

UNESCO to award Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning established in Slovenia

Following the success of [VideoLectures.NET](#), recognized by the UN and UNESCO as one of the most outstanding examples of creative and innovative e-Content in the world in the last decade, the ["Jožef Stefan" Institute in Ljubljana \(Slovenia\)](#) has successfully established a UNESCO Chair on Open Technologies for OER and Open Learning. The Chair is currently expanding its vision and strategy in collaboration within [OpeningupSlovenia](#) and with the [Knowledge 4 All Foundation Ltd](#) based in London (UK).

The UNESCO Chairs Programme

Launched in 1992, the UNESCO Chairs Programme, involving over 812 institutions in 128 countries and 600 chair holders, promotes international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work. It supports the establishment of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in key priority areas related to UNESCO's fields of competence – i.e. in education, the natural and social sciences, culture and communication. Through this network, higher education and research institutions all over the globe pool their resources, both human and material, to address pressing challenges and contribute to the development of their societies. The Chairs serve as think tanks and as bridge builders between academia, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making. In areas suffering from a dearth of expertise, Chairs have evolved into poles of excellence and innovation at the regional or sub-regional levels.

The Chair established in Slovenia

With this prestigious title, the Jožef Stefan Institute has proven that its vision of free and open access to academic knowledge in the form of open online videos and smart technologies is the right approach for addressing the global digital divide in education and knowledge transfer. [The Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning](#) is operating with an initial set of assets in form of EU FP7 research projects *transLectures*, *MediaMixer*, *xLiMe*, *XLike*, and *VideoLectures.Net*, an award winning video library. Its work is in synergy with the *OpeningupSlovenia* initiative and the Knowledge 4 All Foundation Ltd, dedicated to the creation of tools and intelligent services in open education. The Chair is serving to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation on online learning for Open Educational Resources (OER) and open learning. It is facilitating collaboration between high-level, internationally-recognized researchers and teaching staff of the Institute and other institutions around the world. Welcoming the establishment of this Chair the UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova commented: *"We are very pleased to be expanding our cooperation in this forward-looking area that offers the opportunity to increase the quality of learning. This is essential in building knowledge-based societies."* She also praised Slovenia for being on the cutting edge in the field of open educational resources, with the recent establishment of the *OpeningupSlovenia* initiative.

OpeningupSlovenia

OpeningupSlovenia is a bottom-up created and top-down supported new and innovative initiative in which Slovenia as a first European member state is attempting to create a unique nationwide research environment in open education. At the heart of it is an increasing creation and uptake of intelligent tools, open educational resources and courseware. The platform involves all Slovenian universities, as well as compulsory and vocational education institutions, and partners from research and industry. The idea is to create an open educational system in parallel to the formal one, and to exploit all aspects of open education. It has been launched on April 25th at the OCWC conference hosted in Slovenia and commented by Commissioner Vassiliou: *"I am delighted that Slovenia has adopted a national strategy to promote open educational resources. This complements the Commission's own 'Opening up Education' initiative. Our shared objective is not to replace traditional textbooks or face-to-face teaching, but to make the most of the opportunities created by digitisation and new technologies. Europe cannot afford to lag behind its international rivals if we want to ensure our young people have the skills needed in the modern world. I hope that this Slovenian initiative is successful and inspires similar schemes in other Member States."*

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