



## 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 9<sup>th</sup> MEETING HELD IN LESKOVAC JANUARY, 2014

The ninth 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 Leskovac, 29<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> January, 2014. The host of the meeting was the College of Textile in Leskovac, Serbia. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Kaho Leuven from Belgium (Andre Govaert and Geert De Lepeleer), University of Aalen, Germany (Nichola Adams), as well as the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Kruševac (Aleksandar Vasić and Ivan Tomić), School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot (Sanja Kovačević and Marina Milanović), College of Agriculture and Food Technology in Prokuplje (Nikola Stolić and Ivica Stančić), College of Textile in Leskovac (Nebojša Ristić, Miroljub Đelić, Đorđe Miltenović, Suzana Đorđević, Miodrag Đorđević and two students), School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac (Mladen Nikolić, Nebojša Arsić and Vesna Milovanović), High Medical School of Professional Studies in Ćuprija (Milan Sretenović, Antić Dragan, Gordana Knežević and Tatjana Simović), The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš (Dejan Blagojević, Aleksandra Boričić and Danica Milošević), School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje (Nenad Janjić and Damjan Stanojević). The meeting was not attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the National Tempus office.

After the welcoming speech of the director of the College of Textile, Mr. Nebojša Ristić, Mr. Andre Govaert briefly presented the items of the agenda and introduced slight changes in it.

When the report on the meeting held in Prokuplje in November 2013 was unanimously approved of, it was proceeded with the presentations which were planned for the first day of the meeting.

Information on the legal framework to realize the Academy was given by professor Dejan Blagojević from The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš.

In his opinion, crucial activities in the action plans for the Academy are to make amendments to the statutes of the ACAS members and to sign declarations on implementation of a unique policy in the defined areas, which are assignments that still have to be finished. Also, further amendments to the financial plans of the ACAS members are necessary in order to take into account the needs of the four services of the Academy.

In the meantime, the draft for the standards for accreditation has been prepared. The services for QA, SS, ICT and IRO have already started implementing the activities which were stated in their action plans. There has been a meeting with the representatives of the Chamber of Economy from Niš, but more meetings of similar kind are to be organized. Actually, it is absolutely necessary to organize more round tables with the stakeholders from different districts in Serbia, as professor Blagojević says. Several roundtables with Student Parliament representatives from different regions have also taken place and more of them are to follow in the future period.

In addition, the request has been sent to the Ministry of Education for additional interpretation of the articles 34, 47 and 48 of the Serbian Law on Higher Education. Further more, the procedure to include The Student Conference as the project partner has already been started.

Dissemination activities have also been done in the last period. The ECBAC E-radio has been launched, a draft for leaflets has been prepared and the promotion of the project results will be done during the TREND conference, a conference devoted to trends in higher education which will be held in the end of February, 2014.

After this presentation, the representatives of the IRO team, Mrs. Aleksandra Boričić from The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš and Mrs. Sanja Kovačević from the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot presented their action plan and the results of the work done so far.

They stated that the teams for IRO were selected and that the rulebook for IRO, which still has to be adopted by the College councils has been completed. Intensive courses of foreign languages are currently running. Translation of curricula and course syllabi is taking place. Preparations for the project Praxis have been started as well as the preparations for the new Erasmus + programme. However, the financial plan still has to be considered. According to the opinion of the IRO team, it is of great importance to start with the implementation of international standards within the existing curricula.

The IRO team also states that one of the important activities in the near future is to organize staff and student visits and exchanges within the Academy but also to start as soon as possible with staff and student mobility programmes through the EU projects. The team provided a list of new, more precise names of the ACAS colleges in English.

The representative of the team for QA, Mr. Nebojša Arsić from the School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac gave a presentation on what has been done within the area of quality assurance according to the action plan so far. Once again it has been stated that the mission of the QA service is to make the Academy recognizable at the regional, national and the global level for the quality of its teaching process and the quality of studying. The vision of the QA service is to harmonize the strategies of QA and the action plans of the Academy with the national standards in higher education and the parameters of studying quality in the EU. One of the key processes is thus to harmonize the documents that are necessary for the implementation of the strategy for QA.

To have a functional QA service in the future, it is necessary to organize trainings in QA for the key persons who are going to be involved in it. Also, it is of paramount importance to provide financial resources for the activities aimed to improve the level of quality. Some of the strategic goals of the QA service would be to achieve the same level of the quality of studying as at colleges of a similar kind in Europe, to increase the level of efficiency in studying and make conditions for establishing cooperation with colleges and institutions in Europe. The action plan stresses that the crucial activities of the QA service are to determine the domains of quality assurance, harmonize the normative acts, define and adopt the quality indicators, determine the number and type of surveys and specify their content, form an ALUMNI network at the level of colleges and the Academy and, last but not the least, organize trainings for the responsables in the area of QA.

Next was the presentation of Mrs. Sanja Kovačević from the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot and Mr. Mladen Nikolić from the School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac who participated in the conference on the new Erasmus + programme in Athens 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> January, 2014. The participants could hear brief explanation of the purpose of the new Erasmus programme and get familiar with the idea of the programme, the areas it covers and the possibilities of international cooperation and mobility within this programme. It has been pointed out that there are two types of internationalisation.

Internationalisation at home focuses on distance, blended and digital learning while internationalisation abroad implies student and teacher exchanges. One interesting aspect of this kind of programme is that it makes cooperation possible not only with the European countries but also with the countries from Africa and Asia.

At the end of the first meeting day, the participants were divided in the four work groups with the task to devise key performance indicators for the four services within the Academy. Following excellent instructions and explanations of Mr. Andre Govaert on KPIs, the four working groups finished their tasks successfully. The results of team work were presented during the second day of the meeting.

The team for QA elaborated on one key performance indicator related to the increase in the level of studying efficacy and increase in the studying quality which should be identical to the studying quality in Europe. This indicator can be measured by processing anonymous surveys, based on which it would be possible to get analysis of mean values. This measurement can be carried out twice a year at the end of each semester. It can be done on the level of the Academy and on the level of each individual college.

The team for IRO focused first on the domain for encouraging contacts between students with colleagues and peers abroad. This key performance indicator can be measured by means of student questionnaires. The aim would be to increase the number of international contacts for 20% by 2020. This measurement can be taken once a year at the level of the Academy, colleges and the study programmes. The potential improvement plan for this KPI is to introduce more language courses, intensify the IRO promotion and organize student trainings for application procedures.

The second goal of the IRO team which has been elaborated was the issue of signing as many bilateral agreements as possible. The measurement of this KPI will logically focus on the number of signed agreements (active, new, renewed) and could be done once a year at the level of the Academy and colleges.

The team for IT service elaborated on one KPI, concerning the availability of IT equipment. The measurement of this KPI will be done once in three years during the self-evaluation procedure at the level of colleges, IT service and the Academy. Once in three years it will be checked if the standard (20 computers) is fulfilled.

The team for Student service pointed out that there are 4 areas that are of particular importance for the student service. Namely, the SS should pay particular attention to the studying conditions, student welfare, career planning and social life of students.

1. Good quality studying conditions imply the possibility of tutorship, rewarding of gifted students, availability of IT equipment, good library resources, and accessible literature. All these key performance indicators are quantitative and can be measured by calculating the number of, for instance, professors available to provide tutorship, the number of computers used at a college, number of seats in the library and the number of textbooks available, which can be monitored through the reports (increasing/decreasing) at the level of the Student service office and the Academy.

2. The student welfare domain; however, focuses on student accommodation, student nutrition, health care, and student loans. With the exception of student nutrition which is a qualitative key performance indicator to be measured according to the HACCAP standard on food quality, all the other indicators are to be measured quantitatively. Of course, the measurement should be done with reference, for instance, to the Law on student standards and the Law on student health care.

3. As far as student social life is concerned, the vision of the SS is to enrich it with various cultural and sport activities but also with possibilities for voluntary and promotional work. These

can be the indicators which can be measured quantitatively within the reports at the level of SS and the Academy.

4. The last but not the least, career planning sector should pay interest in promotion activities, student interviews, students with employment and student scholarships by monitoring these key performance indicators regularly at the level of SS.

After the presentations of the results of the work groups, prof. Dejan Blagojević gave a presentation on the KPIs in the Academy. He stated that some of the KPIs for the Academy would be, for instance, the number of students who enrolled the 1<sup>st</sup> year of studies in 2014/2015, the number of students at the second or higher years of studying per cycle/academic year, as well as the number of integrated study programmes which are accredited. As far as QA is concerned at the level of the Academy, some of the indicators could be the average mark of the teaching staff at institutional and Academy level, the average mark of the studying conditions, the level of employability of graduate students, as well as the level of student and teacher mobility within the Academy. Also, as far as resources are concerned, it can be measured how many references already exist at the institutional and the Academy level as well as what is the level of usage of common resources. For the IRO office it would be important to focus on the trainings of the IRO team and measure the number of joint applications for the EU project calls, teacher-student mobility flows at institutional and Academy level (both outgoing and incoming ones) and the number of bilateral agreements. For the SS it would be important to establish career planning teams, promotion teams and scholarship teams.

Next was the presentation of Mrs. Sanja Kovačević who gave a short report on the internal dissemination which took place at the College of Professional Studies for Pre-school Teachers in Pirot. On that occasion, the employees of the College in Pirot were informed about the goals of the ECBAC Tempus project 517-200 and presented with the project achievements so far.

The College in Pirot also gave a proposal for a video material to be filmed about the ECBAC project in which all the project partners should take part.

At the end of the meeting the participants completed a new, improved questionnaire for the meeting evaluation.

Also, the preliminary agenda for the next meeting has been agreed on. During the next meeting, the participants will have a chance to hear a presentation on dissemination and valorisation prepared by Mr. Andre Govaert and Mr. Geert De Lepeleer. In the meantime, each partner institution in Serbia should carry out internal dissemination in its own institution and prepare a presentation on it for the next meeting. The focus of the next meeting will be on internal and external dissemination activities done so far. Furthermore, during the next meeting it will be important to finalize the models of the four services, their action plans and the relevant key performance indicators for each service. The Student Conference in Serbia is expected to give a presentation on its activities, and the students within the Academy are also invited to give their presentations on the results achieved so far on their part concerning the ECBAC project. Presentations on career planning are also welcome on the agenda for the next meeting.

At the end of the meeting in Leskovac, Mr. Geert De Lepeleer invited Mrs. Sanja Kovačević to a re-training programme in Gent in March, 2014 concerning financial and administrative matters of the project.

It was agreed that the next consortium meeting should take place on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 in Kruševac. The host will be the Chemical Technical College in Kruševac.

On behalf of the consortium members,  
Ms Danica Milošević