

Erasmus+ Project No 598241-EPP-1-2018-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

**Strengthening Educational Capacities by Building Competences and Cooperation in
the Field of Noise and Vibration Engineering
S E N V I B E**

Inter-project Coaching between Erasmus+ KA2 Projects at National Level

Friday, 5 February 2021, 10 am

Agenda

VENUE: *Web-based meeting organised by SENVIBE team*

PART I: PRESENTATIONS

10.00 – 10.05 **Welcome address**, *prof. Ivana Kovačić, University of Novi Sad, Serbia*

10.05 – 10.40 **Short project presentations** (max 7 minutes per project)

- **SENVIBE: Strengthening Educational Capacities by Building Competences and Cooperation in the Field of Noise and Vibration Engineering**, *Ivana Kovačić, University of Novi Sad*
- **ISSES: Information Security Services Education in Serbia**, *Imre Lendak, University of Novi Sad*
- **SWARM: Strengthening of Master Curricula in Water Resources Management for the Western Balkans HEIs And Stakeholders**, *Milan Gocić, University of Niš*
- **ALLVET: HE and VET Alliance Establishment According to Bologna Principals Implementation via VET Teachers' Capacity Building**, *Danijela Milošević, University of Kragujevac*
- **ImprESS: Improving Academic and Professional Education Capacity in Serbia in the area of Safety & Security (by means of strategic partnership with the EU)**, *Mirjana Radovanović, Educons University*

PART II: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION, *moderator: prof. Ivana Kovacic*

10.40 – 10.55 **Challenges of coordinating ERASMUS+ KA2 projects at Serbian universities**

10.55 – 11.25 **Dissemination of project's results at national level: examples of good practice**

11.25 – 11.55 **Project's exploitation and sustainability: challenges and solutions**

11.55 – 12.00 **Final remarks and closeout**, *prof. Ivana Kovacic*



PARTICIPANTS:

SENVIBE:

- Ivana Kovačić, University of Novi Sad
- Vesna Mašulović, University of Novi Sad
- Dragi Radomirović, University of Novi Sad
- Miodrag Zuković, University of Novi Sad
- Zlatan Šoškić, University of Kragujevac
- Jelena Tomić, University of Kragujevac
- Branislava Đukić, Union of Employers of Vojvodina

ISSES:

- Imre Lendak, University of Novi Sad
- Igor Tatalja, University of Belgrade
- Dejan Simić, University of Belgrade

SWARM:

- Milan Gocić, University of Nis

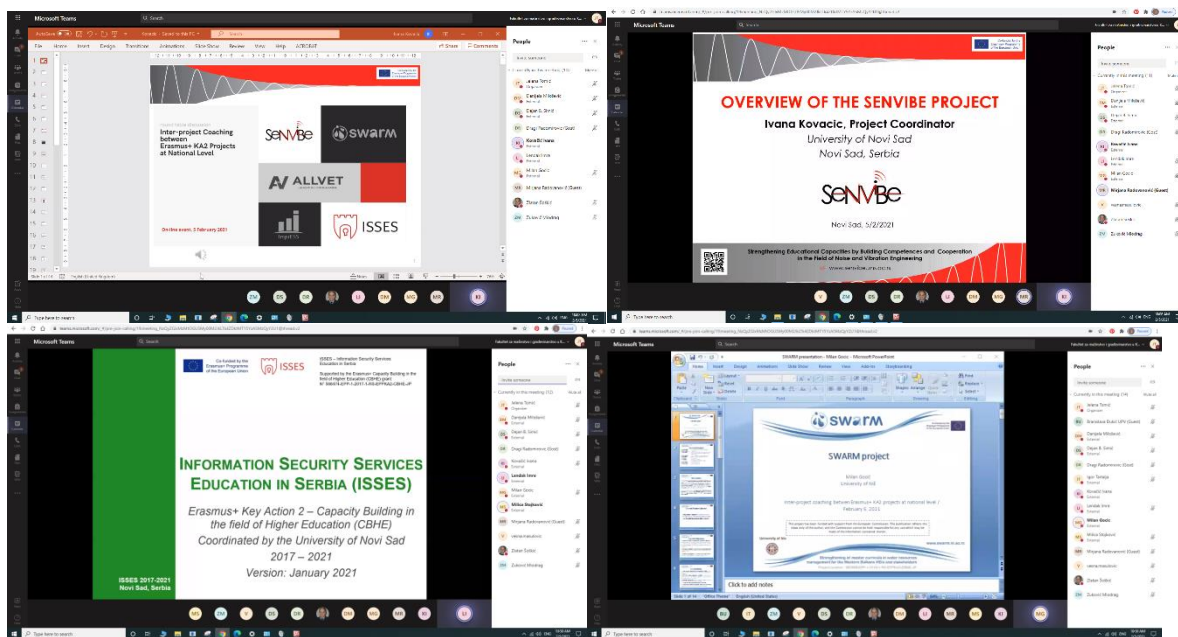
ALLVET:

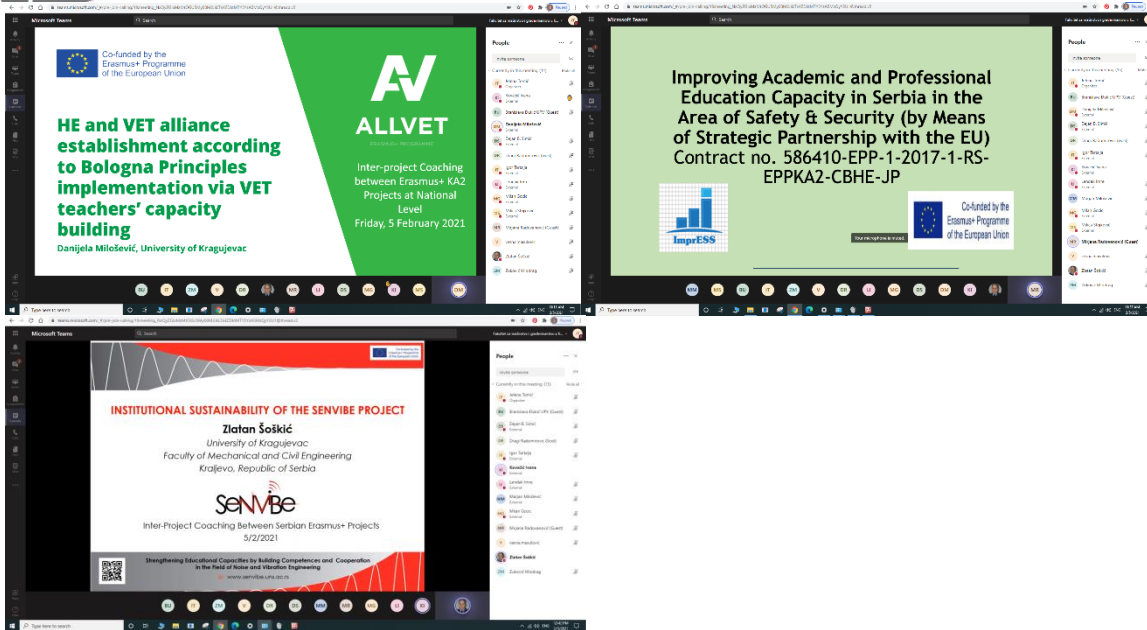
- Danijela Milošević, University of Kragujevac
- Marjan Milošević, University of Kragujevac
- Milica Stojković, University of Kragujevac

ImpRESS:

- Mirjana Radovanović, Educons University

ACCOMPANYING PHOTOS:





CONCLUSIONS

- **Challenges of management and coordination of Erasmus+ KA2 projects at Serbian universities**

There are a number of problems common to Erasmus+ KA2 projects implemented in the Republic of Serbia:

- Curriculum accreditation is a slow and uncertain process, and in the face of restrictions and measures due to the COVID-19 epidemic, waiting times for NEAQA (National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education) responses are longer than usual. Curricula implemented within the scope of projects funded by the European Commission have no advantage in this process, despite the time constraints applied to them;
- The National Erasmus+ Office, which had been providing significant support to project coordinators while the Republic of Serbia was a partner country, has ceased to provide such support since Serbia became a program country under the Erasmus+ program. Significant competencies of this institution are no longer available to project coordinators, and Erasmus+ university offices are not always able to replace them;
- In a large number of cases Serbian faculties have great jurisdictions, while they are only project beneficiaries, but not implementers. Despite jurisdictions, faculties basically have no responsibility for the realization of Erasmus+ KA2 projects. This unfavourable relationship of jurisdictions and responsibilities often leads to disinterest, and sometimes to overt or covert obstruction in universities.

In addition to the common problems, some projects have encountered certain problems that the other projects may encounter, and therefore represent significant lessons of this training:



- ISSES project
 - This project has already been extended due to the COVID-19 epidemic and the illness of the project team members;
 - The project envisaged the obligation of writing books for developed courses, but during the project implementation it turned out that it is still early to create such materials because teachers do not have enough experience with these courses. It is not entirely clear how this problem will be resolved, but the project coordinator will seek approval to release teachers from this obligation, as the literature for these courses can be provided in other ways;
 - Although the topic of the project, computer security, is attractive to the public, which can be seen from the media reports, media representatives are not interested in educational projects in this area, so it is very difficult to fulfil the commitment regarding media presence;
 - The European Commission competent authorities do not adequately evaluate successful promotional events if they were not foreseen within the project plan, which significantly limits the creativity in conducting the project promotional campaign;
- SWARM
 - This project has successfully relied on the Erasmus+ office of the University of Nis, and the only consequence of the epidemic COVID-19 is the delay of the training program for professionals for which it is not clear when and how it will be implemented;
- ALLVET
 - The start date of this project coincides with the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic which reflects on the implementation of the project. The project kick-off meeting was held on 5/2/2020;
 - The project partners are deployed over a wide geographical area from Spain in the west to Kazakhstan in the east, which can be challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - Since the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented traveling, the project activities must take place online, which is very difficult in conditions of large time differences between the project partners;
 - Large time differences emphasize different cultures and ways of life of distant countries, so it is difficult to organize the work;
 - Geographically distant countries are differently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and, consequently, by the anti-epidemic measures, which leads to different working conditions and attitudes towards the project's online activities;
 - According to the project activity plan, trainings represent prerequisite for all the other activities and, therefore, they are planned for the first project year. These necessary trainings have been organised online on the Internet which required change of the teaching aids and the engagement of teachers;



- The project budget did not envisage online work, and consists of significant travel costs and insufficient funds for teaching staff. Such a budget is not adapted to the new circumstances and must be changed;
- Training and budget changings require a new project work plan;
- With the experience that Serbian institutions have as members of project teams from partner countries, the role of coordinators from program countries represents an unfavourable change in terms of the imbalance between the benefits per coordinating institution and the responsibilities this role carries within the project.
- IMPRESS
 - This project had difficult and unusual problems that represent a significant lesson for the other projects;
 - The first unusual problem was the change of project coordinator due to restrictions and lengthy procedures related to University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies; the transfer of funds from this institution is particularly slow since it requires additional approvals;
 - Another unusual problem is the refusal of one of the partners to sign a partnership agreement; this problem led to the project interruption, although all project activities had been realized according to the plan during almost half of the project duration.

- **Dissemination of project's results at national level: examples of good practice**

The common conclusion is that the SENViBE project has the most extensive set of dissemination and promotional activities. Due to the circumstances in which the ALLVET project started and the IMPRESS project ended, they did not present the results of dissemination and promotional activities. On the other hand, the ISSES and SWARM projects presented some interesting solutions to problems related to this aspect of Erasmus+ projects.

- ISSES
 - This project, as a particularly successful promotional activity, organized a hackathon on the topic of computer security, which attracted a large number of participants; unfortunately, this activity was not adequately evaluated by the European Commission;
 - The promotional activities that attracted the median attention are two cyber-exercises organized for the needs of the Army of the Republic of Serbia;
- SWARM
 - Scientific papers published in journals and presented at conferences were used as significant promotional tool;

- **Project's exploitation and sustainability: challenges and solutions**

Similar to dissemination and promotion activities, but the other projects have made an active contribution to the consideration of this topic:



- ISSESS
 - This project does not have the development of a sustainability plan as a project activity, but in communication with the European Commission the project coordinator was informed that this activity must be done, at least in the form of own contribution;
 - One of the mechanisms proposed by the project coordinator for ensuring the sustainability of the project results is the partnership in international associations, which will enable the development, maintenance and dissemination of project results;
- SWARM
 - According to the project coordinator, a key component of sustainability of project results is a careful selection of staff participating in the project, especially from the aspect of assistants and associates, for whom it is very important to plan their careers at the university that implements the project; this requirement is very difficult to meet in the conditions of "brain drain" and fluctuations that characterize the modern concept of Serbian universities.
- ALLVET
 - Since the beneficiaries of this project are partners in partner countries where the program is implemented, the sustainability plan is the responsibility of these partners;
- IMPRESS
 - Within the round table discussion on the topic of sustainability, coordinator of this project presented the experience from the project final meetings, based on which it can be concluded that the European Commission as a project financier focuses on development and implementation of curricula, while the number of enrolled students is considered as an element of acceptable risk. Therefore, the number of enrolled students can be explained in a satisfactory manner even if this number is less than the number of students planned by the project.

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Kraljevo, 26/02/2021

Approved by Project Coordinator: Ivana Kovacic
Novi Sad, 03/03/2021

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