

## Ladislav Cerych has passed away



Ladislav Cerych has been one of the key persons of the pioneer generation of higher education researchers in Europe. Three decades ago, Burton Clark invited scholars from all over the world to synthesize the state of knowledge on higher education. Ladislav Cerych was among those invited together with Tony Becher, Maurice Kogan, Harold Perkin, and Gareth Williams from Europe. In the mid-1970s after having been active at OECD, Lada became director of the Institute for Education and Social Policy in Paris. For about two decades he led this Institute, funded by a Dutch foundation with a European scope and known as the first real European institution of educational research with an emphasis on higher education. It was his contribution that the European Journal of Education became known as one of the best sources of thematic overviews on various issues of higher education in Europe.

He enjoyed the cooperation with colleagues of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel) where he was member of the advisory board for the first decade. He initiated the Centre's involvement in comparative research by participating himself in a project on the German Gesamthochschulen as part of his famous project on the implementation of higher education reforms in Europe. He invited the Centre to join the Study Abroad Project (SAEP) in the course of which he also was the key advisor for the establishment of the ERASMUS programme.

Lada Cerych excelled in stimulating a dialogue between higher education researchers and the policy makers and practitioners in that field. He surprised us by seeing new issues emerging before we others did, such as the tensions between "great expectations and mixed performance" in reform processes and the value of student mobility. He encouraged us neither to get lost in theory nor to be drawn into application. Everybody hearing him admired his ability to switch quickly between more than half a dozen languages. It was a convincing choice that UNESCO awarded him - as one of three outstanding higher education researchers in the world – the Comenius Prize. This happened in 1998, at a time when Prague and other places in the Czech Republic could become again his home along Paris. We lost him now at the age of 86.

*Professor Ulrich Teichler, one of the leading world experts on higher education, the founder and the first director of INCHER-Kassel*