

ERASMUS+ PROJECT 2023-1-RS01-KA220-HED-000156660

EPIR | E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition of
Foreign Higher Education Documents

Work Package 3 Meeting - Activity 3.2

- Report -

Venue:	Università Politecnica delle Marche - Ancona Faculty of Engineering - Polo Monte Dago, Via Breccie Bianche 12, Ancona Faculty of Economics "G.Fuà", Piazzale Martelli 8, Ancona
Date:	Tuesday, 16 July 2024 - Wednesday, 17 July 2024
Organiser:	Università Politecnica delle Marche, EPIR Team

EPIR project partners:



UNIVERSITY
OF NOVI SAD



UNIVERSITÀ
POLITECNICA
DELLE MARCHE



ROMANIA
1 DECEMBRIE 1918
UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA



50 years of
University
of Split



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Qualifications Agency

List of participants:

Partner No	Name of Participant
P1 UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD, Serbia (UNS)	Tatjana Tošić Tatjana Zubić
P2 UNIVERSITÀ POLITECNICA DELLE MARCHE, Ancona, Italy (UNIVPM)	Prof. David Scaradozzi, Department of Information Engineering Benedetta Castagna, Department of Information Engineering Silvia Mangialardo, Head of International Relations Office Gessica Cirenei, International Relations Office Francesco Occelli, International Relations Office Silvia Mariotti, Head of International Students Admission Office Patrizia Moretti, Head of Student Career Management Service Davide Bevilacqua, PhD and Postgraduate Office Giancarlo Mancina, Integrated Learning Information Systems Office Paola Gasparini, Head of Database Management and Basic Application Software Development Office Paolo Marinelli, Database Management and Basic Application Software Development Office
P3 "1 DECEMBRIE 1918" UNIVERSITY OF ALBA IULIA, Romania (UAB)	Madalin Ordean (ONLINE)
P4 UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT, Croatia (UNIST)	Divna Krpan Leida Rizvan
P5 ENIC/NARIC CENTRE QUALIFICATION AGENCY, Serbia (QA)	Milan Kovačević Mirjana Poledica
(Guest) UNIADRION	Nicola Molini
(Guest) ERASMUS+ CONSORTIUM "UNIADRION ITALY"	Participants to the Staff Week organized by the Consortium

Meeting minutes – Activity 3.2:

Erasmus+ EPIR Project Work Package 3 Meeting on “Development and improvement of IT systems for the recognition of foreign students’ Higher Education documents”

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

Università Politecnica delle Marche, as the leader of Work Package 3 of the ERASMUS+ Project “E-Procedure of Institutional Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Documents – EPIR” organized the WP3 meeting with all partner institutions involved in the project on 16th and 17th July 2024.

The first day of the meeting was held at the Faculty of Engineering of Università Politecnica delle Marche in Ancona, Italy.

Silvia Mangialardo, Head of the International Relations Office of UNIVPM, opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and guests. After introducing the project partners, she gave a short presentation of Università Politecnica delle Marche, leader of Work Package 3, describing the faculties and departments of UNIVPM and reporting on the internationalization programmes in which the university is involved. She also gave a brief presentation of the UniAdrion association and the Erasmus+ Consortium “UniAdrion Italy”. She pointed out that the meeting was hosting not only EPIR partners, but also 23 participants to the Staff Week organized by the Erasmus+ Consortium “UniAdrion Italy” in order to increase the visibility of the EPIR project and amplify the multiplier effect of dissemination: the 23 participants included academic and administrative staff coming from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia, whom were invited to participate in the first part of the meeting, where general information and details about the EPIR project were shared by the partners. Finally, Ms. Mangialardo outlined the importance of the EPIR project, illustrating its objectives and reporting on the offices and key personnel of Università Politecnica delle Marche involved in the project.

Tatjana Zubic and Tatjana Tosic from the Centre for Information Technology of the University of Novi Sad, coordinator of the EPIR project, then held a presentation giving an overview of the project: they described the project background, the general and specific objectives and how the University of Novi Sad selected its partners; then they described the main activities in each work package, their timeline and expected results, with a detailed description of WP3 and its budget.

A short coffee break followed.

Presentation of the achievements of each partner in the current phase of the IT system development

After the coffee break, representatives of each partner gave a presentation on their achievements in the current phase of IT development and on future perspectives.

Silvia Mariotti, Head of the International Students Admission Office at UNIVPM, and Patrizia Moretti, Head of the Student Career Management Service, gave a brief presentation on the UNIVPM pre-evaluation platform for international students’ applications, which was created in 2021 to receive, standardize and centrally manage pre-evaluation applications from international students. They described the history of the platform, how the admissions process works and the main outcomes that have been achieved using the platform. They reported on the main critical issues due to the increasing number of applications and concluded outlining future prospects.

Afterwards, Leida Rizvan and Divna Krpan from the University of Split, Croatia, presented an overview of the recognition of foreign higher education documents at the University of Split and reported on critical issues related to the recognition process.

Milan Kovačević and Mirjana Poledica, representatives of the Qualification Agency, Serbia, then gave a presentation on the digital recognition system for applications currently used in Serbia: they reported on the reasons why a digital system for evaluating applications is needed, how the process works and what future activities are needed to improve the process.

In their second presentation, Tatjana Zubic and Tatjana Tosic focused on the recognition process used at the University of Novi Sad and the digital transformation strategy adopted by the UNS since 2021. Currently, the recognition process is not digitalized and all documents are scanned and kept in files. The procedure involves a lot of paperwork, requires the physical presence of the applicant, is lengthy, costly and overall isn't user-friendly or efficient. With the growing number of English-language programmes and the resulting increased interest from foreign students in studying at its faculties, UNS needs to increase the efficiency of the recognition process and develop a digitalized, user-friendly and accessible system. Finally, Tatjana Zubic and Tatjana Tosic gave an overview of the UNS WP3 team and described the steps and timetable for the implementation of WP3, including system analysis and system design.

Presentation of the software solution of Università Politecnica delle Marche

After a short break, Davide Bevilacqua, from the PhD and Postgraduate Office, and Giancarlo Mancia, from the Integrated Learning Information Systems Office, gave a presentation on the pre-evaluation platform developed by UNIVPM in 2021. They started with an analysis of the context, including demographic and economic challenges, competition from northern universities and their impact on university enrolment. They then described the architecture and advantages of a self-developed platform and its limitations in managing the evaluation process by professors, with possible solutions. Finally, they showed how the user side and the back-office side of the platform work.

The last presentation of the morning was given by Paolo Marinelli, software developer at the ICT Service of Università Politecnica delle Marche. He started with an analysis of third-party tools for international students' admissions, describing the expectations and concerns in developing a platform and the strengths and weaknesses of existing platforms that were taken into account. He then described how the development process has evolved over the last few years, the steps taken to improve the development experience and the future steps to be taken.

Visit to the UNIVPM IT Centre

In the afternoon, the participants visited the Department of Information Engineering of the Università Politecnica delle Marche. After the visit, Prof. David Scaradozzi, Internationalization Delegate of the Faculty of Engineering, and Benedetta Castagna, Researcher at the Department of Information Engineering, gave a presentation on the development and methodology of IT solutions.

Wednesday, 17 July 2024

The Faculty of Economics "G. Fuà" of Università Politecnica delle Marche hosted the second day of the meeting.

After a brief introduction by Gessica Cirenei from the International Relations Office of UNIVPM, Tatjana Tosic and Tatjana Zubic from the Centre for Information Technology of the University of Novi Sad presented a proposal for a project report form for the first activity in WP3. The first activities are system analysis and system design with regard to the digitalization of the process of recognition of foreign higher education documents at each partner. As an expected result, a system requirements document and a system design document will be prepared by each partner and will be used as guidelines for the programming of the IT tools for the recognition process of

foreign students' higher education documents. The documents have to be written in English and they have to meet certain requirements: they have to describe the state of the problem, the state of the objective and define the methodology used for system analysis and system design.

The presentation was followed by a final discussion on further next steps to be taken for the implementation of WP3. At the end, certificates of attendance were delivered to the participants and Silvia Mangialardo, Head of the International Relations Office of UNIVPM, gave the closing remarks.

WP3 Online Meeting – Thursday, 10 October 2024

As Madalin Ordean, the representative of the University of Alba Iulia, could not give his presentation during the WP3 meeting on July 16 and 17, the Università Politecnica delle Marche organized a virtual meeting on October 10 to enable him to give a presentation on the current procedure for the recognition of higher education documents at his university. The meeting started at 10:00 with the following participants:

- Vesna Masulovic, Tatjana Tošić and Tatjana Zubić from the University of Novi Sad;
- Madalin Ordean from the University of Alba Iulia;
- Milan Kovačević from the Qualification Agency ENIC/NARIC Center Serbia;
- Divna Krpan from the University of Split;
- Prof. David Scaradozzi, Gessica Cirenei, Davide Bevilacqua, Giancarlo Mancia and Francesco Occelli from the Università Politecnica delle Marche.

In 2022, the University of Alba Iulia launched an online platform for the application of international non-EU candidates, where all the documents required by law are uploaded, verified, approved and then sent to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for final approval.

Users can access the platform, create their account and update it. They can easily and reliably apply for a study program at UAB using validated, dynamic forms and steps: the platform provides a preview of the application and files the submitted documents. Users then receive email notifications at almost every step of the application process. The entire procedure is online, and the physical presence of the applicant is required only at the enrollment stage. Applicants can manage their applications through a simple web interface, and they can register for more than one application during an intake. Meanwhile, administrators and coordinators can view all applications and their status, validate, invalidate or reject applications, log sent emails, view all accounts and manage all data in an easy and secure way.

The process starts with the international student creating his account on the platform and submitting the application. If the application is validated, the user can then upload the required documents, such as proofs of payment and residence permit. The documents are then sent to the relevant reviewers and the final enrollment is filed in a document archive.

In its first year, the platform processed more than 1400 international applications. UAB intends to further develop this new platform to increase security, add statistics and include other services required by potential international candidates for its study programs.

The presentation was followed by a short Q&A session and in conclusion the representatives of the University of Novi Sad gave an overview of the next steps to be taken for the implementation of the project. The virtual meeting ended at 10:45.

All presentations are an integral part of the minutes.

Prepared by:	The EPIR UNIVPM Team
Place and date:	Ancona, 11/10/2024