

Dear SEFI community and especially dear Gunter Heitmann,

I am pleased to meet your request, Professor Berbers, President of SEFI, and Professor Heiß, Vicepresident of TU Berlin, to hold a laudatory speech about Gunter Heitmann. Today online, we are able to honour him as this year's **recipient of the renowned SEFI Leonardo da Vinci medal.**

I was asked to speak today and I am honoured to do so in recognition of our long shared history as colleagues and friends. Gunter, I have had many occasions to observe your thorough and brilliant mind at work. You combine subtlety in teaching and profound knowledge as well as the art of asking good and thought-activating questions and a clear position and statement in your attitude to improve the future of engineering education! The activities of your busy path of life and career are numerous and too many to list here. So I will **highlight some selected merits!** For further reading you will find an extended version of this laudatio in the proceedings!

Already during his **Study** of Industrial Engineering and Economics **at TU Berlin** he was student representative in the German Commission for Engineering Education. **After graduation** in 1969 he was a co-founder of the „Institut für Hochschuldidaktik“ at TU Berlin, one of the first „Centers for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education“ at a German University. Here he started his professional work in a project about „Integrated Curricula in Engineering Education and possibilities of creating a Comprehensive University for Berlin“. From 1972 until 2003 he **worked as a tenured scientist** at the Center with focus on curriculum development, new teaching and learning concepts, qualifications research and international approaches to engineering education.

As a **member of the German Association** for Educational and Academic Staff Development in Higher Education he contributed in particular to a reference framework for the pedagogical qualification of teaching staff in higher education in 1994, which formed the basis for a modularized continuing education programme for teaching staff at TU Berlin, which until today is successfully provided and continuously up-dated and expanded.

Gunter Heitmann's outstanding **performance as active SEFI member** started shortly after SEFI's foundation with TU Berlin as one of the founding parties, when he became official representative for almost 30 years. He engaged himself successfully in different activities and consequently has been appointed SEFI Fellow and granted honorary membership!

Some important steps were taken as co-founder of the first SEFI Curriculum Development Working Group, **thus building the advancing wheel of today's SEFI organisational structure!** Here he contributed to more than 20 annual workshops and conferences resulting in proceedings and publications. He was involved as board member and chair of working groups in EU Socrates Thematic Networks for Higher Engineering Education in Europe. As chair of a Special Interest Group he was in charge to develop a **Glossary of Terms** in Engineering Education which was applied in publications of different thematic networks and the **European Network for Accreditation** of Engineering Education **ENAAE**. For SEFI he also expanded the **cooperation with the American Society** for Engineering Education!

Since his retirement in 2003 he was still requested as engineering education senior expert consultant with activities mainly in three areas: Curriculum development, quality assurance and accreditation of programmes and teaching staff development.

Until today, he is engaged in the **field of European Standards for Accreditation** of Engineering Education of Bachelor and Master Programmes, implemented during the Bologna process, for engineering education contributing to the design of the so-called EUR-ACE standards and disseminating the EUR-ACE label, also counselling to projects and programmes in Russia, South Africa, Namibia and the UK.

On **national level** as member of the Advisory Board of the Association of German Engineers VDI, he was in 2007 initiator of the first Quality Dialogue on Engineering Education offered on a bi-annual basis. Just tomorrow it will be continued in the **2021 Quality Dialogue**.

In summary, in all these years he yielded and achieved high national and international reputation in the field of engineering education and teaching in higher education as well as quality assurance and accreditation processes for universities. For you, all this has not been just a profession, but a calling and all colleagues and friends you have met during your activities could share this calling. There are few who have done so much for engineering education, good teaching and learning and curriculum development also, over so long a period as you!

So we can be **grateful** that today, in the face of changing reality at universities and global challenges, you remind us to stay always engaged with our life passions and goals! I am very much looking forward to celebrate this award in person with you!
Thank you!