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Enhancement of HE research potential  
contributing to further growth of the WB region



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**Annex B to QC Manual - Word document template**

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Enhancement of HE Research Potential Contributing to Further Growth of the WB Region  
Re@WBC**

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Abstract	The following document is the Intermediate Report of the achieved and planned results within the Work Package 2: Excellent university for the researchers.

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### **Activity 2.1. University centers and HR offices reinforced**

Within the activity 2.1 the University of East Sarajevo was assigned to perform the analysis of present situation at the Western Balkan Universities concerning existence of research centers and HR offices and existence of different bylaws, documents and procedures regulating research, with the recommendations how to improve it.

All Western Balkan University partners (Universities of Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Montenegro, Vlorë, Tirana, East Sarajevo and Sarajevo) sent necessary materials and information about current situation at their institutions.

The following information was analyzed:

1. Information about concrete bylaws on institutions regulating status of researchers and research in general,
2. Main elements of research strategy such as strategic aims and action plans,
3. Information about bylaws regulating work of research centers.

After a detailed analysis of the current situation the University of East Sarajevo made the following conclusions:

- All the partner universities described in detail and covered organization and implementation of the research through existing university and faculty documents: statute, code of ethics, bylaw regulating promotion, bylaw regulating doctoral studies and career development centers etc.
- It should be emphasized by analyzing different bylaws dealing with academic promotions that conditions for promotion are very different on different partner institutions.
- The positions of teachers and researchers and their definitions differ from university to university.
- Strategies for research differ from university to university and even does not exist on some universities. Implementation of different strategies and following strategic and action plans is questionable on the most institutions involved in this project.
- On different involved institutions a number of research centers and institutes exist but they have different structures and are legally organized in different ways. All of them represent important places for research but also connection between universities, work field and wider community.

The University of East Sarajevo proposed, as common action plan for all WB Universities within this activity, to develop research strategy with common minimal principles, developing all documents and bylaws regulating research on the University using existing good regional and European practice and regulating role of research centers and institutes on the similar way by using also good existing practices.

All reports are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-centers/dmsf>

### **Activity 2.2 Administrative staff competences improved**

Within the Activity 2.2 the University of Novi Sad organised a training for administrative staff of the WB partner Universities at the University of Novi Sad.

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On September 22, 2016 the project coordinator of the University of Niš held a meeting with the representatives of the University of Novi Sad, Serbia and University of Vlora, Albania. We discussed the organisation and implementation of future project activities, such as the organisation of the following activity 2.8: Ethical committee procedures improved, which should take place at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia and is to be organised in collaboration with the University of Vlora, Albania.

Following that meeting, the project coordinator, Prof. Dr. Dragana Cvetković Ilić presented the project activities to the training participants and Prof. Dr. Pavle Sekeruš, contact point of the University of Novi Sad, gave a presentation about the facts and figures of the University of Novi Sad and its role in the Re@WBC project.

After that, Ms. Rachel Delcourt of the University of Liege trained the participants on how to build a sustainable soft skills training program for PhD candidates and researchers.

On September 23, 2016 Mr. Gabriele Baldissoni presented the experience of the actions implemented at the University of Politecnico di Torino, Italy in regard with the support to researchers. Dr. Rebekah Smith McGloin presented the implementation of the UK Concordat to support the career development of researchers at the Coventry University and discussed the challenges and innovations for research support staff.

The atmosphere during the training was very satisfactory and 36 participants from all the Western Balkan University partners (Universities of Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Montenegro, Vlora, Tirana, East Sarajevo and Sarajevo) expressed their comments gathered in the Activity report which is available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-staff/dmsf>

The project coordinator and representatives of the University of Novi Sad had a meeting with Dr. Rebekah Smith McGloin and scheduled the following meeting at the Coventry University for December 2016, concerning the implementation of the Activity 2.5: Training trainers.

### **Activity 2.3. University managements educated on the C&C implementation**

Within the Activity 2.3 Professor Miroslav Trajanović from the University of Niš had a meeting at the University of Novi Sad on April 27, 2016.

Professor Trajanović presented to the Vice-rector for Research and the Vice-rector for International Affairs of the University of Novi Sad the importance of active participation and support to the EURAXESS network.

Professor Trajanović also emphasized the importance of the implementation of the principles of the “European charter for researchers”, as well as of the “Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers”.

Within the same Activity the University of Novi Sad in collaboration with the University of Belgrade and University of Nis organised the meeting at the Rectorate of the University of Belgrade on June 8, 2016.

17 representatives of the management boards of the partner institutions were educated on the implementation of the Charter and Code through the “HR Excellence in Research” by HR expert from the University of Nis.

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The meeting's reports are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-managements/dmsf>

### Activity 2.4. HRS4R strategy created and adopted at partner universities

Work groups created at WB universities designed their own HRS4R. The strategies were presented to and adopted by the respective universities. The comparative analysis and the experiences of the EU partner universities were essential in creation of the strategies. The following universities submitted their applications under the November 2016 deadline to obtain the "HR Excellence in Research" award: University of Kragujevac, University of Sarajevo, University of East Sarajevo, University of Vlora and University of Novi Sad.

After completed assessments the European Commission will grant the "HR Excellence in Research" award to the University of Kragujevac.

The University of East Sarajevo, University of Vlora and University of Novi Sad were asked to make minor revisions and re-submit revised versions of their applications following the feed-back of the assessors. Once the revised applications are re-assessed, the European Commission is expected to grant the "HR Excellence in Research" award to these Universities as well.

The University of Sarajevo was asked to make a major revision and submit the new application under the new call.

The HRS4Rs are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-hrs4r/dmsf>

### Activity 2.5. Training trainers

Within this activity several trainings are planned. The first two-day training was organised by the University of Coventry on December 15-16, 2016. The topics of the training were the following: supervisor development and training, multidisciplinary and funding proposals. There were 16 participants from all the WB universities and 6 speakers.

The training report is available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-training/dmsf>

The following three trainings will be organised at **the University of Belgrade on April 5-7, 2017** and topics to be covered will be: inter-cultural communications, researcher ethics, writing research proposal, **University of Liege on May 8-11, 2017** and topics to be covered will be: HR strategy for researchers, merit based and transparent recruitment of researchers, scientific staff interested in the recruitment of researchers; and **University of Torino May 23-26, 2017** with the following topics: soft skills and entrepreneurship.

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### **Activity 2.6. Promotion procedures improved**

Within the activity 2.6 the University of Sarajevo was assigned to perform the analysis of present situation at the Western Balkan Universities concerning the bylaws regulating the promotion procedures with the recommendations how to improve them. The University of Sarajevo designed a common template for evaluation reports.

All Western Balkan University partners (Universities of Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Montenegro, Vlora, Tirana, East Sarajevo and Sarajevo) sent necessary materials and information about current situation at their institutions.

The University of Sarajevo collected all the reports into one internal report with the analysis of the situation and with the list of the following recommendations:

- Revise the University / Faculty documents regarding the procedures for academic promotions to have clear description of all phases and instruction in case of appeal,
- Universities should adopt detailed description of the criteria for academic promotion based on scientific areas and titles,
- Common template for reporting on academic promotion should be developed by each university,
- All documents regarding procedures and criteria for academic promotion should be available on each university's web-site,
- All academic promotion procedures will be conducted in respect of academic autonomy,
- The written Report on Implementation of Recommendations should be written by the end of June and sent to the coordinator of the Project.

All reports and Annex A are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-promotion/dmsf>

### **Activity 2.7. Plagiarism monitoring tools implemented**

The WB partner universities are in the process of purchasing the plagiarism monitoring tool.

### **Activity 2.8. Ethical committee procedures improved**

Task leaders for this activity are the University of Vlora and University of Kragujevac.

The training of Ethical committee members was organised at the University of Kragujevac on November 10-11, 2016.

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19 participants from the University of Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, Vlora and Tirana were trained. Participants from the University of East Sarajevo and University of Montenegro were unable to participate.

The training report is available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-committee/dmsf>

Within this activity the University of Vlora was assigned to perform the analysis on the current situation of the ethics committees at the WB Universities with some suggestions for improvement. All WB partner Universities (UNI, UoM, UT, UV, UNSA, UNS, UNES, UKG and UB) sent their reports to the University of Vlora.

After a detailed analysis of the current situation the University of Vlora made the following recommendations for improvement:

- Despite the fact that each of the WB universities has adopted several laws, bylaws and regulations regarding ethics and ethical behavior, there is still a need for a more detailed legal framework that addresses all aspects of ethics in research and of scientific integrity and that is handy to use by the institutions and researchers.
- Need for a common framework of ethics assessment.
- Less centralized ethics committee.
- Clearly defined ethical principles and issues applying to all types (and each type) of research. Drafting an exhaustive list.
- The composition of the ethics committees revisited: Who should sit on the committee? (Expertise, background and characteristics of the members.)
- Clearly defined procedures for ethical assessment.
- Need to draw a clear-cut distinction between the role, scope, tasks and responsibilities of ethics committees and those of scientific integrity boards. Most partner universities do not seem to have one. Is it time to go separate?
- Facilitating the work of the ethics committees through proper legal, institutional and technical instruments.
- Improve and enhance the efficiency of the work of the Ethical committees. Consider the possible effects of the existing sanctions and their adaptation.
- Periodic analysis of situation and control in respect to the principle of legal and ethical norms and standards of research. Defining the measures in case of determining discrepancies in respect of ethical principles and norms.
- Defining the model for the transformation of the Court of Honor of the University to the Ethics Committee. Analysis of viability and possibility for introducing the Ombudsman in order to protect rights of researchers at the university level.
- Adoption of the regulation at university level which would define the principles of determining disciplinary liability and enforcement proceedings in cases of violations of the Code of Ethics, plagiarism, infringement of intellectual property rights etc.
- Precise definition of actions that indicate a violation of professional ethics.
- Increasing the number of measures that can be imposed for violations of professional ethics.
- Refinement of procedures under which the Committee for ethical issues gives its recommendations.

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- Clear delineation of the cases of disciplinary proceedings from the cases in which the procedure is conducted by the Committee.

All reports are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-committee/dmsf>

### **Activity 2.9. Cooperation with scientific diaspora established**

Within the Activity 2.9 the University of Tirana was assigned to perform the analysis on the current situation at the Western Balkan Universities concerning cooperation with scientific diaspora and Alumni with the recommendations how to improve it.

All Western Balkan University partners (Universities of Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Montenegro, Vlora, Tirana, East Sarajevo and Sarajevo) sent their reports about current situation at their institutions.

After detailed analysis of the current situation the University of Tirana suggested that the partner universities lacking the alumni database need to create more permanent structures and a list of databases of academics living and working abroad who are willing to come to their home country and contribute to the Institutions of Higher Education in their home countries, engaging in various development projects or undertaking teaching assignments at university. This would result in the constitution of real Alumni networks.

Having established the database, the universities (all WB partners) need to implement a diaspora strategy. It is quite obvious that diaspora engagement requires strategies which are mainly based on networks. The best situation is for the governments to create the appropriate conditions for the existence of different kinds of organizations, facilitate the cooperation between networks and provide access to the diaspora for dialogue with the representatives from the government. It is also important that the governments recognize the fact that they need to cooperate with the private sector.

Scientific Diaspora and Alumni associations can play a key role in forming research partnerships and enhance cooperation between scientists. The funding of such a coordinated action would be the key to success.

It was concluded that one diaspora strategy cannot fit all the countries. Countries clearly differ in terms of their macroeconomic circumstances, the history of their diaspora, their size, geography and general resources to successfully pursue a diaspora strategy. While many governments acknowledge the importance of diaspora engagement, many still lack the capacity to design and implement effective policies on a meaningful scale.

But, successfully engaging the diaspora is a long-term endeavour that requires perseverance and patience.

All reports are available on the following link:

<http://mngt.rewbc.ni.ac.rs/projects/wp2-cooperation/dmsf>

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