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In order to promote internationalization of higher education, it is paramount to create a favorable environment, which includes not only financial security and effective investment in human resources, but also legal framework, strategies, and relevant mechanisms for internationalization.

Dr. Araik Harutyunyan,
RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport

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ERASMUS +
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ERASMUS +
BOOSTING ARMENIAN UNIVERSITIES INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY & MARKETING
Co-funded by the Erasmus Programme of the European Union
AUA, BOCST, RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Superior Technical Institute, Shirak State University, Vanadzor State University, Tallinn University of Technology, American University of Armenia, Rovira i Virgili University, University of Rovira i Virgili, Institut de Recerca i Innovació Tecnològica, Centre de Recursos per a l'aprenentatge i la Investigació



June 2019. Consortium partners visit the University Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona (Spain)

TRAINING AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

On February 18-22, 2019, representatives of the Erasmus+ BOOST consortium held a project management meeting and took part in a training on grant proposal writing, partner engagement and fundraising held at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden.

Overall, 27 professionals from seven partner institutions from Armenia participated in this project activity, including representatives from the American University of Armenia, Armenian State Pedagogical University, Shirak State University, Vanadzor State University, National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility, and the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

Content covered by the training included key features of the Swedish National Strategy on Internationalization; guidelines related to drawing the Logical Framework Matrix for Erasmus+ program applications; and KTH academic programs and practices in recruiting international students. Of special interest was the support by the Swedish Institute (SI) of projects in democratic, equitable and sustainable development in developing countries. The consortium management meeting with the European partners was dedicated to reviewing the draft national strategy presented by Robert Sukiasyan, Head of the Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education Department of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.



WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY AT THE RA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT



YEREVAN, Armenia – On April 30, 2019, a workshop was held dedicated to boosting the internationalization strategy and marketing of higher education institutions in Armenia. The event was organized as part of the Erasmus+ BOOST project.

Dr. Arayik Harutyunyan, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia (RA), and Lana Karlova, Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office in Armenia, welcomed the participants and underscored the key priorities of the internationalization process in Armenia's higher education system. The Minister noted that the system of education in Armenia is currently going through a transition and addressing many challenges: "It is necessary to expand the academic freedom of higher education institutions; to increase

their autonomy, transparency and public accountability; to adopt new mechanisms that best reflect the students' needs; and to strengthen the research capacities of higher education institutions so as to strengthen the link between education, science, and the economy."

Dr. Harutyunyan emphasized that "In order to promote the internationalization of higher education, it is paramount to create a favorable environment, which includes not only financial security and effective investment in human resources, but also the legal framework, strategies, and relevant mechanisms for internationalization."

Robert Sukiasyan, Head of the Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education Department of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Kristina Tsaturyan, Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Expert, and Anahit Ordyan, AUA Assistant Vice President, discussed the higher education



internationalization strategy in Armenia proposed by the project partners. Tsaturyan and Ordyan outlined the fundamental strategic directions, goals, and objectives of the internationalization of higher education and research in Armenia. "Internationalization is not only about what we do, but rather how we do it: it is a state of mind open to learning from the wealth of international experience. It is nurtured by a supportive and socially responsive environment," Tsaturyan said.

While discussing the issues related to work permits, visas, and residence cards, Ordyan highlighted the need for establishing an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate the development of action plans to support the strategies identified in the Erasmus+ BOOST project. "Continuous cooperation across government agencies and their respective concerted efforts in this direction will be important following adoption of the national strategy for internationalization," she noted. The representatives of European partner universities, Rui Mendes from Instituto Superior Técnico (IST), Lisbon, and Karin Knuttson from the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, shared the best practices from the internationalization processes taking place in their institutions.

Several local universities briefed the participants on the internationalization initiatives in



their respective institutions, the work completed thus far, as well as recent achievements of the BOOST project. Artak Poghosyan from the National Centre of Educational Technologies (NCET) presented the proposed structure of the "Study in Armenia" program, which can be used as a marketing tool by all higher educational institutions in Armenia. The established goals for boosting the internationalization of Armenian higher education and research are: creating an environment that is conducive to internationalization of higher education and research; increasing competitiveness of



higher education programs and research at the international level; raising the international visibility and attractiveness of Armenian higher education and research; and increasing international mobility of students, faculty, and administrative staff.

Deputy Minister Anapiosyan made the closing remarks expressing hope for the successful implementation of the internationalization of higher education strategy on a national level.

STUDY TOUR AT THE UNIVERSITY ROVIRA I VIRGILI

TARRAGONA, Spain – On June 25-28, 2019, BOOST consortium partners took part in a four-day Erasmus+ BOOST Study Tour of the University Rovira i Virgili (URV). The tour coincided with URV's



International Staff Week and the final conference of the Erasmus+ Systemic University Change Towards Internationalization (SUCTI) project. This was an excellent opportunity for the consortium partners to learn about the SUCTI outcomes and network with staff from higher educational institutions (HEIs) around the world. The visit was dedicated to issues related to the creation or operationalization of International Cooperation Offices (ICO) and communication strategies for the internationalization of HEIs.

URV Vice-Rector for Internationalization, Dr. John Style, and URV Director of International Relations, Marina Casals, welcomed the participants. Casals presented the main goals of internationalization, the department's structure, functions, and best practices. She also addressed current global trends in internationalization of HEIs, the challenges imposed by the changing global demographics and increasing student mobility that presents higher education as a global market imposing associated demands on employers. She elaborated on the centralized and decentralized





models of ICOs duly discussing the structure and functions of each model. “The tour allowed me and my colleagues to think beyond the term ‘internationalization’ and define exactly what it means for our university,” affirmed Narek Ghazaryan, AUA Director of



the Office of Communications. “All University structures and institutions are built out of people and relationships between people. So, the importance of the International Staff Week is to bring people together so that they can build better university structures,” noted Dr. Style.

The BOOST Study Tour covered the examination of diverse topics, including comprehensive internationalization, communications strategies for internationalization, and best practices in internationalization. Through workshops, poster presentation, and working sessions, the tour created the right platform for the consortium partners to share their ideas, and present their distinct priorities and strategies for internationalization. BOOST

partners presented their ICOs, structures and functions, number of employees, and the types of activities they performed. They spoke about the existing challenges and shared the achievements of their respective departments. At the poster presentation, BOOST partners also shared the communication strategies practiced in their respective institutions.

On June 26, an international coffee break took place at URV where the participants of International Staff Week and BOOST consortium members shared national foods from their countries. The SUCTI final conference, a three-year initiative within Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic partnership for higher education, took place on June 27. Following the opening remarks by the Secretary for University and Research of the Catalan Government, Dr. Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal, and URV Rector, Dr. Maria Jose Figueras Salvat, and Ms. Marina Casals, who also is the SUCTI project coordinator, presented the goals/objectives of the project, its partners and trainers. During the conference round table discussions, the trainers shared their thoughts of the project, its outcomes, as well as the challenges they have a coordination meeting of BOOST project partners was held at the conclusion of the Study Tour, where the partners discussed the next

steps, including development of the internationalization platform, indicators, and quality assurance activities.

INTERNATIONAL STAFF WEEK AT THE SUPERIOR TECHNICAL INSTITUTE



LISBON, Portugal – On October 7-11, 2019, BOOST consortium partners from Armenia, namely the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of RA, Armenian State Pedagogical University, American University of Armenia, Shirak State University, Vanadzor State University, Yerevan State Conservatory, and National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility), participated in the International Staff Week 2019 hosted in three different schools of the University of Lisbon, Portugal: the engineering school (Técnico Lisboa), the humanities school (School of Arts and Humanities),



and the sciences school (Faculty of Sciences). The event aimed at boosting the internationalization of HEIs by creating opportunities for participants to network, share best practices, discuss current challenges, and enhance their knowledge and competences.

The participants also took part in the World Café held on the Technology Campus of Oeiras, Taguspark, and in the Exhibition of International Partners held on the Alameda Campus. They had the chance to promote their respective universities and present to the larger academic community mobility opportunities available in their institutions.

Alongside the International Staff Training Week, the Erasmus+ BOOST consortium management meeting addressed the project activities planned for the remaining nine months.

IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP AT SHIRAK STATE UNIVERSITY

On March 22, 2019 Shirak State University conducted a workshop on "Prospects for Higher Education Internationalization" within the frame

of the ERASMUS+ BOOST project. During the workshop, the European partners presented their experiences in academic mobility and internationalization of universities. Also, there was discussion on development perspectives and intercultural communication skills, as well as other activities carried out within the framework of the BOOST program for the internationalization strategy of Higher Education Institutions HEIs.



The following topics were covered:

- Development of Internationalization Strategy within the framework of ERASMUS+ BOOST
- Training on International Credit Mobility
- In-house Training
- Training on Support to Internationalization Process
- International Students Admission
- Training in Proposal Writing

DISCUSSION ON INTERNATIONALIZATION PRACTICES IN ARMENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Within the Erasmus+ BOOST program, a national internationalization strategy was developed for Armenian Higher Education Institutions to facilitate embracing internationalization practices and create a National Platform with online tools for mapping and benchmarking the



internationalization processes in the country. These developments were presented by Mr. Robert Sukiasyan, Head of the Department of Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport at a meeting with representatives of various ministerial departments.

ONLINE CONFERENCE HALL OPENS AT VANADZOR STATE UNIVERSITY



VSU High School classroom N15 will henceforth serve as an Erasmus+ Online Conference Hall. Initiated by Susanna Toumanyan, the Acting Rector of VSU, and with support from the Erasmus+ BOOST project, it will be possible henceforth to organize online events, conferences, and various courses in the conference hall. Equipped with advanced technologies, including an interactive whiteboard with a modern web camera, a swivel device, conferencing speakers and related supplies, the conference hall offers the opportunity to maintain close collaboration with different universities worldwide to facilitate

university internationalization. The Conference Hall will be available for lectures and classes that require internet access. This offers the most optimal medium for the organization to implement distance learning.



At the official opening of the Conference Hall, Gohar Dokholyan, Head of the Department of Cooperation and Relations at VSU, stated that the university would maintain cooperation with all its subdivisions ensuring that the newly-opened hall would fully serve its purpose.

Also attending the opening was Holger Sauer, guest professor from Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nurnberg. A group photo of the guests was taken using the new web camera and the interactive whiteboard.

IN-HOUSE TRAINING AT THE RA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORT

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia (MOESCS) conducted an in-house training within MOESCS to share knowledge gained from the study tour of Tallinn Technological University within the Erasmus+ BOOST program. Ministry representatives, Tatevik Gharibyan and Arsen Hakobyan, who had participated in the study tour, presented the financial policy



of the Estonian Higher Education system, current developments of the education system, the Tallinn University experience and their credit mobility practices. The speakers also touched upon a number of questions related to effective organization and management of joint programs between universities, and the international experience in the recognition of joint qualifications.

NEWS FROM THE TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The 32nd Annual EAIE Conference and Exhibition in Barcelona, Spain will take place on 15–18 September, 2020, at Fira de Barcelona. The 2020 conference theme is 'Forging creative pathways'.



The organizers are looking forward to meeting colleagues from different places.

Taltech representatives from Study in Estonia participated at the Helsinki EAIE conference.

BOOST project case studies revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the 10-year internationalization process, as presented at BOOST

seminars, and also served as a guide and ground for setting future developments. TTU wishes to work with teachers to popularize technical, natural and social sciences among school students in an effort to raise the quality and level of teaching and learning in those fields.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS

- Training for technical teachers and engineering educators
- based on the Engineering Pedagogy curriculum. The aim is to provide learners that have already acquired a technical higher degree with the knowledge and skills necessary for competent, creative and effective teaching of technical subjects based on the principles of engineering pedagogy. Graduates can apply for ING-PAED IGIP qualification.
- Courses in technology, natural and exact sciences for providing new information and knowledge of recent developments in fields related to TTU.

Training for secondary school national curriculum elective subjects. The courses are held with support from the Eduko Development Programme for Education Sciences and Teacher Training.

TTÜ Department of Law won the competition for provision of research services to the European Commission in the field of the rights of EU citizens.

The consortium is led by the European Centre for Political Science and, in addition to the TTÜ Department of Law, Maastricht University and the European University Institute also are involved in the research. The total cost of the project is half a million euros.

According to the head of TTÜ Department of Law Professor Tanel Kerikmäe, citizenship of the European Union is an initiative that should enhance European identity. “The goal of the project is to study the rights deriving from EU citizenship and the impact thereof on the political and legal environment. In particular, it will be interesting to analyze which legal challenges are facing multilevel Europe in the digital era.”

INTERNATIONAL WEEK AT THE ARMENIAN STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY



On September 23-27, 2019, the International Cooperation Unit of the Armenian State Pedagogical University has organised an “International Week” within its own premises. More than 350 students, faculty and staff participated in a five-day information events. The event aimed at introducing ongoing International Exchange Programs: Erasmus+ Credit Mobility program and Summer



School Program as well as success stories of Erasmus+ Credit Mobility program participants. The ASPU International Cooperation Unit officers present the application procedure, financing and other details of exchange programs to students on a regular basis. Students, administrative and academic staff of the University previously participated in Erasmus+ Credit Mobility Program (namely in Finland, UK, Italy, Hungary, Spain) shared their challenges and benefits of mobility as well as knowledge and experience they gained during their study abroad.

ERASMUS+ INFORMATION DAYS IN YEREVAN 2019

On November 7-8 annual Erasmus+ Information Days in Yerevan were held at the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Armenian State Pedagogical University. The Information Days are key awareness raising campaigns that shed light on Erasmus+ Programs and bring together administrators, scholars,

experts and students from higher education institutions, decision makers from various ministries, members from EU Delegations, and other EU partners.

The 2nd day of Information Days was dedicated to discovering new perspectives for inter-university cooperation under Erasmus+ ICM and advancing Armenian-Spanish contacts. In the panel with IROs from Armenia and Spain, the guest speakers shared their achievements and challenges of planning and implementing mobility with Program/Partner countries. The session was followed by the introduction of changes foreseen in the new draft law on Higher Education and Research, which is intended to facilitate internationalization and scientific cooperation between Armenian and European HEIs. The two day event concluded with the ICM Armenian-Spanish marketplace and Spanish delegates’ institutional visits to Yerevan-based public and private Universities (<https://erasmusplus.am/news/>).

STUDENT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK CELEBRATION AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA



"The courses were challenging and interesting because you acquired a lot of knowledge. One of the best subjects I took was 'Globalization' because, as an exchange student, you're studying with other international students from all over the world and it really reinforces your learning."

Georges Ohannessian
SKEMA Business School, France

"The best thing about this study abroad opportunity was the connections you made, which will last forever. We have tons of stories about the bonds we share. For most of them, we were the first Armenians they met and, after meeting us, they became very interested in our country."

Maxime Rodrigus
University of Mons, Belgium

"For me, the most important thing I learned was how to go into a different culture that has nothing to do with yours and to try to learn to navigate in it. It was difficult at first, but then we got used to it, and after that it changes you because now you have two different mentalities."

Mari Sahakyan
John Cabot University, ItalyV

"At first, it was difficult being there, but then something changed and we started to get familiar and started to explore Rome and explore ourselves, as well."

Laura Abrahamyan
John Cabot University, Italy

PROJECT PARTNERS

ARMENIAN PARTNERS

- RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (RA MoESCS)
- Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovian (ASPU)
- American University of Armenia (AUA)
- Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas (YSC)
- Shirak State University after Mikayel Nalbandyan (ShSU)
- Vanadzor State University after Hovhannes Toumanyan (VSU)
- National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility (ArmEnic)

EU PARTNERS

- Universitat Politecnica De Catalunya(UPC), Spain
- Instituto Superior Tecnico (IST), Portugal
- Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV), Spain
- Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Sweden
- Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), Estonia



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