

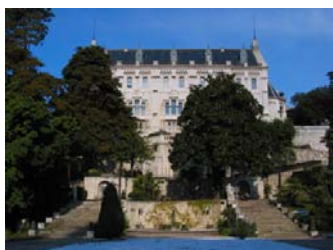
### European collaboration of the human kind

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Nice was recently the setting for the official launch of eLene-<sup>TT</sup> (e-learning network for Teacher Training). This 2-year project funded by the European Commission *e-learning* programme aims to accompany Higher Education teachers in the innovative use of ICT through the development of a Virtual Learning Resource Centre, a database containing the best in tools, resources and guidelines for teacher training. Teachers will have the opportunity to participate in thematic workshops, both face-to-face and online, in order to fully experience what it means to integrate new teaching and learning practices.

The driving idea behind eLene-<sup>TT</sup> is to encourage the use of ICT in pedagogically innovative ways. Higher Education teachers are the main beneficiaries, together with teacher trainers and instructional designers, with the ultimate benefit obviously for the students themselves.

The eLene partners, from 8 European countries, spent the year 2004 developing this original action-research approach, which is now ready to be deployed.



In Nice, the outside temperature is close to zero, rare for the South of France, even in January. The 35 members of eLene-<sup>TT</sup> brave the cold to pose for the traditional group photograph, smiling despite the fatigue. They have every reason to be satisfied: after over a year of intense collaborative effort, they have put eLene-<sup>TT</sup> on the road and are ready to return to their respective countries with all they need to get down to work.



eLene-<sup>TT</sup> is an ambitious project which aims to improve the use of ICT through innovative pedagogical practices. It covers a vast area of activities, from tutoring distance learners to online course design, bringing in new pedagogical approaches such as problem-based learning, serious gaming, collaborative learning or the use of mobile solutions.

### A wealth of unexplored resources!

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The project has been developed as the Higher Education sector undergoes major evolution. Individualised learning, lifelong learning and increased mobility, both physical and virtual, mean that teachers and students need to update their skills constantly, making the best possible use of the available technology within sound pedagogical frameworks.

A multitude of tools and resources exist across Europe. However, many of these remain isolated, often used only by those who created them. So much expertise just waiting to be discovered and put to good use. There is thus a real need for collecting, analysing and testing these resources, and for presenting them in a clear user-friendly way.

### eLene-<sup>TT</sup> : a practical approach to teacher training

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By way of response, eLene-<sup>TT</sup> aims to provide concrete results beneficial to the European HE e-teaching community as a whole. Pooling and building on their experience, the partners will create a Virtual Learning Resource Centre: a database of tools, resources and guidelines for teacher training, enhanced with comments, pedagogical advice and real-life experiences.

Over the next two years, the project will move through successive phases, collecting and evaluating resources, publications and experience in the field, selecting the most appropriate, drawing up guidelines and testing the whole through specifically designed teacher training actions.

## (h)eLene-TT: a year of collaborative work... and a human e-learning network is born

2004 was a rich and intense year for the group. Who would have believed so much could have happened since the first time the partners met in November 2003, in the impressive environment of the gilded 'Room of Windows' at Politecnico di Milano? The participants start to get to know each other, tentatively at first, but all convinced that here is an exceptional opportunity for collaboration.

A few months later, work picks up again in Bremen. In the post-modern decor of Germany's leading WiFi university, the partners adopt contemporary creativity methods inspired by 'Metaplan' and bring in an external facilitator to help them structure their work. Animated debate results in innovative suggestions which, once grouped and organised on post-its, form the basis of the eLene group's future actions. A further meeting in May 2004, hosted by Vidéoscop and the IAE business institute of Université Nancy 2, and eLene-TT is born, helped on its way by the initiative and efforts of committed individuals.



This year of sustained collaborative work has resulted in the emergence of a true eLene spirit, marked by transnational friendships and the will to break down institutional barriers. As Matteo



Uggeri put it so well, when explaining the rationale behind the project website: "We should be 'minimal', 'human' and above all 'not boring'!"

"It's a fantastic group, stimulated by the presence of strong personalities who work well together in a spirit of human cooperation, without taking themselves too seriously," concludes Deborah Arnold, the project coordinator.

And what if this was one of the many small ways in which grassroots individuals are working in the wings to build a true European community?

*Helen T.*

### The eLene partners:

- ◆ **CANEGE:** Universités Paris-Dauphine, Nancy 2, Nice, Grenoble, Paris-Sud, in collaboration with the CNED-EIFAD (*France*)
- ◆ **METID-Politecnico di Milano** (*Italy*)
- ◆ **ZMML-University of Bremen** (*Germany*)
- ◆ **UOC : Universitat Oberta de Catalunya** (*Catalonia, Spain*)
- ◆ **The Finnish Virtual University:** University of Helsinki, Helsinki University of Technology (*Finland*)
- ◆ **University of Umeå** (*Sweden*)
- ◆ **IVLOS Institute of Education, Universiteit Utrecht** (*the Netherlands*)
- ◆ **The Polish Virtual University:** Marie Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin (*Poland*)

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