



Tempus



Tempus project- 517200-1-2011-1-BE-TEMPUS-SMGR
Establishing and capacity building of the Southern Serbian Academy and the National Conference for Vocational Higher Education (ECBAC)

REPORT ON THE 10th MEETING HELD IN KRUŠEVAC
MAY, 2014

The tenth consortium meeting within the implementation of the TEMPUS ECBAC 517200 project entitled ***Establishing and capacity building of the Southern Serbian Academy and the National Conference for Vocational Higher Education*** was held in Kruševac, 14th -15th May, 2014. The host of the meeting was the School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac in Serbia. The meeting was attended by the representatives of KU Leuven from Belgium (Andre Govaert and Geert De Lepeleer), University of Aalen, Germany (Nichola Adams), IPP Porto (Monica Vieira) as well as the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Kruševac (Aleksandar Vasić, Zoran Vasić and Ivan Tomić), School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot (Sanja Kovačević, Danijela Vidanović and Marina Milanović), College of Agriculture and Food Technology in Prokuplje (Nikola Stolić and Ivica Stančić), College of Textile in Leskovac (Nebojša Ristić and Miroljub Đelić), School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac (Mladen Nikolić, Nebojša Arsić and Vesna Milovanović), High Medical School of Professional Studies in Čuprija (Milan Sretenović, Antić Dragan and Tatjana Simović), The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš (Dejan Blagojević, Aleksandra Boričić, Radomir Cekić and Danica Milošević), School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje (Nenad Janjić, Zoran Janjić and Nebojša Dimitrijević), Business Technical College of Vocational Studies (Ljubica Diković) and Railway College of Vocational Studies in Belgrade (Dragica Jovanović). The meeting was not attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the National Tempus office. The representative of the Student Conference of Academy of Professional studies, Alija Salkunić, the vice- president of the (hereinafter) Student Conference was present.

The first presentation on the agenda was the presentation of Mr. Dejan Blagojević from the School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš who informed the participants about the Legal Framework to realize the Academy. Professor Blagojevic stated that the four services for QA, IR, SS and ICT had done a great work in the meantime and he especially showed his satisfaction with the work of the QA service which managed to harmonize a set of questionnaires and to prepare two rulebooks on Quality assurance to be used at the level of the Academy. Once again professor Blagojevic said that the set of standards for the accreditation of the Academy was prepared, which is a very important document requested by the European Commission after the monitoring visit.

Then Mr.Geert De Lepeleer informed the participants about further actions that we as the project partners should take. After the monitoring visit of the National Tempus office in October 2013 we received a feedback from the European Commission which recommended that certain new activities should be undertaken due to the fact that the National Conference of Academies was established prior to the

commencement of the project and that this institution is not willing to take part in the project implementation. One of the recommendations was to alter some of the work packages (especially WP5) and introduce new activities which would be especially designed for the Student Conference as a new ECBAC project partner and the schools in Belgrade, Uzice and Subotica which should take a more active role in the project. Whereas the Student Conference should provide help in organizing student fairs in Niš, Belgrade and Čuprija, the three mentioned schools apart from participation in *student fair* organization should draft a model for career planning and take part in internal and external dissemination activities. Once again, Mr. De Lepeleer informed us about the importance of implementing internal and external dissemination activities by all the project partners since they are crucial for the sustainability of the project results. Also, it was stated that a long-term marketing and business plan must be defined as soon as possible, that the equipment should be purchased immediately and that the set of standards for the accreditation of the Academy must be clearly defined in a short notice. Mr. Geert De Lepeleer emphasized that he had sent the request for the project prolongation up to 30th June 2015, together with a substantially modified work plan (where WP5 has been redrafted), improved Logical Matrix Framework and the revised budget table. We are still waiting for the feedback from the European Commission on the prolongation results.

Next was the presentation of Mr. Andre Govaert who talked about dissemination and valorization of projects, with the special focus on the DIVA project which was especially designed to deal with these issues. This presentation was a very useful example of good practice and is a model of dissemination activities that should be followed by all of our project partners.

Afterwards, 7 schools from Serbia presented the results of their internal dissemination activities. The school from Pirot did that during the previous meeting in Leskovac so the representatives from Niš, Kruševac, Čuprija, Prokuplje, Leskovac and Vranje each gave a short account of the activities undertaken by their institutions. All of these dissemination activities were attended by the teaching and non-teaching staff members of these higher education institutions and some of the dissemination activities of certain schools were attended by the students and external stakeholders as well.

During this part of the meeting, the school from Niš presented a draft for the ECBAC Tempus leaflet which is to be further improved after hearing comments of the project partners. Also, the school from Niš used the opportunity to present the ECBAC project poster which had been presented for the first time during the Trend conference on Kopaonik and after that on the diploma awarding ceremony in the school in Niš. Once again, the director of the school from Niš informed the public that the ECBAC radio had been launched and that all the partners should give their contribution to setting up a one week program for the radio. The School in Niš stressed that their students also played an important part in dissemination activities. They gave their contribution in setting up the ECBAC radio, organizing events and designing the ECBAC project's website. The director of the school in Niš added that the School Council is regularly informed about the progress made on the project through reports that are submitted by the ECBAC team members. The Council has also been informed about the Comparative analyses document, new sets of questionnaires and changes in the quality policy proposed by the ECBAC team.

Since the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Kruševac devised a special template for dissemination activities which contains various information on the type and the course of the activities organized as well as the aimed target groups, it was agreed that this template should be sent to all the project partners in Serbia so that they could keep records of all of their dissemination activities in an organized and systematic way. Also, it was agreed that the presentations on dissemination activities of each school will be placed on the website of the ECBAC project together with the promo material. Facebook profile and the youtube channel for the ECBAC project were also activated and are going to be updated with all the relevant project material, photographs and video clips. The plan is also to start up an e-newsletter whose content is also going to be prepared by all the project partners together. Each school also has a task to collect all the photos, video and magazine clips from the local TV stations and

local printed media which are then going to be put together on the ECBAC website in one place in order to be available to all the users of the site. In this period, all of the eight Serbian partners are involved in promotional activities of their schools to attract potential students and each school is using this opportunity to conduct dissemination activities about the ECBAC Tempus project as well.

After these presentations of Serbian partners, the representative of IPP Porto, Monica Vieira and the representative of Hochschule Aalen, Nichola Adams talked about the internal and external dissemination activities in Portugal and Germany respectively both stressing that a higher education institution must have strong ties with the industry, local authorities and local communities in order to attract as many new stakeholders as possible and thus ensure sustainability of the project results.

Next was the presentation of the representative of the Student Conference of Academies of Professional studies who was talking about the structure and the activities of this organization (hereinafter referred to as the Student Conference). The Student Conference has the task to protect the interests of students in the process of higher education and set the common policy for the Student Parliaments of all the colleges of vocational studies in Serbia. The Student Conference is a non-profit organization with the status of a legal entity which has the head office in Kragujevac and accompanying seven regional centers. Members of the Student Conference are all the Student Parliaments of the accredited colleges which delegate one representative to the Student Conference sessions. One of the responsibilities of the Student Conference is to deal with the common interests of students to improve higher education in Serbia, coordinate the work of the Student Parliaments and represent the interests of students at the international level but also to take part in external quality evaluation of higher education institutions and the accreditation process. The Student Conference has close cooperation with the National Conference of Academies for Applied Studies, the National Conference of Universities and the Student Conference of Universities of Serbia. In 2013, the work of the Student Conference was focused on solving the problem of unemployment of the students with the diploma of vocational studies, recognition of diplomas, recognition of their students by the National Employment Service, reinforcement of the individual Student Parliaments and the introduction of vocational master studies.

Next was the presentation of Sanja Kovačević from the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot who gave an overview of the activities that have been done by the IRO office so far based on the action plan of this service. So far the team responsible for internationalization has prepared the workplan and the financial plan for 2014 and the IRO rulebook on student mobility which still has to be adopted by the Teaching councils and has gone through the preparation for the Erasmus + projects. Translation of the syllabi and curricula is still in progress, the English language course is still running while international standards are being implemented in the existing curricula. First international cooperation agreements are going to be signed by the end of 2015, which is a more realistic plan while info brochures for incoming and outgoing students are going to be printed by the end of June 2014. The IRO office is planning to establish the contact with the Czech Embassy, to organize soft skill and intensive language courses in due time to prepare students for mobility programs and prepare video clips as promotional material. Also, the IRO team reminded the partners to get their PIC numbers at the ECAS site so that they can be considered for Erasmus programs.

The IRO team was the only one which prepared the set of KPIs. Right now, the IRO team proposes the following six indicators to be monitored: **1. encouraging contacts between students with colleagues and peers abroad, 2. signing bilateral agreements, 3. maintaining and increasing the number of outgoing students, 4. maintaining and increasing the number of incoming students, 5. exchanging faculty and 6. English taught modules.** It was added that another KPI must be introduced. This KPI no.7 would focus on harmonization of the curricula among Serbian and European higher education institutions in order to make internalization at home possible. This means that all the students who do not have a chance to go abroad through exchange programs can stay at home and learn the same kind of material like their peers abroad. This can also imply studying from the books written in some of the foreign languages or organizing lectures

of visiting professors which will just help students get a broader picture of educational trends abroad. In conclusion, this team stresses that it is essential to have people to people contacts in order to establish strong international cooperation and organize mandatory English language courses for the teaching staff to prepare them for teacher mobility programs. Also, students and the Student Parliament must be well informed about all the activities of the IRO and be involved in them.

Afterwards, Nikola Stolić a member of the QA team from the college of Agriculture and Food Technology in Prokuplje presented the results of this team's work which followed after intensive internal meetings of the team during four sessions in Niš. The outcomes of this fruitful work are the adapted and harmonized questionnaires for 1. **freshmen**, 2. **students** and 3. **the students who have finished their studies** as well as the **two rulebooks**. These documents have already gone through or entered the procedure to be adopted by the Teaching Councils. Some of the ACAS members are already using these new sets of questionnaires when conducting student surveys in their schools.

Then Mladen Nikolić from the School of Higher Chemical Technology in Kruševac gave a presentation on the special software which can be used by the student services in other schools in order to make their work much easier. This software allows students to apply for exams, search for the exam results, choose elective courses, complete questionnaires, communicate with their professors and do other useful things on-line. This software is going to be improved further on to become even more optional. Right now this model is designed for use at the school level, but the plan is to develop a software which would be used on the level of the Academy.

Professor Dragan Antić from the School of Higher Medical Studies was the next presenter who presented a very complex IT system that could be used by the ICT services. This model was already presented at the consortium meeting in Čuprija, March, 2013.

After consultations in the work group, The ICT service team has proposed the list of equipment that has to be purchased for the smooth running of the ICT system. The equipment includes the following: **IISA, ISA, improvement of ISC, ISA 1 or 2x (server, UPS), ISC 8x (server, UPS, NAT), 36 computers, 8 digital printers and 8 x AP for EduRoam.**

The tendering procedure for this equipment should be started as soon as possible according to the recommendations of the European Commission. The plan is to organize a unique tender for all the members of the ACAS, but each ACAS member will pay for its share in the total amount for the equipment. The school in Niš will be in charge of the tendering procedure. A Commission will be formed from the representatives of each school which will monitor the tendering procedure and give approval for the purchase of the equipment.

In the work group 1, partners were discussing the model of the future Academy, its structure and its responsibilities. The model of the Academy is already envisaged by the Law on Higher Education and the strategy for Education until 2020 so the model that is proposed by the ECBAC team members is completely in accordance with the law. The main precondition for the Academy is that it must perform at least five accredited study programs of vocational studies from at least three scientific or artistic educational fields and this precondition is satisfied by integrating the eight partner schools from the ECBAC project.

The Academy is envisaged according to the Law as an independent institution with the status of a legal entity. This is exactly the model of the Academy that the ECBAC team adheres to following the idea that the members of the Academy should be the accredited colleges of vocational studies which will retain their status of a legal entity within the Academy.

There are 12 integrative functions that the Academy should be in charge of according to the Law, but its greatest contribution should be in the area of quality assurance and control, international cooperation, strategic planning, investment planning and the establishment of a unique information system. In its organizational structure, the Academy should have five bodies responsible for the work of the Academy, that is the President, The Presidency, Academy Senate, Academy Council, and the Student Parliament of the Academy.

Jurisdiction of the Academy President will be defined by the Statute of the Academy.

The Presidency, apart from the President himself, should include *Directors of the vocational colleges* which are members of the Academy, *the President of the Student Parliament of the Academy* and *the Secretary of the Academy*. Among other responsibilities, the Presidency will also be responsible for establishing the cooperation with the National Employment Service and the stakeholders from the industry.

The Academy Senate as a professional body will consist of 2 teaching staff members from each of the colleges that are members of the Academy. The Senate will be responsible for defining precise criteria for the election of teachers and initiate the programs for applied research among other activities.

The Academy Council will have 22 members in total, that is two teachers from each of the eight colleges within the Academy, one of whom is the representative of the Teaching Council, then three representatives of the Student Parliament of the Academy and three representatives from the rank of founders that will be appointed by the Government.

The founding act for the Academy will be issued by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Once the Academy is established it must be accredited according to the standards for the accreditation of the Academy. The ECBAC team has made a draft for the 12 standards for the Academy that should be presented to the Ministry of Education with the help of the National Conference for Applied studies.

During the second day of the meeting the report on the Trend conference which was held from 24th to 27th February, 2014 on Kopaonik in Serbia was also given since this Conference was one of the external dissemination activities carried out by the members of the ECBAC team. This conference was very significant because it was the 20th conference on development trends in higher education which was a great occasion to present the results of the ECBAC project and to inform the academic public about the goals of the project. Several project partners from the colleges in Pirot, Niš and Kruševac participated in the conference with the three following papers: *Prospects for Staff and Student Mobility at Colleges of Vocational studies in Southern Serbia*, *Overview of Important Segments of Human Resource Management in Higher Vocational Education* and *Defining the Quality Framework for Establishing the First Academy of Vocational Studies in Serbia* focusing primarily on the issues of quality assurance and internationalization. This was a great opportunity to promote the project results and to present promo material in the form of posters but also a great opportunity to have talks about the project issues with the rectors of the Universities in Niš and Novi Sad and to have a meeting with the representatives of the National Council for Science. The entire material from the conference including the agenda, the report on the conference, the photos and the poster presentations of the papers can be found at the ECBAC project's website.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that the school of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Kruševac will be responsible for launching an e-newsletter in Serbian which should be placed on the website of the project. The schools from Niš and Čuprija will make a written report on the Comparative analysis of vocational and academic studies in Serbia and the EU which is later on going to be published.

The date of the next meeting has not been set due to the fact that we are still waiting for the response of the European commission on the results of our request for the project prolongation.

On behalf of the consortium members
Danica Milošević