

# JOINT STUDIES

Erasmus+ project ROCCO

# ROCCO

## Removing Obstacles for Cross-border COllaboration

### **Objectives**

- To propose legislative changes related to cross-border collaboration with emphasis on accreditation of joint study programmes
- To create guidelines for higher education institutions with information and advices for development and accreditation of joint study programmes

# ROCCO

## Removing Obstacles for Cross-border COllaboration

### □ **Team**

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# Cross-border Cooperation

- Students and staff exchange (Erasmus, CEEPUS etc.) – well established
- Scientific cooperation– functioning for a long time
- Joint studies– in 2014/15 Croatia was among the countries with 0 – 2,5% joint studies and most of the countries in the region are in that same group
- Therefore, Croatian Strategy of education, science and technology supports establishment of joint studies

# Joint studies in Adriatic-Ionian region

University	Programmes in English	Joint studies (joint or multiple degrees)
<b>Università Politecnica delle Marche</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>University of Zadar</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>University of Banja Luka</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>University of Primorska</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>University of Bologna</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>University of Patras</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>University of Trieste</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

# Joint studies – EQAR

(European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education)

Reaction to very complicated procedures for accreditation of joint studies:

- Accreditation report produced by any agency registered in EQAR will be recognized by any other agency registered in EQAR
- *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes* (adopted at the ministerial meeting in Yerevan)
- No national criteria!

# Why to set up joint studies?

Already mentioned external reasons plus the following institutional reasons:

- teaching quality enhancement
- access to additional teaching and research resources
- increase of reputation
- access to additional (international) students

# SWOT

This is a SWOT analysis for Croatia.

Any other country should make its own.

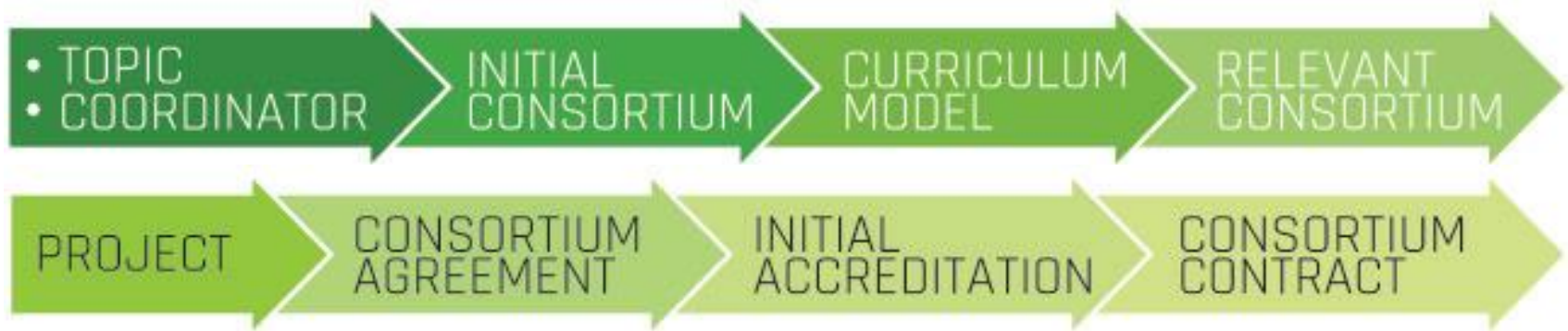
	Helps in setting up and delivering joint programmes	Hinders setting up and delivering joint programmes
Internal sources/reasons of the higher education institution	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
	Wide range of study programmes that can be joined together	Complex initial accreditation
	High-quality teaching staff	Complex quality assurance
	Students interested in new forms of studying and methods of teaching	Additional administrative burden
	Support from the line ministry and accompanying quality assurance agencies	IT system of higher education institutions (ISVU) does not support joint programmes
	Sound language competence of students and teachers	Insufficient support systems for foreign students
	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	Internationalisation and raising the international reputation of the higher education institution	Differences between legislative and institutional frameworks in various countries
External sources/reasons beyond the direct control of the higher education institution	International dimension in curriculum design and development	Increased costs of delivering joint study programmes
	Excellence-based clustering in specific disciplines	Increased burden on human and other resources
	Innovative programmes and teaching methods	Questionable sustainability of joint programmes
	Creating a motivating competition among teachers	Unrecognisability on the local labour market
	Access to additional resources of foreign higher education institutions	
	Attracting motivated foreign and local students	
	Development of teachers' competences for work in an international environment	
	Access to additional EU funds (ESF etc.)	
	Increased employability in the European Common Market	



# The initial idea for a programme

- jointness has to bring **added value**, not only for the HEI (reputation and internationalization), but also **for the students**
- forming a consortium to create a joint study program not very different from one already offered by a single consortium member is not a good start
- an idea for a joint study should always originate from a desire to give the students something they could not get without that kind of study programme

# Forming the consortium



When selecting consortium members attention should be paid to academic expertise, the fact that institutions have been accredited, mutual trust among the partners, their commitment to the delivery of the joint programme and institutional support.

# Consortium agreement

## **It should answer the following questions:**

- What are the reasons for the joint study and what brings the added value?
- Do the HEIs have positive relevant accreditation scores awarded by an EQAR agency?
- Is the funding plan sustainable? Are the students expected to participate in the funding and what would their share be?
- What if the partnership is terminated and delivery of the programme is discontinued?
- Is there an agreement on an agency that will carry out evaluation?
- Does each partner have the capacity to perform its duties?
- What are the procedures for the recognition of the period spent studying abroad and who is responsible for them?

# Consortium agreement

## **It must contain at least the following:**

- method of coordinating the work of the consortium and the development and delivery of the curriculum
- plan for external evaluation of the programme – the initial accreditation as well as future external and internal reviews or evaluations in line with ESG
- agreement on funding, responsibility for costs and distribution of revenue
- duties in the management and leadership of the study programme
- engagement and mobility of teachers
- procedures for standardising teaching competencies based on the selected pedagogical concept

# Consortium agreement

- student selection and admission procedure
- places and modes of programme delivery
- proposal for the study programme
- ensuring recognition of the period spent studying abroad
- student financing, student status and entitlements
- ensuring sustainability and the contingency plan for students in case delivery of the joint programme is discontinued
- use of e-tools and IT systems for management of the education process
- award of qualifications and the elements of public documents
- academic and professional titles and academic degrees awarded in the languages of all partners

# Joint curriculum

Curriculum elements	Additional joint programme elements	Other issues
Objectives, learning outcomes, EQF-compliance	Specific requirements of each country, but also the European context	Identification of the joint programme's added value
Content and teaching methods	Responsibility for specific parts of programme delivery at the consortium level	Flexibility derived from the complex structure of the joint programme
Teaching resources	Shared virtual platform for teacher-student collaboration (e.g. LMS)	Open or closed platform and technical features
Programme funding and sustainability	Consideration and adjustment of the specifics of national higher education funding	Modalities for using equipment and teachers belonging to different partners
Admission requirements	Agreeing on the requirements and lists of admitted students among the partners	Appropriate IT system
Programme completion requirements	Method for issuing completion certificates and recognition in national systems	Informing stakeholders (employers, agencies, etc.) about qualifications
Programme quality assurance	Comprehensiveness of the quality assurance system	Avoiding red tape and redundancy

# Initial accreditation

## **There are two possible cases:**

- All higher education institutions in a consortium have the authority to adopt study programmes (in Croatia, these are public universities)
- One or more higher education institutions in a consortium are subject to initial programme accreditation carried out by an accreditation agency (in Croatia, these are polytechnics, colleges and private universities)

In both cases, it can and should be achieved that the initial accreditation process is based on a **single review** carried out **in line with the ESG and without using any specific national criteria.**

# Initial accreditation

- In the first case the senates (or other institutional bodies responsible for the initial accreditation of study programmes) should adjust their procedures in order not to introduce unnecessary obstacles to joint programmes (e.g. the requirement that the process is conducted in national language or through evaluation by a local panel appointed by senate/quality board)
- In the second case, the *European Approach* suggests that the HEIs jointly select an EQAR agency to conduct the accreditation procedure



# Evaluation of programme implementation

- It should consist of periodic evaluations in accordance with the **ESG, European Approach** and good practices in joint programme quality assurance, and it should be done for the **programme as a whole** and not for some of its components!
- In Croatia, reaccreditation is carried out at institutional level, but it covers all programmes offered by the institution. However, during the reaccreditation of a Croatian HEI which is a partner in a joint programme, it is not possible to evaluate the joint programme as a whole, because the accrediting body normally has no authority over foreign partners.

# Evaluation of programme implementation

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- Therefore, the only reasonable way is to have external periodic programme evaluation (of the programme as a whole), performed by an EQAR agency, jointly selected by the partners!

# Funding

- In most cases the HEIs can charge tuition fees for joint programmes to the full amount of programme costs, which means they can be delivered without public funding.
- However, if these programmes are to attract the best possible students and offer learning opportunities to students from socially and economically disadvantaged groups as well, it would be advisable that they are at least partially publicly funded.

# Funding

- Consortium contract must clearly define whether tuition will be paid by some students or by all of them, what will be the amount of such tuition, and how the consortium members will distribute the funds among themselves.
- When negotiating a funding agreement with a ministry, a HEI participating in a joint programme, for which public funding has been approved, will include that programme in the negotiation process.

# Funding

- When calculating the funding for particular HEI, the ministry may also include the students enrolled in the joint study.
- In doing this, it may take into account all the students, or only the national students, or only the EU students.
- It may award full amount for a student enrolled in a joint study, or only part of it (proportional to the time spent in the institution), or it may award some additional amount to encourage the joint studies.
- And finally, there are possibilities for EU (or other international) public funding.

Thank you for your attention