. It was involved in the dissemination and information process of HEInnovate from the beginning, being among the first to organise an HEInnovate workshop for representatives of HEIs from Hungary and neighbouring countries. The Tempus Public Foundation was honoured to be designated as a contact point between the EC, the OECD, the Ministry of Human Capacities, the national HEInnovate experts and the participating institutions in the OECD HEInnovate review and is also engaged to assist and further develop this process in co-operation with the Ministry of Human Capacities, the EC and the OECD.

The country review has concrete policy impact. The Ministry of Human Capacities, in collaboration with the Tempus Public Foundation, has developed a set of practical recommendations and support mechanisms for Hungarian HEIs. An expert group with representatives from various HEIs, innovative companies and various policy actors is supporting this work.

László Palkovics
Minister of State for Education,
Ministry of Human Capacities

András Nemeslaki
President Tempus Public Foundation