

November, 2012

Sveučilište u Mostaru - University of Mostar

TEMPUS MOREMS project – Site visits by EU experts 25th of October 2012

REPORT

EU Experts:

Assis. prof. Lučka Lorber, Vice-Rector for Quality Development at the University of Maribor (Slovenia),
Christopher Moss, University of Marburg (Germany)

Present:

Prof. dr. Vojo Višekruna, former vice- rector,

Introduction

The Experts were welcomed by the Rector's Personal Assistant, Prof. Dr. Vojo Višekruna and a team of experts from the University. The discussions followed the lines suggested by the EU-experts for all site visits. We had a frank and open discussion about the situation at the . University of Mostar/Sveučilište u Mostaru.

Integration

University of Mostar is organised as an association of faculties with academic and partial financial autonomy. The University is a legal entity, but also the faculties are also individual legal entities. The Assembly of Herzegovina – Neretva Canton adopted new higher educational law and now the University has two years to introduce full integration, and one year for the preparation and planning of the process.

There is a mixed reaction from the faculties about this. The current university management is in office on an acting basis only until the process of integration has been completed. The University has produced a draft of proposal of new statute to reflect integration. Integration is seen as an opportunity for change and expansion and autonomy and also provides for the accreditation of courses. An internal evaluation is also taking place under the auspices of a TEMPUS project.

Finance

Apart from a grant from the cantonal government which is not fixed, the university's main income is from student fees. The university also receives some financial support from the Croatian government. According to students who were present, fees are not seen as a problem. In order to plan spending and investment, the university would be happy to receive an agreed sum of money from the cantonal government. The buildings belong to the university and are part of their assets.

Funds from the Cantonal budget are paid to the University, distributed to the faculties according to the accepted “key for distribution” among faculties, after all shared University costs have been covered. The decision on shared costs and key for distribution of funds among faculties are adopted by consensus by the Senate of the University of Mostar.

Quality assurance

The University has strong quality assurance policies and appropriate procedures. Documentation of the various aspects of the programme are published and transparent. A quality culture pervades the contributors to the institution. Students are the main partners in the processes of quality assurance at the faculties.

Quality indicators are used as an instrument to ensure quality throughout the university and indicate the level of quality (traffic light system). Currently second cycle courses are being analysed for quality. The University uses the results of self-evaluation reports for its strategic development plan, which focus on students self-employment and benchmarking. They have good international experience on QA, and were involved in several international projects.

The University has an advisory board with external advisors.

Teaching

The University has a very high level of academic autonomy and it is the only University in BiH which does not have to ask for any kind of consent for curricula and the appointment of teachers and associates. Competences are given priority in the teaching of new courses which are being developed in mechanical engineering.

Bologna

The experts found the course guides focus too much on years when describing cycles rather than credits. The Bologna cycles are recognised, but the norm seems to be to expect job seekers to have completed two cycles. In many cases, it seems to have been repackaging of old courses. Workloads for the allocation of ECTS credits are estimated. Competences are described in the ECTS guide. Awareness of the employability factor is not complete and not all courses offered are Bologna compatible.

Internationalisation

The students are mainstay of the process of Internationalisation at the University. They organise themselves and spread their good experiences among the student population. The International Office is run by one person who has help from about 20 volunteers from the University. They are active not only in the mobility programmes but also with the TEMPUS Projects, Erasmus Mundus Programme, CEEPUS Programme, Fulbright Program and they have many bilateral agreements with the EU universities. The Faculty of Business offers also the study programme in the English language.

The leadership of the University, academic staff and students strongly support international programmes and cooperation.

Special Services

The University has a career centre, a computer centre and offers several cultural projects.

We got impression that in all special Services at the University students play the main role, that is very important for the third mission of the University of Mostar.

Conclusions:

The EU experts would like to thank the Rector's personal assistant and the Secretary General who were present throughout the site visit and also the other members of staff and the students who gave us their time. We found a University in the middle of major changes from the point of view of administration (integration) and leadership. Problems such as financial constraints but also Bologna implementation are fully recognised and are being addressed. The EU experts recommended that the University should draw up a budget to be used for negotiations with the Cantonal Government regarding finance.

Reporters

Assis. prof. Lučka Lorber

Christopher Moss