

CONCLUSIONS OF THE 11TH CONSORTIUM MEETING OF THE TEMPUS ECBAC 517200 PROJECT

On the basis of the opinion and consent provided by the project co-ordinator Mr Geert de Lepeleer, 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 Čuprija, in the meeting held on November 26th 2014 achieved the following

AGREEMENT

- That all eight consortium members are ready to institutionally and organisationally connect themselves into an Academy of Professional Studies
- That they will make their best efforts in front of the Ministry of Education and the Government of the Republic of Serbia to form the Academy of Professional Studies, bearing in mind the Strategy of higher education in Serbia until 2020, the Section on professional studies.
- That they shall encourage establishing of 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 defines 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 common IT system

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 achieves 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 president

Managing body of the Academy is the Council of the Academy

- 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.

President of the Academy is elected by the Council of the Academy for the period of 3 years and from among the professors of professional studies of the Academy

The Council of the Academy consists of 22 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 4 members, representatives of the work fields

The Senate of the Academy consists of the president of the Academy, directors and representatives of the colleges, members of the Academy.

Student parliament 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 Ćuprija, Prokuplje and Pirot. 2.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Academy of Professional Studies encourages the creation of multidisciplinary study programmes of basic professional studies, as well as common master study programmes.

6. 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.

7. Academy provides the possibility for students to connect amongst themselves, to become more visible on the labour market and thus have less trouble finding a suitable employment.

Pirot, 26.11.2014. god

Co-ordinator

..... Consortium members