

MINUTES

KICK-OFF MEETING

Strengthening of Internationalisation Policies at Universities in Serbia (SIPUS)

544538-TEMPUS-1-2013--1-RS-TEMPUS-SMGR

Venue:	University of Novi Sad, Central University Building, Conference Hall, 1st floor Address: Dr. Zorana Đinđića bb, Novi Sad, Serbia
Time and date:	Friday, 7 February 2014 (10.00 - 18.00h)
Participants:	Urlike Karawagna (UniGraz), Kanita Kovačević (UniGraz), Prof. Dr. Luc François (UGent), Delfien Cloet (UGent), Gábor Czéh (UP), Eszter Sándorfi (UP), Carolina Madeleine (UA), Ines Šuh (WUS Austria), Prof. Dr. Vera Dondur (NCSTD), Prof. Dr. Stevan Pilipović (NCSTD), Prof. Dr. Teodor Atanackovic (NCHE), Prof. Dr. Radmila Marinković-Nedučin (NCHE), Jelena Cimbalević (MEST), Dr. Dragica Koldžin (PSSTD), Marija Filipović-Ožegović (NTO), Milena Škaljac (NTO), Jasmina Pešić (UB), Olivera Mijatović (UNIKG), Prof. Dr. Zoran Nikolić (UNI), Prof. Dr. Ivan Milentijević (UNI), Prof. Dr. Miladin Kostić (SUNP), Prof. Dr. Čemal Dolićanin (SUNP), Doc. Dr. Edin Dolićanin (SUNP), Prof. Dr. Verka Jovanović (SUB), Svetlana Stanišić (SUB), Stefan Perišić (SUB), Tatjana Zajac (NIS), Tamara Šereš (NIS), Natalija Žunar (BINS), Ivana Gočanin (BINS), Prof. Dr. Pavle Sekeruš (UNS), Ivana Vujkov (UNS), Helena Hiršenberger (UNS), Ana Šoti (UNS), Dunja Malbaša (UNS), Dubravka Gavrančić (UNS), Ivana Đokvučić (UNS), Nataša Nikolić (UNS), Milica Nerlović (UNS), Danijela Čirić (UNS).
Apologies:	-

SIPUS PROJECT ACRONYMS: UniGraz (University of Graz, Austria), UGent (University of Ghent, Belgium), UP (University of Pécs, Hungary), UA (University of Alicante, Spain), WUS Austria, NCSTD (National Council of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia), NCHE (National Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Serbia), MEST (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia), UB (University of Belgrade, Serbia), UNIKG (University of Kragujevac, Serbia), UNI (University of Niš, Serbia), SUNP (State University of Novi Pazar), SUB (Singidunum University), NIS (Petroleum Industry of Serbia), BINS (BalkanIDEA Novi Sad, Serbia), UNS (University of Novi Sad). **Other acronyms:** NTO (National Tempus Office, Serbia), PSSTD (Provincial Secretariat for Science and Technological Development, Serbia)

1. WELCOME

DOC. 1

Prof. Dr. Pavle Sekeruš, Vice-Rector for Science and International Relations, University of Novi Sad, greeted the participants of the SIPUS Kick-off Meeting on behalf of the UNS Rector, Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković and introduced the main points of the Agenda. The welcome was also extended by the representative of the Provincial Secretariat for Science and Technological Development of AP Vojvodina, Dr. Dragica Koldžin, who made introductory remarks on the importance of internationalisation in the fields of Higher Education and Science as well as on the support provided to this process by the provincial authorities. Each participant of the meeting presented himself/herself briefly to the rest of the audience before the operational part of the Agenda.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

PPT-UNS

Ms. Helena Hiršenberger, member of the SIPUS core management team at UNS, gave an overview of the most important goals and the intended policy impact of SIPUS. The participants were reminded of the project's background and rationale (phases of HE internationalisation in Serbia), the urgent need for a qualitative leap in the area of internationalisation due to the ongoing lack of strategies and policies at the national and institutional level, as well as the opportunities of Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ that can only be utilized fully by Serbian HEIs if there is a strategic approach to internationalisation at Serbian universities and within the Serbian system of HE and Science. It was especially emphasized that SIPUS has a two-fold impact: national and institutional, and therefore both national and institutional outcomes that will work in synergy. SIPUS also brings the cross-cutting concept of internationalisation to all sectors, structures and processes at Serbian universities and raises awareness of the needs, benefits and opportunities of internationalisation.

3. PRESENTATION OF SERBIAN PARTNERS: POLICY LEVEL

The presentations of the SIPUS partners started with the brief descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of Serbian institutions which are the key players and stakeholders in the process of internationalisation at the national level.

The presentation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia was delivered by Ms. Jelena Cimbalević on behalf of the State Secretary, Dr. Zoran Mašić. Ms. Cimbalević pointed out that in October 2012, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia until 2020, which promotes the internationalization policy in higher education (internationalization of academic studies, more study programs in foreign languages, increase of the number of joint study programs with foreign universities, increase in the mobility of teachers across the countries of EHEA, intensive cooperation within Erasmus + and Horizon 2020, etc.). Some of the existing aggravating circumstances on the path to the effective implementation of internationalization in higher education were also mentioned: the Law on Higher Education does not comply with the Lisbon Convention; granting residence permits to foreign students has obstacles; there is a problem with the recognition of diplomas obtained abroad (professional and academic recognition), problems of student visas, low provision of scholarships and accommodation for foreign students. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development will assist and contribute to the work within the SIPUS project in the domain of its responsibility and with issues of national importance. Prof. Dr. Teodor Atanacković presented the National Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Serbia on behalf of its President, Prof. Dr. Srđan Stanković. Prof. Dr. Vera Dondur described the activities of the National Council of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, with particular emphasis on internationalisation as one of the key dimensions in designing and proposing strategic approaches to scientific and technological development and its implementation (future action plans).



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4. PRESENTATION OF EU PARTNERS

PPTs (EU partners)

EU partner representatives presented the main facts and figures related to their university, with particular emphasis on the scope, quality and features of their ongoing process of internationalisation in higher education and research. Prof. Dr. Luc François presented the University of Ghent, Ms. Kanita Kovačević presented the University of Graz, Mr. Gábor Czéh presented the University of Pécs, Ms. Carolina Madeleine presented the University of Alicante and Ms. Ines Šuh explained the types of priorities that guide WUS Austria in its main activities and projects. The presentations were a valuable part of the Agenda, both as a starting point at which partners got to know each other better as well as an initial discussion forum (initial questions) on the similarities, differences and complementarities of the process of internationalisation in different educational systems and at different institutions.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT, REPORTING AND NTO MONITORING

PPT (NTO)

Mrs. Marija Filipović Ožegović, Head of the National Tempus Office of RS, informed the participants on the important issues of Tempus project management, reporting and NTO monitoring, with useful information regarding the commonly encountered challenges. Mrs. Filipović-Ožegović also provided answers to the questions asked by the project participants regarding various aspects of national taxation, financial reporting and financial auditing.

6. PRESENTATION OF SERBIAN PARTNERS: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

PPTs (RS partners)

Serbian partner representatives presented the main facts and figures related to their institution, with particular emphasis on the current state of internationalisation at the institutional level and the activities oriented towards enhancing the scope and quality of internationalisation. Prof. Dr. Pavle Sekeruš presented the University of Novi Sad, Jasmina Pešić presented the University of Belgrade, Olivera Mijatović presented the University of Kragujevac, Prof. Dr. Zoran Nikolić presented the University of Niš, Doc. Dr. Edin Dolićanin presented the State University of Novi Pazar, Doc. Dr. Svetlana Stanišić presented Singidunum University, the only private higher education institution in the SIPUS Consortium, Tatjana Zajac presented NIS - Petroleum Industry of Serbia, and Natalija Žunar presented BalkanIDEA, the student voice in SIPUS.

7. PRESENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT WORK PACKAGES 1, 2 & 3

PPTs (WP leaders)

WORK PACKAGE 1 - University of Ghent, Belgium

Mrs. Delfien Cloet gave a short overview on the activities foreseen within WP1 since Ghent University is the WP leader. The presentation focused on the two main outputs:

- In-depth analysis and assessment report of the current national framework underpinning internationalisation in Serbia => conducted by the University of Novi Sad + input from Serbian partners;
- A detailed comparative study on existing national legislatives for internationalisation of HE and research in EU partner countries (Belgium, Austria, Hungary and Spain) and Serbia, with clear references to the appropriate EU strategies => conducted by Ghent University + University of Niš & Serbian HEIs.

Initially, the University of Alicante was not foreseen (in the application) to contribute to this activity by providing a report on Spanish national legislative when internationalization is concerned, therefore the University representative is to confirm their participation at a later date, since their input is considered to be rather valuable.

The University of Novi Sad, as a coordinating institution, will consider the reallocation of funds within the budget line referring to this activity in favour of University of Alicante and confirm it, in case University of Alicante agrees to make a contribution to this activity. The results of the analysis and the comparative study will serve as the basis for the study visit to Ghent University.

Ms. Ivana Vujkov suggested a template for these reports to be created by coordinating institutions (Ghent and Novi Sad) tackling all the topics that would be presented in the main report, so as to get uniform information from EU partners. The report would comprise two perspectives: general outcomes (government input) and student perspective (established centres, funding schemes, capacity building and improvement of existing services).

There was a discussion on the type of data that can be provided by different EU partner HEIs. Unlike Karawagna from the University of Graz noted that internationalisation is not regulated from the level of the state, at least not in specific detail, but it is rather a matter handled by Austrian universities themselves. Prof. Dr. Luc François suggested that each EU partner should contribute with the information they were able to provide, since the legal framework differed from country to country. Therefore, instead of a template, a questionnaire dealing with the institutional and national framework for internationalisation could be developed and could serve as an adequate method for data collection.

The deadline for creating the questionnaire should preferably be the end of February, 2014, while the main report would be created until the end of April/middle of May 2014.

It was also mentioned that SIPUS project should have close cooperation with the FUSE project (coordinated by the University of Niš) when it comes to data on internationalisation at Serbian universities.

This was followed by the discussion referring to the dates for study visit of Serbian partner institutions to Ghent University, when the Ghent University representatives proposed **the visit to be conducted in the week of June 16, 2014.**

The content and design of this study visit will be directly related to the key challenges identified in the two above-mentioned documents.

After the transfer of adequate expertise, the work on drafting the key national documents will be launched by the National Councils:



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- Standards for accreditation of joint and double degrees with foreign partners
- National strategy on academic mobility and recognition of degrees
- National strategy on internationalisation of higher education and research.

Prof. Dr. Vera Dondur pointed out that there is a gap between these strategies, since none of the universities in Serbia have their own general strategies tackling all the aspects of university development (financing, mobilities, human resources etc.), which would be the reference point when creating national strategies.

In addition to this, a unique information point will be established on all national funding schemes supporting outgoing mobility, as well as national guidelines for incoming mobility of students and scholars will be produced serving as a quality benchmark for Serbian HEIs (incl. accommodation, arrivals-departures, admin-academic support etc.).

Mrs. Marija Filipović-Ožegović informed all the attendees that there is a new initiative *Study in Serbia* launched jointly by National Tempus Office and Ministry of Education which is complementary with this project activity, therefore a mutual cooperation in this domain is also possible.

In conclusion, the following deadlines were confirmed:

- A1: Reports on existing national legislatives by 31/05/2014
- A2: Study visit in Ghent by 16/06/2014
- A3: Accreditation standards for joint/double degrees by 31/03/2015
- A4: National strategy on mobility and recognition by 30/06/2015
- A5: National strategy on internationalisation of HE&R by 30/06/2015
- A6: Information on national funding schemes by 31/05/2016
- A7: National benchmarks for incoming mobility by 31/05/2016

WORK PACKAGE 2 – University of Niš, Serbia

Prof. Dr. Ivan Milentijević presented the key activities foreseen within the WP 2: Study visits to EU partner universities: University of Graz and University of Pécs, including focused meetings with the non-university partner WUS in Graz; Establishment of working groups for strategic development of internationalisation in education and research at each Serbian university; Organization of the workshop at the University of Novi Sad on best practices of academic and administrative support for international students and staff and organization of joint and double degrees; Writing guidelines for institutional practices and regulations regarding academic recognition of mobility periods spent abroad. Following this intensive know-how transfer activities, Serbian universities participating in the Project will define two internal strategies for their own specific academic and research environments that will be in line with common national goals: - university strategy on internationalisation of HE and research at universities in Serbia, and - university strategy for increasing the quality and scope of academic mobility.

The study visit of Serbian partner institutions to University of Graz was planned for May 2014. Due to the fact that the study visit to Ghent University was postponed to June 2014, **there was a suggestion the study visit to Graz University might be also postponed for July 2014, however, the date is still to be confirmed by the representatives of University of Graz.**

GENERAL TIMEFRAME SUGGESTED BY UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ :



On the request of the University of Pécs representatives, the study visit of Serbian partner institutions to the University of Pécs was also postponed to 2015, due to their busy schedule and full engagement in current projects the University is running till the end of 2014.

WORK PACKAGE 3 – University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Ms. Helena Hiršenberger presented the main focus of the WP3 referring to the training of staff from Serbian universities for participation in large scale international collaborations; report on conditions for the recruitment of foreign PhDs, teachers and researchers (analysis); Action Plan for participation in ERA; Set of recommendations for university research project management and talent development.

Further on, the deadlines for project activities within this WP were outlined:

Study visits:

- Ghent University, the week of June 16, 2014 (together with A2)
- University of Alicante in April 2015

Analysis of potential obstacles

- Secretaries General from Serbian universities (November 2015 - May 2016)

Workshop on participation in ERA

- UB in February 2015

1. Set of recommendations (May – Oct 2015)
2. Seminars (3) on employability organized by NIS in October 2014, 2015 and 2016



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Prof. Dr. Verka Jovanović suggested the workshop to be held at Singidunum University instead of University of Belgrade which was accepted by all the attendees.

WORK PACKAGE 4 – WUS Austria

After a short introduction on the main activities and competences of WUS Austria in the domain of higher education development, linking HE, industry & society, HE & human rights as well as the services this organization provides on daily basis, Ms. Ines Šuh provided a brief overview of the methodology related to the Project quality control activities performed by WUS:

- Review of the intermediate and final report;
- A template of a questionnaire should be provided for all partner institutions tackling the methodology and their expectations related to each study visit, and deadline for the template creation is preferably the end of February 2014;
- During the regular project meetings, a 30-minute session will be included to enable partner institutions to discuss and express their view of the project progress, assumptions and risks related to upcoming activities and do quality assessment of planning together.

WORK PACKAGE 5 – University of Novi Sad and Singidunum University, Serbia

Ms. Ivana Vujkov presented briefly the main activities that will be performed within the WP 5 with the given deadlines:

Dissemination conferences (annually)

- Feb 2014, Feb 2015, Oct 2016

Press conferences at the end of each year

University fairs

- EAIE in autumn 2014 and 2015
- national Edu Fairs

Website on internationalisation (initial title suggestion: www.GoInternational.uns.ac.rs)

- launch in April 2014

Printing&Publishing promotional materials and PR

- Visual identity

Once again, the cooperation with the by National Tempus Office and Ministry of Education in this domain has been confirmed through the new initiative *Study in Serbia*, as well as the attendance of international education fair EAIE that is taking place in September 2014 in Prague.

WORK PACKAGE 6 – University of Belgrade, Serbia

Ms. Jasmina Pešić gave a short outline of the main activities planned within the WP 6, such as monitoring of the implementation of national and institutional internationalisation policies and strategies, monitoring the increase of participation in larger scale

projects and the quality of international partnerships as well as the developed or reinforced support systems for both incoming and outgoing mobility of students, teachers and researchers.

WORK PACKAGE 7 – University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Ms. Helena Hiršenberger presented the methodology of managing the Project, including both managing the content activities and financial management, through:

- establishing the Project management structure (Steering Committee and Support Team; WP leaders – management & coordination; persons in charge of public procurement at each Partner University), while **the lists of appointed representatives for each body to be provided by the end of February 2014;**
- organizing SC meetings (Feb 2014, Feb 2015, Nov 2015, Oct 2016).

Apart from these, Ms. Hiršenberger pointed out some information vital for the smooth Project realization:

- PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS will be sent to partners after the Tempus meeting in Brussels (February 2014) and the first installment upon receipt of all PAs signed;
- EQUIPMENT - UNS is going to start with Public Procurement procedure in March 2014, therefore specification corrections (if any) **to be provided within the allocated budget from the of February until mid-March 2014.**
- REPORTING - all financial and technical documentation is required to be kept in good order; all national financial requirements have to be accompanied with relevant TEMPUS forms (Conventions, Time sheets, IMRs, etc); Intermediate Report will be submitted in May 2015 (including both NARRATIVE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT)
- EXCHANGE RATE from the beginning of the project until the second installment:
 - **114,619 RSD/EUR**
 - **296,80 HUF/EUR**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

At the end of the meeting, Mrs. Delfien Cloet raised the question related to the engagement of Luc François in the Project since Prof. François is retiring in April 2014. Due to the fact Prof. François has been participating in one more Tempus project at Ghent University (apart from SIPUS) where his expertise is equally valuable as for this Project, Ms. Cloet has turned officially to EACEA asking for the clarification and possible approval of Prof. François's further involvement in these two projects.

The SIPUS project coordination team also promised to support this request and ask for the official approval of Prof. François's engagement.