

## La MANCHE: Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education

[www.lamanche-tempus.eu](http://www.lamanche-tempus.eu)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial	p. 1
Young Leaders Academy	p. 2
La MANCHE VTT	p. 3
La MANCHE VTT Networking Events	p. 4-5
UCB RAISEd Project Profile	p. 6
La MANCHE @ Platform 4	p. 7
La MANCHE Project Meeting in Armenia	p. 8
La MANCHE Meets GOVERN and MAHATMA	p. 9
Upcoming Events and Activities	p. 10
Contacts	p. 11

*Dear Reader,*

We are pleased to present to your attention the 4<sup>th</sup> Information Bulletin issued by the La MANCHE project consortium. We in La MANCHE have recently entered the third and final year of the project life and have inevitably started counting down the remaining months until October 2015. A huge amount of work has been completed during the last 26 months and numerous project outputs are already put on the table.

Project partners have prepared and published the [External Assessment Report](#) on Leadership and Management Skills and Models in the Higher Education Institutions in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the [Changing Higher Education Institutions in Societies in Transition In-depth Study Report](#), the [Handbook of European Governance Practices in Higher Education](#), the [Student Engagement Toolkit](#), the [guidance materials and syllabi in Leadership and Change Management](#), the [Communication and Post-Project Dissemination Strategy](#).

68 trainers and change agents have been trained at the [Trainings for Trainers](#) organised at consortium level. In 2014 more than 1500 staff members at the 23 project Partner Country institutions underwent trainings in change management at institutional level. More than 1400 students and staff members attended the public lectures in Grassroots Leadership organised in the 23 La MANCHE universities in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The immense amount of work carried out so far has been also positively assessed by the Executive Agency which approved the project Intermediate Report in July 2014.

With the start of the third and final project year and through the establishment of the [La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank \(VTT\)](#), the project also entered into a new stage. We are currently working hard to attract and engage with as many external stakeholders in higher education as possible. The main purpose of this collaboration and ongoing dialogue on higher education reforms facilitated through the VTT is to listen to all interest parts' opinions and perceptions and to incorporate the relevant recommendations and viewpoints into the Strategy for Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (La MANCHE Strategy). The La MANCHE Strategy will be the main legacy of the project and shall continue to be implemented in the La MANCHE Partner Countries institutions long after the project life ends.

We hope that 2015 will be productive and successful for the La MANCHE project and a feasible and relevant La MANCHE Strategy will be jointly created with the contribution of numerous stakeholders in higher education from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and from the EU countries.

We would like to thank everyone for the support and commitment towards the La MANCHE Strategy and project cause and to wish you happy Christmas and New Year.

*La MANCHE project consortium*

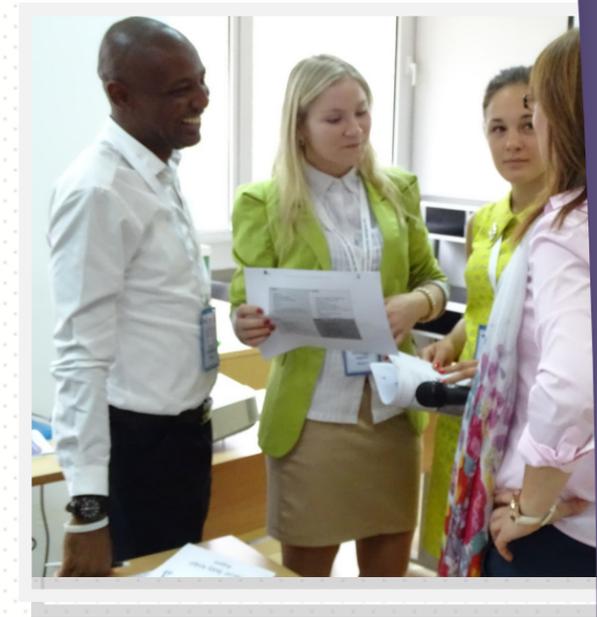
## Young Leaders Academy at International University College



A La MANCHE [promotional video](#) was prepared during Young Leaders Academy with the aim to tell some of the participants' stories and impressions from the Young Leaders Academy and to disseminate information on the [La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank](#) online platform.

In the period of 7<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014 International University College, Bulgaria (IUC) hosted the first and largest project event with students' participation and involvement. The [Young Leaders Academy](#) aimed at empowering students of the La MANCHE universities to become more active and committed to the processes of change and decision making at their institutions.

The five-day trainings and workshops in Grassroots Leadership and Change Management were held by lecturers and trainers from the EU project partner institutions. The [Academy agenda](#) included such topics as grassroots leadership, strategies for leading change, student empowerment and organisational learning, developing role of mentoring within the organisation, creative thinking and leadership skills etc.



Apart from having achieved its initial goals, the Young Leaders Academy in September 2014 has become one of the most inspiring and rewarding events in the project. The students' quotes and feedback speak for themselves:

*"This program was undoubtedly the best learning experience lived by us so far. Everything was fantastic!"*

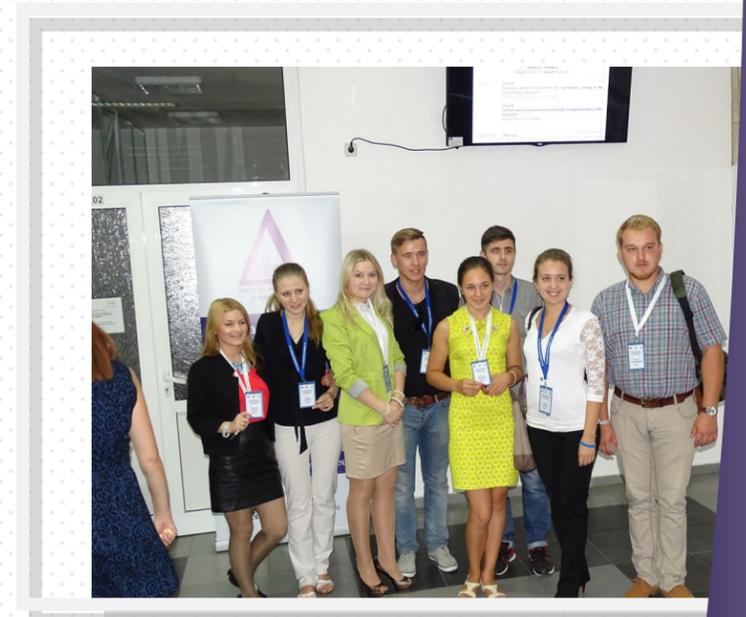
*"This project and the meeting helped me feel more self-confident."*

*"It was full of interesting and new information, new contacts and great experience!"*

*"We are grateful for the time at YLA and we are impatiently waiting for our next meeting in the project."*

*"I had an amazing experience which cannot be recreated. I would love to experience a conference like this once more".*

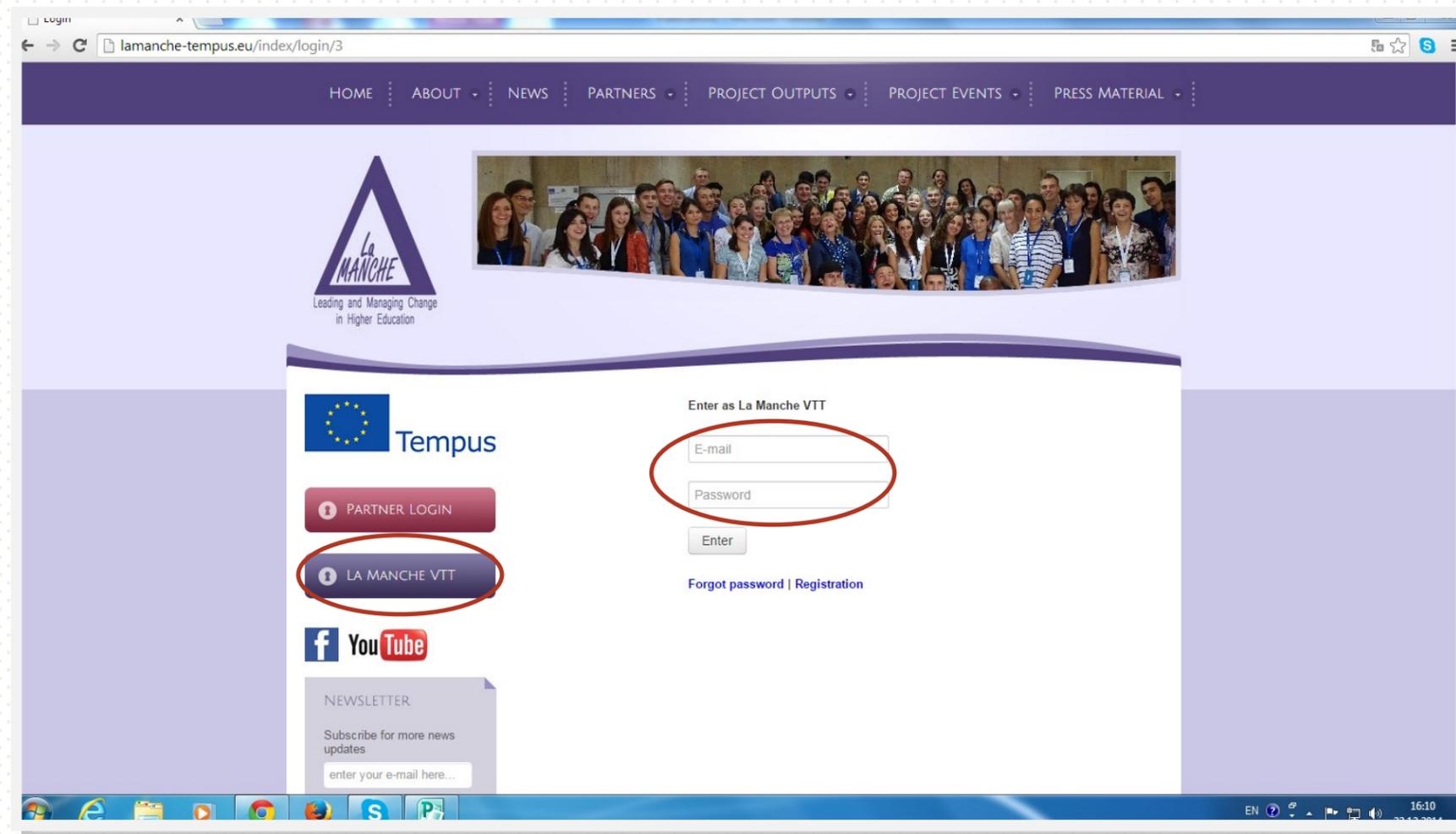
*"I am so happy that I had a chance to be part of this project."*



## La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank

The project partners in La MANCHE are currently focused on building sustainable mechanisms for critical discussions on university governance issues through the La MANCHE Virtual Think Tank (VTT). The La MANCHE VTT is a member-driven community which is internet based and located on the project website. It initiates and encourages ongoing dialogue on higher education reforms among relevant stakeholders in the La MANCHE countries and promotes joint problem solving. The VTT provides an online platform for consultation, networking, peer learning and exchange of good practices in the field of higher education governance. It involves higher education institutions leaders, stakeholders and opinion formers from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and the EU.

In times of economic turmoil, growing social discontent and political crisis, all of which seriously affecting the higher education sector, the voice of all stakeholders in higher education should be even better heard. In particular, through the La MANCHE VTT the project consortium hopes to provide a voice for a new generation of higher education leaders by giving them the opportunity to debate side by side with established opinion leaders, policy makers, business and civil society representatives, student organisations. The La MANCHE VTT's primary goal includes joint elaboration and promotion of a strategy for leading and managing change in higher education (the La MANCHE Strategy) in the Partner Countries from the Eastern Neighboring Area. The VTT aims also at raising awareness on the European Higher Education Modernisation Agenda and the needs to stimulate and implement structural reforms in the higher education sector. La MANCHE Strategy to be finalized in August 2015 will be a strategic plan for embedding and implementing reforms on institutional level, for building stakeholder support for reforms and for managing change.



Through the La MANCHE VTT the consortium members are establishing six transnational themed working groups including one with advocates for gender equality in higher education. The chosen working method subjects experts' work to stakeholder scrutiny at both the national and transnational level, and compels experts to include stakeholder views and positions into the design of reform strategies and governance models. Since stakeholders are the people without whose continuous support change would be impossible to happen, this approach ensures that the La MANCHE Strategy will be relevant to the real needs and concerns of the main actors of modernisation, and that these actors will stay involved with, and will assume ownership of upcoming reforms.

## La MANCHE VTT Networking events

**Cherkasy State Technological University, Ukraine  
21.10.2014**



**Belarusian Trade and Economic University of  
Consumer Cooperatives, Belarus 02.10.2014**

**Comrat State University, Moldova  
01.10.2014**



**P.O. Sukhoi State Technical University of Gomel,  
Belarus  
02.10.2014**

In the period of September – December 2014 the Partner Countries institutions in La MANCHE organised a large number of La MANCHE VTT networking events. The one-day events brought face-to-face various stakeholders in higher education. They aimed at raising awareness on the project among stakeholders to motivate them to engage with the project prospective activities, e.g. the formation of six Transnational Themed Working Groups, the La MANCHE VTT activities as well as to provide input and contribute to the La MANCHE Strategy.

**Gavar State University, Armenia  
19.10.2014**



**International Black Sea University, Georgia  
28.11.2014**

## La MANCHE VTT Networking events (2)

Lviv Academy of Commerce, Ukraine  
23.10.2014



Lviv Polytechnic National University,  
Ukraine  
27.11.2014



Odessa National  
Economic  
University, Ukraine  
10.10.2014



Moldova State University, Moldova  
03.10.2014



Vitebsk State Technological  
University, Belarus  
13.10.2014



Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University,  
Georgia  
21.10.2014

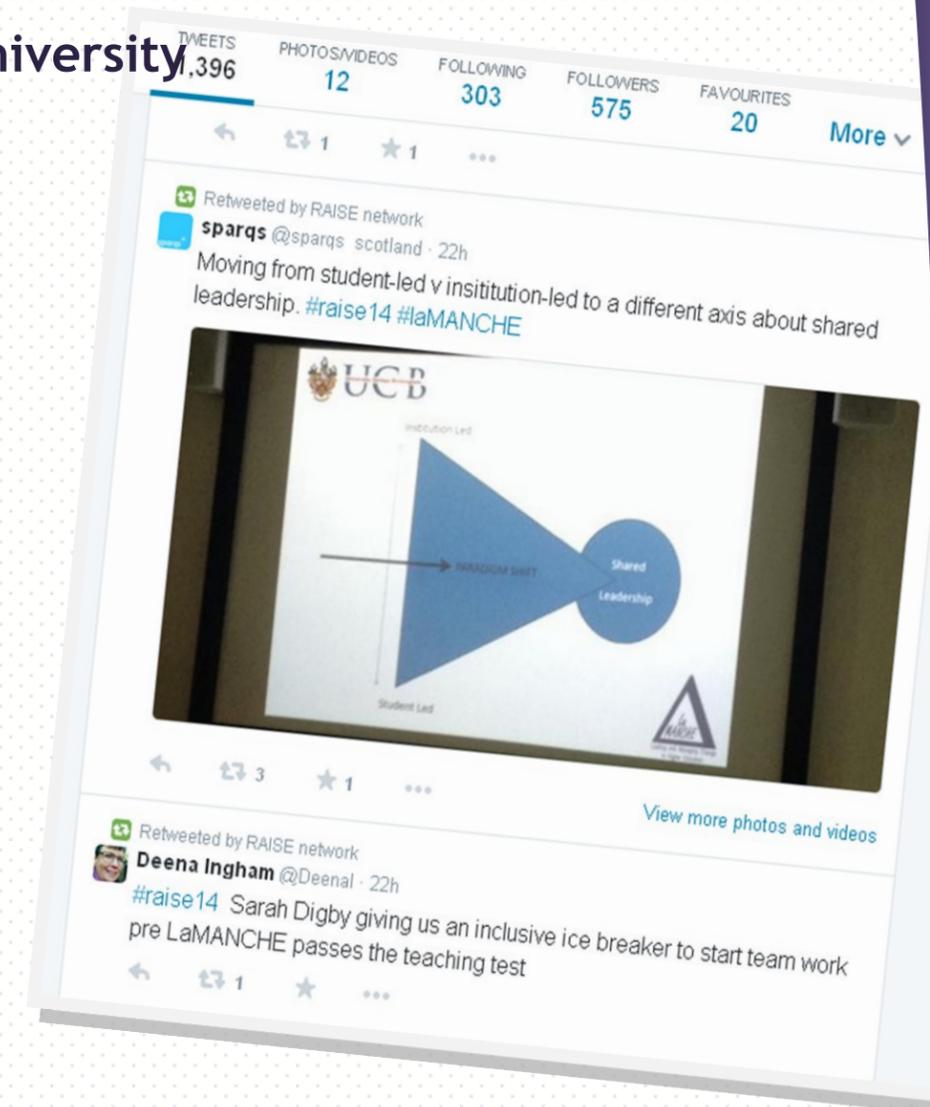
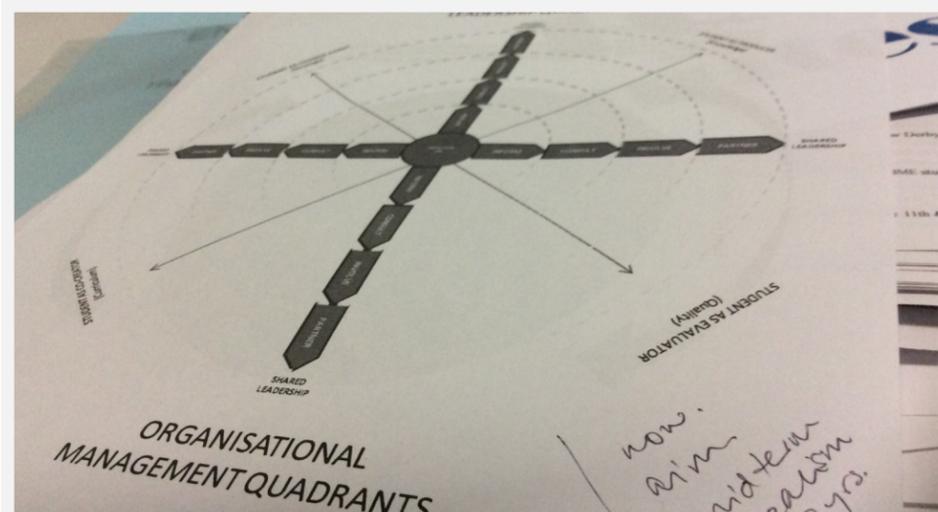
# UCB RAISEd project profile @ National Conference at Manchester Metropolitan University



Sarah Digby, from University College Birmingham, presented at the National Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) Conference at Manchester Metropolitan University, in September this year. Entitled, Student Engagement: Opportunities for All, the primary goal of RAISE is to place student engagement (SE) at the centre of policies and practice in higher education.

According to RAISE (2014):

*“Many staff and students have taken this challenge on and there are many excellent initiatives currently to foster SE with all its manifest benefits such as retention, inclusion and transformative learning. However opportunities for all students to really engage are not yet as widespread as we would wish and many staff, and students too, have not yet embraced this agenda. This is likely to require a culture change. To achieve that, we must continue to promote the values and benefits of SE on all fronts; this includes the what, how and why. We have divided that overall focus into three themes, building on our three previous conferences and encourage contributions from all those involved with students in Higher Education, but particularly from students themselves, as they are powerful agents of change.”*



Approximately 450 delegates from institutions from all over the United Kingdom attended the Annual Conference, demonstrating a growing commitment to SE. Delegates who attended the session presented by Sarah were keen to hear about the La MANCHE project and its aspirations relating to stakeholder engagement and student leadership, as well as acknowledging La MANCHE partners' commitment to changing cultures - a challenge for all HEI's. Project Information Bulletins were eagerly received, as well as opportunities to discuss the Student Engagement Toolkit, devised by Sarah and Simon Blake, which was launched in Portugal last year.



# EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

BRINGING EASTERN EUROPEAN PARTNERS CLOSER TO THE EU



## La MANCHE presentation @ Platform 4 of Eastern Partnership

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 the La MANCHE project was presented at the [Platform 4 “Contacts between people”](#) session which was dedicated to [higher education](#). The Platform 4 is part of the Eastern Partnership initiative launched in 2009 and responds to the desire of the EU's Eastern neighbors (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) to move closer to the European Union. Platform 4 is one of the four thematic platforms to exchange best practices on issues of mutual interest such as good governance, economic integration and growth, energy security and transport, contacts between people.



The recent session of Platform 4 had a thematic focus on internationalisation and mobility at the universities of the six countries involved. Christina Armutlieva, La MANCHE Project Coordinator had the opportunity to provide an overview of the project progress to date and to showcase how the transnational cooperation between the 29 project partners involved is contributing to the processes of internationalisation. During the meeting she also met senior officials from the Ministries of Education in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and discussed with them prospective participation of higher education policy makers in these countries in the La MANCHE VTT and more specifically their involvement in La MANCHE Strategy drafting.



## La MANCHE project meeting in Armenia



In the period of 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 the La MANCHE partner institutions from Armenia held a joint meeting with the IUC, the project lead organisation's team. The meeting aimed at general coordination, planning and quality control as well as to streamlining the activities in Work Package 7 dedicated to the La MANCHE VTT. In particular, the project partners discussed the challenges faced during the implementation and promotion of the VTT in Armenia.

The partners also focused on higher education themes and issues specific for Armenia to be covered and included in the La MANCHE Strategy. The partner meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December was attended by Ms Lana Karlova from the National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) in Armenia. As a result of the discussions, the La MANCHE team in Armenia agreed that enhanced efforts shall be put in attracting more stakeholders in higher education in Armenia to join the La MANCHE VTT. One of the ways to achieve this is through engaging actively with the Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) in Armenia.



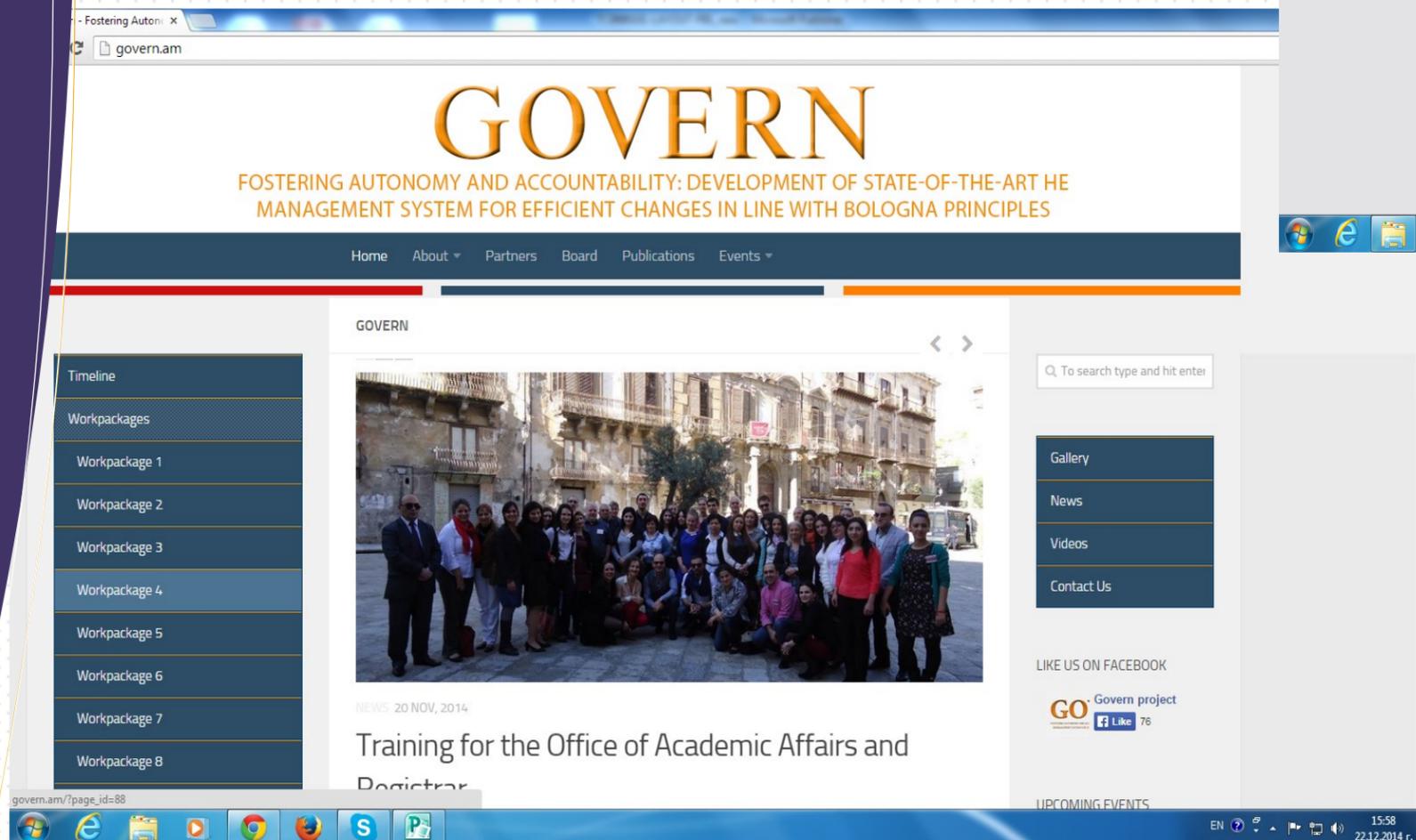
Thanks to the efforts of NEO Armenia the Project Coordinator met on 17<sup>th</sup> December with four of the Armenian HEREs and had the chance to acquaint them with the project and the VTT. Another area and target group to work more closely with in the near future is the non-governmental sector and the NGOs in Armenia active in the field of education. During the visit to Yerevan the IUC project team along with project partners from ANAU and SEUA met representative of International Center for Human Development Think Tank (ICHHD) and discussed with them the La MANCHE project achievements and ICHHD possible contribution to the project.



# La MANCHE meets GOVERN and MAHATMA

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014, during the project meeting with Armenian partners held in Yerevan, Ms Lana Karlova from NEO Armenia organized an inter-project collaboration event for project team members of the Tempus projects La MANCHE, [GOVERN](#) (Fostering Autonomy and Accountability: Development of State-of-the-art HE Management System for Efficient Changes in Line with Bologna Principles) and [MAHATMA](#) (Master in Higher Education Management: Developing Leaders for Managing Educational Transformation).

During the event Christina Armutlieva, Project Coordinator of La MANCHE spoke extensively on the project aims and achievements. She presented the La MANCHE VTT and invited the colleagues from the other two projects to join the La MANCHE consortium and actively contribute to the VTT activities.



When speaking of the difference La MANCHE is striving to make for the partner institutions involved, Christina underlined that while other Tempus projects addressing the regional priority of university governance are focusing on changing procedures and measures related to human resource management and institutional governance, projects like La MANCHE predominantly aim to contribute to the change of mindsets, the paradigm shift and the development of new attitudes and approaches towards change in life and in education. In other words, the main aim of projects like La MANCHE is to prepare the institutions and to equip the people involved with the proper transversal skills which would help them to address new challenges in the system and to reduce the change resistance.

## Upcoming events and activities

**December 2014 – October 2015**

Collaboration within six Transnational Themed Working Groups (WGs) for engagement with various key stakeholders in higher education and members registration at the La MANCHE VTT as follows:

1. Transnational Themed WG with higher education institutions outside La MANCHE
2. Transnational Themed WG with policy makers
3. Transnational Themed WG with business leaders
4. Transnational Themed WG with civil society representatives
5. Transnational Themed WG with student organisations
6. Transnational Themed WG for gender equality in higher education

**December 2015**

Initiation and kick-off of a series of discussions on leading and managing change in higher education in the La MANCHE countries through the La MANCHE VTT

**January – March 2015**

Online discussions and drafting proposals for policy changes through La

**February – March 2015**

Project meetings with partners from Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

**April 2015**

Elaboration of an advanced La MANCHE Strategy draft

**May – June 2015**

National conferences in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to present the La MANCHE Strategy draft

**August 2015**

Finalisation and publication of the La MANCHE Strategy

**September 2015**

Workshop Women in Leadership in Higher Education in the framework of the final partner meeting

**September 2015**

Final La MANCHE dissemination even



### LA MANCHE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

La MANCHE on Facebook:

La MANCHE on Youtube:

### CONTACTS

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*La MANCHE team wishes you a happy Christmas and all the best for 2015!*

