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ELEVATING THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MOLDOVA -ELEVATE-

Reference number: 573921-EPP-1-2016-1-MD-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

**STUDY VISIT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF Maastricht, Brussels Campus,
May 29- 2 June 2018**

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, May 29, 2018.
Arrival day: Arrival and accommodation of the participants at the hotel Ibis City Centre, rue Joseph Plateau N°2, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium.
<p>Participants:</p> <p>UTM Larisa Bugaian Dinu Turcanu Serghei Andronic</p> <p>UASM Ilie CERCEL Elena SCRIPNIC</p> <p>USC Andrei Popa Irina Todos Sergiu Cornea</p> <p>USARB Lidia Padureac Valentina Pritcan</p> <p>KDU Serghei Zaharia Tatiana Racovchena</p> <p>ASEM Grigore Belostecinic Rurac Ludmila Hîrbu Eduard</p> <p>RECTORS` COUNCIL Liliana Budevici-Puiu Eduard Coropceanu Victoria Tcacenco Nicolae Chicus LARISA SAVGA</p> <p>PST (Project`s Supporting Team) Crudu Rodica Diana Bragoi Mistrean Sabina Augustin Ignatov</p>
Date: Wednesday, May 30, 2018
Venue: Maastricht University Campus Brussels, Avenue de Tervueren 153, 1150 Brussels, Belgium



Item 1: Due to the fact that the Maastricht University Campus Brussels did not have available rooms for supporting ELEVATE management workshops, it has been decided to organise them in the extra hours of the following days. Thus, the participants were offered an opportunity to visit European Union's institutions and have a tour of the capital city of the EU. The participants commonly agreed to manage workshops in the extra hours of the following days and left for the city.

Date: Thursday, May 31, 2018.

Venue: Maastricht University Campus Brussels, Avenue de Tervueren 153, 1150 Brussels, Belgium

Item 1: Within the period of 9:30-10:00 the participants registered their presence at the meeting organised inside the premises of the Maastricht University Campus Brussels.

Item 2: Natalia Timus, provided a welcome speech to the participants of the study visit. She mentioned the importance of sharing internationalization experience among the universities to maximize the possibility to provide higher standards education to students and better working experience for other stakeholders. Timus underlines the advantages provides by provision of double degree, exchange and joint programmes such as making efficient use of resources, deepened international experience and readiness, improved courses' content. She also highlighted the strategic relevance of implementing high technologies in making best use of them in the process of education delivering i.e. skype. She concluded with speaking about ranking of internationalization covering key directions, i.e. strategy, programmes, motilities, research.

Item 3: Mrs. Crudu, ELEVATE's manager for academic and scientific issues, presented the key relevance of enhancing internationalization of Moldovan HEIs it being capable of providing feasible solutions to the present socio-economic, demographic and competitive challenges. Moreover, Mrs. Crudu marked the necessity to develop a justifiable methodology in processing the internationalization surveys undertaken within Moldovan HEIs to assess the real situation in the academic environment and determined the degree of involvement of these institutions in the internationalization process and evaluate the dynamics.

Item 4: Lutz Krebs, MGSOG, UM and UNU-MERIT, provided a presentation of MGSOG, UM and UNU-MERIT's experience which regards double diplomas, their advantage and challenges. He described the double degree programmes from many angles i.e. national and university, approaches and pitfalls. Mr. Krebs started by covering the dimension of internationalization from the national level, making an analysis of Netherlands in the general international context, highlighting the weaknesses of the country in relation with stronger and larger neighbouring countries, not the dominant position of the Dutch language. He underlined the key necessity of internationalizing universities including attracting additional students which make it possible in enlarging funding absorption by the university. He said that despite of the fact that in European countries as well as in Netherlands, HE can be pricy it is a need, nevertheless, lowering the costs can increase the enrollment and enlarge the possibility to attract quality students within the institution. In this regard, it is important to find a niche market for the HEI, to socialize students within the country. Mr. Krebs underlined that internationalization is efficient for the country due to the fact that it makes it possible to benefit from cheaper students due to the fact that the country had nothing to pay for their past education. Mr. Krebs underlined that HE within Netherlands is highly subsidized, one year of education at UM costing 2060 EUR, half of the sum being paid by government. Also, authorities provide large opportunities to benefit from scholarships. Nevertheless, the cost of education for students outside EEA is 7.500 EUR. He also explained the mechanisms of how university gets financed by the government and which facilities students have in paying for their studies. Mr. Krebs provided information about programmes level management and how to keep the balance between quality and quantity, mentioning German vs Dutch approach towards HE. He mentioned the key advantages Dutch education provides to students i.e. free penalty leave within the first month of education, study advice. He mentioned the key principles of encouraging timely graduation and importance of getting problematic students out. Mr. Krebs underlined the key necessity of having equal treatment between national and international students, mentioning that spending money on foreigners is actually economically justified, it pays off by retention of people (38% within first 5 years, and 25% within 10),

economic contribution to Dutch economy being 1.5 billion EUR. Mr. Krebs covered key principles of internationalization at the level of institution mentioning the importance of creating niche programmes, and attraction of high quality staff, relevance of material, high standard English. A key condition is to make students feel at home by providing advice which in future can lead to their retention. He also determined key motivation of internationalization i.e. economies of scale, increasing heterogeneity of debate, recruiting opportunities, networking and profiting. He mentioned key aspects of internationalization at the programme level: single degree (international perspective, exchange, internships, specific courses), double degree, more replication and lower risk, joint degree, higher risk and up - front costs. Other possibilities include short courses, exchanges, and fellowships. Mr. Krebs determined the strategic importance of partnerships, for the aims of increasing quality, common understanding of quality, students' perception, career cooperation. Development notes provided by Mr. Krebs included that it is important to safe guard the value of diplomas, keep high standards of national accreditation, steer national education to meet the demands of the market and keep up with the requirements of the international education and pace of development. As concluding remarks, Mr. Krebs contributed by covering the aspects of getting additional funding for education (full fee, made on order courses, minimization of transition costs), providing room for individual initiative, and finalized by determining the general economic impact of internationalization as favourable, retention, hiring and integrating as well as facilitation return migration as being of strategic importance.

COFFEE BREAK

Item 5: Mrs. Tatiana Skripka provided a presentation regarding Joint Master Specialisation "Regional Integration and Multi-Level Governance" in the framework of the one-year Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development organised by the Maastricht School of Governance and the UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT). She provided information regarding the specialisation background, general data regarding partner institutions, which is the design and set of the joint master, opportunities and challenges as well as the lessons which were learned since the beginning of the programme (started in 2012). Mrs. Skripka mentioned that the Master of Science in Public Policy and Human Development aims to prepare its students to actively participate in the policy process, as policy designers or analysts, as civil servants or academics. To achieve this goal, the programme emphasises the connection between public policy and decision-making processes, or more specifically, the effectiveness and efficiency of governance. Within the programme 15-25 students are prepared a year. She highlighted also main principles of the collaboration i.e. ad-hoc meetings, focus on the topics which are demanded by the students. She underlines the programmes requirements summarised within 4 courses each 4 ECTS points, followed by a master thesis which is also awarded 16 ECTS points. Mrs. Skripka covered the brief content of the course, procedures related to the thesis supervision, which input is required by each partner institution and the principles of responsibility division, and the terms of cooperation. It mentioned that teaching is made according to Dutch standards focusing on the teaching quality. Mrs. Skripka determines the main disciplines undertaken within the programme including Introduction to Regions, Comparative Regionalisms, Regionalism and Multi-Level Governance, Topical Issues in Comparative Regionalism. She mentioned the main opportunities of joint master such as joint teaching supervision, pooled expertise, access to wider professional networks, shared courses, divided responsibilities, content and rules. Mrs. Skripka underlined the challenges i.e. cooperation and quality assurance, divergent and incompatible standards, teaching methodologies and assessment, programme continuity, staff challenges. Afterwards, several recommendations were made including mutual incentives, fostering new and established collaboration, comprehensive programme design, quality assurance, compatible rules, regulations, flexibility and openness to change as well as leadership.

Item 6: The participants offered several specification questions to speaker, including: which skills and competences are equipped the students and if the programme is nationally accredited in Netherlands. Mrs. Skripka answered by underlining that the programme does not hold accreditation and students are equipped with a variety of skills, tools and knowledge, which enable them to work as policy designers and policy analysts. They are capable of working within public and private institutions at local, national and international levels, and the vast majority of students will embark on a career in these areas.

LUNCH

Item 7: Natalia Timus spoke about a Case Study regarding an inter-university blended course with Bilkent University. She mentioned that in a globalised society when HEIs face considerable challenges, internationalisation could serve as an important step towards enhancing competitiveness of countries' HE. Mrs. Timus presented the key opportunities which universities can report if properly integrating into regional and international research and teaching networks, one relevant example in this regard can serve EHEA which helps in reducing the barrier effect of national borders and create a unique space of education on the European continent. It allows more flexibility, exchange of experience resulting in the development of an innovative culture offering higher competitiveness readiness. In order to value practical and theoretical skills and abilities, HEIs should consider developing an interactive learning environment capable of connecting people sharing the same values and interests. She shared the experience obtained by the University of Maastricht through the PBL Online project in which the cooperation with Bilkent University was started. In 2011 the Faculty of Arts and Social Science invested in a blended course with Bilkent University covering the issues related to the enlargement of the European Union comprising 2 months at the Bachelor programme. University of Maastricht developed innovative strategy where 34 online blended courses were created across various faculties, covering such areas as IT, teaching, learning. Mrs. Timus mentioned the objective of the courses such as to be flexible and meet the demands of the students, she also underlined course elements i.e. including a face to face meeting at the beginning, 5 pre-recorded lessons, video conference, as well as various PBL sessions, and group research tasks. Mrs. Timus concluded with several recommendations on how to develop this kind of courses and which lessons the University of Maastricht has understood.

Item 8: Aisling Tiernan provided an online presentation by the use of Skype regarding internationalisation, mobilities and exchange programmes. She mentioned the importance of strategic partnerships and collaborations to reach the institutional objectives in this regard, considering a tiered approach comprising regional, national and international environment. She mentioned the key importance of partnerships for the University of Maastricht in developing competitive programmes in the areas law, ethics, privacy, behaviour, health and research methodology. She mentioned the key aspects of institutional networks building, and also how to build multi-layered cooperation partnerships resulting in effective exchange of experience and best practice in the areas of mobility, research, education, and their impact upon the society and knowledge creation. Mrs. Tiernan mentioned the key aspects of international collaboration of Maastricht University and the role of Campus Brussels in this regard it serving as a catalyst in generating larger and more accessible growth potential enhancing institution's European University identity in a global society. She mentioned several university networks capable of enhancing HEIs internationalisation potential such as Worldwide University Network, European University Association, Young European Research University Network. Participation in these organisations help institutions to gain increased internationalisation through fostering publishing activity, stimulating mobility, enhancing partnerships and offering guidelines.

Item 9: Eduard Hirbu made a general presentation of the criteria of ranking universities' internationalisation. He made a presentation of various international ratings including <https://www.topuniversities.com/>, www.timeshighereducation.com where he determined key directions which should be followed by the analysts when developing ranking of Moldovan HEIs. He proposed that the methodology of analysis of the information gathered through the undertaken surveys to be developed until the study visit to Buckinghamshire New University.

Item 10: Rodica Crudu, Elevate's manager for academic and scientific issues addressed a question to Representatives of the Rector's Council i.e. Eduard Coropceanu, Rector of Tiraspol State University and Nicolae Chicus, Rector of Ion Creanga State Pedagogical University: do they want to participate in the completion of the Elevate internationalisation survey and, consequently to be included on the online internationalisation benchmarking tool or no? Both, Mr. Coropceanu and Chicus agreed with the participation in the survey and committed to fill in until the study visit undertaken to Buckinghamshire New University. Mr. Belostecinic, Head of the Rectors' Council, said that all participating universities should fill in these survey to have wider



coverage of the HE internationalisation process in the Republic of Moldova. Mrs. Crudu has asked the responsible participants to make a draft of institutional internationalisation until 20th of June 2018 and send these drafts to Maastricht University representatives to get advice. Mrs Timus said that University of Maastricht is opened and could help Moldovan counterparts in this regard. Yet, the participants decided not to hurry up and declined this idea, demanding having larger period to be able to provide a more relevant and crafted document responding to the necessities of Moldovan HEIs. It has been decided also that both National and Institutional Internationalisation Strategies to be developed simultaneously.

Item 11: All the participants were invited to a reception organised within Maastricht University Campus Brussels, Avenue de Tervueren 153, 1150 Brussels, Belgium.

Date: June 1 2018

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Item 12: Mrs. Timus made an introductory speech highlighting the necessity to make the internationalisation strategies both in Romanian and English. Mrs. Velisco, provided strategic guidance of how an institutional and national strategy should look-like mentioning the requirements of a public document and how it should be drafted. She referred to several strategies which are either actual or in drafting i.e. Moldova 2020 and Moldova 2030. She also referred to several regulations i.e. Governmental Decision nr. 33 from 2007, Law nr. 717, from 2003, Education 2020 Strategy, and other several international acts including Communiqué from Bucharest, 2012, Communiqué from Erevan, 2015 and Communiqué from 2018. She mentioned key aspects of a strategy, how it should be formatted i.e. description, problem definition, object, measures, activities, assessment of impact, results, stages of implementation and reporting. Afterwards, the representatives of Moldovan universities presented drafts of their institutional Strategy on Internationalisation of Higher Education and Research including Rodica Crudu, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, Larisa Bugaian, Technical University of Moldova, Elena Scripnic, State Agrarian University of Moldova, Valentina Pritcan, Aleco Russo Balti State University of Moldova, Sergiu Cornea Cahul State University BP Hasdeu, Tatiana Racovcena, Comrat State Univeristy, Liliana Budevici-Puiu, Rectors' Council/ University of Physical Education and Sport of Moldova, Larisa Savga, Rectors' Council/ Trade co-operative University of Moldova, Victoria Tcacenco, Rectors' Council/ Academy of Music, Theater, and Arts of Moldova, Nicolae Chicus, Rectors' Council, Ion Creanga State University of Moldova, and Eduard Coropceanu, Tiraspol State University. It is important to mention the intervention of Mr. Belostecinic, Rector of ASEM and Head of Rectors' Council, regarding the necessity of the state to finance internationalisation efforts. Mrs. Crudu proposed the formation of the working group regarding the development of National internationalisation Strategy, in the following format: Mrs. Velisco-coordinator; Mrs. O. Sirbu, ASEM; Mrs. Bugaian, TUM, Mrs. Pritcan, USARB, Mrs. Racovcena, KDU, Mr. Cornea, USC, Mrs. Scripnic, SAUM. Mrs. Crudu has asked the representatives of the Rectors' Councils regarding their willingness to participate within this working group and the related processed regarding strategy elaboration. The following persons were appointed, from Ion Creanga State University of Moldova it was delegated Alexandra Barbaneagra, from Tiraspol State University- Mrs. Mosanu, from the University of Physical Education and Sport of Moldova, Liliana Budevici-Puiu and from Trade co-operative University of Moldova- Larisa Savga. During the discussions it has been made a coffee break and a lunch break.

Item 13: Fine tuning meeting has been realized by the members of UWG-1 where university leaders discussed on assessment of institutional internationalization strategies, analysis of internationalization aspects on institutional aspects and draw special attention to points that has to be included in the internationalization strategies of partners based on EU practices, and Maastricjt University in particular.

Date: June 2, 2018

Departure day