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I am very pleased and proud to be participating in the launch of OpenUpEd as President of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities.

What we are announcing today has three central characteristics: it is simple, it is leading, and, we believe, it is powerful.

The mission of OpenUpEd is to:

- Meet the massive demand for accessible higher education that has been revealed by the MOOC movement, specifically in Europe, and so widen access to higher education;
- Share the quality of flexible online higher education in Europe with the world;
- Encourage institutions in Europe and beyond who share our values and our commitment to flexible online higher education to become partners in this pan-European venture;
- And thereby contribute to the modernisation of higher education in Europe.

OpenUpEd is:

- Simple: because we are not attempting to create a new MOOC platform. Instead, we are creating a window onto the provision and services of the partners;
- Leading: because this is the first pan-European initiative in the development of massive open online courses;
- Powerful for three reasons:
  - Because OpenUpEd will make possible partnerships amongst conventional and open and distance universities across Europe, sharing resources to the benefit of students.
  - Because OpenUpEd has the potential, from a modest beginning, to contribute to the transformation and modernisation of higher education in Europe through the deployment of web technologies;
  - And because OpenUpEd has the potential to widen access to higher education across Europe through all the diversity of its cultures and languages

EADTU represents 10 open and distance universities and 14 national associations of conventional universities organising distance/online education for off-campus students, and two 'dual mode' – campus-based and online – universities.

We represent provision for in excess of three million students in 23 nations. What we have in common forms the foundation of the framework of eight features which Prof. Mulder has outlined.

Our dominant form of provision is flexible, responsive, part time higher education as, hence OpenUpEd is about openness to learners.

We have created student-centred delivery models, which take higher education to students when and where they want it, rather than expecting students to be when and where their teachers want them. This is reflected in the learner-centred approach that will define OpenUpEd.

Our pedagogy uses learning resources designed for independent learning when there is no classroom, combined with personal tutorial support, hence our emphasis on resources designed for independent learning in OpenUpEd.

We offer quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement that match the best that conventional universities can offer, coupled with open access and scale. We provide quality for all, and so quality will be central to OpenUpEd.

We use new technologies as a means to extend quality and access, and create an ever more personal and flexible student experience, hence the emphasis on digital openness and media-supported interaction in OpenUpEd.

When Europe's open universities were founded, there was a clear demarcation between their provision and the rest of higher education. But the days when open and distance education was a minority activity are largely over. Enabled by rapidly evolving technologies, open education is emerging as a desirable business model for many institutions and in many nations.

Many EADTU members have already created MOOCs. Others will follow. Some are also taking a lead at national level. The Open University in the UK has already positioned itself at the leading edge through the creation of FutureLearn, which will host provision from many of the leading UK conventional universities, as well as from the Open University itself.

Many EADTU members see MOOCs as a natural extension of what they already do, to widen access further, by creating pathways from informal to formal learning.

OpenUpEd adds value to its partners' contributions, and in doing so affirms the values of equity, quality and diversity which are central to our mission as members of EADTU.

OpenUpEd will promote equity by making partners' offerings visible and accessible across Europe and beyond.

It will promote quality by presenting the excellent of teaching and learning in open and distance learning in Europe.

It will promote diversity by enabling the sharing of resources and matching of provision to needs across Europe.

This is the beginning of an adventure in higher education in Europe. Like all great adventures, we know where we want to get to. Like all great adventures, we don't know quite it will look like when it finishes. What is important is that we are setting out now on the adventure that is OpenUpEd.