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Tempus
in the Western Balkans
Tempus in the Western Balkans

Prepared for
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by
the European Training Foundation
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Tempus is a venerable programme which has demonstrated its worth over more than a decade in providing assistance to partner countries reforming or restructuring their higher education systems. The latest generation of the programme, 'Tempus III', came into force in 2000. Two innovatory aspects were introduced. First, in addition to the tried-and-tested country-specific approaches, particular emphasis was placed on the programme's capacity to encourage regional cooperation. Second, more explicit reference was now made not only to the need for the programme to ensure consistency and, where necessary, complementarity with other Community programmes, but also to create synergies with other forms of assistance to the partner countries.

In late 2000 and throughout 2001, the European Commission organised a series of three regional Tempus conferences in Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana. The purpose of the conferences was to build on the new potential in the Tempus programme in fostering regional cooperation and creating policy synergies. Hence, the conferences not only brought together participants from throughout the Western Balkans region, but sought to insert Tempus in the broader policy contexts of the Stability Pact and the Bologna and Graz Processes. Three themes were explored: higher education management (Sarajevo), higher education and society (Skopje) and regional cooperation and networking (Tirana). The conferences proved to be highly productive and fertile fora, giving participants the chance to explore these common themes together. The deliberations were also fed back into the editorial process of drafting the new Tempus Guide for Applicants (published in 2002).

This report provides a summary of the conference proceedings and the conclusions reached by the participants. The broader policy contexts (Graz, Bologna, and so on) are provided in boxes. The report passes in review the three conferences before elaborating on some of the major topics discussed by the participants. In commissioning this report my intention has been not just to provide some sort of record of a highly productive conference series, but also to extend access to those discussions to a broader audience. I would in particular commend it to any institution considering embarking on a Tempus project in the Western Balkans region. The report is also worthy of study by all those involved, or about to become involved, in the Tempus programme.

As manager of the programme, what has struck me most in reading the report has been the Tempus Programme's rich potential and extraordinary adaptability. These aspects surely go a long way towards explaining the programme's venerability. As I write, Tempus has just been extended to nine partners in the Mediterranean region, thus introducing further potential to enhance the programme's regional capacity. This report provides a first thematic exploration of that capacity, but surely not the last!

Dr Martin Westlake
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Directorate-General for Education and Culture
European Commission
Tempus regional seminars in the Western Balkans

As an immediate response to the needs identified by the Higher Education Working Group of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, organised three regional Tempus events in 2000 and 2001.

Higher education management:
June 15 - 18, 2000, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on "The link between strategic university management and higher education policy".

Higher education and society:
November 24 - 25, 2000, Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on "Institution Building".

Regional co-operation:
April 6 - 7, 2001, Tirana, Albania, on "Regional Co-operation and Networking".

These seminars were organised to provide for a forum of discussion on specific topics related to the implementation of the Tempus programme in the Western Balkans, but also related to the priorities defined by the Education and Youth Task Force of the Working Table I of the Stability Pact. These topics ranged from university management related to policy development and system improvement, through the contribution of higher education institutions to civil society development, to regional co-operation in the field of higher education.

In each of these events, participants represented a wide range of administrative and academic staff of universities together with representatives from Ministries of Education from the countries of the Western Balkans and European Union Member States, as well as of the National Tempus Offices and international organisations.

These seminars provided welcome opportunities for participants to meet and discuss experiences and eventual future co-operation. The outcomes of the seminars will be taken into account in the further development of the Tempus programme.
The Stability Pact and the Graz Process

The Stability Pact, launched at the initiative of the European Union in June 1999, aims to bring peace, stability and economic development to the region. It embraces all of the countries of the area as well as many other European and non-European countries and organisations.

The activities of the Stability Pact are organised around three working tables composed of different Task Forces, which define strategies and action plans that are then implemented by working groups. Under the first working table, the Task Force on Education and Youth is co-ordinated by the Enhanced Graz Process. The working groups also serve as platforms for policy co-ordination and discussion on issues such as the regional dimension of education, linkage between the regional dimension and national reform policies and the potential role of universities in the promotion of mutual understanding across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Initiated by the Austrian European Union presidency in October 1998, the Graz Process was established to carry further the recommendations of the conference “Educational co-operation for Peace, Stability and Democracy in South East Europe”, which was organised that year in Graz. In the framework of the Stability Pact, adopted a few months after this conference, the Graz Process was extended and renamed the Enhanced Graz Process.

There are six working groups under the responsibility of the Task Force on Education and Youth, including one on higher education, which is co-ordinated by the European Universities’ Association (EUA).

Partners of the Stability Pact

- European Union Member States and the European Commission
- Countries of the region and their neighbours: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Yugoslavia
- Non European Union-members of the G8: USA, Canada, Japan and Russian Federation
- Other countries: Norway and Switzerland
- International organisations: UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, UNHCR, NATO, OECD
- International financial institutions: World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Finance Corporation (IFC), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB), Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
- Regional initiatives: Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), Central European Initiative (CEI), South East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) and South East Europe Co-operation Process (SEECP)
Tempus regional seminar in Sarajevo
The link between strategic university management and higher education policy

The Sarajevo seminar was organised on June 15-18, 2000 by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, as the first of several Tempus complementary measures which could be seen also in the more general context of the activities of the Stability Pact in higher education.

The seminar was hosted by the University of Sarajevo and welcomed some 55 participants representing the Ministries of Education and the National Rectors Conferences of the Western Balkans and European Union Member States, National Tempus Offices, and national or international organisations committed to higher education co-operation with the Western Balkans.

The first part of the seminar was dedicated to presentations and discussions in plenary, which focused on topics such as higher education legislation, strategic university management and regional co-operation. Two case studies on national higher education legislation and strategic university plans were also presented. These presentations provided the background for in-depth discussion within three working groups focusing on the main challenges related to university governance and management structures, to the structure of university studies and to quality assurance in higher education.

The conclusions of the seminar were formulated in a set of recommendations about how to ensure a better synergy between higher education policy at the system level, and strategic development needs at the institutional level. These recommendations were proposed for the consideration of European Ministers of Education during their meeting in Bucharest on June 18-20, 2000.

Reform of higher education legislation

The aim of the seminar being to reflect upon higher education policy developments, a number of presentations were made to give an overview of the developments in higher education legislation in the European Union Member States, in the Candidate Countries and the countries of the Western Balkans.

Higher education legislation in various Member States of the European Union can be classified into three broad categories. In the first category, regrouping the countries with a long tradition of decentralisation, the focus of legislation is on general principles and guidelines, leaving the detailed application to regional, local or institutional bodies. In the second category, centralised systems, legislation is more prescriptive, with highly detailed acts to regulate the behaviour of institutions. In the third category, federal systems, the legislation is very detailed and comprehensive to ensure against potential judicial conflict between regional and federal structures and between these structures and individuals. In all cases, however, recent legislation shows a definite trend towards the reinforcement of the role of the State in the shaping of higher education policies, with finance as the lever of this new role. The trend is also towards a conception of higher education as a whole, as a system in which the various components interact to achieve agreed objectives within medium to long-term development frameworks.
In most countries of Central and Eastern Europe, legislative reform experienced a two-stage cycle. The initial stage dealt with the immediate problems of the transition, such as academic autonomy. The second stage provided for more elaborate legislative reform covering all aspects of higher education. It is worth noting that very often the initial stages of reform tended to consolidate existing university structures, thus making further reform more difficult.

At present, two sets of policy issues which need to be included in a comprehensive legal framework are common to all countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The first category of issues is related to democratisation and the new structure of autonomy and accountability between the State and higher education institutions. This issue covers a range of questions related to the lines of responsibility between ministries of education, other governmental agencies and Parliaments, financial and administrative controls and incentives, responsibilities for student admission and staff appointment and internal governance of institutions. The second category of issues concerns quality, efficiency and fairness. It covers questions such as the status and financing of students, the content and organisation of courses, the location and organisation of research, the evaluation of student performance, the criteria for the establishment and differentiation of both traditional and new types of institutions, and so on.

Universities in the Western Balkans specifically face challenges related to the economic, political, cultural and social transformation of their countries. The need to reform universities and higher education systems, to introduce new institutions and connect them to the wider area of European higher education, is widely recognised.

As stressed by most of the experts during the seminar, the idea of “university” has to be reconstructed. This idea stems from the current conception, in most of the Western Balkan countries, of the university as an association, or federation, of autonomous faculties, schools or departments. The reform of university organisation and management is therefore a high priority.

### Strategic objectives of higher education reform in:

**Romania:**
- Decentralisation of the higher education system;
- Establishment of effective university autonomy;
- Restructuring of the decision-making process between the Ministry and the universities;
- Changing the financing mechanisms of the universities;
- Development of a European dimension in academic life;
- Development of private higher education institutions.

**Albania:**
- Development and upgrading of curricula, and development of a post-university qualification system;
- Development of a system for quality assessment and accreditation;
- Definition of procedures for the election of governance bodies;
- Increasing of financial and institutional autonomy;
- Improvement of admission procedures.
Recommendations

Governance and management:
✓ enacting legislation which provides a flexible framework for long term and sustainable higher education development, thus able to respond to rapidly changing circumstance;
✓ ensuring that a policy framework exists which enables institutions to take responsibility for their own development and management; emphasises the importance of the development of integrated institutions of which faculties are constituent parts, allows the institutions to reflect in their internal structures and decision-making procedures the interests of the community and the society in which they operate and enables them to play their full role as driving forces in shaping the external environment;
✓ ensuring that the organisation and function of the university leadership reflects its enhanced responsibilities and greater accountability, and that the appropriate professional administrative structures exist.

Structure of university studies:
✓ ensuring, on the basis of the forthcoming analysis of the existing situation, that the necessary reform process is initiated to allow the participation of the countries in the Bologna Process;
✓ ensuring that ENIC NARIC\(^1\) centres are established in all countries as a tool for improving information dissemination.

Quality assurance:
✓ encouraging regional co-operation as part of wider European co-operation, in particular with reference to the development of ongoing training structures for university leaders and Quality Assurance managers; the increased use of existing, well tested quality assurance mechanisms and procedures; the access to information on European Quality Assurance bodies and networks; the development of a European pool of experts and the independence for Quality Assurance bodies from both government and institutions based on best European practice.

International co-operation:
✓ ensuring that the existing possibilities of the Tempus programme be exploited to the full to support the implementation of these recommendations;
✓ and that the results of the PHARE Multi Country Higher Education programme be disseminated further, and that activities continue building on the results already achieved.

Reform of university management

Universities, in the European Union but also more generally in Europe, are increasingly accountable for the use of public funds and obliged to meet the needs of societies that are more and more concerned by rising unemployment rates for graduates.

Strategic planning is definitely one of the tools accessible to higher education institutions to respond to the challenges they face, be it declining public and state resources, increased competition among institutions for students and scarce financial resources, diffuse higher education legislation, or unclear grant-making policies. Strategic planning is a matching process between an institution and its environment based on a realistic evaluation of both.

The benefits of planning are significant and, taken altogether, help define the broad context within which institutional decisions should be made. The planning process helps to create a clearer and more comprehensive vision of the university’s mission, its opportunities, strengths and comparative advantages. Planning also fosters a greater awareness of issues confronting the university and it contributes to improved communication within and among units.

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\(^{1}\) ENIC Network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility). NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres).
However, strategic planning is a complicated and heavy undertaking, particularly in large, complex institutions like universities, and often results in plans which are wish lists rather than serious attempts at setting a realistic course for the future. The most common impediments to the planning process are overlapping committees, overemphasis of paperwork and meetings, slowness, incapacity to account for the loosely-coupled, complex nature of universities, and failure to involve key people. The success of a strategic plan rests in great part on the effectiveness of processes that focus on specific issues and on its connection to the financial reality of the institutions.

If developed and publicised properly, it should not be a discrete activity. Rather, strategic planning should be seen as one way of creating a dynamic organisational structure. Strategic management helps align the institution with its environment.

**Reform of study structures**

As stressed by a number of speakers, the most important move that European universities at large ought to take is to shape and structure their own offers, in particular with regard to the degree structure. As a matter of fact, current trends in higher education show an extreme diversity of degrees, institutions and systems, which is certainly the main obstacle to more mobility in higher education in Europe.

In this respect, two particularly important changes, which could be implemented by higher education institutions in most European countries, were underlined.

The first concerns the introduction of meaningful first (undergraduate) degrees. These courses should be short, flexible, more relevant to professional life, more multidisciplinary, more European and international and should open access both to postgraduate studies and to the labour market. The second change identified by the speakers relates to the creation of new master's courses clearly open to the participation of students who have completed their undergraduate studies in a different institution or in a different country. Masters degrees offered by consortia of institutions rather than by just one university would allow a much wider redistribution of students entering the postgraduate level. Such Masters would also pave the way to comprehensive mobility, allowing students not only to do something abroad which is accepted as a replacement of what they would normally have studied at their home institution, but to have a choice of diversified, relatively short and specialised Masters programmes.

**Tempus University Management projects**

**The Bologna Process**

As stated during the Tempus regional seminar held in Sarajevo, in June 2000, the reform of university management is one of the most important challenges in most countries of the Western Balkans. These countries experience a situation in which universities are fragmented into independent faculties and institutes or, as in Albania, where faculties are traditionally autonomous vis-à-vis the university rector, which makes the development of institutional strategies extremely challenging. Tempus University Management projects aim at supporting higher education institutions to take up this challenge and to implement projects aimed at the:

- strengthening of strategic management capacities;
- reform of university governance and finance;
- strengthening of central university services;
- promotion of closer links between universities and their environment.
These objectives are parallel to the targets set in the action plan of the Bologna Process, which have been defined as the general framework of the 2002/2003 Tempus priorities for the countries of the region. As a matter of fact, the Bologna Declaration has become a reference for long term reforms and concerted action in the Western Balkans. Representatives of these countries participated as observers in the Prague Conference (May 17-18, 2001), during which Croatia officially joined the process. At this conference, Ministers acknowledged the efforts undertaken in all actions of the Bologna Declaration, pointing out in particular the importance of the work on quality assurance, with the creation of ENQA\(^2\) at international level, and the need for life long learning perspectives.

Although all the countries of the Western Balkans are not yet signatories of the Bologna Declaration, they all show an intense interest in the process, both at Ministerial and university level. Their participation so far in the Bologna Process has already provided a significant impetus to the reform process currently underway in these countries.

The importance of the Bologna Process for the countries in the Western Balkans was emphasised more recently at the informal conference of the Ministers of education of these countries in November 2001. They recommended that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, “strengthen co-operation and higher education reforms with a view to the full participation by the countries of the region in the European higher education area”.

In the framework of Tempus, the achievement of the objectives defined in the Bologna Declaration could be supported by several types of projects. However, University Management projects are specifically designed to support the reform of higher education, at institutional level, in fields such as:

- the degree structure and the introduction of under- and post graduate levels;
- the introduction of credit systems;
- the development of quality assurance;
- student and teacher mobility.

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### The Bologna Process

The Bologna Process aims at the establishment of a European Higher Education Area. The European Ministers of Education pledged in June 1999 to reform the structures of their higher education systems in a convergent way, while safeguarding the fundamental values and the diversity of European higher education. The year 2010 was defined as the target date for the achievement of the actions defined by the Bologna Declaration. Two years after signing the Bologna Declaration, European Ministers in charge of higher education, representing 32 signatories, met in Prague in May 2001 in order to review the progress achieved and to set directions and priorities for the coming years of the process.

These actions include the:

- adoption of a common framework of readable and comparable degrees;
- introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate levels in all countries, with first degrees no shorter than three years and relevant to the labour market;
- introduction of credit systems compatible with ECTS;
- promotion of a European dimension in quality assurance;
- elimination of remaining obstacles to the free mobility of students and teachers.

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\(^2\) ENQA: European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
Readable and comparable degrees
Introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate levels

In the five Western Balkans countries eligible for participation in the Tempus programme, the traditional degree structure is seemingly in two tiers, but with long, highly structured, mono-disciplinary first degrees not easily compatible with the kind of Bachelor degrees proposed in the Bologna Declaration.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned fragmentation of universities into independent faculties and institutes makes the development of multidisciplinary curricula extremely challenging.

Past experience shows the possibility, through Tempus, to design new degree structures, particularly in Bulgaria, where it is acknowledged that Tempus has been influential in the implementation of the Higher Education Law of 1995, and especially on the chapters related to the new degree structure and the establishment of assessment and accreditation procedures.

In the framework of a Tempus University Management project, activities such as the following can be supported:

- comparative analysis of existing degree structures in the European Union, as well as in the region;
- development of an institutional, or multi-intitutional, policy for the reform of degrees;
- development of action plans for the implementation of the reform;
- pilot implementation of the reform;
- staff training.

Undergraduate and postgraduate levels relevant to the labour market

Developing and delivering degrees which are relevant to the labour market is a priority for all higher education institutions. In the Western Balkans, the Ministers of education declared, at their informal conference in November 2001, that "practical measures should be taken to favour those branches of study which are most likely to stimulate employment and encourage business."

One practical measure could be the development of multidisciplinary curricula. This implies deep curricular change, which would be approached in the framework of a Tempus Curriculum Development project, but also the development of an institutional policy aiming at favouring co-operation between the faculties.

For example, the introduction or development of economics, management, environment subjects or language teaching in engineering curricula could provide for an increased multidisciplinarity and support the development of interfaculty co-operation, which could be formalised at the level of the institution.

Furthermore, activities related to the development of a centre for postgraduate studies, common to several faculties and open to learners seeking continuing education possibilities, could be supported in the framework of a Tempus University Management project.

Introduction of credit systems

The adoption of ECTS is foreseen or planned in all five countries but none of them has yet introduced a nation wide system. For the time being, higher education institutions are allowed to experiment with ECTS and other systems.
As for the introduction of multidisciplinary curricula, the introduction of credit systems can be approached both from the curriculum angle and from the university management one.

In the framework of a Tempus University Management project, aiming at introducing a credit system, the following activities can be supported:

- identification and comparative analysis of existing models;
- development of a model adapted to the institutions involved and compatible with ECTS;
- administrative and teaching staff training;
- development and publication of the necessary information brochures and related documents (learning agreement, transcript of records, etc.);
- information seminars for staff and students, etc.

It is worth noting that Tempus projects aimed at introducing ECTS and developing the modularisation of studies have been particularly successful in Romania, because they effectively led to increased mobility of students for whom the credit system allowed a simplified recognition of courses taken abroad.

ECTS – European Credit Transfer System

ECTS was initially established under the Erasmus programme (1988 – 1995). It has been tested over a period of six years in a pilot scheme which involved 145 higher education institutions in all the European Union Member States and the countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) and which operated in five subject areas. Progressively the range of subject areas was broadened and the number of participating institutions increased. In 1999-2000, more than 1,200 institutions from the European Union, the EEA, Cyprus and the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe used the ECTS system.

The evaluation of the pilot scheme proved that the ECTS is an effective instrument for creating curricula transparency and facilitating academic recognition and consequently mobility of students, and also a catalyst for reflection on course curriculum structures.

Over the years ECTS has evolved from being a transfer system to an accumulation system. It is learner focused, and value and knowledge development oriented.

The main ECTS tools are the information package (information booklet about the university), the learning agreement (between the sending and receiving universities and the student), the transcript of records (which certifies the learning agreement) and the credits.

The credit documents the total workload of a student, ie the total number of hours spent attending lectures, doing homework, in thesis preparation, laboratory and/or library work and on a placement. ECTS is not meant to regulate the content, structure or equivalence of the study programme and there is no relationship between ECTS credits and the level or difficulty of a course.

Based on an average of 40 hours per week and 40 weeks per year, the total hours per year are set between 1,600 and 1,800 hours, equivalent to 60 credits. Professors permanently monitor the actual workload of students to check whether the initial planning is correct and to adapt their requests to students if necessary. Credits are only awarded (credited) if the student satisfies the assessment requirements.
Quality assurance

Quality assurance is receiving growing attention. Accreditation agencies have been, or are planned to be, created in a number of the concerned countries. The development of quality assurance systems is a typical objective of a Tempus University Management project, which can support activities such as:

- the development of a consensus between national authorities and universities in the field of quality assurance, including the development and implementation of an inter-institutional model, procedures and staff training;

- the development and implementation of an internal evaluation and monitoring system, including the identification of possible models of systems, the development and adoption of an evaluation and monitoring concept and its implementation.

The example of the Albanian Accreditation Agency created in 1999 in co-operation with the Hungarian Accreditation Council is worth mentioning. The Tempus programme supported the establishment of this agency, the development and implementation of procedures, criteria for accreditation and evaluation together with the training of university and agency staff in their use.

As far as past experience is concerned, the impact of Tempus projects in the field of quality assurance in Latvia is also worth underlining. Tempus has provided for exposure to current practice across the European Union and for training at host European Union universities, successfully supporting the drafters of the higher education law in their efforts to take this issue on board.

Student and teacher mobility

The objective defined in the Bologna Declaration regarding student and teacher mobility is the "elimination of remaining obstacles to the free mobility of students and teachers."

As such, this objective goes far beyond the scope of Tempus. Obstacles to free mobility are too often related to a lack of funds and border controls. The funds available in the framework of the Tempus programme are far too limited to have a real impact on the development of mobility. Therefore, the so-called Mobility projects have been abandoned and new measures have been introduced in Curriculum Development projects. As defined in the 2002-2006 Guide for Applicants, student mobility (with guaranteed academic recognition of periods spent abroad) should be an integral part of all Curriculum Development projects.

However, other obstacles, for example, the lack or weaknesses of institutional structures, such as a well-functioning International relations office supporting mobility, can be ameliorated with the support of Tempus. Activities such as the comparative analysis of existing structures and organisations, development of a strategic and action plan endorsed by the institution's decision-making bodies, staff training, promotion and delivery of the services as defined in the action plan, etc., can be supported.
The Skopje seminar took place on November 24 and 25, 2000 at the same time as the Zagreb summit, where closer integration of the five countries negotiating Stabilisation and Association agreements with the European Union was being discussed. As underlined at the opening of the seminar by Mr Pinto de Teixeira, Head of the European Delegation in Skopje, "the Stabilisation and Association agreements are designed on the model of the Association Agreements signed with the Candidate Countries but with a strong emphasis on regional co-operation."

In this context, the topic of "Institution Building" as a tool to support European integration, chosen for this second Tempus regional seminar, appeared to all participants as being of the utmost relevance. Presentations and workshops allowed clarification of the concept of Tempus Institution Building projects, which raised interest among the 55 participants who agreed on the need for developing Tempus Institution Building projects at national and regional level in certain fields, such as journalism, banking and finance, and the environment.

**Tempus Institution Building concept**

The specificity of Tempus Institution Building projects lies in their distinctive target groups, but also their outcomes. These projects aim at developing and delivering short-cycle (1-6 months) training or retraining courses for the staff of the target institutions. These training programmes are tailor-made, practice-oriented and focus on practical knowledge and the development of skills directly related to the adoption and implementation of the "acquis communautaire" by the target institutions. The format and the modes of delivery are to be adapted according to the size of the target audience, to the professional and working background of the trainees, as well as to their constraints in terms of availability.

The first series of presentations made during the seminar aimed at introducing the concept of Tempus Institution Building and the background prevailing in the Candidate Countries where this type of project had been successfully introduced.

Originally, Tempus Institution Building projects were introduced in 1998 to support the efforts undertaken by the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe to integrate the "acquis communautaire" and implement European Union directives and policies in the framework of the Association Agreements.

The general objective was to support the implementation of the pre-accession strategy and the capacity building of the administrative and institutional structures of partner countries. Therefore, the target groups of these projects differed from those of the more traditional Tempus projects. Tempus Institution Building projects were targeted at the staff of ministries, public authorities at local, regional and national level, social partners and their training organisations, media and media organisations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, industries and companies.

The specific objective of the introduction of Tempus Institution Building projects was to support higher education institutions in providing target institutions with the theoretical and methodological support that only universities can offer, while at the same time providing access to a broad range of models and experiences from European Union Member States.
Tempus Institution Building Projects

For trainees, not for students

The target groups are not traditional university students, but trainees, and only activities that are directly related to them should be planned. However, Tempus Institution Building projects could have spin off effects such as the integration of the material developed into the regular curricula of the partner university.

Practical, not academic

The aim of each project is to develop and deliver short-cycle (1-6 months) training or retraining courses for national administrators, professional associations, the semi-public sector and local/regional administrators. The courses should focus on practical knowledge and skills that have been defined, with the contribution of the target groups, as necessary for the implementation of Stabilisation and Association Agreements and in the medium/long term for European integration.

Together with the target institutions

Each project should be designed on the basis of a clear analysis of the particular needs of the target groups, which should be actively involved in the organisation and implementation of the project activities.

Case studies

As illustrations of this concept, specific presentations were made on the Hungarian and Slovakian experiences in the field of Tempus Institution Building projects, but also on individual Tempus Institution Building projects implemented in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Skopje. All these presentations stressed the fact that a good needs analysis at the project design phase is a prerequisite for an adequate and sustainable project.

The presentations of the achievements and weaknesses of running or past Tempus Institution Building projects can be summarised as follows:

■ Achievements:

• hundreds of modules and of East-West visits of trainees have been developed and organised in less than two years, a number of these modules have been integrated in under- and postgraduate courses;

• active participation of trainees has enabled the proper integration of their view points and the design of training courses precisely meeting their needs and constraints;

• national authorities have expressed their interest for continued delivery of the developed courses;

• a new type of partnership between universities and ministries and different state and private actors, SMEs and NGOs has been developed.

■ Weaknesses:

• finding European Union partners and developing effective partnerships, particularly within large consortia;

• the limited language knowledge of target groups and the specificity of adult teaching have often been overlooked;

• the issue of the sustainability of courses, along with those of accreditation and certification of courses, is insufficiently addressed and developed courses tend to become ad hoc courses.
It was generally acknowledged that the implementation of Tempus Institution Building projects in the Candidate Countries contributed to:

- the development of management policy and skills of participating higher education institutions, in view of their later active participation in the European Union's education programme, Socrates;
- the development of administrative and institutional capacities, including the preparation of local, regional and national administration for the management of European structural funds;
- the development of approaches to life long learning in higher education institutions.

**Institution Building and Regional Co-operation in the Western Balkans**

The comparable challenges and development perspectives in the Western Balkans favour co-operation at the regional level. Institution Building projects should be implemented at the regional level if the target institutions face similar needs and if co-operation can lead to a fruitful exchange of experience and a more efficient use of scarce human and financial resources.

**Workshops**

After the general presentations, three parallel workshops on different topics, already considered as main concerns in the Tempus national priorities and related to the development of civil society, were organised. An average of 15 participants actively took part in each of the workshops, during which a number of ideas such as the Tempus Institution Building concept, the target groups and the objectives of Tempus Institution Building projects were discussed. A number of ideas about preferred priorities for Tempus Institution Building projects and concrete project proposals were proposed.

In the first workshop, focusing on "Journalism", all participants stressed the need for projects catering for the development of regional co-operation. Participants concluded that development of public relation skills, training of journalists on the European Union dimension and civil society should become priorities in the countries of the Western Balkans.

The following topics were identified as relevant objectives for Tempus regional projects:

- establishment of a Journalism Faculty;
- training of journalists on European Union institutions and languages;
- development of electronic media and of systems for public information.

In the second workshop, participants discussed concrete ideas for future projects and defined the upgrading of the skills of bank staff (assessment of credit risks, human resources) and of the financial skills of public administrators and of SMEs as priorities. Issues related to the financing of higher education were also pointed out as priorities, which could be addressed through projects aimed at training staff of Ministries of Education and Finance in financial management of higher education institutions. Two general objectives which could be achieved in the framework of Tempus regional projects were identified:

- upgrading of accountability and financial management skills of local governments;
- development of budget formulation and execution capacities; training courses in accounting and finance for SMEs.
Participants of the third workshop discussed "Environment"-related priorities and defined the need for legislative change, standard development, education on water protection and water quality management and on transportation of dangerous material and treatment of medical waste as priorities for future Tempus Institution Building projects in the Western Balkans.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The future of Tempus Institution Building in South-East Europe

The need to open up to their environment in an era of life long learning and continued education is as evident for universities in South-East Europe as for their partner institutions in the European Union. Institution Building activities can contribute to bringing about the required change in the strategic approach of higher education institutions.

The political framework of Tempus Institution Building in South-East Europe is different from that of Central European Candidate Countries. The current Tempus countries participate in the Stabilisation and Association Process, which offers them a prospect of European Union integration based on a progressive approach adapted to the situation of the specific countries. The Stabilisation and Association Process sets ambitious goals for countries to gear their political, economic and institutional development to the values and models underpinning the European Union. In this context, Tempus Institution Building can in particular provide support to public administration reform and to the strengthening of civic society.

Characteristics of Institution Building projects being comparable, although the political contexts are different, the current Tempus countries would greatly benefit from drawing upon the experience of the Candidate Countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It is recommended to consider financing not only the involvement of individual experts from the Candidate Countries in Tempus Institution Building projects but also the limited participation of institutions from the Candidate Countries.

Institution Building activities targeting Ministries and policy and advisory bodies in higher education themselves should be considered a priority.

Considering the outstanding needs of higher education institutions in the areas of university management and curriculum development, it is not recommended that Tempus increases the relative share of Institution Building projects to the levels experienced in the Candidate Countries (approx. 2/3).

Tempus training courses for Institution Building – Lessons learnt from the Candidate Countries

Although the context in which the Tempus Institution Building project was introduced at the time was very specific to the pre-accession strategy in the Candidate Countries, lessons can be learnt from the numerous, previously implemented projects.

During the two academic years covered by the Tempus II bis extension, out of 286 Tempus Joint European projects funded in the ten Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, 162 were Tempus Institution Building ones. As underlined by most participants in the Skopje seminar, the Tempus programme should build on the experiences of the Candidate Countries.
Tempus Institution Building in Hungary

Tempus Institution Building was a concept introduced in Hungary well before the Commission made it the cornerstone of Tempus II bis. Thus it was the Hungarians who, in 1998, published the clearest yet guide to what Tempus Institution Building was really all about.

The two calls for applications resulted in a choice of projects which was far higher than anywhere else and exceeded the funding potential by so much that positive impact was almost guaranteed beforehand. Through the selected projects an estimated 3,000 staff at local, regional and national authorities, as well as social partner organisations and NGOs were trained in the European Union “do’s and don’ts” of agriculture, environment, finance, justice, and other areas.

A recent sounding-out by the NTO showed that almost all of the involved universities had integrated the developed course modules in their regular curricula and would continue offering them to an external audience.

The following elements are drawn from the various impact studies drafted by the National Tempus Offices and from the assessments carried out at the selection and implementation stages of the Tempus Institution Building projects, as well as from field monitoring reports.

Lessons learnt at the project design stage

1. The needs analysis and the target group

Although the analysis of the existing problems and needs must be the basis of any project design, the needs analysis provided in the Tempus applications is quite often weak.

A needs analysis should provide documented answers to a range of questions such as:

- Is there a need for the kind of courses we would like to develop and deliver? If yes, what is this need, how many potential trainees are there? What is their average availability to attend courses? Are the basic tools necessary for the delivery of courses accessible to them?
- Are there any other institutions in the country/region providing this kind of training?

The clear assessment of the particular needs of participants to be trained in the framework of their specific working, legal and economic environment, but also of the potential trainees’ professional and educational background are basic elements leading to success during the implementation of a project.

2. The project consortium

As pointed out during the presentations made in the framework of the Skopje seminar, finding European Union partners and developing effective partnerships for Tempus Institution Building projects has often proved to be difficult.

Co-operation between academic and non-academic partners from the Candidate Countries and from the European Union brings added value to Tempus Institution Building. Thanks to co-operation in previous projects, Tempus Institution Building consortia were often based on pre-existing relations and therefore allowed capitalisation on knowledge and means (equipment) acquired in the framework of other Tempus, and also other donors’, projects. However, in some cases, projects had to review the composition of the consortium to ensure better focus on the specific needs and objectives of this project type as well as high standard know-how and expertise transfer between all partners. The more balanced consortia, in terms of geographical representation and in terms of academic and non-academic partners, appeared to be the more successful. A correct balance between the number of European Union and non-European Union partners and
between the number of academic and non-academic partners, allows for twinning type relations between the partners and therefore for the development of fruitful and sustainable relations between all partners.

Furthermore, the active involvement of target institutions as project partners was not always clearly foreseen in applications. On the one hand, this omission often led to some administrative difficulties related to the fact that the benefit of a Tempus grant is limited to staff of consortium partners. On the other hand, the active and concrete involvement (participation in the courses' development, making staff available to attend courses, possible financial participation in project expenses, etc.) of target institutions is an important prerequisite for the development of well-adapted courses and high level of attendance in courses.

3. Language skills

Limited language knowledge of target groups was pointed to by the speakers at the Skopje seminar as one of the main weaknesses to be addressed in the implementation of an Institution Building project.

International partnerships are one of the main features of Tempus projects and require minimum language skills from all project participants. Very often, this issue has been underestimated and projects have been confronted not only with internal communication problems but also low efficiency of knowledge transfer to trainees, whose understanding of the European Union's terminology was low, since courses were developed, and sometimes delivered, in a foreign language. Therefore, foreign language training should not be neglected and should be complementary to the specific training and targeted (in terms of level, duration, etc.) to the specific background and work area of target trainees. When targeting public administrators at regional or local level, the possibility to deliver these language courses in the Partner Country should be considered as it enables the training of a higher number of people (sound use of funds and higher impact) with usually almost no foreign language abilities.

4. Teaching methodologies

Tempus Institution Building aims at achieving the largest impact possible and at training as many trainees as possible. To address these objectives, the development of distance learning tools and appropriate teaching methodologies is encouraged.

However, as underlined during the Skopje seminar, the specificity of this teaching methodology and its technicalities have not always been properly considered, a shortcoming which can lead to difficulties in the project implementation phase. Furthermore, the equipment requirements of this type of education need to be fully assessed. Target trainees' access to the necessary computer and communication tools has to be ensured.

Last but not least, liaison with other programmes developing distance education tools, such as the Phare Distance Education Project (in the framework of which regional distance education centres have been established), should take place in order to create synergy and the optimisation of resources.

Lessons learnt at project implementation stage

1. Development and delivery of courses

Institution Building projects are aimed at very specific target groups which, unlike traditional university students, cannot make themselves available for long periods on a full time basis. They already have an education and professional experience. Their training needs are practice oriented and daily work related. Quite often, the development of courses did not sufficiently take these specific parameters into account and courses had to be adapted at a later stage to address these needs and achieve a reasonable impact.

A certain number of projects provided training of trainers' modules without giving any details on the methodology for this specific activity. It is obviously a good way to favour multiplying effects and long lasting sustainability of the project (avoid dependence on foreign/external trainers), but it has specific features which have to be addressed such as the selection of potential trainers, training and evaluation methodology, and so on.
These features should be taken into account at an early stage to develop really effective trainers’ modules.

As underlined in the Guide for Applicants, the developed courses should at least also be delivered to a pilot group of trainees during the lifetime of the project. In this respect, previously implemented Tempus Institution Building projects show that a proper selection of trainees, according to a precise and fair methodology, known in advance by all interested parties, is a guarantee for the homogeneity of trainee groups and therefore the best results in training. It is also an efficient way of avoiding potential administrative/political interference, which could be strong when organising study visits abroad.

2. Management of the project

The quality of network management is a key element in the successful implementation of project objectives. One of the elements leading to success is the establishment of a day-to-day connection between project staff and non-academic institutions, which have different structures and operational mechanisms to those of the academic institutions. In order to achieve the best result, the project’s management should play an active role in motivating all partners, defining with them clear outputs and a work plan, to transfer their specific knowledge and expertise and to share their experience, positive or negative.

3. Establishment of a training centre

The establishment of a training centre is a widely spread objective of Tempus Institution Building projects. It is a challenging and interesting objective, which deserves careful analysis and planning to allow the sustainability of such a centre. If an equivalent centre, in the region, in the country, is already operating, the new one might face strong competition and achieve poor results. There would be potential duplication of work and a risk of diluting the impact of the project. Training centres are often seen as organisations as such. Therefore, they need to have registered status, business plans, development strategy plans, customer oriented practices, internal policies and procedures, and so on; all elements which are too often neglected in Tempus projects.
The Tirana seminar, hosted in Tirana on April 6 and 7, 2001, was the last of the three Tempus regional seminars organised in the framework of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe by the Directorate-General Education and Culture of the European Commission.

The main objective of the seminar was to contribute to the definition of priorities for regional co-operation to be included in the Guide for Applicants 2002. In addition, the seminar aimed at further developing the concept of networking projects as well as the specific conditions to be applied to both regional and networking projects and at defining the potential role of students in higher education reform and in Tempus.

Making full use of the extensive briefing documentation and of the various presentations, the 90 participants made concrete proposals and a valuable contribution to the preparation of the new Guide for Applicants.

**Existing regional co-operation**

As an introduction to the topic of the seminar, a brief analysis of the informal survey, addressed to Rectors of all the countries in the Western Balkans participating in the Tempus programme, was presented. This analysis revealed the existence of a variety of contacts between universities in the region. At the same time the answers received showed no evidence of structured and systematic co-operation at institutional level, demonstrating that regional co-operation is not yet a systematic element in the institutional development planning of higher education institutions. Furthermore, this survey confirmed that, while not all universities attach the same importance to regional co-operation, there seems to be a general desire to increase existing links in a number of areas.

In the Western Balkans, regional co-operation exists not only between higher education institutions of the region, but also on a wider geographic level, as for example in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Initiative which was presented in detail to the participants of the seminar.

The Adriatic and Ionian Sea Initiative was launched in Ancona on May 19–20, 2000 with the participation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the six countries involved. One of the projects, initiated by the University of Bologna, in the framework of this initiative, is the creation of a virtual University of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, Uniadrion. Uniadrion’s objective is to encourage regional programmes for training, long-distance education, regional networks, pilot projects, research projects and other joint initiatives in the four fields selected as priorities. These priorities are the development of the unique cultural heritage of the Adriatic-Ionian basin, the protection of its environment, the promotion of cultural tourism and the development of communication and trade relations.

In addition to this important initiative, an example of cross border co-operation between universities was given; namely, the Bulgarian–Romanian Inter-University Centre for Europe (BRIE). BRIE was founded by the University of Rousse (Bulgaria) and the Romanian Academy of Economic Sciences, with the participation of German universities. Using the Polish–German Collegium Polonicum in Slubice as a model, the aim of the initiative was to build on the strengths of Romanian and Bulgarian higher education at the Danube Bridge and jointly use the institutions’ potential to actively prepare for European Union membership. Two Masters programmes have been
developed ("European Studies" and "Computer Economics") and began in early 2002. They are open to students of the Western Balkans. Several activities aimed at raising the interest of private donors, analysing the economic and scientific potential of the region, implementing a feasibility study regarding a possible new building for the Economic College and a future "Science Park", are being implemented.

Overall, the answers to the above-mentioned questionnaire and the statements made by the presenters displayed a consensus on the fact that regional co-operation proves especially advantageous if it is embedded in a framework of European co-operation. Therefore, the Tempus programme is clearly a major factor in promoting regional co-operation between higher education institutions in the countries of the Western Balkans.

Regional co-operation in Tempus

In Tempus terminology, the term "regional project" refers to projects involving institutions from at least two different partner countries and two different European Union Member States. As far as the Western Balkans are concerned, the first Tempus regional projects started in December 1997.

At the time of the seminar, 15 per cent of all Tempus projects running in the Western Balkans involved institutions from more than one of these countries. These projects covered a wide range of subjects including European studies, tourism, agriculture, and Institution Building in the field of law.

As an illustration, the project entitled "A model for a European Judge" was presented. This Tempus Institution Building project involves eight partners from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as partners from Italy and Spain. The project aims at training judges from the three partner countries with a view to bringing the judicial system of those countries closer to that of the European Union, through the transfer of experiences and knowledge.

In 2000/2001, the emphasis on the promotion of regional co-operation (series of regional Tempus seminars; emphasis on regional co-operation in the priorities for Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) contributed to an increase in demand for Tempus support for regional co-operation. As a result, every third proposal received during the selection round 2001 was a regional application.

Workshops

In the framework of this seminar, four workshops were organised to enable discussions to take place in smaller groups on (i) the priorities for regional co-operation, (ii) the specific conditions which should be applied to Tempus regional projects, (iii) the concept of networking and (iv) the role of students. The outcomes of these discussions were presented in the form of recommendations during the final plenary session.

Main recommendations

✔ Provide more detailed information on the policy framework of regional co-operation to potential applicants.
✔ Enhance the promotion of regional co-operation within the Tempus programme.
✔ Promote and support the participation of candidate countries in Tempus regional projects.
✔ Define joint priorities for regional projects.
✔ Redefine the concept of networking projects.
✔ Promote students' active participation in Tempus projects.
✔ Provide more guidance to applicants on how to find partners and how to prepare a needs analysis.
✔ Introduce more flexibility in contractual rules applicable to regional projects.
1. **Workshop on priorities for regional projects**

The participants at the workshop focusing on the definition of priorities for regional projects underlined the fact that the further promotion of regional co-operation within Tempus is in line with one of the core objectives of the Stability Pact. Regional co-operation offers the opportunity for an orientation towards the Bologna Declaration, and it leads to effective and efficient co-operation, and to the exchange of experience and ideas with partners from European Union Member States.

The working group recommended that joint priorities for regional projects should focus on:

- **University Management:** introducing the concept of “higher education management” in order to take into account the specific structure of the universities in the region, i.e. “associations of faculties”, and focusing on financial management, structure and systems of study programmes, quality assurance, accreditation and creditation;

- **Curricula Development:** narrowing the number of disciplines, encouraging multiplying effects and inter-disciplinary studies (foreign languages, information technology, environment technology and management, human rights, agriculture, journalism, tourism, cultural heritage) as well as the development of student mobility;

- **Institution Building:** focusing on Public Administration, Law (relating to integration in Europe) and Environment.

2. **Workshop on the specific conditions for regional projects**

Participants at this workshop focused on the contractual rules applicable to Tempus projects and identified a number of issues which deserved a more flexible approach where regional projects were concerned, such as:

- the ceiling applicable to Overheads for regional projects should be higher than for national ones (3.5 to 7.5%);

- use of personal cars should be allowed with a clear mileage indemnity, reporting documents could include a specific line for declaration that the car was indeed used for this purpose;

- staff costs should be allowed for all professors going to teach abroad.

3. **Workshop on the concept of networking**

In this working group, participants reflected on the concept of Networking Projects as defined in the Tempus Guide for Applicants 2000-2002 and the need to review this concept.

They proposed to rename “networking projects” as “Multiplier projects” and defined the following key features for a revised type of project:

- **Objective:** exchange of information and experience and dissemination of outcomes of Tempus or other projects relating to Tempus aims, with the aim of developing synergies between institutions and to increase the impact of Tempus outcomes;

- **Activities:** collection of results of related higher education reform projects, exchange of experiences in the implementation of higher education reform projects, development and implementation of Action Plans to define the work with the core target groups, development of strategies to involve wider groups to participate in the network.
Project ideas from participants

- Curriculum Development: social, technical and natural sciences, medicine, (cultural) tourism, agriculture and environment protection.
- University Management: upgrading staff qualifications, restructuring the system of degrees, introducing ECTS, quality assurance, social and student services, with active involvement of student representatives.
- Training courses for staff of the public administration in different sectors, including justice and culture.
- Strengthening student associations: development of democratic student structures, training of student representatives, training to influence the educational reforms.

4. Workshop on the role of students

Participants made the following recommendations for the promotion of students’ participation in Tempus:

- ensure a better distribution of information on the Tempus programme among academics and students and promote and support projects related to the development of students’ services and the strengthening of student associations;
- facilitate and encourage students’ participation as members of consortia involved in planning, monitoring and implementation of Tempus projects and the dissemination of results;
- provide the possibility for students as representatives of student associations to benefit from individual mobility grants;
- recommend that monitors interview students/student representatives.

Tempus multi-Partner Country Projects

In accordance with the priorities identified by the Stability Pact and the Stabilisation and Association Process in 2000/2001, the Tempus programme began to place a strong emphasis on regional co-operation. The development of regional co-operation is widely recognised as a key element for the development of education systems in the Western Balkans. As stated by the Ministers of Education from South-Eastern Europe at their informal conference in November 2001, “it is important when preparing national policies on reforms to recognise that there are benefits not only in the existence of co-operation with international organisations but also in multilateral and bilateral co-operation between the countries of the region.”

While countries and education systems in the region vary greatly, they share the common challenge of having to respond quickly and flexibly to fundamental economic and social transition processes.
Stabilisation and Association Process

This process was proposed by the European Commission on May 26, 1999 to establish a new kind of contractual relationship between the European Union and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This contractual relationship is formalised in Stabilisation and Association Agreements, which have been signed, as of 2002, with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia. The Stabilisation and Association Process is supported by a dedicated assistance programme (CARDS) to help each country to reach, at its own pace, the defined objectives.

It is a tailor-made progressive approach that takes into account the situation of each country and stresses the need for regional co-operation. The ultimate goal of the process is to bring peace, stability and economic development to the region and to open the perspective of European integration in the European Union.

The regional co-operation model proposed in the Stability and Association Process is essentially an extension of the European Union’s own philosophy, according to which deeper co-operation with neighbouring countries is a route to national as well as regional stability and growth and serves the mutual interest of all countries concerned.

In the framework of the Tempus programme, regional co-operation has to be understood as a partnership between two European Union Member States and more than one Partner Country. Therefore, this type of project is now entitled “multi-Partner Country”. This specific feature of Tempus projects, according to which all Tempus projects must involve at least two European Union countries in addition to the Partner Country(ies), is particularly well suited to the specific challenge of co-operation between countries of the same region. As underlined in the OECD thematic review of education policy, “external involvement is essential in the Balkans, resources are needed and external mediators are needed – they are people who can bring others together, work towards consensus, defuse confrontations, help focus on long term common interests rather than short term disagreements.”

Benefits of Tempus Multi-Partner Country projects

As stated in the “Strategic framework and priorities for action” published by the Graz Process in December 2001, “regional co-operation is the ideal instrument to pool accumulated experience and expertise, […] a long term strategy for educational co-operation in South East Europe cannot be successful without paying close attention to the regional dimension of co-operation and networking”.

Designing multi-Partner Country projects is in the genuine interest of the projects and consortium members and not only a way to demonstrate that the project is in line with the priorities defined by the authorities and that for this reason it should be funded. Exchanges of experiences with neighbouring countries facilitate the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning at the home institution, allow for the capitalisation on previous experiences, avoid the duplication of efforts and encourage greater coherence with standards of best European practices at the regional level. Furthermore, a regional approach to a certain number of issues can translate into the establishment of much needed regional networks of experts and also facilitate economies of scale. For example, increased academic co-operation at a regional level allows a more efficient use of scarce national human resources.

Priorities for multi-Partner Country projects

Priorities will be given to projects which:

- provide a clear justification of the advantages of working at multi-country rather than at national level;
- address reform needs which are relevant for all participating CARDS countries;
- ensure a fair and balanced participation of all partners in project activities;
- realise outcomes that are beneficial to all participating CARDS countries.
Curriculum Development multi-Partner Country projects

Higher education institutions of the region face similar challenges in terms of the development of new teaching methodologies, including the use of modern information and communication technologies, the promotion of interdisciplinary studies and the introduction of quality control mechanisms. All these issues could be addressed in the framework of multi-partner Curriculum Development projects aiming at, for example:

- the harmonisation of study programmes compatible with European programmes, including development of curricula, courses, and teaching material;
- the establishment of joint postgraduate degrees in the fields of environmental sciences and economics, tourism, business administration, social work and social policy, public finance, and so on;
- content and methodology-related staff training;
- the promotion of student mobility and the creation of a basis for the mutual recognition of diplomas and studies abroad.

From a subject area point of view, Curriculum Development projects related to the economic and social transition process are identified as a priority for all the countries of the region; particularly if they aim at introducing or restructuring complete and modular under- or post-graduate study programmes in the fields of economic sciences, law, social sciences, teacher training, management and business, public administration or European studies and languages.

University Management multi-Partner Country projects

In the sphere of University Management, a number of the Tempus priorities identified for each Western Balkan country could be particularly well suited for developments at a multi-Partner Country level: among these were identified the introduction and strengthening of mechanisms for strategic management at higher education institutions and the strengthening of student associations and student services.

The development of accreditation mechanisms and quality assurance systems in the framework of the Bologna Process was widely acknowledged as being better implemented in a regional context. Multi-Partner Country University Management projects could support activities related to the identification of possible models of accreditation and evaluation systems, the development and implementation of adapted systems, including self-evaluation mechanisms and the continuing education of all actors involved in higher education processes.

The promotion of close links with the local and regional economy through the transfer of technology and knowledge was also identified as a priority for University Management projects in the region. The establishment of technology and knowledge transfer centres, common to several countries, including the development of the legal and organisational frameworks, evaluation, certification, and quality control mechanisms, and the development of managerial skills of the staff, could all be supported by the Tempus programme.

Multi-Partner Country training courses for Institution Building

As stated above, countries of the Western Balkans share similar challenges in terms of transition processes, which cover changing labour markets and emerging civil society. These challenges require new skills, competences and knowledge in a lifelong learning perspective. The development and delivery of training courses, targeted to the non-academic sector in the following fields have been identified as priorities in most of the countries of the region:

- justice, e.g. training of judges, law enforcement personnel and other civil servants on issues such as the fight against organised crime, and European Union law, including the Schengen agreements;
metrology, e.g. the training of civil servants and entrepreneurs on ISO standards;

- environment, e.g. training of SME managers, staff of natural parks on environmental protection issues, natural resources, waste, water management;

- public administration, e.g. training of ministry staff on European affairs, training of regional and local civil servants on public finance;

- social policy, e.g. training of social workers.

The aim of the Tempus programme is not only to develop and deliver training courses on such topics, but also to ensure the sustainability of these courses. Regional initiatives such as the establishment of centres of excellence for public administration training or of continuing education centres within the partner universities could be supported.

**Multiplier projects**

The so-called “Multiplier projects” lend themselves clearly to participation on a multi-Partner Country level. Multiplier projects support national and multi-Partner Country networks as a tool for the dissemination and sustainability of the results of previous or current Tempus projects (the results of relevant projects not connected with the Tempus programme may also be included).

These networks, which may include universities and other institutions that could benefit from or provide input to the dissemination of experiences and outcomes, must draw on the experience of previously implemented projects with a view to widening the impact of their results at national or multi-Partner Country level.

As underlined in the “Strategic Framework” published by the Graz Process (December 2001), the dissemination of best practices and experiences adds considerable value to national reforms and the stabilisation process. In this context, Tempus Multiplier projects may support activities leading to:

- a convergent framework for curricula or training courses in various subject areas between a wide range of institutions;

- the comparative analysis of past or on-going higher education, university management or other reforms which could feed into the national, multi-Partner Country or institutional reform processes;

- the establishment of formal co-operation agreements between universities and/or institutions, including mutual recognition of diplomas, student mobility, joint curricula and courses.

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**Multiplier projects – key tasks**

- The design and implementation of a coherent action plan, including the selection of the target groups, the choice of the most suitable method for dissemination (short-term training sessions for selected target groups / meetings / seminars / publications / internet forum, and so on).

- Identification and evaluation of results of previously implemented projects relevant to the main objective of the Multiplier project.

- Improvement of the quality of selected outputs and their adaptation to the needs of the identified target public.
Tempus and students

Students, who are the final beneficiaries of the Tempus programme, have been widely recognised as being among the most vocal groups in favour of far-reaching university reforms in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and also in other parts of the Western Balkans. As stressed by the European Ministers in charge of higher education during their meeting in Prague (May 2001), students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education. They should and must be competent, active and constructive partners in the higher education reform process.

Students participating in the Tirana Tempus regional seminar argued that the 2001/2002 Guide for Applicants did not "make the opportunities for students in the programme clear enough."

During the preparation of the new Guide for Applicants, all efforts have been made to take on board the recommendations made by the student representatives in Tirana, as well as the recent developments supporting a shift from a teaching centred education to a learning focused one. The need for such a shift is clearly expressed in the Bologna Declaration, in the new approach to ECTS and in the Declaration of the Lisbon Summit.

"Students should be encouraged to take the initiative for Tempus projects”

During the Tirana seminar, student representatives stated that “Students should be encouraged to take the initiative for Tempus projects.”

The new Guide for Applicants states more clearly the importance of student involvement and hence increases the possibility of them benefiting more directly from the programme. However, the Tempus programme is based on a bottom-up approach and the Commission therefore defines the most suitable framework for the Tempus programme, leaving the initiative for the formulation of projects to the participants. Furthermore, the main aim of Tempus is to support co-operation at institutional level, meaning universities as a whole. It is therefore up to the students, or any other potential actor in the programme, to make use of the possibilities provided by the general framework. It is up to any potential actor to have ideas, to translate them into concrete and structured projects and to convince the legal representatives of the higher education institutions to endorse these projects, since any Tempus project has to be endorsed by and integrated into the institutional/ university framework.

Students in Tempus projects

1. Project management

The drafting, submission and implementation of Tempus projects implies administrative tasks, such as planning, budgeting, reporting, organisation of meetings, and internal monitoring.

It could be of interest for students to participate along with the project co-ordinator in these tasks, which could be considered as practical exercises for students of management, economics, law and so on. In fact, skills development in project formulation, submission and management is perceived in the Candidate Countries as one of the main benefits of Tempus. Furthermore, contribution to these tasks is probably the best way to keep abreast of the implementation and results of a project and therefore contribute to its implementation and to the dissemination of its results.
2. **Quality control of project outcomes**

Any type of Tempus project involves control of the quality of the outcomes, whether these outcomes are re-trained professors, a newly developed course, a newly established International Office, the introduction of ECTS type mechanisms or a reorganised and modernised library. Being the end-users or beneficiaries of any of these outcomes, the involvement of students in quality control is highly recommended. This contribution can take the form of active participation in related project activities (meetings, workshops, and contribution to the preparation of quality control tools such as questionnaires) or more passive participation through provision of the necessary feedback, presenting the students’ point of view on the quality of these outcomes.

3. **Students in Curriculum Development projects**

A typical Curriculum Development project will aim at developing a new course or restructuring an existing one. This development will generally be carried out together with a (re)training of the teaching staff and the development of new or updated teaching methods. Students' involvement is probably one of the means to ensure the adequacy of the proposed courses with their needs. It is also a prerequisite for the proper evaluation of the workload implied by the courses in view of the definition of the number of credits in the framework of the approach recommended by the Bologna Declaration (implementation of ECTS equivalent mechanisms).

Students can valuably contribute, through their participation in the discussions, meetings and workshops by providing comments on proposals, or by answering questionnaires on any of the steps implied by a Curriculum Development project.

Furthermore, consortium members of Tempus Curriculum Development projects are requested to ensure the delivery of new or restructured courses within the lifetime of the project to enable their evaluation and eventual adaptation and upgrading. Students could play an active role in ensuring that this often delayed phase of a Curriculum Development project is actually carried out.

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<th>Students can contribute to:</th>
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<td>- the evaluation of existing curricula, courses, teaching methods and the definition and evaluation of new ones, from a content and structure point of view (ratio of contact hours – homework-preparation of thesis – laboratory and/or library work – placement);</td>
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<td>- the development and evaluation of teaching materials;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- the quality control of the project outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Students in University Management projects**

Although University Management projects do not directly target students, these projects will aim at upgrading the overall functioning of the partner higher education institution(s) and as such will have an impact not only on administrative staff but also on a students' learning environment and conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of activities targeted at students:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- strengthening of students' participation in university structures, including training of student representatives on various issues such as communication skills, fund raising, evaluation and methodology;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- development of student services, including establishment of social services (study, placement and career counselling), development of communication tools such as student newspapers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University management can easily question the added value of the direct involvement of students’ representatives in projects purely related to the reform or upgrading of administrative procedures (financial systems for example). However, there is a large range of University Management projects in which the contribution from students could be constructive. As main users of university structures, student representatives could bring added value through input in the following type of activities:

- development and introduction of quality control systems;
- introduction and implementation of ECTS equivalent mechanisms;
- modernisation of libraries;
- establishment or development of international relations' offices;
- development of student services;
- restructuring of the overall structure of studies and degrees.

5. **Students in Multiplier Projects**

These projects aim at the broader dissemination of completed Tempus project outputs through networks. The contribution of students to any of the main tasks implied by such projects is obviously welcome and could be mutually beneficial to the consortium and the students involved.

For example, the identification and evaluation of results of previously implemented projects relevant to the main objective of the project is rather human-resource intensive and can easily be linked to on-going studies. Quality improvements of selected outputs (if needed) and their adaptation to the needs of the identified target public implies the consultation/contribution of the said target public, which would often include students. Preparation, publication and dissemination of specific contributions to support the development of national reforms and strategic planning for the higher education systems involved would imply the active contribution of all actors of these higher education systems.

Students' initiatives for Multiplier Projects could build on the experience of existing student networks, such as the Erasmus Student Network, and on the various initiatives targeting or increasing the involvement of students that are being implemented at European Union level.

For example, in 2000, the Commission facilitated the creation of a "European Liaison Group", presently composed of ESIB, AEGEE and Erasmus Student Network, in order to improve information, consultation and co-operation between them and with the Commission. This group is seen as the "voice of students' associations" at European level. The Group participates in consultative meetings organised by the Commission before every Socrates Sub-Committee on Higher Education.
Lisbon Summit – March 23-24, 2000
Employment, Economic Reforms and Social Cohesion: Towards a Europe based on Innovation and Knowledge

This special meeting of the European Council agreed upon a new strategic goal for the Union: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs bringing greater social cohesion.

In the field of education, achieving this goal requires a strategy aimed at modernising the European social model, investing in people and combating social exclusion. The European Council has therefore concluded that Europe’s education and training systems need to adapt both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment. This new approach should have three main components: the development of local learning centres; the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in the information technologies; and increased transparency of qualifications. The definition of the means for fostering the mobility of students, teachers and training and research staff and the development of a common European format for curricula vitae were two of the targets defined by the European Council during this special meeting.

With regard to the Western Balkans, the European Council reaffirmed that peace, prosperity and stability in the region are strategic priorities for the European Union and that the Stabilisation and Association Process is the centrepiece of the Union’s policy in the Balkans.

The goals defined at the Lisbon summit have been confirmed in the Commission’s priorities for 2002, which include Europe’s investment in knowledge, confirming the acknowledgement of long term potential by investing more in education, preparing students and researchers to live and work in an integrated Europe.
Useful web sites

European Commission, Directorate for Education and Culture
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm

The Socrates programme (ECTS)
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html

The Tempus programme (ETF website)
http://www.etf.eu.int/tempus

European Training Foundation
http://www.etf.eu.int

The European Union’s relations with South Eastern Europe
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/index.htm

Stability Pact
http://www.stabilitypact.org/

Economic Reconstruction and Development in South East Europe; this European Commission / World Bank website aims to provide a real-time working tool to help donors identify the current situation in South East Europe and the macroeconomic needs of the countries.
http://www.seerecon.org/

Educational Co-operation Network; a co-operation between the University of Ljubljana, CEPS and KulturKontact Austria, under the umbrella of Task Force Education and Youth, Stability Pact, Working Table 1. About 140 institutions are members, it provides key documents on education reform in the languages of the region
http://www.see-educoop.net

European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES)
http://www.cepes.ro/

European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC)
http://www.enic-naric.net/

EAIE (European Association for International Education)
http://www.eaie.org

EUA (European University Association); founded March 31, 2001, the EUA is the result of the merger between the CRE-Association of European Universities and the Confederation of European Union Rectors’ Conferences.
http://www.unige.ch/eua/

European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies
http://www.enqa.net/

National Student Unions in Europe (ESIB)
http://www.esib.org/

European Center for Strategic Management of Universities
http://www.esmu.be/

UNIADRION
http://www.uniadrion.unibo.it/