

Tempus information day for Serbia (Belgrade, Dec 16, 2009)

Summary and conclusions of the workshops

Workshop A: Modernization of curricula – double and joint degrees; interdisciplinary study programmes – experiences acquired within Tempus and recommendations for the ongoing call for proposals

Moderator – Sofija Dukic, Tempus office Serbia

The introductory words were given by Prof. Dr. Vera Dondur, Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. She spoke about basic elements that are used in classification and ranking of HE institutions within Bologna process countries. Besides number of PhD study programme and number of qualifications gained at each level of study programmes, she emphasized as an important element the number of joint, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary programmes offered. This element is linked to the percentage of foreign and exchange students as well as the number of foreign teachers at the institutions. Such programmes, according to Prof. Dondur should be designed in line with labour market demands. Currently there are 5-6 joint programmes being accredited and implemented in Serbia.

Prof. Aleksandra Prasevic spoke about cooperation of Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade with University of Nice «Sophia Antipolis» for the establishment of double degree programmes.

She advised future applicants to start with reaching a consensus within their institutions about providing support for implementing joint programmes as an element of institutional strategy. The other important element according to Prof. Prasevic is a good choice of EU partners – those EU HE institutions with whom successful cooperation existed before and which already launched similar programmes in their countries. Finally, Prof. Prasevic emphasized the importance of having an administrative structure – in their case it is the Administrative centre - that assisted students enrolled at joint programmes and provided support to the teaching staff.

One of the participants of the workshop raised the question of language competences in case of joint programmes, drop-out rate and sustainability of the joint programmes. Prof. Prasevic said that it knowledge of French language had been one of the requirements for enrolment (*for students*) or involvement (*for teachers*) but they also had support from the French Embassy in Belgrade for the organization of additional French language courses. Drop-out rate was small and programme is still on-going at the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade.

Ms Danijela Cekicevic, teaching assistant from the Union University, presented project “Child Rights Education Development: Moldova and Serbia, a programme through which Serbia became part of the European network of Child Rights Masters coordinated by the FU Berlin. Her presentation placed focus on organization of the programme with right balance of theoretical courses at the university and practical experience gained at the relevant state institutions and other organizations that are involved in Child Rights issues. A good combination of content of courses and new methods of work was appreciated by students. Within the programme duration 15 German and Romanian foreign students spent a study period in Serbia while 3 Serbian students stayed in Kluj and London. The Programme included a distance learning component. The programme involved 15 Serbian professors while one Romanian and one UNICEF expert also contributed to the realisation of courses in Serbia.

The experience of Tempus in Croatia with interdisciplinary studies was presented by **Ms Gordana Cukar, National Tempus Office Croatia** (part of AZVO – Agency for Higher Education – in charge, among others, of accreditation of study programmes and recognition of foreign degrees). The first example given by Ms Cukar was the project “Establishing Interdisciplinary Curricula and Center for Postgraduate Studies and Research in Cognitive Sciences in Croatia. The University of Zagreb supported the interdisciplinary approach in the field of cognitive sciences (psychology, psychiatry, neurosciences, linguistics, anthropology, informatics and biology) establishing a centre that gathered teacher from all the cognitive sciences for joint research and programmes. Two scientific institutes are also involved. Previous good cooperation among partners and the involvement of highest universities authorities were taken as a facilitating element for making the centre operational and reducing red-tape.

The second example addressed was the project “ICES – International Center for Entrepreneurial Studies” implemented at the University of Osijek. Within the project a centre of excellence in entrepreneurship was established with a PhD programme in entrepreneurship and innovation at the University. An important objective was to work on the development of the entrepreneurial skills among the staff from all departments i.e. to create a critical intellectual capacity for entrepreneurial education. Croatia has a National council for competitiveness and one of its tasks is the promotion of entrepreneurship skills.

Workshop B: Cooperation with stakeholders - experiences acquired within Tempus and recommendations for the ongoing call for proposals

- Moderator: Ms. Jelena Brankovic, student of European Master in Higher Education
- Introductory words: “Working Together to Put Lifelong Learning Into Practice”, Prof. Dr. Verica Babic HERE team, and “New Approaches to Educational Innovation” Prof. Dr. Søren Ehlers, University of Aarhus, Denmark
- Good practice example: project “Ecological Training Courses for Capacity Building of Local Communities in Serbia”, Mr Goran Boskovic, University of Kragujevac

The aim of the workshop was to offer an opportunity to its participants to learn more about practices and possibilities existing within the third type of TEMPUS projects – higher education and society, both Joint Projects and Structural Measures. Professor Babic and Mr. Boskovic from the University of Kragujevac, and Prof. Ehlers, from Aarhus University in Denmark presented their experiences with how TEMPUS has contributed to strengthening the higher education – industry links. In presenting the TEMPUS project Developing Lifelong Learning Framework in Serbia, Prof. Babic focused on the role of stakeholders in the process of composing a consortium, while Prof. Ehlers stressed the importance of the “third role” of universities and their active participation in meeting the needs of the environment. Mr. Boskovic presented the activities within the TEMPUS project on “Ecological Training Courses for Capacity Building of Local Communities in Serbia”, which represents an example of a TEMPUS project involving cooperation between universities and municipalities with the aim of local capacity building in the field of ecology.

The second part of the workshop consisted of the discussion on the issues of lifelong learning and the role of universities in society, with the focus on the current trends with respect to the nature of universities.

Workshop C: “Participation of professional colleges in Tempus and networking with guests from EU”

Moderator: Mrs. Marija Filipovic Ozegovic, Tempus Office Serbia

The guests from EU were Mr. Geert De Lepeleer, International Relations officer, Ka-Ho Sint-Lieven University college, Belgium and Prof. Dr. Horst Lazarek Technical University Dresden Germany. They presented main features of vocational higher education system in their countries and their institutions.

It is important to stress that there is a clear difference in learning outcomes and competences between academic and professional bachelor in these countries. The potential employers have the clear expectations from both types of bachelors which are recognised by the labour market. National qualification framework is developed in both countries and it would be useful for Serbia to use their experiences, especially regarding vocational higher education.

Ka-Ho Sint-Lieven University college and Technical University Dresden are open for cooperation with universities and professional colleges in Serbia.

D. Erasmus Mundus – how to prepare applications for student exchange networks and joint degree programmes

Moderator: Ms. Jasmina Gajic, National Tempus Office

Good practice example: Erasmus Mundus Master programme in improvement in Astrophysics

The introductory word on how to apply in Erasmus Mundus programme has been given by Jasmina Gajic. During the presentation there were questions on how to apply in Action 1 and Action 2 in EM. Representatives of universities in Serbia wanted to know what kind of benefits their institutions can have from participating in this programme. The potential applicants also found as interesting topic for the discussion how to encourage students from EU to study at one of the universities in Serbia especially through cooperation projects in EM Action 2 (former External Cooperation Window). The question was placed about how many EM action projects would be approved for Western Balkans in Action 2 in the current Call for proposals.

The second part of the workshop was dedicated to the presentation of the first approved Erasmus Mundus master course with participation of a HE institution from Serbia. Dragana Ilic, contact person for Erasmus Mundus programme at Faculty of Mathematics, University of Belgrade presented the preparation phase of application for EM master programme. She gave useful advice on how to prepare a good application and how to communicate with other partners, what to read before becoming involving in such a programme. Then she explained how the project will be implemented both at other consortium universities as well as at the University of Belgrade. The discussion in this part of workshop was directed mostly towards the accreditation process of EM master course in Serbia.