**Fostering Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs**

**through Efficient Strategic Planning - IESP**

**3rd PMB Meeting (on-line), 13th November**

**12.00 – 17.00**

**Minutes**

Attendees:

Prof. Danilo Nikolić, University of Montenegro

Prof. Nataša Kostić, University of Montenegro

Prof. Srdjan Redžepagić, University Cote d'Azur

Prof. Eric Nasica, University Cote d'Azur

Katja Cerar, University of Ljubljana

Juan Carlos Garcia Galindo, University of Cadiz

Rafael Vélez Núñez, University of Cadiz

Prof. Milica Vukotić, University Donja Gorica

Sandra Tinaj, University Donja Gorica

Nela Milošević, University Donja Gorica

Bojana Malešević, University Donja Gorica

Prof. Radislav Jovović, University Mediterranean

Milica Kovačević, University Mediterranean

Kristina Ljuljdjuraj, Ministry of Education

Lidija Vukčević, Ministry of Science

Mr Tijana Stanković, Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education

Ana Dragutinović, University of Montenegro

Vladan Perazić, University of Montenegro

Professor Danilo Nikolić, the project coordinator opened the meeting and welcomed the representatives of all project partner institutions. He presented the meeting Agenda which was sent to partners in advance.

In the first part of the meeting draft Internationalization Strategies of three Montenegrin universities as the most significant result achieved during the first year of project implementation were presented.

Draft internationalization Strategy of the University of Montenegro was presented by prof. Danilo Nikolić. The initial documentation for developing draft version of Internationalisation Strategy of UoM were the General Strategy of UoM 2019-2024 and the following documents developed within WP1 of IESP project: Review of EU HEIs models of internationalization, Benchmarking of UoM with UL and Guidelines for internationalisation of Montenegrin universities. An overview of the current state of internationalization was given through: internationalisation of education, internationalisation of mobility, internationalisation in the field of international projects, internationalisation of research and ranking of World's Universities. SWOT Analysis of internationalisation at UoM with the focus on internationalisation of education, internationalisation of mobility – student incoming mobility, internationalisation in the field of international project, international openness to International students/researchers, University networks and Internationalisation of research was presented. In conclusion an overview was given of responsibility for Internationalisation Strategy implementation, financing activities within Internationalisation Strategy and monitoring of implementation of Internationalisation Strategy.

Commenting on the presented draft Internationalization Strategy of the University of Montenegro Professor Juan Carlos Garcia Galindo from the University of Cadiz gave a number of comments and presented some good practice examples from the University of Cadiz to be considered in the planning of internationalization activities:

* When signing bilateral agreements it is better to link them with a mobility agreement or any other specific agreement on specific subject;
* For those areas not covered by Erasmus + a programme the UCA has created a programme with UCA’s own budget, identical to Erasmus in terms of organization;
* UCA also has incoming programme to attract students in those areas where their research is strong – thus it creates ties with partner universities and with supervisors – they later apply for international projects within various programmes
* a programme for attracting talent for research scientists for short stays of minimum 6 months was created and a call was published for certain areas, it attracted researchers who stay 6 months up to 1 year;
* UCA also created a scholarship programme of Research Vice-rectorate with their own funds providing grants for short stays between 3 and 6 months, if a student is in co-tutelle s/he receives more points, thus they are also promoting co-tutelle.
* fund has been created for researchers who can stay from 3 week to 2 months for which the funds are obtained from the budget from the overheads of research projects or other international projects. Regional government also provides funds for internationalization which are used for the same purposes.

Professor Nikolić welcomed all the suggestions for improving the strategy, acknowledging that the ideas of UCA are good.

Next, the draft strategy of the University Donja Gorica was presented by Nela Milošević, assistant prof. at UDG. Prof. Milošević explained the process of drafting the document, which started from the recommendations of IEP, giving an overview of what has been done in the past three years in terms of quantitative and qualitative achievements in education, mobility, science and arts. An overview of education offer was given with focus on programmes in English. Data on bilateral agreements, mobility of students and staff, on publications, international conferences, international and national research projects were shared as well as those on research fellowships, international ranking. Furthermore, SWOT analysis and draft Internationalization Strategy were presented: the strategic internationalization goals, the priority areas: student and staff mobility, quality international scientific research, internationalization at home. For each priority area a set of objectives is clearly defined, based on the desired outcomes but keeping in mind that the goal needs to be reachable. International Strategy promotion and monitoring and the Internationalization Action Plan were presented in conclusion.

The next presentation was by Prof. Radislav Jovovic who gave an overview of the draft of the Internationalization strategy of the University Mediterranean. First an overview of history of internationalization was given followed by SWOT analysis, internationalization strategy mission, vision, objectives and the plan of integration of internationalization objectives supported by adequate structures – offices, capacity building, and support for internationalization of research. An overview of priority areas of internationalization and those responsible for implementation were given. The necessity of providing funding was emphasized.

Professor Juan Carlos gave a general comment that in all presentations the issue of budget was mentioned. He shared the experience of Andalusia where universities are funded by the main government but also by local government. Every year the budget is divided into eight universities and there is a specific part of budget distributed among universities based on the results obtained in previous year- the number of incoming and outgoing students etc. Professor Juan Carlos suggested that this could be communicated to the Government of Montenegro.

Professor Jovovic agreed that it is important to increase the budget for internationalization.

Professor Juan Carlos added that in general the problem of human resources should also be highlighted as they are never enough. He stated that Montenegrin universities count Vice-deans as resources for internationalization – at UCA this is not the case, they are not counted as human resources for internationalization, they are not full time administration, for addressing the task you need administrative staff that is devoted. In the last plan UCA defined and increased the units that were lacking in human resources - they included 7 new people in international office. In the Vice-rectorate for research they have a specific office for internationalization and they could increase human resources, without human resources it is not easy to accomplish the set goals. He pointed out that mobility of administrative staff is also important, not only people from International Office - it is important to support the idea that mobility is important for administration staff but they also have to have the promotion for this.

Professor Nikolic announced the following presentations about implementation of first year activities.

Professor Srdjan Redžepagic presented achievements within WP1. Before starting with the presentation professor Redžepagić introduced his colleague prof. Eric Nasica, Vice-rector of the university who has already actively participated in project activities and will continue to work on the IESP project this the end. Prof. Nasica’s participation is very important for all because of the experience he has and his knowledge; he has joined the project earlier but due to administrative issues could not join the meetings.

The results achieved in the first year of project - from mid November until the end of the first project year were presented. The methodology used to reach the goal of WP1 was mainly related to a thorough review of EU HEIs models of legal and administrative framework in the field of internationalization of education, research and mobility, which has served as a baseline for comparison with Montenegrin HEIs.

Participation of each of EU partner has been significant, but without colleagues from Montenegro it would not be possible to arrive at the point that was reached. Measurable indicators were used that helped to be in line with the project proposal with LFM established in project proposal. Within UCA activities the most important element was the one related to internationalization – in the end it resulted in development of guidelines which will be very important document for Montenegrin HEIs. Through this work elements were identified that will help in internationalization process– after seeing the document of MN HEIs it is evident there is clear visible international vision for developing Montenegrin HEIs.

Due to Covid 19 many activities had to be postponed –some mobilities within WP have not been realized – visit to the University of Ljubljana was realized, those to Nice and Cadiz could not be realized so there were on-line visits instead. Review of internationalization practices was done, some on-line visits were implemented. Unfortunately real mobilities could not be implemented so all has been done virtually, which has produced different impression and results.

The second activity – benchmarking analysis was realized thanks to collegues from University of Cadiz who contributed a lot –physical meeting at UDG to discuss the analysis could not be held.

Katja Cerar gave a presentation of the activities implemented within WP 2 Capacity building for Internationalization through staff training and equipment upgrade.

The University of Montenegro was in charge of equipment procurement. A joint call was published and one bidder was selected. Due to the delay in the delivery the equipment procurement will be a little bit late. As regards development of new web site, the University of Montenegro has conducted the procurement of new web site and selected the suppliers. The University Mediterranean expects to complete the activity by end of January next year. University Donja Gorica has already finished the activity. They have designed the layout and enriched the content with drop-down menu. They prepared brief description of projects and included testimonials of foreign students. They also created informative page in Chinese language. A brochure will be posted on the English version of the web site.

Regarding workshops and trainings, the University of Ljubljana was responsible for organizing training on strategy development. It was organized in June and the aim was to train participants how to prepare the Strategy. It was led by prof. Čater from the University of Ljubljana. In 2021 training on development of inter-cultural competencies is planned and within WP 3 know-how transfer on design of courses in English.

University Cote d’Azur was responsible for organizing training related to internationalization of research and innovation and this was held in June.

Know how transfer related to improving skills of teaching staff to deliver courses in English is under way. English language course for teaching staff has started. All the participants were tested for the course. The minimum level B1 was requested to follow the course.

UDG appointed a team of professors and they intend to organize English courses in January 2021.

Professor Nataša Kostić from the University of Montenegro gave an overview of WP 3.

Development of internationalization strategies and action plans is under way as well as development of supporting documentation to internationalization. Design of catalogues for courses offered in English is planned in the second project year. For development of pilot summer school in English with curricula two faculties of the University of Montenegro – Faculty of Maritime Studies and the Faculty of Tourism have expressed their readiness to organize the summer schools and they have formulated the summer schools titles.

Development of teaching matarials in English is planned for the second project year as well as development of criteria for assessing the quality of internationalization of Montenegrin HEIs.

An overview of WP 7 which is led by the University of Montenegro was given. Several activities have been carried out. By the end of January 2020 project management structures were established during the Kick-off meeting and the meeting in Brussels was attended by the coordinator prof. Nikolić

Project meetings are regularly held, some of them on-line. There is regular e-mail communication with the project coordinator.

First meeting of PMB was held at the Kick-off and there was one more on-line PMB meeting in May when it was decided to carry on with the activities in the on-line mode. Thus all meetings envisaged by the application were held and all other forms of communication were used.

On 9 November there was an on-line meeting of all partners on which occasion the documents that were drafted within WP1 were adopted.

Mid-term report needs to be submitted to EACEA by mid January. All partners have a role in the completion of the project report. Vladan Perazić will prepare it with the coordinator prof. Nikolić and other members of University of Montenegro team. The partners will be required to send relevant information.

External financial audit will be done by the end of second project year.

Discussion on the unused funds for travel ensued conducted by prof. Nikolić.

Vladan Perazić explained that in general, the project participants have the possibility to re-allocate the budget. He also reminded that the individual budget categories cannot be increased for more than 10%. There is another rule. If more than 10% is to be used permission needs to be obtained for this from Brussels. However, if this increase leads to increase of 40% for staff costs of the total budget, it will not be approved.

It was agreed to ask the Erasmus + office on the possibilities to use money that was not spent on travel. Prof. Niokolić suggested to ask National Erasmus + Office Montenegro.

Bojana Malešević from the University of Donja Gorica, leading institution of WP4 gave a presentation of activities implemented within WP 4 – integration of internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs. Work on this WP will start in II project year and will last until the end. The main aim is adoption and implementation of all activities within WP 3 - adoption and implementation of strategic documents, establishment of support center for internationalization, adoption and implementation of courses in English, adoption and implementation of summer schools. All three universities have drafted strategies of internationalization. Implementation of strategies with Action Plans will start immediately after their adoption. Strategies will be distributed to all units. When establishment of language support centres is concerned, at the University of Montenegro one center has been established at the Rectorate, one at the Faculty of Philology in Nikšić. The University Donja Gorica and University Mediterranean have established language support centres within rectorates.

Catalogues of English courses will be presented to Montenegrin governing bodies for adoption, while accreditation is not needed for this activity. Report will be disseminated and distributed to all units

Summer school curricula will be presented to Governing bodies for adoption. Curricula will be disseminated and distributed.

Professor Juan Carlos presented the achievements within Work package 5 relating to QA, which includes the following: Establishment of QA body, Development of Monitoring and Quality Plan and External QA.

QA body was established in January 2020 at the Kick-off meeting, while the Quality and Monitoring Plan was approved in July 2020. Distribution of tasks at UCA was affected by the 4 month sick leave of one project team member, which is why the Monitoring Plan was delayed. The templates for QA were also approved in July.

Professor Juan Carlos urged all the partners to send the missing surveys for the implemented activities and announced a meeting for Quality and Monitoring Plan in June. He also announced that the first report of the Quality Body will be sent to PMB for approval. External quality control will be launched in November and external quality control evaluator will be hired. The impact analysis will start in the second part of project implementation.

The QA board has been established as well as QA documents. The quarterly report was due in September but due to lack of data it was decided to skip that one and merge it with one in November. A QB meeting is scheduled for next week.

As regards WP 6 most of activities are done and for some no quality assessment is needed. Still, most activities can be considered completed. Professor Juan Carlos expressed regret the study visits had to be done virtually but also hoped to have physical visits next year.

Professor Juan Carlos explained it is the responsibility of the organizer to send out the surveys and to analyse the results.

Milica Kovačević suggested it is better to give the link during the session so that the participants can fill in the survey on-line – later they forget about surveys – in general it easier to analyse data in such a way. The surveys received from e-mail are not anonymous – so they maybe are not objective. It was suggested that five minutes at the end of the event in future events should be dedicated to surveys.

Juan Carlos agreed for future events as it will be faster

Milica Kovačević from the University Mediterranean presented the activities implemented with WP6. All these activities have to be implemented throughout the project since the project results need to be communicated to the public –all possible channels of communication must be used.

The web-site of the project was created. UoM is in charge of creating and updating this web-site. All partners have to send different contents in coordination with the coordinator. UoM is doing a good job regarding the web-site. Instagram and Facebook profile have been created and partners are asked to follow them. Also, this is connected with current situation – the social media accounts have to be active, but as there are no attractive events it is a challenge to fill them. University Mediterranen prepared the visual identity of the project. Newsletter has been sent out to the partners. The project and the partners were presented in it and the outcomes so far, but in the future the plan is to make them more attractive with info on education and importance on internationalization. The new edition will be prepared soon. It will be posted on the web-site and the social media accounts.

As for dissemination and exploitation events, all activities in this WP are interconnected. As there have not been any students’ week or some other events, it is difficult to organize everything on-line and to reach partners outside the project. Various activities with different target groups should be used to present the project. Exploitation map will be made and possibilities for continuation of cooperation with the partners will be explored. We can do this not only formally but also through informal communication.

There was a discussion among partners on the contents and concept of the next newsletter.

Wrapping up the meeting the partners concluded that even though the project plan for the first year of its implementation was very ambitious and there was a high intensity of activities, the results achieved are quite impressive, especially considering the fact that they were implemented in the conditions of Covid 19 pandemic.