



REPORT ON THE 3RD CONSORTIUM MEETING IN VRANJE

The third working meeting within the implementation of the TEMPUS ECBAC 517200 project under the title *Establishing and capacity building of the Southern- Serbian Academy and the National Conference for Vocational Higher Education* was held in Vranje on 17th – 18th September. The host of the meeting was the School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje. The meeting was attended by the following EU representatives: Geert De Lepeleer, Andre Govaert and a student Simon Van Hijfte from KaHo Sint Lieven from Belgium, Monica Vieira from IPP in Portugal and Vania Kusworo, a student from Hochschule Aalen in Germany.

The representatives of the Serbian partners at the meeting were the following:

1. School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Kruševac (Ivan Tomić-professor, Vasić Zoran-student service, Vasić Aleksandar-director and a student Danijel Jeremić)
2. School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot (Danijela Vidanović-director, Emilija Popović-professor, Sanja Kovačević-English teacher, and two students Sonja Ćirić and Jelena Vidanović)
3. College of Agriculture and Food Technology in Prokuplje (professors Nikola Stolić and Ivica Stancic, Marija Jovic-English teacher and a student Nikola Ubavić)
4. The College of Textile in Leskovac (Ristić Nebojša-director, Djelić Mirosljub-student service chief, Miltenović Djordje-professor and a student Marko Stojić)
5. School of Higher Chemical Technology in Kruševac (Mladen Nikolić-IT service, Dragan Nikolić-director and a student Milica Milićević)
6. High Medical School of Professional Studies in Ćuprija (Tatjana Simović-professor, Djordje Stevanović-professor, Ljiljana Milović-director, Mirjana Stamenković -vice director, Vesna Miljković- economist and a student Miloš Stanković)
7. The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš (Dejan Blagojević-director, Aleksandra Boričić-professor, Radomir Cekić-secretary, Danica Milošević-English teacher and two students Milan Jevtović and Stefan Nikolić)
8. Health Center in Ćuprija (Ivana Nikolić- a main nurse and Danijela Lukić-a lawyer) as well as the representatives of the host, that is the School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje (Nebojša Dimitrijević- professor,Gordana Bogdanović-professor, Nenad



Janjić-professor, Zoran Janjić-director, Miodrag Stanković-professor, Damjan Stanojević-professor, Nikola Stevanović-student, Andrejević Snežana-student, Petrović Kristina- student)

The meeting was not attended by the representatives of the Ministry of the Education and Science although they were sent an invitation as for the previous meetings. Bearing in mind the topics of the meeting and the focus on the problems and issues which refer to the functionality of the Academy and its organs, it was agreed that the representatives of the Business Technical College of Vocational Studies in Užice, School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Subotica and Railway College of Vocational Studies in Belgrade as well as the representatives of the Regional Chamber of Economy from Niš should direct their time and activities on the second part of the project.

The meeting invitation was sent to the President of the Conference of the Academies of Professional Career Studies in Serbia who could not come due to illness.

The meeting agenda was agreed during the month of August in communication between the consortium members.

Before the commencement of the meeting, Mr. Zoran Janić, Mr. Geert De Lepeleer as well as Mr. Mihajlović, the commissioner of the Pčinja region addressed the local media- TV Vranje and the Vranje papers.

After the welcome speech of Mr. Janić, the director of the School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje, the meeting was addressed by Mr. Budimir Mihajlović, the commissioner of the Pčinja region, who underlined the importance and the role of professional studies in the technical and technological development of the Republic of Serbia.

After that Mr. Geert De Lepeleer presented in short the ongoings and activities in the period from April when the meeting in Kruševac was held until mid September. Dejan Blagojević notified the attendants about the details of the visit of the NTO representatives, during June in Niš, when the monitoring of the performed activities on the project was done. It was concluded on that occasion that the project activities had been carried out according to the plan, but the question of absence of the Ministry of Education and their non-participation in the project implementation remained not answered.

After approval of the meeting report from Kruševac which was held in April 2012, the realization of the planned activities was begun.



A representative from Niš gave a short retrospective view on the dynamics of the implementation of the planned activities, completed 2nd cycle of accreditation, carried out enrollment period as well as the results which had been achieved.

It was determined that the achieved results are good and that they affirm the validity of the idea and the initiative for the establishing of the Academy of Vocational Studies.

A special emphasis was put on the series of thematic lectures which refer to the methodology and referencing of the scientific papers, methods of performing teaching activity, the procedures of carrying out practical training, and the publishing activity. This was conceived as the first set of the activities which have the aim to improve the quality of work of the higher education institutions, improve the existing and set the new procedures of the quality of work.

The attendants were notified that in compliance with the results from Krusevac and by the decision of all the members of the consortium, The Conference of the Academies of Professional Career Studies in Serbia was sent an official invitation in a written form for a full-membership in the ECBAC consortium and was acquainted with the project details, but that it has not given the official answer yet.

After that, the organizational structures, working principles and mechanisms of control and management in the work of higher education institutions were presented by the student organizations Kaho Sint Lieven from Belgium /Simon Van Hijfte/, University of Aalen from Germany /Vania Kusworo/ and IPP from Portugal /Monica Vieira/.

The framework of the student organization, operation procedures, control and management mechanisms in the work of higher education institutions of the professional orientation in Serbia, was presented by the student Milan Jevtović from The School of Higher Technical Professional Education in Niš.

The common conclusion is that the success of a higher education institution depends, to a great extent, on the level of organization and the operation of the student associations as well as their engagement.



After a short break, work groups started with their work with a task to consider the QA framework and define the strategic goals and the action plan on the basis of the achieved results from Kruševac.

RESULTS OF THE WORK GROUPS

During the first day of the meeting three work groups (one student and two teacher groups)were made in order to find solutions for the current issues and problems related to the Academy.

The work group consisting of students was considering issues related to the quality framework of the Student parliament within the future Academy. The students have made the following conclusions:

1. The mission of the Student parliament within the Academy is to take care of the social welfare of students and the economic conditions of students in the following areas: transport, student food- gastronomy, insurance, financial support, support of the cultural-social activities, support of the international experience exchange among students, improvement of professional higher education and creation of opportunities for volunteer work.
2. In order that the mission of the new parliament could be realized, it is necessary to connect students from eight different professional higher education institutions within a special network, so in that respect introduction of video conferences or some other media by means of which it is possible to improve the communication among students is suggested.
3. When it comes to the election of students for the parliament, due to the geographic location of schools and distances, it would be necessary to find a coordinator who will manage to connect students across Serbia by good organizational skills. It has to be someone who is motivated to work, who has excellent communication skills, who is ready to manage students from eight different schools and who is responsible for his own decisions and actions, as well as someone who will represent the Student parliament in a good way. Potential candidates for this role should be searched for at all the higher education schools, while the Student parliament of the Academy will make a decision whom to appoint for such a position.
4. It will be necessary to bring new internal regulations which will be applied for all eight schools, which means that the existing regulations need to be unified, reviewed and improved in order to find the best solution for everyone. Such regulations should give answers which organs to select, how to select the governing board, how to carry out the voting procedure (elections), how to elect members, how to be financed (budgeting), etc.
5. It is very important that each school in the Student parliament has students from each year of studies so that the knowledge and experiences can be passed on.
6. Election of the parliament will be done in the following way. Each school will get 1 vote for every (100, 200 students), which means that the schools which have greater number of students will have more representatives in the student parliament. The president will be elected by simple majority which means that 50% of votes plus one vote will be enough for a person to be elected

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a president. This means that if there are 8 members in the parliament, 5 votes are needed for a person to be proclaimed a president. When selecting the vice-president, the president will not have the right to vote, so other members will make that decision.

7. The work of the parliament will be based on democratic atmosphere, where each person will have the right to state his/her opinion and give his/her suggestions which are going to be discussed. When making a decision it is necessary for it to be unanimous which means that there must be 100% votes on a given proposal.
8. Students who are not the members of the parliament may join sessions and state personal opinions and express their thoughts since the work of the parliament is going to be public. The number of sessions will be decided on the Rule book, and if more sessions are needed, decision on it will be made by all the members together.
9. Once a Rule book is established, students will try to improve their communication with important persons (like school board members or the manager of the transport company) who will help them solve their problems (in cases of disagreements or disputes).
10. The Parliament should be a body which is independent of political beliefs and ideology. The Parliament needs people who are responsible, motivated, who want to be volunteers and give their support and assistance to other students.
11. In the next five years, the Parliament should develop a fully functional student union, obtain new opportunities for higher quality education, or higher education with different approach to studying, improve the student mobility on the international level, as well as the study standards and the standards of student life, improve the cooperation among the Academy members, and change or improve the way of communication to third parties in order to reach its goals but at the same time keep its identity and culture.



Unlike the students who were discussing the issues related to the new parliament, the teaching staff divided in two groups was giving suggestions related to the strategic, operative goals and action plans for the Academy and its services.

The first work group gave suggestions for the following strategic goals: 1. establishing the network of higher education institutions, 2. mobility of students and teachers and improving the international cooperation, 3. integration of the teaching process in order to improve its quality, 4. unique methodology and standards for monitoring and evaluation of the student practical training and 5. insistence on the pending education strategies which would contribute to the implementation of the idea of a professional master and improve the student status at the work field.

1. It is believed that the first aim can be reached by April 2013 when the first results of establishing close cooperation and close network of students and teachers will be seen, by making a special link on the existing Tempus site where teachers and students from different schools can cooperate or arrange the exchange of literature, teaching aids, library resources as well as their

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experiences. Teaching staff and students will be able to use teaching aids in possession of other schools within this type of cooperation. (For instance, the workshop from Vranje will produce wooden toys for the School of Preschool teachers in Pirot). The plan is to set the link as soon as possible and start the exchange of teaching aids.

2. As concerning mobility, it is believed that by the end of October the students will exchange information with the foreign students about the possibilities for student exchange (application forms, procedures, cultural background). By the end of the year, the conditions will be formed for visiting professors and the exchange of experiences of student services. On the local level, the students before the parliament will meet to further develop their action plans. This plan presupposes intensive communication and cooperation and frequent mutual visits.

3. Integration of curriculum is possible at the beginning of the next academic year when it will be possible to adapt it in such a way that all the similar aspects of different disciplines are integrated and practical application of knowledge from different subjects is made possible.

4. In the next two months, new questionnaires and surveys will be made for monitoring and evaluation of the practical training of students, which will be done on the examples of good practice of certain higher education institutions.

5. In the future period, more intensive cooperation with the Conference of Academies of vocational education is planned, which should influence the Ministry of Education and Science to insist on the pending strategic goal to include professional master as a new option in higher education. The action plan would insist on different promotion activities which would stress the difference between academic and professional education.

The second work group defined the following strategic goals: 1. quality improvement in the system of higher professional education, 2. improvement of international cooperation, 3. more efficient use of teaching aids, 4. improvement of the quality standards and 5. joining curricula of the same or similar study programs.

1. It is possible to improve the quality of professional higher education by defining adequate conditions for election of teachers, where each election position is conditioned with min 10 references for the period of five years, by introducing a report about the five-year work of teachers (having in mind that the current situation is such that professors do not have re-elections), by obtaining licences (min 20% of teachers should have them), by increasing trends for obtaining scientific and professional titles by implementation of different projects, by learning foreign languages in the organization of institutions

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at least once a year, by introducing preparation classes one week before the start of the academic year from fundamental subjects for the newly enrolled students, by carrying out internal control of the professional and pedagogical work of teachers at least twice a year and by collecting information from the graduated students (alumni) and their evaluations of the study program quality.

The action plan implies amendments to the rules of teacher and assistant elections, amendments to the working plans and bringing the Rule book about the professional improvement of teachers, assistants and non-teaching staff. In implementation of these activities school directors, school board and the academic council would take a significant part, and it is believed that by June 2013 there would be some measurable indicators such as the Rule book, working plan and reports to rely on.

2. When speaking about intensifying international cooperation, it should be insisted on inclusion in international projects such as CEPUS, ERASMUS, TEMPUS, IPA and strive for membership in EURASHE (The Conference of Academies of vocational studies is their member and it is possible to follow the activities of this organization through them). Apart from that it is necessary to form a common body within the Academy for international cooperation, but also long for membership in international forums.

The President of the Academy and the senate should create teams for project documentation writing and applications at open competitions, educate new teams for project development and make a new organizational scheme and project sistematization. It is expected that the results would be seen by June 2013.

3. More efficient use of resources through member cooperation (min. once a year) would be made easier by creating a data base of resources (staff, equipment, facilities) and defining common needs. The President of the Academy, senate and the council should enable the use of resources to the members by June 2013, which should have a positive effect on saving resources and the quality of teaching at professional studies.

4. Quality standards can be improved by periodical employer reports on the quality of work at least two times a year, by regular periodical analysis of the Rule book for self-evaluation, quality evaluation, the quality of data collecting method, professional improvement of the non-teaching staff (15% of the staff a year) and by receiving a feedback from the graduated students (alumni). To achieve this goal it is necessary to bring a Rule book about professional improvement of the non-teaching staff, create a data base of graduate students, make additions to the annual working plan and organize

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meetings with employers. By February 2013, a new Rule book and new working plan should be brought, and new contracts on cooperation should be made. The President of the Academy, the senate and the council should take an active part in these activities and create an atmosphere in which it would be possible to implement this action plan.

5. In order to join the same or similar studies, it is necessary to make a data base of the same or similar study programs. With this view, it would be necessary to collect data from all the schools, find the common goals of the curricula, educate teachers and carry out the evaluation. It is believed that by February 2013 there would be indicators of success in implementation of this strategic goal such as a created data base, annual working plan, cooperation contracts, all done with the help of the President of the Academy, senate and the council.

During the second day of the meeting, the school representatives from Niš, Pirot, Vranje, Čuprija and Kruševac presented their experiences by giving (already mentioned) lectures which refer to the methodology and referencing of the scientific papers, methods of performing teaching activity, the procedures of carrying out practical training, as well as the publishing activity. The main idea is to prepare brochures on the basis of these lectures which would be the guidelines for the teaching staff in the partner schools.

The procedures of quality management as well as the mechanisms of their implementation in IPP Porto and Kaho Sint Lieven were presented by Monica Vieira and Andre Goavert.

During the second day, the meeting was attended by the representatives of the NTO in Serbia, Sofija Dukić and Nina Sotjanović. Their presence was taken advantage to clarify certain procedural issues which refer to the financial management of the project, as well as the monitoring and the analysis of the efficacy indicators of the project implementation.

Afterwards, the attention was given to the realization of the planned course of the English language and there was a short analysis of the project WEB presentation with additional instructions and guidelines for the details of WEB presentation design and maintenance.

It was agreed that the following meeting should take place in Pirot and that the host would be the School of Higher Professional Education for Preschool Teachers in Pirot in January 2013.

After approval of the conclusion, the meeting was finished.

Vranje 18/9/2012

