

Report of the First Study Visit to The University of Niš

The first ESN study visit to the University of Niš took place on November 18th 2014. The delegated members selected to conduct the study visit were Ivana Gočanin and Katarina Vaščić.

The main goals of the study visit were:

- Introducing ESN to the International Relations Office of the University of Niš, student mobility officers and the coordinator of the Erasmus+ programme;
- Providing more information about ESN to motivated students who have shown interest in working in the field of student mobility;
- Holding a presentation about ESN, as a partner on the SIPUS project and an organization that is actively involved in the development of student mobility at Universities in Serbia;
- Presenting different ESN International projects, the benefits of opening an ESN section at universities, promoting youth activism and the importance of youth volunteer work.

The meeting was set with professors Vesna Lopičić, the vice-rector for International Relations, and Vera Marković, the Erasmus+ coordinator for the University of Niš. We also had the pleasure of meeting Jelena Cviljak, student mobility officer in the International Relation Office.

Before the presentations, we discussed the current state regarding student mobility at the University in Niš; professor Lopičić pointed out that there is a lack of interest for youth activism and volunteer work and that there is a gap in communication channels with students. SIPUS and FUSE projects were mentioned as two of the biggest projects and factors contributing to the creation of mobility and internationalization strategies. However, it was established that there is a strong need for an organization such as ESN that will encourage students to volunteer and that will work on informing students about the opportunities for student mobility.

There were 10 students present at the presentation. The goal was to present the followin:

- Goals and projects of ESN;
- The importance of ESN for the development of mobility, youth activism and non-formal education;
- Ways how ESN can benefit the development of student mobility (Buddy Network, mobility promotion, etc.);
- Examples of good practices in cooperation between ESN Novi Sad and the International Relations Office of the University of Novi Sad;
- The essential role of the International Relations Office for the development and support of ESN;
- Means of financing, registration of the organization, ESN meetings, ESN activities, etc;

- Additional questions.

Outcomes

There is undoubtedly a need for forming of an organization such as ESN at the University of Niš. The International Relations office as well as the students are highly motivated to work on creating an ESN section in Niš, with the main of other ESN sections from Serbia, as well as with the support of the University of Niš.

Students present during the presentation showed great interest in working in this field of student mobility, and helping the University promote it and thus work on strengthening of internationalization policies.

In talking with the students, we set up some follow-up activities which included forming of a preliminary local board, contacting different faculties to collect contacts of foreign students in Niš and consequentially reaching out to them, and finally, attending presentations and seminars about Erasmus+ and other types of student mobility.

Further follow-up activities and goals are to be set at the first ESN and IRO meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, 18.12.2014.

Ivana Gočanin
ESN Novi Sad – Section President
Email: esnnsresident@gmail.com
Phone: +381 62 533 470