

STAND – Analysis of the State of Play Workshop

MINUTES

07 MAY 2021

TIME: 10 – 11:00H

LOCATION: TIRANA

WORK PACKAGE	WP1 – Activity 1.3
TYPE OF MEETING	Training - Seminar
FACILITATOR	POLIS University, Tirana, Albania
NOTE TAKER	Alfia Urazaeva
INSTITUTION	IBC-M
PRESENCE	Virtual

Agenda topics

10:00 – 11:00H

**RECAP OF DAY 1, DEBRIEF PER
COUNTRY OF AFTERNOON SESSION
DAY 1/Q&A**

**ENORA PRUVOT, THOMAS
ESTERMANN/EUA**

DISCUSSION
<p>Bujar Gallopeni has introduced Agenda. Recaps of previous day session was shared previously, with the task distributions among country teams, thus it was decided to shorten the Agenda. All the sent recaps were received and evaluated well, they would be included into the workshop report. Montenegro recap was very precise and concrete. Link with the Ministry well established. Task Force responsibilities and meetings timeline also well defined. Albania process: POLIS will take over the liaison with the Ministry. Group will include other partners into Consortium (who are not partners under the project, but seen as valuable). Kosovo group will establish Ministry link (with more details to be shared). Task force is the biggest as it includes 3 participants per partners, also includes parliament representative and students representative. Timeline also is well defined. Coordination will take time and effort. Data will need to be collected and analyzed now by the partners, but EUA will be available for constant support.</p> <p>Bujar Pira /UASF Question: Should Parliamentary Representative be considered for this framework? Laws, statues on Education in Kosovo are approved by the Parliament. We had a case this December when statues of 4 Kosovo HEIs were approved by the Parliament, How is this taken into consideration? As there is a strong government control, however define the framework, do we concentrate on internal procedures? As lawys and by-laws will take time to change.</p> <p>Thomas/EUA Answer: we know from other systems, that laws and by laws are regulated, you have a legal law that makes a reference, reference to the status makes stronger reference. Parliament, ministries endorse the statues. Statues regulate which groups come in to work, but it is your institution that decides who are the representatives from the university. We will need to see different cases. Statues need to be seen.</p>

Enora: it is not unusual for the statues to be approved by the miniseries or parliament, this is just a last link normally to check that there are no contradictions against regulations. You have assessment of what is going on, and you have your vision, changing the status of employees might be not of concern now, but more financial stress might be your vision. We will concentrate on this in the questionnaire, we will see the roadmap, to see and understand the points of change and their levels.

Your example, is one of the point to be considered, do you want to concentrate on this. This is one of the points to discuss for your country group.

Bujar Pira: Further research and analysis might be need to see how autonomy can be enabled to the universities. Roadmap will provide us the best practices, whichever one we choose might help.

Thomas: this will be part of your discussions and exchanges. You will need to identify where the restrictions come from, and you include them into your roadmap. You have to identify the issues to work with: changing the law, bylaws, all will have to be based on discussions, of what you want to change and if you want to change.

Enora: you will need to identify the priorities of the changes you will need.

CONCLUSIONS	
Defined country-level working groups and work plan.	

MINUTES

07 MAY 2021

TIME: 11:00 – 13:00

LOCATION: TIRANA

WORK PACKAGE	WP1 – Activity 1.3
TYPE OF MEETING	Training - Seminar
FACILITATOR	POLIS University, Tirana, Albania
NOTE TAKER	Damir Gashi
INSTITUTION	IBC-M
PRESENCE	Virtual

Agenda topics

11:00 – 13:00H

**PRESENTATION OF THE
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ENORA PRUVOT, THOMAS
ESTERMANN/EUA;
MODERATORS: MIHONE
KEROLLI, FLORA KRASNIQI,
BUJAR GALLOPENI, JELENA
DJOKIC**

DISCUSSION	
<p>IBC-M College Director, prof. Mihone Kerolli, moderating this part of the workshop, began it by inviting the project beneficiaries and their respective representatives to present the questionnaire findings and comment in case any clarification is further required by the EUA.</p> <p>Kosovo</p>	

IBC-M professor Mr. Bujar Gallopeni representing Kosovo commented that questions and context were clear in all dimensions, nevertheless, he mentioned that Kosovo may need in-depth analysis of the questionnaire, more time to digest all the questions and reflect on those, and potentially some clarification at the later stage.

Prof. Bujar Gallopeni posed a question to the EUA representatives, asking in what context should the questionnaire be further developed, would it need to be adapted to fit the needs of the country or should it be used in line with the present situation?

EUA Deputy Director of Governance, Funding & Public Policy Development, Ms. Enora Pruvot, replied by saying that the response options should remain the same, including the content of the form/dashboard and therefore the questionnaire itself, including the questions and the response options, because it's the scorecard and the survey should remain the same. That doesn't mean you can't have flexibility around it, if you want to consider additional elements then you can do so, but she said that she would encourage beneficiaries to keep the survey as is. Dashboard form in MS Excel is password protected for any changes, to avoid the formatting of the document, such as tick boxes and other elements in it. So I would ask you not to make any changes to a form content, but if you want to analyze any additional component or the problem, that would most certainly not be a problem.

EUA Director of Governance, Funding & Public Policy Development Mr. Thomas Estermann said that the added benefit to this kind of approach, by keeping the form intact and unamended, will allow them to put this into a context of a large number of universities throughout Europe, where EUA would be able to determine which countries have freedom in what autonomy dimensions. Also, in case the project beneficiaries would like to add additional information or include a descriptive part on certain aspects of the roadmap, that would be of course possible. We can then come up with the statistics in terms of university autonomy in Europe.

Prof. Bujar Gallopeni thanked Ms. Enora Pruvot and Mr. Thomas Estermann for their response to a question he posed.

Albania

POLIS University Head of International Units and Projects, Ms. Flora Krasniqi, representing Albania said that they find most of the questions in accordance with the legal framework of Albania and that they may need to add additional notes to the dashboard in a form of annexes, as Bujar Gallopeni mentioned earlier, but nothing other than that.

Montenegro

IBC-M Academic Director, prof. Jelena Djokic representing Montenegro said that they lack some input or clarification regarding certain questions presented in the dashboard, concerning naming proper designation of the university structures, whether it's a board or university committee commission, and the voting rights procedures and the adoption of statute, since in the case of Montenegro, this hasn't been regulated neither by the Ministry nor by the university.

Mr. Thomas Estermann replied that it would be up to university to decide, since this would be a matter of the university statute and thereby its autonomy.

Prof. Djokic added that the Parliament is the body that will have a final vote on the statute, meaning that it would be indirectly evaluated by the state, not by the Ministry but by the Parliament.

Mr. Thomas Estermann replied that it is difficult to provide a clear-cut answer, it depends on the parliament. Would the parliament agree to put this forward or will they be making any

changes whatsoever? Maybe you should discuss this between yourselves and see if this has been addressed in the past, or is this is just a formality. It's good that you describe the situation in the dashboard, and just say if this is a practice or something new. He added that of course the scorecard itself is simplifying things in certain areas and it doesn't capture all the details, but again the advantage of providing a close enough description of the situation, it will allow your universities to get a clear picture of how good you are positioned within the European university autonomy system.

Prof. Jelena Djokic asked for clarification about the "Design of academic programs" part, where Ms. Enora Pruvot responded by saying that judging by their past experience with other educational systems and their universities' autonomy, there are countries where there is a module on national history or defense, so these are parts of the options that exist in some educational systems, but we can recommend that you have a look at the autonomy scorecard reports because there you'll find information about different cases across Europe, and there's even country profiles where we describe the situation in each country, and provide recommendations, like for example "Statute needs to be approved" etc.

Data analysis – achieving a structured overview of university autonomy in Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro

Mr. Thomas Estermann opened the last part of the workshop, about the steps to be followed after the beneficiaries obtain all the data in the dashboard, data analysis and drafting a report. Dashboard is basically a database with additional information, and as we said at the beginning, communication here is a very important aspect, and therefore after drafting a report you may be using it in presenting it to other universities, community, ministries, so everyone understands what is the current state of play. We will show you an example and also we'll show you some examples from the past projects so you can have an insight on how this has been done before. Of course, you are not obliged to follow it, it's just something that we deem useful.

In this first part you will have to describe the state of play, describe different dimensions, identifying the areas where autonomy is deemed important and all the shortcomings.

The second step is road map development, with specific suggestions on what should be addressed and how. As one can see, a scorecard is a tool that addresses a lot of different areas, and you have to set your priorities so you can understand in what areas your autonomy needs improvement.

Developing these dashboards has an aim and that is to translate this so you can have a proper reform discussion on a solid base.

Mr. Thomas Estermann than provided an example from a roadmap EUA has developed with their partners in Kazakhstan, and the indicators in the dashboard, providing an example in offering programs only in the official language or in other languages as well.

This is very important because very often, policy makers want to make sure the universities have established procedures at institutional levels corresponding to a quality process in place.

Mr. Thomas Esterman then presented another action plan from another project, this time with Armenia, where one can see why is it important to provide additional information beside those required in the dashboard, and we can observe some general challenges with critically low level of public funding for high education, and this was esteemed as high priority to address. There were several actions proposed, a long-term plan for investment was developed, or setup specific schemes for funding research in universities.

We added another element – and that is the timeframe, deciding if this would be done in a short-term, like in one year time, or over a longer time period, three years for example. There is no fixed structure to this but we find it quite useful to reflect on those things and make it clear that it would be important to do something, like this, which is the case here with the increased funding towards the sector, but in reality, it was estimated that it wasn't feasible in long-term. And again, on the institutional level the equivalent actions posed, for example, engaging in diversification of funding activities, it's not much but still it shows that a lot can be done at the institutional level.

Also, as one can see from a recommendation we did in Kazakhstan, there is a link to the reports, with a description of prerequisites, and we have described a case for 11 actions that we suggested, and 6 actions at institutional level. We find this very important, because if you don't add actions at institutional level, it is much difficult to get the reforms in place.

Just to give you an idea, in order to convince stakeholders to engage in a reform process, a structured report would be very helpful, and as you can see on your screens (Ms. Enora Pruvot is sharing her screen with other participants), we have here a description of a process, its various dimensions like organizational autonomy and as you can see here we have a distinct and condensed description of the situation collected through a dashboard, but in a more readable way, for the decision makers, for those that are involved in the process.

What you see on your screens is a detailed, condensed report for a complete system on 11 pages, describing different dimensions, and then we have an assessment per category in colour coding, and this is just another way of showing what has been described before.

Ms. Enora Pruvot added that we also looked at opportunities, the idea was to see where things were actually quite advanced and what could be done in addition.

Mr. Thomas Estermann said that they tried to bring in some principles from their work practice, with the last point here where we developed toolkits on governance model, what to have in mind when changing your governing models and inclusion of external members etc. Our recommendation is to think about developing the analytical reports, with roadmaps and recommendations, so that is taken up in the best possible way.

Please, have a look at the examples we are going to distribute to you, make your decisions and come back to us in case you have any questions.

In the end, we have developed governance toolkits, what to have in mind when changing your governing models, and should you include external members or other members.

At the same time we have also developed Human resources and Financial management toolkits. Why did we do this? Well, because we found out that in systems where you only look at the legal changes, the implementation often becomes problematic point.

Ms. Enora Pruvot added that we are the very beginning of the journey, there's a lot of work ahead, but we have dynamic groups here, and we are not worried about the collection of data, I think we will have a good assessment from your side.

Prof. Mihone Kerolli thanked both Mr. Thomas Estermann and Ms. Enora Pruvot for their contribution and for a detailed briefing and the workshop. It was an interesting experience, all three groups from the three countries, and the good thing is that it was clear to all the participants what were the questions about, the methodology itself, and we have witnessed how there may be discrepancies in the process, where everything is clearly defined in the law, but however in the implementation part we come across some obstacles. Findings from each country will be compared between the partners, and experience shared.

Ms. Mihone Kerolli also thanked all the participants, rectors, vice-rectors, for their engagement, discussion, contribution and commitment to make a change in the autonomy practice of HEIs in the Western Balkans. Also, she thanked the POLIS university for organizing the workshop, their technician who did a good job on a technical side, saying that we appreciate all the effort invested by all the partners. She also expressed her satisfaction with meeting in-person the management of Montenegro University for the first time; also emphasized how the partners are looking forward to meet all others in the future, hoping that borders will be opened and that we will have more interaction between everyone involved.

Mr. Thomas Estermann said that he agrees with everything prof. Mihone Kerolli said and this model is obviously not 100% ideal, but I have a feeling it will work out thanks to the excellent preparation done in terms of organization. Mr. Thomas Estermann expressed his gratitude to prof. Mihone Kerolli for taking part in organizing the workshop and the country representatives that have done all the work and delivered the workshop. We are looking forward to meeting you in person.

Prof. Mihone Kerolli also thanked the Ministry representatives who participated online, as they share a commitment for changes in university autonomy and governance and university reforms, which is of course a good sign and are looking forward to have a successful outcome of the project.

MINUTES

06 MAY 2021

TIME: 14:30 – 16:30

LOCATION: TIRANA

WORK PACKAGE	WP1 – Activity 1.3
TYPE OF MEETING	Training - Seminar
FACILITATOR	POLIS University, Tirana, Albania
NOTE TAKER	Gresa Ferri
INSTITUTION	IBC-M
PRESENCE	Virtual

Agenda topics

14:30 – 16:30H

**ORGANISING THE DATA
COLLECTION PROCESS: DEFINING
ROLES, PROCESS AND TIMELINE &
GROUP WORK DISCUSSION**

**EUA, ASSISTED BY BUJAR
GALLOPENI, JELENA DJOKIC,
MIHONE KEROLLI, FLORA
KRASNIQI**

DISCUSSION

- Group Work discussion

Group from Albania led by Flora Krasniqi
Group from Montenegro led by Jelena Djokic
Group from Kosovo led by Bujar Gallopeni

- Discussion on the separate systems, how those systems can be organized within institutions.

For each system, proposed questions for discussion:

Step 1. Liaison with the Ministry

Who is responsible to liaise with Ministry and collect responses?

Who should be contacted in the Ministry?

Who is responsible to collect relevant legal document?

Step 2. University Taskforce

Who is part of the University taskforce? Who is responsible to coordinate the taskforce?

Who outside of the consortium should be included?

Who is responsible to set up taskforce meetings? Separate meetings for each dimension? + General consensus meetings to validate the response?

Step 3. Overall process

Who is responsible to collapse the data for each system in the dashboard?

Who is responsible to check that everyone is on track with their tasks?

The idea is to discuss and decide on the responsibilities, in the cases where participants present can't take decisions right away, they will have more time to coordinate with their institutions.

Another aspect, to be decided who is going to collect the legal documents. It is also interesting to discuss the approach towards the ministries, if it is important for the EUA to join the meetings with the ministries or not.

University Autonomy taskforce: TBD who is going to be part of the group, ideally the partners of that country.

One person should be responsible to coordinate groups.

Timeframe should be decided and scheduled, Consensus final meeting to be scheduled to make sure all agree on the final picture.

Important: Names and deadlines do be set. Deadlines do not have to be the same for each three countries: Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro.

Feedback from discussion:

Montenegro Group presented by Jelena Djokic:

Step 1: Liaison with Ministry

Vice rector for academic affairs is responsible to liaise with Ministry and collect response.

Director of the Directorate for higher education should be contacted in Ministry.

Vice dean for academic affairs will be responsible to collect relevant legal documents. 12.05.2021

Step 2: University task force

Vice rector for academic affairs, Vice rector for science and research, The head of Finance, General Secretary of the University and the head of Scientific Board, are part of the university Task force.

Vice rector academic affairs will be responsible to coordinate the task force. Members of the Supervisory Board from external stakeholders should be included as well, The head of Scientific Board. He will also call for the Task force meetings, on 15.06.2021. As the University of Montenegro is the only public university, general consensus is not under question.

Step 3: Overall process

The office for international affairs will fill the data, under the supervision and responsibility of the Vice Rector. As a Task force coordinator, he will also check that everyone is on track with their tasks. 10.07.2021.

Kosovo Group presented by Bujar Gallopeni:

Step 1: Liaison with Ministries

IBCM to coordinate the process with the ministries.

Proposed date for meetings to be coordinated with the ministry. Approx: Mid June

Step 2: University Task Force

Facilitator for the process: University of Prishtina

Vice Rectors from each university will be responsible

General Secretary

Student Representative

Representative of Parliamentary Commission for Education

To be included: 5 partners that are part of the project, plus 3 more who are not part of the project one student representative from each partner.

Procedure:

1. Each representative of partner university will fill out the first draft of needs assessment at university level, latest by 30th of May.

2. The coordinator/ facilitator will merge a single draft, deadline 10th of June

3. A joint workshop to validate the dashboard - 15-16th of June in UASF.

Step 3. Overall Process

IBCM Team (Bujar, Mihone, Alfia) will be responsible for monitoring and coordinating the activities for Kosovo's assessment process.

Deadlines: Step 1: TBD (Mid June)

Step 2: 20th of June
Step 3: 30th of June
Final Draft: 15th of July, 2021

Albania group:

Step 1: Liaison with Ministry

Polis University will be responsible to liaise with the Ministry and collect the responses

Step 2: University Taskforce

Albanian taskforce will consist of one representative from UT (Ledjon Shahini, head of Scientific Research and Projects Unit) and one representative from UMAD (Renata Tokrri, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs) Ledjon will be responsible to coordinate the task force.

Albania would be willing to include in the process other public universities, such as University of Elbasan, University of Shkodra. Hopefully they will accept the invitation and provide the required information.

Ledjon is responsible to set up taskforce meetings. We plan to organize meetings to discuss about all four dimensions and not separate meeting for each dimension. Also, we think of holding a general consensus meeting if the collected responses do not meet with one another.

- a. Deadline for the first meeting: June 15th
- b. Deadline for the 2nd meeting: June 22nd
- c. Consensus meeting (if necessary) June 29th

Step 3: Overall Process

1. University of Tirana (Ledjon Shahini) responsible for collecting the data into the dashboard.
2. University Aleksander Moisiu (Renata Tokrri) is responsible to check if all are on track with the tasks.

CONCLUSIONS	