

## **Discussions at the CIDREE Expert Meeting Tallinn/Estonia September 9th, 2011: Educational Centres at the Service of Teacher Education and School Improvement**

The ensuing discussions centred on the following topics provided:

1. What are the good practices of applying educational centres in your country?
2. What are the main aims and working principles (standards) that should be taken into account in designing educational centres?
3. How do the plans of Estonian educational centres meet the principles that other countries may have?
4. How to build a network of cooperation for educational centres all over Europe?

The following points for the improvement of educational centres and international cooperation emerged from these discussions:

- Estonian universities see educational centres as 'educational laboratories, where didactics and broadly all educational theories can be developed and practised (and analysed) in an innovative environment that provides student teachers, practising teachers and researchers (and sometimes pupils interested in teacher education and/or educational research) with equipment and materials that can be potentially and effectively applied in schools (and kindergartens)'. The laboratories are supported and provide support through web-based environment.
- Examples from France show that using different video formats for analysing and reflecting on lessons has proved to be useful for both students and beginning teachers. In addition, research laboratories can be used for (international) cooperation in the analysis.
- It was suggested that the centres should have an outreach function, including schools and the wider community as its targets rather than focus predominantly on teacher education at universities. This is more in line with the activities outlined by the Governmental Agency (GR) in Sweden and the regional support centres in the Netherlands.
- Joint projects could be initiated to research the work of such centres including a systematic analysis of their context and needs as well as their development and further evaluation.
- The centres could exchange existing materials and other equipment as well as encourage both national and international cooperation between teachers and teacher students to share experience.
- Joint courses could be developed (on the example of the Scottish partners) to achieve higher standards of teacher education and research and improve expertise.