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E-learning and Advancement of Higher Education

The University Computing Centre hosted the panel discussion on **E-learning and Advancement of Higher Education** on January 31, 2007, organised by the Tempus Project "*Education Quality Improvement by E-Learning Technology*" or the **EQIBELT** in cooperation with the Tempus Project "*Furtherance of Bologna Promotion in Croatia*".

The topic of the discussion was how e-learning can entice and support the changes brought on by the Bologna Process and how, in which situations and under what conditions the information and communication technology and e-learning can be catalysts of changes and improvements in the system of higher education.

The panel discussion was organised as a part of the annual meeting of the EQIBELT Project Consortium involving 8 European and 3 Croatian universities, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and CARNet. *Srce* has been coordinating the project on behalf of the University of Zagreb.

European experts were the participants of the panel discussion

The participants of the discussion were guests from the European universities from Finland, Belgium, Spain, Estonia, Portugal and Austria, experts from the University of Zagreb and the University of Split, chancellors, vice-chancellors, deans and associate deans of Croatian universities, representatives of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and members of the academic community from many Croatian towns.

The representatives of the European universities reported on their experience in using the information and communication technology and especially e-learning in teaching and learning at their universities, on both successful and unsuccessful attempts to use technology in improving the quality of education, in achieving intended changes and academic goals. The need for the direct link between the technology potential and set educational goals was stressed. On several occasions participants talked about the importance of ensuring good quality support to both lecturers and students in order to make the use of technology simple, effective, sustainable and successful.

Professor Wim Van Petegem from the University in Leuven, Belgium said: "The benefits of creating a virtual educational environment at a university are multiple: lecturers can communicate with students in an easier and more effective manner. They can cooperate among themselves on creating educational materials; students have easy access to educational materials, the possibility of communication and working together during their entire university education, and the institution itself provides all its students with a portal that is simultaneously unique and personalised."