

Eight consortium members of the project Tempus ECBAC 517200 among which there are colleges of professional studies from Niš, Vranje, Kruševac (2), Prokuplje, Leskovac, Pirot and uprija achieved the following

## AGREEMENT

- That all eight consortium members are ready to institutionally and organisationally connect themselves into a network of consortium members in view of establishing the Academy of Professional Studies
- That they will make their best efforts in front of the Ministry of Education as a project partner and the Government of the Republic of Serbia to form the Academy of Professional Studies, bearing in mind primarily the interest of the students in accordance with the Strategy of higher education in Serbia until 2020.
- That they shall encourage establishing of the legal framework for the accreditation of the said Academy of Professional Studies, considering the fact that currently there are no defined standards for the accreditation of the Academy of Professional Studies accepted by the said consortium members
- That they shall offer the standards for the accreditation of the Academy of Professional Studies defined through the realisation of the Tempus ECBAC project to the Commission for Accreditation
- That, upon establishing legal frameworks, they shall officially become the members of the Academy of Professional Studies according to the following model:

### *Establishing of the Academy*

Eight colleges of professional studies of Southern Serbia, which are relatively small and incoherent units, launched the initiative to institutionally and organisationally connect themselves and thus strengthen their capacities by means of integrating into an Academy of Professional Studies. Through this act a critical mass is to be formed, such that allows the colleges of professional studies to realise their mission within the system of higher education, first and foremost by improving the quality of higher education, by rationally using the available equipment and by developing educational processes in accordance with the standards of higher education. These colleges have been accredited for more than 30 study programmes in 4 scientific fields, thus fulfilling the legal requirement for establishing the Academy of Professional Studies (in order to form an Academy one needs at least five study programmes in at least two scientific fields).

The founding act and the Statute of the Academy define the status of the Academy as an independent higher education institution, as well as the status of higher education units

within the Academy. It also appoints the Council in the process of founding and the person responsible.

### **Integrative functions of the Academy**

The Academy of Professional Studies provides a full autonomy and common grounds in the following areas:

1. Strategic planning
2. Defining study programmes
3. Quality management
4. Teaching staff election
5. Issuing diplomas and diploma supplements
6. The policy of student enrollment
7. International co-operation
8. Planning and investment
9. Engagement and employment of the teaching staff
10. Development of a unique IT system
11. Student Service
12. Research and Development

### **Autonomy of the colleges of professional studies**

Colleges of professional studies as higher education institutions keep their full autonomy and social responsibility as legal entities in the following domains: adoption of the Statute and other general acts, election and removal of the directors, election of the Council members, forming of college bodies, managing one's own resources and revenues, deciding upon those issues concerned with the realisation of the teaching process, scientific and artistic work, as well as work regarding research. The colleges propose and actively participate in making decisions on all integrative functions of the Academy.

### *Academy activities*

Academy of Professional Studies realises the following levels of education: basic, specialist and master professional studies (pending). The first level of education are the basic professional studies, and the second level are master professional studies which last for two years realised in those fields in which the institutions achieve remarkable results in applied and development research, and specialist professional studies which last for one year.

### *Academy bodies*

-Leadership body of the Academy is the Council of the Academy

-Managing body of the Academy is the Board of directors

-Expert organ of the Academy is the Senate of the Academy

-Student parliament of the Academy is a body representing the students of the Academy.

The Council of the Academy consists of 25 members, out of which there are 16 members from among the representatives of the Academy, 3 members who are representatives of students, 3 members representatives of the Government as the founding body and 3 members, representatives of the work fields.

The Senate of the Academy consists of the Board of directors and one representative from the colleges, members of the Academy.

Student parliament of the Academy consists of 16 members, 2 representatives of every college member of the Academy.

### *Financing of the Academy*

Academy is financed through the means procured by the founder, or through its own funds (personal revenues), gifts, donations, sponsorship and other sources of income acquisition.

### *Strategic goals of the Academy*

1. By applying this model of integration into the Academy the colleges improve their functionality, keep their autonomy and increase their social responsibility. This model offers the possibility of development and a long-term survival of the said colleges which represent an important asset in numerous cities, because they are mostly the only higher education institutions in these cities. Such is the case with Puprija, Prokuplje and Pirot.
2. Academy provides the possibility for students to connect amongst themselves, to cooperate more closely, to become more visible on the labour market and thus have less trouble finding a suitable employment.
3. Academy encourages the efficiency and rationality when it comes to the use of expensive equipment which is equally available to every member regardless of the location.
4. Integration creates a critical mass in the official bodies, especially in those which decide on study programmes, teaching staff election and study conditions and rules.
5. Integration creates possibilities for common participation in national and international projects. It is more likely that an institution shall participate in a project within the Academy, than individually.
6. Academy of Professional Studies encourages the creation of multidisciplinary study programmes of basic professional studies, as well as joint master study programmes.
7. Integration creates the conditions for the development of a long-term co-operation with the economy and the possibilities for a practical training of students, i.e. that the colleges of professional studies realise their mission within the system of higher education so that students are capable of applying the acquired knowledge.

..... Consortium members