

**MARDS Consortium Meeting**  
**University of Vienna**  
**11 – 12 December 2019**

Minutes, first day, 11 December 2019

Present:

Prof. dr Radovan Stojanović, University of Montenegro  
Ms Jela Radović, University of Montenegro  
Dr Lucas Zinner, University of Vienna  
Mag. dr Christian Kolowrat, University of Vienna  
Mag. Lisette Schmidt, University of Vienna  
Mag. David Zuser, University of Vienna  
Prof. dr Matjaž Debevc, University of Maribor  
Prof. dr Jernej Turk, University of Maribor  
Prof. dr Melita Kovačević, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb  
Prof. dr Alexandra Bitušikova, Matej Bel University  
Kamila Borsekova, PhD, Matej Bel University  
Prof. dr Milica Vukotić, University of Donja Gorica  
Dr Sandra Tinaj, University of Donja Gorica  
Prof. dr Brilanda Bushati, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”  
Prof. dr Arjeta Troshani, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”  
Dr Alma Afezoli, Polytechnic University of Tirana  
Ms Uriana Thanasi, Polytechnic University of Tirana  
Ms Rezarta Sinanaliaj, University of Vlora  
Prof.assoc.dr Elenica Pjero, University of Vlora  
Prof. dr Betim Cico, Metropolitan University of Tirana  
Prof. dr Ozcan Asilkan, Metropolitan University of Tirana  
Ms Tanja Radusinović, Chamber of Economy of Montenegro

Prof. dr Radovan Stojanovic, MARDS project coordinator, welcomed everyone to the second coordination meeting of project bodies. This meeting gathered 22 people from 11 institutions. Institutions that were missing are: Ministry of Science of Montenegro, Ministry of Education of Montenegro, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Albania and Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania.

Meeting started with overview of the tasks done during the first year of the project, shown through the presentation “Progress report year I” prepared by prof. dr Radovan Stojanović and through the project website [www.mards.ucg.ac.me](http://www.mards.ucg.ac.me), which contains all relevant documents and information. Project coordinator introduces all participants where we are with the project and which are main problems.

**Overall information:**

- 22 meetings were held;
- 4 trainings;
- 250 people participated;
- 110 participants of the trainings;
- 40 quality presentations;
- 10 recommendation documents with more than 300 pages.

**Conclusion:**

- No reason to be disappointed;
- Active and serious work done;
- Formal audits from NEO and EACEA commented that we have good results and we are on the track.

**Status of deliverables:**

- DE1.1 Reports completed;
- DE1.2 Proceedings postponed in order to collect more material and put it all in a book;
- DE1.3 Legal documents for responsible bodies are almost ready, will be sent till the end of 2019;
- DE2.X Trainings are done; Report on trainings will be ready in M24;
- DE4.1 Report on equipment – Equipment purchase partly done: UoM, UDG, UMT and PUT bought the equipment, no information from UNISHK and UV; it is necessary to put Erasmus plus stickers and take photos of the equipment.
- DE5.1 and DE5.2 Quality control – good work done: Quality plan prepared; Questionnaires were done for every event; Analysis of the questionnaires performed.
- DE6.1 and DE6.2 Dissemination could be better;
- DE6.3 Dissemination to stakeholders could be better;
- DE7.1 Sustainability strategy not completed yet;
- DE8.X Management is going well.

**Where we are with other deliverables:**

- UoM and UNISHK started working on Curricula Development;
- in Albania there is a problem with accreditation of PhD studies and there is still no clear information on what should be expected; UNISHK is trying to provide additional values by signing strategic partnerships between Albanian universities involved in this project;
- at UoM PhD structure and Course syllabus templates are prepared.

**Problems:**

1. PhD problem in Albania, because there is no clear information and guidelines;

2. Documents to be sent to responsible bodies;
3. Equipment status – should be completed before submitting mid-term report;
4. More dissemination to industry and services;
5. Sustainability strategy in delay;
6. Law participation of Ministries;
7. Recruitment of young people and students in Albania;
8. Preparation of mid-term report in order to take 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of the money.

**Mitigation:**

- Till the end of January to resolve PhD problem in Albania;
- Till the end of December to send documents to responsible bodies;
- Till the end of February to finish equipment purchase;
- Till the end of December to finish sustainability strategy;
- Till the end of January to organize two dissemination events in Albania;
- To speed up accreditation process in Montenegro;
- To continue with tasks for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year;

**Feedback:**

- Letter from EACEA received couple of days before the meeting where they ask to be updated by 13<sup>th</sup> January about current situation of PhD Studies in Albania.

**Partners' feedback:**

- Prof. Cico is thankful for cooperation, with special thanks to prof. Stojanović who is very dedicated as project coordinator, trying to resolve problems on time and giving his support in every activity/situation. He also mentioned that in all trainings participants received excellent information and knowledge which will contribute to the development of PhD studies in Albania in general.

This meeting continued with presentations from partners on the work done during the first year of the project. Presentations shown by:

- University of Vienna – mag. dr Christian Kolowrat
- University of Maribor – prof. dr Matjaž Debevc
- Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb (orally) – prof. dr Melita Kovačević
- Matej Bel University – Kamila Borsekova, PhD
- University of Donja Gorica – prof. dr Milica Vukotić
- University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi” – prof. dr Arjeta Troshani
- Polytechnic University of Tirana – prof. dr Alma Afezolli
- Metropolitan University of Tirana – prof. dr Betim Cico
- University of Vlora – Ms Rezarta Sinanaliaj
- Chamber of Economy of Montenegro – Ms Tanja Radusinović

All presentations are available on MARDS website.

Next topic was development of PhD Studies at the Universities. Prof. Stojanović presented PhD structure templated prepared at the University of Montenegro and course syllabus template prepared based on the documents provided by the University of Maribor. At UoM team for Curricula has been established and will work on moduls and structure of PhD School. University of Donja Gorica has recently accredited some programmes and will help us with this matter. Project coordinator informs if there is a problem with Curricula, it is possible to get 6 months of extension of the project but without further payments. Prof. Kovačević warns that we should be careful with allocation of ECTS.

Prof. Troshani from UNISHK showed their course syllabus template and informed that at this stage legal framework in Albania is still not clear. They sent a letter to the Ministry asking for detailed information and advice, very soon they received an answer which does not give any precise information. She states that the biggest problem is communication with the Ministry and hopes that this problem could be solved by mutual cooperation with all the partners. UNISHK has signed bilateral agreements with some universities, in order to strenghten their application. These agreements contain general information on exchange of the staff and students, joint programmes, etc.

Prof. Cico asks which is the position of other universities in this cooperation?

Prof. Troshani answers that PhD School will be opened in Shkodra but every university will contribute by offering courses at their institutions. She underlines that application can't be successful without contribution of each partner.

Prof. Cico gives two approaches:

- (1) UNISHK to prepare bilateral agreements;
- (2) To prepare PhD Studies based on agreement with all universities – meaning that there will be one agreement which will include all partners and they will work and prepare everything together.

Prof. Kovačević says that it would be good to have plan B, even if we get extension it will be hard to finish everything as it sounds quite ambitious. She mentions that at the end of 3 years of the project we must have clear outcome. If not, we can be deducted of money which is often done recently by EACEA.

Prof. Cico repeats that there should be one agreement between all universities; to be sent by UNISHK rector; to send the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Ministry.

Prof. Stojanović explains that in EACEA they are familiar with this problem as from 2 – 4 Albanian universities asked for extension but he doesn't know about final results. This situation is going on for around 6 years.

Prof. Afezulli from PUT asks about plan B and thinks it should be discussed among entire team and approved by all. She suggests first to try to struggle in order to finalize the project as it was planned.

Dr Zinner says that there are different layers, some things depend on the Ministries but some could be done by the universities. He suggests to partners to think of the framework they want to set up. Universities can think about initiatives where there is no need for Curricula, set up joint summer schools, something concrete that can be included in structure and Curricula (common appearance, summer/winter schools, etc).

Prof. Stojanović concludes this topic by informing that in one month, before 13<sup>th</sup> January, we need to have an update on this and to send it to EACEA.

Afternoon session started with presentation by prof. dr Alexandra Bitušikova, from Matej Bel University, which is responsible for WP 2 Training of Montenegrin and Albanian academic staff and professionals/administration in doctoral education. Outcome of this WP is recommendations which will be done in M24.

Every participant of the training must complete Individual Mobility Report. It will include the list of the skills improved, some thoughts and recommendations to be implemented in their institutions.

Prof. Stojanović asks if it will be possible to organize an extra training, if we find it necessary.

Prof. Bitušikova mentions that there is only question of finances, but in general it is always possible.

Prof. Cico proposes that this training could be led by our experts but to include also participants from the Ministry of Education. Prof. Bitušikova says that it would be good to organize this training in addition to the next Consortium meeting.

Next part is dedicated to the topic of legal documents to be sent to the responsible bodies.

Dr Zinner asks what do we expect from the Ministry and do we need its act. Prof. Stojanović explains that documents will be sent to them for adopting, but we do not ask for legal adjustments. We expect of them to commit and give positive feedback and scholarships. Proposal for improvement of PhD studies in Montenegrin language will be sent with the Report on “state-of-the-art” of doctoral studies and Report on funding doctoral studies, together as one book. It will be presented as a result of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the project. Rector and president of the Governing board at the UoM are members of MARDS team so we expect them to approve this proposal, and we expect support from the Ministries as they are partners on this project.

In Albania, same documents should be sent for adopting – proposal for improvement in Albanian language along with the two reports in English.

In M13 call for external evaluator should be published. External evaluators must be from outside of Consortium, they can't have contract, they can be subcontracted. Prof. Kovačević says that it is not necessary to make an open call, it can be Consortium decision but prof. Stojanović explains that we must be transparent. A good idea is to decide between 2-3 people with good references.

As PhD Curricula Development is the main topic of this meeting we came back to it. Dr Zinner suggests to the partners to think about vision of joint schools – what is there to offer and who is the staff. He suggests to put the content for what we want to develop, e.g. start joint summer school and put pressure on the Ministries that we need legal framework for it.

Mag. Kolowrat showed couple of examples from the University of Vienna for PhD solution.

**Decisions to be taken:**

- **To accept Progress report on year I, by project coordinator;**
- **To accept Reports of partners;**
- **To accept measures for improvement of PhD studies;**
- **To accept progress on equipment;**
- **To accept progress on dissemination;**
- **To agree on actions regarding the problem of PhD studies.**