



## Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (La MANCHE)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> ONLINE STEERING COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

#### MINUTES

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013

**Time:** 1 pm CET

**Venue:** online session at oovoo.com

**Attendees:** Christina Armutlieva, IUC Bulgaria

Ruben Aghgashyan, SEUA, Armenia

Lyudmila Misnikova, BTEU, Belarus

Ruizan Mekvabidze, GTU Georgia

Angela Niculita, MSU, Moldova

Olesya Gladushyna, EUNU, Ukraine

Ihor Oleksiv, LPNU, Ukraine

Corinne Stewart, Agrosup Dijon, France

#### 1. Project progress

Christina Armutlieva welcomed the participants at the online meeting and informed them on the purposes of the meeting, namely to discuss project progress, upcoming activities, the 3rd partner meeting agenda and to the Year 1 Financial and Activity Summary. Aleksander Markarov is currently on a business trip in Japan and will connect depending on his engagements there. The project coordinator started the discussion by briefing the Steering Committee members on the progress made in project since the last project meeting in April 2013. The activities in work package 2 have been completed and the main work package deliverable, namely the External Assessment Report has been published on the project website and each partner institution will receive 10 hard copies of it. Significant work has been completed in work package 3 led by Angela Niculita from MSU. According to Angela, despite the tight schedule and the deadline from mid Augusts, all Partner Countries institutions have submitted the case studies on time and in line with the project quality requirements. Christina thanked Angela for the persistent and effective leading of this work package. At the meeting in Bragança all Partner Countries institutions will have the opportunity to present shortly their case studies and achievements in work package 3. In work package 4 the partners from the

EU are currently developing the Handbook of Innovative Governance Practices and guidance and teaching materials in leadership and change management. Activities in work package 5 carried out in the Partner Countries will be coordinated by NTU KhPI. The meeting in Braganca will be combined with trainings for trainers in leadership and change management to be led by EU experts. Christina acquainted the Steering Committee members on trainings planned to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October.

## **2. 3<sup>rd</sup> La MANCHE partner meeting agenda**

The meeting is scheduled for the period of 21<sup>st</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October, 21<sup>st</sup> being day of arrival and 26<sup>th</sup> day of departure. The agenda on 22<sup>nd</sup> will include presentation and evaluation of the progress made so far in the project according to work packages and presentation and discussion of upcoming activities. In addition, a keynote speech will be held by Prof. Michael Zouboulakis from University of Thessaly, the Greek partner in the consortium. Prof. Zouboulakis was involved in the elaboration of the External Assessment Report in workpackage 2 and will share his view on universities institutional performance and academic autonomy. The keynote speech will trigger a series of discussions on leading and managing change in higher education to be held in the framework of the trainings in leadership and change management scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October. During the two days of trainings the 69 trainees will be divided in two groups. Working in two smaller groups will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the trainings and will allow the trainers to establish personal contact with the trainees and to provide individual support to them. The EU experts will act as trainers in Portugal and will stay in contact with the trainees after the meeting as well. This is expected to happen through the project website and through other means for online communication. The trainers will provide tailor-made assistance and guide the Partner Countries' trainers in the process of preparation and organization of the local multiplication trainings. In line with the project application form, for Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> October the host institution has planned a Change Agents' Retreat. The event will include networking activities, workshops, wrap-up discussions and reflections on upcoming events. It is important to outline that the trainings and the retreat are intended to contribute to improvement of the participants' skills for communicating effectively the change processes within their institutions. Improvement of communication skills and upgrade of interpersonal skills is considered crucial for the project implementation both at consortium and at institutional level. Ruben Aghgashyan from SEUA informed the partners that he won't be able to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> project meeting in Braganca in person due to other professional engagements, but his institution will send a replacement. The other members of the Steering Committee confirmed that they'll take part in the meeting in Braganca. In addition, three of the institutions (BTEU, GTU and EUNU) will be represented by the highest management level at the meeting, as their Rectors join the meeting and the trainings in Portugal. Christina thanked these partners and confirmed that IUC will be represented by its President Prof. Todor Radev and its Vice Rector for Quality Prof. Vesselin Blagoev whom the partners have met at previous meetings. Since the La MANCHE project major target group consists of representatives of the partner institutions' senior management level, namely Rectors, Vice Rectors and Head of Administrative Units, the direct involvement of Rectors and Vice Rectors of the partner institutions in the project activities is crucial for its success.

## **3. Upcoming activities**

Following the 3<sup>rd</sup> partner meeting the Partner Countries institutions will focus on the activities envisaged in work package 5. Christina reported that IUC is planning in early October to hold an online session with Anastasiya Makarenko from NTU KhPI to discuss in details the activities, deliverables and outcomes to be produced and the objectives to be completed with the multiplication trainings at the Partner Countries institutions. The multiplication trainings will take place between January and end of April and in total 780 trainees will involve in these. The trainings will aim at developing skills for effective change management

and at introducing innovative culture in the institutions. The trainers at the multiplication trainings will be trainees at the trainings in Braganca hence they will switch roles when they return home.

Christina and Corinne informed the partners on the upcoming activities involving the EU partners in the project in work package 4 and 5. Along with preparing for the trainings in Portugal, the EU experts in the project will also publish before the end of 2013 the Handbook on Innovative Governance Practices, the guidelines, training materials and syllabi in leadership and change management.

#### **4. Year 1 Financial and Activity Summary**

Christina informed the Steering Committee that the Year 1 Financial and Activity Summary to be elaborated by the Committee shall benchmark progress made so far towards the initial activity timeline and to report on the project financial management. The project progress was one of the themes at the field monitoring which took place in July 2013 in Ukraine. Representatives of NTO Ukraine visited CSTU. During the day an online session took place with the participation of CSTU, LAC, EUNU, NTU KhPI, LNTU and the project coordinator. Christina outlined the work of CSTU and the collaboration of the rest of the Ukrainian partners which contributed to the monitoring. The project coordinator explained that the Year 1 Financial and Activity Summary will be based on the information provided in the interim reports submitted by the project beneficiaries and therefore will closely follow the structure of the Interim report to be submitted by IUC to EACEA in spring 2014. Christina informed the Steering Committee members that in the course of August and September 2013 the majority of the project partners submitted their interim reports including the project reporting documentation and a claim for payment of the next installment. Ihor asked if LPNU could submit its second interim report. Christina confirmed that the deadline for this was in August and that LPNU is invited to submit its second interim report and the supporting project documentation at the partners' earliest convenience. As far as other institutions in the project are concerned, along with the requested balance payment IUC has already or will soon transfer a second advance payment to the partners who have submitted their reports. The purpose of the second advance payment is to cover travel costs and costs of stay expected to incur in regard with the 3<sup>rd</sup> partner meeting which due to the large number of participants are expected to be relatively higher than at the previous project meetings. The EU partners will send to Braganca two representatives per institution (one institutional coordinator and one trainer) and the Partner Countries project partners will be represented by one institutional coordinator and two trainees. In terms of the staff costs reporting Christina informed the Steering Committee that IUC has contacted EACEA and asked for advice on the steps to be undertaken in case the envisaged daily rates are higher than those paid in reality to some of the project participants based on the beneficiary institutions' remuneration policy. In May one of the partner institutions sent an email to the project partners claiming that it will increase the number of work days envisaged in the project application form to a number which will allow it to absorb fully the funding envisaged for staff costs. Following an exchange of emails with EACEA Christina informed the Steering Committee that concerning this issue the consortium was advised not to allocate the savings too quickly to an increased number of workdays at this stage in the project. According to the mail received experience shows that the surpluses generated at the beginning of the project can be used towards the end of the project in a more rational way. At later stages of implementation dissemination ideas or spin off effects of the project can appear and the consortium might need some funds to explore these. Christina referred to BTEU who have had a question in this regard earlier. Lyudmila was interested to know when these additional dissemination activities will be possible. Christina replied that this will be possible in the second half of the project life, most probably in Year 3. She confirmed that IUC is committed to act in compliance with the Grant Agreement and the Partnership Agreements. Concerning the Year 1 summary Christina asked the partners present to share their ideas and views regarding the project implementation. Corinne said that she is looking forward to meeting everyone in a month in Portugal. Ruizan confirmed that project implementation at GTU is being carried out in line with the project schedule and that there is a full

understanding between GTU and IUC regarding the project documentation and the submission of the interim report. Ihor was eager to know if the team of LPNU could spend a day in Madrid after the meeting in Portugal. Christina confirmed that IUC which in charge of flight ticket purchase for LPNU will take into account the preferences of the team of LPNU when booking and purchasing the tickets. Angela informed the partners that the visas for the team of Moldova have not been received yet. She looks forward to meeting all partners in Portugal. Ruben and Olesya second the latter statement.

Christina thanked all Steering Committee members for their time today and for their work and commitment in the project. She invited the partners who have institution specific questions to stay online and discuss those with the project coordinator. Lyudmila stayed tuned and discussed in details with Christina the equipment purchase in Belarus which is now on the project agenda following the successful project registration in Belarus which was finalized in the end of August.