



ECBAC TEMPUS meeting devoted to the student offices of the consortium members

Date: 20th February, 2014

Meeting participants: Emilija Popović and Sanja Kovačević from the School of Higher Professional Education of Preschool Teachers in Pirot, Ivan Andrejić and Zoran Vasić from the School for Higher Professional Education of Preschool Teachers in Kruševac, Vesna Milovanović, Nebojša Arsić, Mladen Nikolić and Nada Ristić from the School of Higher Chemical Technology, Dragan Antić and Milan Sretenović from the High Medical School of Professional Studies in Čuprija, Ivica Stančić and Slavica Šuković from the College of Agriculture and Food Technology in Prokuplje, Miroljub Đelić, Nebojša Ristić, Đorđe Miltenović and Suzana Đorđević from The College of Textile in Leskovac, Goran Petković, Nenad Janjić, Damjan Stanojević and Mladen Micić from the School of Higher Applied Professional Education in Vranje, Danica Milošević, Irina Cenić, Aleksandra Boričić and Dejan Blagojević from the host institution in Niš.

A meeting within the ECBAC Tempus project was held at the School of Higher Technical Professional education in Niš on February 20th, 2014.

The idea was to organize a gathering of student office representatives of all the schools belonging to ACAS in order to make a swot analysis of the student offices and find solutions for harmonization of the student offices at different higher education institutions by making unique tools which would be used for keeping student records. Apart from this, the intention was to discuss the possibilities for expanding activities of the student offices in order to make them more alike to the student services which exist in the European countries.

At the beginning of the meeting, each of the eight schools had a chance to present its own student office and explain how the office works. It is obvious that it has come to certain changes in the work of the student offices since the new Law on the Information of Public Importance came into force. This law requires that students cannot be asked by student offices to give data which is too personal, such as information on their gender or their identification number. Students would actually have to sign a declaration in which they agree to provide such data to the student offices. Some of the schools thus prepared special forms on which students do sign their declaration of accordance for giving such personal information to the offices.

It has been stated that all the schools are legally bound to keep a registry book of each particular student and make reports on the exams that have been taken, which is still being done manually. In this segment of the discussion, it has been especially emphasized that all the student offices have very good communication and cooperation with the Student parliament and the Commission for quality control inside the institution. Afterwards, when the presentations of the student offices were given, a conclusion has been reached that the great number of the offices has a need for state of the art technical solutions for processing student data.

Most schools keep student records within data bases which have been created in Excel programme. However, this programme has no capacity to deal automatically with the analysis of the final results, so the student officers still have to process a great amount of data manually. This kind of work is quite unefficient and in order to improve it, it is necessary to create more up-to-date data bases and use more delicate softwares which can enable much faster and easier work to the student offices and at the same time enable students to fulfill one part of their obligations electronically, such as performing exam registrations or filling in the student surveys on-line.

The school in Čuprija, for instance, uses an EFT programme which can extract numerous statistical data. This programme enables students to register for the exams on-line, but it also monitors the payment of the student tuition fees, which increases awareness in students of the necessity of making regular payments. Leskovac has a different data base which can also keep records on how many students have taken an exam, how many of them have passed it and with which mark or how many times a student has failed an exam etc. One of the better solutions was presented by the School of Higher Chemical Technology from Kruševac whose software for student records and surveys is the most comprehensive one. This school has special e-forms to be filled in by professors where it is possible to keep track of students' attendance in lectures and practical classes, insert the number of their credits on exams, etc.

As far as accommodation, transport and nutrition of the students is concerned it has been concluded that much more needs to be done in relation to these particular services. Some schools, such as the school in Prokuplje and the school in Pirot have the possibility to provide accommodation to their students. The school in Prokuplje can put students in the Pupil's home where there is room for about 50 students, while the school in Pirot has good cooperation with the Boarding school where it can place some of the students as well as the professors who come from other towns to teach. Some schools even have contracts with the local transport companies based on which students can get discounts for transport even up to 50%. However, most of schools just give special certificates to students so that they could receive a discount for the transport services thanks to the city subsidies for transport. As far as nutrition is concerned, representatives of the school from Čuprija shared their experience by stating that there is a student canteen in their school in which students can have meals if they obtain tokens for the canteen with the help of the student office.

Some student offices like the one in Kruševac and the school in Prokuplje also assist students in the procedure for obtaining student credits and scholarships.

Bearing in mind that the student services in Europe are quite different from our student offices, due to the fact that our offices mainly do the administrative work, it is necessary to introduce more innovations and provide additional financial resources in order to put into practice other activities characteristic for the student services within our higher education institutions.

At the end of the meeting, it has been agreed that the next meeting would take place in Niš, 7th March 2014 and that the agenda would focus mainly on the issues of quality control, harmonization of the rulebooks and student surveys.

On behalf of the consortium
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