



Erasmus
Mundus



SUNBEAM
STRUCTURED UNIVERSITY MOBILITY BETWEEN THE BALKANS
AND EUROPE FOR THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN MACRO-REGION.

S.UN.B.E.A.M.

**Structured University mobility between the Balkans and
Europe for the Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion
Erasmus Mundus Action 2 – Strand 1**

FINAL CONFERENCE – Ancona, Italy - 20 September 2018



The Final Conference was held in Ancona, Italy at Loggia dei Mercanti on 20 September 2018.

The project Coordinator opened the conference presenting the welcoming speeches from representative of institutions involved in the Conference:

- **Prof. Oriana Carnevali**, Vice Rector of Marche Polytechnic University;
- **Luca Ceriscioli**, President of the Marche Region;
- **Ambassador Fabio Pigliapoco**, Senior Advisor of Adriatic-Ionian Initiative Permanent Secretariat;
- **Prof. Danilo Nikolić**, President of UNIADRION;
- **Michele De Vita**, Secretary General Chamber of Commerce of Ancona and Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce;
- **Ida Simonella**, Secretary General Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Cities.





After the welcome remarks SUNBEAM coordinator **Silvia Mangialardo**, Head of International Relations Office of Università Politecnica delle Marche, presented facts, figures and achievements of SUNBEAM project.



SUNBEAM is an Erasmus Mundus Mundus Action 2 – Stand 1 project coordinated by Marche Polytechnic University including a total of 20 partner Universities (9 EU Universities and 11 non EU Universities) and 6 Associate partner:

- ✓ UNIADRION (Association of Universities of the Adriatic-Ionian area),
- ✓ Forum AIC (Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce),
- ✓ FAIC (Forum of the Adriatic-Ionian Cities),
- ✓ All (Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative),
- ✓ AIESEC (International association of students),
- ✓ C.A.S.E. (Centro Alti Studi Europei – Centre for High European Studies).

Most of SUNBEAM Partners (17 out of 20) are also members of UNIADRION association and the project is strictly connected with its reinforcement and revitalization.

SUNBEAM received a total of 1.059 application and selected 199 candidates to carry out mobilities with the following distribution per study level:

Type of mobility	First Cohort	Second Cohort	Third Cohort	TOTAL
Undergraduates	30	23		53
Masters	34	25		59
Doctorates	14	10		24
Post-Doctorates	7	10	11	28
Staff	32	3		35
TOTAL	117	71	11	199

A special focus was given to the third-call that was designed for post-doc mobilities and directed to experts in topics related to the Adriatic-Ionian Region and EUSAIR pillars showing examples of best practices and examples of successful mobilities.



Alim Abazović, Quality Assurance and ECTS Coordinator of “Džemal Bijedić” University of Mostar focused his contribution on SUNBEAM quality assurance and evaluation since Džemal Bijedić” University of Mostar is coordinator of the Quality Assurance Committee.



Quality of the project activities was assured by all partners with their internal and external quality assurance measurements. In order to assess the results 3 surveys were conducted:

- Academic survey at the end of mobility;
- Survey on recognition for students
- Survey on recognition for institutions

The Quality Assurance Committee conducted the “Academic survey at end of mobility” among students concerning their satisfaction with the mobility and their evaluation of the project and of their experience. Replying to the survey was compulsory and proved to be very important in order for the partnership to evaluate the project results and take actions for improvement. The response rate was 62% of students.

The analysis shows that the large majority of students are very or quite satisfied with all the following aspects of their mobility:

Aspects of the institutions involved in mobility stay	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Indifferent	Quite dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Established contact with host university	83%	13%	4%	0%	0%
Communication with host institution was fast and accurate	82%	14%	3%	1%	0%
Quality of administrative support structures at host university	76%	18%	3%	3%	0%
Ease of access to administrative support procedures at host university	76%	19%	4%	1%	0%
General availability of administrative support staff at host university	74%	19%	7%	0%	0%
Speed with which administrative departments at host university resolved incidents during your stay	75%	14%	11%	0%	0%



All procedures at host institution were clear to me	75%	15%	10%	0%	0%
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Academic aspects of mobility	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Indifferent	Quite dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Academic activities carried out	72%	25%	3%	0%	0%
Quality of human resources of teaching staff/researchers	83%	15%	1%	1%	0%
Quality of study/research plan	73%	26%	1%	0%	0%
Ease of access to academic procedures	68%	24%	7%	1%	0%
Support offered by academic coordinator	79%	13%	8%	0%	0%
Where the general conditions of the mobility call fulfilled?	82%	14%	4%	0%	0%
Supplementary academic studies offered at host university (Language courses, complementary courses, etc.)	60%	23%	16%	1%	0%
Academic level required	69%	26%	5%	0%	0%

The answers, which in general can best reflect student satisfaction with the academic aspects of mobility are those regarding: “Quality of study/research plan”, “Support offered by academic coordinator” and “Fulfillment of the general conditions of the mobility call” that show an overall satisfaction rate of more than 92%.

Since the recognition of studies and qualifications is regarded as one of the critical aspects of international mobility, the Quality Assurance Committee conducted two specific surveys: one directed to partners and another one specifically targeting students. The surveys were conducted distributing questionnaires both to partners and students belonging to the 1st and 2nd cohort. All institutions unanimously confirmed (100% positive answers) the following assertions:

- each person has the right to seek recognition of her/his foreign educational document, period of studies, non-formal education and informal learning;
- the recognition procedure is the same for all without any kind of discrimination;
- assessment criteria are transparent and consistent;
- information on the recognition process is public and available to all;
- the recognition process is carried out by a special body at the faculty / institution level.

Also, none of the partner institutions reported any problem with the recognition requested from SUNBEAM students.

Partner institutions in more than 89% cases confirmed the following:

- each applicant has the right to appeal the decision on recognition;
- higher education institution carries out academic recognition (recognition in order to continue education);
- the higher education institution has developed a system of recognition, in accordance with existing international and national documents;
- the procedure is initiated by a request through a pre-determined form;
- the foreseen documents should be submitted together with the request for recognition;



- in case that the request is incomplete or unclear, the applicant shall be given a certain period to complete it or clarify it;
- the recognition process includes the administrative processing of a request - determining whether the submitted application contains all required and valid documentation and whether it was submitted by an authorized person;
- the higher education institution keeps records on completed recognition procedures.

The survey on recognition conducted among students had a 68% response rate.

The analysis pointed out that students are aware of recognition procedures at home institutions (93%), and those procedures are available for students (86%). Students are also informed about all procedures related to recognition (82%). 76% of surveyed students claimed that the procedure is initiated by a request on pre-determined forms and the recognition process is carried out by a special body at the faculty / institution level. Regarding the right to appeal a decision on recognition 59% of the students claim that they do have that right. Also 31% are not sure. It worries a bit that almost 10% of the students stated that they do not have a right to appeal to a decision on recognition. 63% of students claim that the request for recognition is resolved relatively quickly, but almost 20% of students answered „no“; some of the students commented that it requires a significant amount of time. Students evaluated recognition procedure as not expensive in 75% cases.

Most common identified problems are that subjects can not be acknowledged due to differences in ECTS points, different approaches in recognition issues, translation and interpretation of Transcript of Records.

Forthcoming activities in quality assurance and assessment involving the Quality Assurance Committee will include:

- Survey on Employability
- Partner survey
- Contribution to the Final Report

Staša Mesec, EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner – Slovenia, presented the ongoing and future activities within the governance structure of EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

EUSAIR is the macro-regional strategy officially approved by the EU Council and the EU Commission at the end of 2014, involving 8 participating countries aiming to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity and contributing to further integration of the Western Balkans.

Also the state of the art of the strategy was shown in terms of governance structure and development of the action plan.





Paola Castellucci, Senior policy officer, Office for Internationalization of Higher Education, Italian Ministry for Education, Universities and Research, focused her contribution on the role of higher education institutions in the development of the Adriatic-Ionian area. She described the path that starting from the Sorbonne Joint Declaration signed by 4 countries i.e. Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom led to the Bologna Declaration signed by 29 countries aiming to enlarge and better structure the previous initiative, getting the start of the Bologna Process.

Today the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) count 48 countries with the mission of creating agreed and common paths towards an open, democratic, connected and inclusive student-centered approach to higher education.

Since June 2018 Italy held the responsibility of the BFUG secretariat. In such framework Italy is considering the need of a more structured relation linking the higher education institutions within EUSAIR countries.

The General Directorate for Student, Development and Internationalization of Higher education has started political negotiations among Education Ministries within EUSAIR Countries, in order to promote a multilateral agreement for the creation of an Adriatic-Ionian Higher Education Partnership. This partnership will be aimed to foster mobility at all levels (students and staff) and also procedures for facilitating mutual academic recognition.



Prof. Mario Giordano, UNIADRION Secretary General, presented the evolution of UNIADRION and its further developments. UNIADRION originated within the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and then was formally constituted as an association in 2013 and is cited in the EUSAIR Action Plan as best practice of academic cooperation in the area. UNIADRION strategic Objectives are:

- ✓ Producing new knowledge
- ✓ Disseminating knowledge
- ✓ Share knowledge with the territory

Activities consist in research, teaching and exploiting the potential of universities for territorial development in the EUSAIR 4 pillars.

Besides SUNBEAM, mostly including UNIADRION members, UNIADRION is currently participating in the following projects:

- ✓ ALMARS: Erasmus+ capacity building, marine sciences curriculum in Albania, mostly UNIADRION members



- ✓ AI-NURECC: Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities, funded by the DG REGIO of the European Commission. The project provides for multiple actions including research, education, training, out-reach.



Stavros Kalognomos, Project Officer at CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions), presented the AI-NURECC project, which is coordinated by CPMR and whose partnership is composed of UNIADRION, Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Chambers of Commerce, Forum of Adriatic-Ionian Cities, Adriatic-Ionian Euro-region. Mr. Kalognomos presented all the activities to be implemented in the framework of the project, including training workshops on entrepreneurship addressed to students and young graduates in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, and other actions involving all the key stakeholders working for the development of the Adriatic-Ionian area in the fields of creative and cultural industries, tourism and cultural heritage, skills development for young people.





Ana Dragutinović, Head of International Relations Office, University of Montenegro, presented an analysis on the impact of EU mobility programmes on Western Balkans higher education institutions. The two EU programmes that were analysed were Erasmus Mundus Actions 2 and Erasmus+ taking into consideration their impact at individual (both for students and staff), institutional, national and regional level. In particular it was highlighted that participation of Western Balkans universities in EMA2 ensured smooth transition into Erasmus+ strengthening: development of services for incoming students and staff, development of regulations governing mobility of students and staff and progress in academic recognition.

Further cooperation in the region is expected to:

- develop bilateral agreements, joint programmes, joint publications, summer schools;
- strengthen existing initiatives, e.g. network of International Relations Offices (IROs) in Western Balkans;
- revive UNIADRION association;
- contribute to the development of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR)



Andrea Nobili, Ombudsman Marche region, focused his contribution on the “rule of law” and fundamental rights in the Balkans. Mr. Nobili highlighted the importance of the principle of independence of judiciary in order to ensure the respect of the rights of citizens especially in those countries of the Adriatic Ionian macro-region that are interested in applying to join the EU.



The morning session ended at 12.30 after questions were asked by the audience.



The afternoon session opened at 13.30 with presentation from Ms **Berina Bukva**, RYCO (Regional Youth Cooperation Office) presenting the opportunities for youth in Western Balkans 6.



After a debate regarding activities carried out and opportunities offered by RYCO the Coordinator introduced some of the SUNBEAM scholarship holders that were testimonials of successful stories and example of best practices.





Giustina Selvelli, Senior Scientist at Institute for Cultural Analysis, University of Klagenfurt, performed a mobility at Post Doc level at the Department of Tourism, Geography and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad within the third cohort.



The main activities conducted during her mobility were:

- Development of the research project about the multicultural Southeast European Capitals of Culture (Novi Sad, Timisoara, Plovdiv, Rijeka);
- Investigating the appropriate way of integrating Roma communities in the frame of the sociocultural activities of Novi Sad European Capital of Culture 2021;
- Confrontation with socio/cultural/linguistic questions related to Roma minorities in Vojvodina, the local policies and good practices;

with main outcomes being:

- Establishment of fruitful relationships between the Department of Tourism and international partners in the Southeast European area (Intercultura Institute in Timisoara, University of Plovdiv);
- Development of successful exchanges between representatives of Roma organizations, Romology scholars and our team of researchers;
- Definition of a possible project of inclusion of the local Roma communities in the context of Novi Sad European Capital of Culture 2021 for European Funding Grants;
- Collection of considerable quantitative and qualitative data on Roma language in Vojvodina, to be employed in a series of papers and studies in progress.

As a consequence of her mobility Prof. Selvelli successfully applied for a research/teaching position at University of Klagenfurt, Austria, in topics related to multilingualism (Institute for Cultural Analysis).

Ivana Vujkov, Head of International Relations Office at University of Novi Sad, who performed a staff mobility at University of Split, highlighted the importance of international cooperation among universities not only at academic but also at administrative level.



Prof. Stefano Lenci, Department of Civil and Building Engineering, and Architecture at Università Politecnica Marche carried out a mobility as academic staff at University of Novi Sad.



Prof. Lenci's mobility was a means to strengthen the collaboration between Prof. Lenci and Prof. Kovacic (University of Novi Sad) that resulted in:

- Publication of joint paper "Externally excited purely nonlinear oscillators: insights into their response at different excitation frequencies", *Nonlinear Dynamics*, DOI: 10.1007/s11071-017-3741-5;
- Seminars held by Prof. Lenci at University of Novi Sad;
- Joint supervision of PhD student Nemanja Andonovski who enrolled in Università Politecnica delle Marche;
- Organization and realization of the IUTAM Symposium Enolides (<http://enolides.ftn.uns.ac.rs>) in June 2018 in Novi Sad where Prof. Kovacic was chair and Prof. Lenci co-chair with more than 60 attendees,
- Applications for 2 separate calls for proposals:
 - ✓ Type of action: COST Action
Proposal Reference: OC-2016-2-21241
Title: Nonlinear Oscillators: From cross-phenomenological mapping to multi-functional applications
Acronym: NOLINOS
 - ✓ Type of action: MSCA-ITN-ETN (European Training Networks)
Proposal number: 765642
Title: Nonlinear Dynamics and Control for Advanced Engineering Design
Acronym: NODYCAD

Visar Vokri from Kosovo who is enrolled in the PhD programme in "Economics" at Università Politecnica delle Marche spoke about his personal and academic experience during the participation in the SUNBEAM project.

Giulia Cappelli, master student at Università Politecnica delle Marche, who spent a 6-month study period at University of Sarajevo, highlighted the importance of international mobility in bringing together different cultures and strengthening personal and academic development.