

CONGRAD

Conducting graduate surveys and improving alumni services
for enhanced strategic management and quality improvement

Kick-off Meeting in Subotica (Serbia)
01 February 2012 – 04 February 2012

Minutes

Bielefeld, 17 February 2012



European Commission
TEMPUS

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SUMMARY

Overview

The CONGRAD Kick-off Meeting, hosted by Subotica Tech – College of Applied Sciences and co-organised by University of Belgrade, Centre for Education Policy and Bielefeld University, had the following objectives:

- to foster the cohesion of the CONGRAD Consortium
- to acquire a mutual understanding for each partner's roles, tasks and activities
- to identify initial concerns, challenges and risks
- to agree on the following steps for a successful project implementation

The meeting was attended by 39 participants: 37 representatives from the CONGRAD Consortium institutions, one representative from the National TEMPUS Office Serbia and one external expert (Germany).

The meeting minutes contain the main conclusions and other important notes from the discussions and the presentations.

Main conclusions

- The CONGRAD Consortium members agreed on the planning and implementation of activities during the first project year. The main events are:
 February 2012: Kick-off Meeting in Subotica, RS
 April 2012: Seminar in Bielefeld, DE
 September 2012: Seminar in Prague, CZ
 November 2012: Workshop in Podgorica, ME
- To ensure the systematic collection of graduate contact data will be the main challenge of the first project year. Therefore, all HEIs shall start the contact data collection for the initial Graduate Survey.
- As the modes of data collection and institutional statistics vary between institutions, the definition of the CONGRAD 2007 and 2012 cohorts has to be specified:
 2007 cohort = graduates of academic year 2006/07, graduates of calendar year 2007
 2012 cohort = graduates of academic year 2011/12, graduates of calendar year 2012
- A working group on questionnaire development (Analytical Unit and EU Partners) will have the first meeting during the Bielefeld Seminar and the second meeting during the Prague Seminar. The HEIs shall be informed about the progress and will have the opportunity to comment and to give feedback. The final questionnaire shall be discussed and agreed during the Montenegro Workshop.
- The CONGRAD Steering Committee agreed on the Consortium Agreement. A revised draft version of the Consortium Agreement will be sent to all partners.

CONGRAD Kick-off Meeting 01 February 2012 – 04 February 2012

DAY 1: Wednesday, 01 February 2012

Day of arrival.

Meeting of Bielefeld University (UNIBI), University of Belgrade (UBG) and Centre for Education Policy (CEP) to finalise organisational issues regarding the CONGRAD Kick-off.

Welcome dinner with all participants.

DAY 2: Thursday, 02 February 2012

SESSION 1: CONGRAD Project Introduction

After a welcome address by Jana NÖLLER (Deputy Project Coordinator) from Bielefeld University and supporting greetings from Igor FUERSTNER (Vice-Dean for Education at Subotica Tech), Jana NÖLLER and Predrag LAZETIC (Centre for Education Policy) presented an introduction to the CONGRAD Project: background, objectives, consortium structure, key activities and events. All participants of the CONGRAD Kick-off were introduced briefly. Furthermore, the activities and deliverables for the first project year – representing Work Package 1 and Work Package 2 were discussed in detail.

SESSION 1: *Conclusions of presentations and discussions*

Three project cycles

The key activities of the CONGRAD Project can be divided in three parts:

- 1st year – Preparation of the Graduate Survey
- 2nd year – Graduate Survey and Analysis
- 3rd year – Reporting, discussion and implementation of results

Key events during the first project year

- February 2012: Kick-off Meeting in Subotica, RS
- April 2012: Seminar in Bielefeld, DE
- September 2012: Seminar in Prague, CZ
- November 2012: Workshop in Podgorica, ME

Graduate Contact Data Collection

Graduate surveys are a highly reliable instrument to collect information on the transition from higher education to the labour market. As pointed out by Harald SCHOMBURG (INCHER-Kassel) the duration and other characteristics of the transition process depend on several factors which are distinct for different cohorts of graduates. Juhani RAUTOPURO (FIER at University of Jyväskylä) emphasized that the timing of the survey matters also regarding the graduates' response behaviour: The graduates' reflexion of study conditions and the transition process tends to be more difficult and hence inaccurate when it is done a long time after graduation. Furthermore, one has to take into account the higher education reforms and curricular changes that took place within the last decade. Therefore two cohorts are to be included in the survey:

- graduates of year 2007 (five years after graduation)
- graduates of year 2012 (one year after graduation)

Measures to ensure the well-functioning of the contact data collection have to be taken from the

very beginning. An EXCEL template with all relevant information to be collected will be provided. All HEIs will take measures to ensure the rector's support on university level and the deans' support on faculty level. The faculties shall take part in the Graduate Survey on a voluntary basis. However, it is recommended that all faculties participate. Since the existing contact data collection practices differ at the HEIs (centralised vs. decentralised), different approaches will be necessary to establish a central contact data-base for the Graduate Survey. The Institutional Coordinators are responsible for the coordination of the contact data collection.

All contact data remain within the HEIs. Neither the Analytical Unit nor the Project Coordinator will have access to the contact data at any time. It is the responsibility of the HEIs to ensure the contact data protection within the institution.

Outlook: For the survey the HEIs will be provided with IDs and Access Codes that have to be linked with the institutions' graduates' contacts. The HEIs will invite their graduates either by e-mail or by mail to participate in the Graduate Survey. With the invitation e-mail/letter the participants receive a personal Access Code to log in on the Graduate Survey website.

Questionnaires

A core questionnaire with additional questions relevant for the HEIs will be developed. While the questionnaire development will be done in English, translations into the "local languages" will be provided for the survey.

The Analytical Unit will develop the questionnaire in cooperation with the EU Partners and the Project Coordinator. Two working group meetings will take place until the Workshop on questionnaire development to be held in Podgorica (ME) in November 2012. In order to ensure a goal-oriented development process the HEIs will be asked to provide a list of core questions that are relevant according to the institutional needs. All HEIs will be updated on the progress of the questionnaire development regularly and will give feedback on the questionnaire.

Dissemination

As suggested by Harald SCHOMBURG (INCHER-Kassel) the HEIs shall promote the participation in the survey (website, leaflets etc.).

Exploitation

The CONGRAD Project covers the implementation of the initial Graduate Survey. In order to ensure the continuation, an action plan for future activities and opportunities of funding have to be discussed.

SESSION 2: Keynote by Harald Schomburg (INCHER-Kassel)

Methodological approaches of graduate surveys in Europe and selected results

In his keynote speech, Harald SCHOMBURG (INCHER-Kassel) provided a comprehensive overview on the methodological approaches of graduate surveys in Europe. After a short introduction to INCHER-Kassel, an overview on methodological aspects of Graduate Surveys and on the results of various Graduate Surveys was presented. Particular emphasis was placed on the fact that higher education institutions have to reflect on their students' careers after graduation to a greater extent. The graduates are experts regarding the relationship between study and employment and it is the HEIs who can gain access to their graduates' expertise.

SESSION 2: Conclusions of presentation and discussions

KOAB Approach

In Germany the INCHER-Kassel introduced the KOAB Approach, which is now the largest

decentralised graduate survey system in the world. The KOAB Approach relies on a network of universities and polytechnics that are supported by INCHER-Kassel regarding the data collection, data cleaning and reporting. During the discussion of the KOAB Approach – as presented by Harald SCHOMBURG – it was emphasized that doing a graduate survey is not only administrative work, but research. The results drawn from the Graduate Survey have to be interpreted in the institutional context and they shall be used in the institution. A professionalization of graduate survey researchers is to be aspired.

CONGRAD Approach

Within the CONGRAD Project an Analytical Unit (University of Belgrade and CEP) is established. The Analytical Unit, the central research unit, is responsible for the overall coordination of the Graduate Survey and supports the network of participating HEIs.

Graduate Survey results

In general, the HEIs are to remain anonymous when reporting the results on project level. For institutional purposes the results may be analysed in more depth.

Over-education

Mihajlo BABIN (Singidunum University) and Predrag LAZETIC (CEP) expressed that for the case of Serbia a high level of over-education is to be expected. This topic shall be emphasized in the analysis and interpretation.

SESSION 3: Presentations by CONGRAD project partners

Introduction and Contact data collection practices

All Consortium partners were asked to prepare a short introduction to their institution and to give a presentation on the existing contact data collection practices. The presentations were given in the following order:

- University of Tuzla
- School of Higher Technical Professional Education, Niš
- Singidunum University
- University of Belgrade
- University of Kragujevac
- Higher Business Technical College, Užice
- University of Montenegro

SESSION 4: Continuation of Presentations by CONGRAD project partners

Introduction and Contact data collection practices

The presentations were continued in the following order:

- University of Novi Sad
- University of Banja Luka
- University of Jyväskylä: Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)
- Subotica Tech – College of Applied Sciences
- Centre for Education Policy
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia
- Bielefeld University

SESSIONS 3 & 4: Conclusions of presentation and discussions

Different contact data collection practices

As the presentations have shown, the contact data collection practices vary considerably between the HEIs. A report summarising and categorising the different contact data collection practices will be provided.

Contact data-base

The main goal is the establishment of a central contact data-base which will be used for the initial Graduate Survey and for future surveys. When the HEI's contact data are stored decentralised, e.g. at faculty level, the Institutional Coordinator has to ensure the coordination of the contact data collection and the merging of the different sources. An EXCEL template with all relevant information to be collected will be provided. However, the HEIs can decide to use their own data-bases if there is an established procedure at their institution.

As pointed out by Harald SCHOMBURG (INCHER-Kassel) data protection laws have to be respected. Therefore the contact data-base shall be stored securely and separate from other sources.

Contact data updating

The quality of the contact data is the key element to ensure reliable and high-quality Graduate Survey results. In order to create a reliable contact data-base the collected contact data have to be updated on a regular basis – before and during the survey. Different approaches and strategies were discussed:

For the contact data collection of the 2012 graduates it is important to have the e-mail addresses included the contact data. Upon graduation, the Student Service Offices shall collect the graduates' e-mail addresses. As suggested by Marija JOVANOVIC (University of Belgrade) the contact data can be collected and/or updated when the graduates collect their graduation certificates. This can be accompanied by incentives like information materials or future offers from the Career Development Centres or the like.

For the contact data collection of the 2007 graduates the updating can be done through a "phone survey". Harald SCHOMBURG also suggested considering to use the snowball method (e.g. obtain three more contacts from each graduate who was reached.) Juhani RAUTOPURO (University of Jyväskylä) suggested including a call on the HEIs' websites.

Other strategies can be applied depending on the institutional conditions. Since the budget for postage is limited it is crucial to collect as many (updated) e-mail addresses as possible.

DAY 3: Friday, 03 February 2012

SESSION 1: Keynote by Juhani Rautopuro (University of Jyväskylä) and Keynote by Radim Ryska (Charles University in Prague)

Graduate surveys in Finland – Reasons, realisation, results and use

In his keynote speech, Juhani RAUTOPURO (University of Jyväskylä) provided an insight in the field of graduate employment research in Finland. Special attention was drawn to the analytical questions that can be addressed when using results from graduate surveys: employment/unemployment, match/mismatch, over-education and "academic" spatial concentration or urbanisation.

Success of HE graduates at the labour market and its relation to selected educational characteristics

The keynote speech by Radim RYSKA (Charles University in Prague) concentrated on the concept of professional success. Data from the REFLEX surveys was used to show that the explanation of professional success cannot be limited to objective indicators like income and professional status, but should take into account subjective indicators like educational level of job and job satisfaction. Furthermore, competences of graduates were introduced as explanatory variables for professional success.

SESSION 1: Conclusions of presentation and discussions

Both key note speeches draw attention to the potentials of the CONGRAD Project and the analytical questions that can be addressed with graduate survey results.

Use of the results

As pointed out by Juhani RAUTOPURO it is crucial to clarify what is needed for CONGRAD: What questions are important to the participating HEIs? Firstly, topics have to be defined, and then the questionnaire can be developed. Additionally, it has to be clarified, for what the data and the results shall be used: The first step is to ensure the quality of the data, but then one has to make use of the data.

Flexibility

Radim RYSKA emphasized that in the past graduates were primarily expected to become experts in their field of work. Today, while transferable skills become more essential, graduates have to show flexibility and adaptability.

Unemployment

Since unemployment rates are very high in the participating countries, special attention needs to be drawn on how graduates do cope with the labour market situation.

SESSION 2: CONGRAD Tasks, roles and activities

Jana NÖLLER (Bielefeld University) and Predrag LAZETIC (CEP) presented the CONGRAD Project work packages and moderated the relating discussions of activities and roles of the partners. Also the Analytical Unit staff was introduced to the CONGRAD Consortium:

- University of Belgrade: Isidora JARIC, Nada SEKULIC, Ognjen RADONJIC
- Centre for Education Policy: Predrag LAZETIC, Ivana ZIVADINOVIC, Dejan CABRILO

SESSION 2: Conclusions of presentation and discussions

Work Package 1

- A report on the existing contact data collection practices will be provided. HEIs that did not provide the answers to the questionnaire yet, shall send it as soon as possible.
- The Seminar "Types, modes and relevance of graduate surveys for HEIs" taking place in Bielefeld in April 2012 will focus on the use of graduate surveys for HEIs and will provide a more in-depth perspective on the CONGRAD Graduate Survey. A first meeting of the working group for questionnaire development (Analytical Unit and EU Partners) will also take place in Bielefeld.
- All HEIs shall start the contact data collection. Especially important is the collection of the e-mail addresses from all 2012 graduates. In order to raise awareness, the distribution of leaflets shall be considered.

- Equipment will be provided as budgeted for all HEIs.
- Trainings for administrative staff can be provided on request.
- The main goal for the first project year is a complete central contact data-base for all 2007 and 2012 graduates. Updating strategies may include phone surveys, announcements on the institutional website etc. The Student service Offices shall be encouraged to exchange their experiences and strategies
- **Academic year vs. Calendar year**
 Apparently there are different modes of general data collection and procedures for official statistics. Some HEIs work on the basis of academic year, some have the calendar year as basis. Therefore, the preliminary definition for the CONGRAD 2007 and 2012 cohorts is as follows:
2007 cohort: graduates of the academic year 2006/07
 graduates of the calendar year 2007
2012 cohort: graduates of the academic year 2011/12
 graduates of the calendar year 2012
- **Student assistants**
 Current students can be involved in the contact data collection and updating. As pointed out by Sofija DUKIC (NTO Serbia), they can be financed by TEMPUS if they are under official (temporary) contract with the institution.

Work Package 2

- The Seminar “Conducting graduate surveys in transition countries” taking place in Prague in September 2012 will focus on the particular demands of graduate surveys in transition countries. A second meeting of the working group for questionnaire development (Analytical Unit and EU Partners) will also take place in Prague.
- The main goal of the Workshop on questionnaire development taking place in Podgorica in November 2012 is the final version of the questionnaire(s) to be employed in the initial Graduate Survey. Until then all HEIs will be updated on the progress of the questionnaire development regularly and will give feedback on the questionnaire.
- The final questionnaire will be translated into the “local languages” and needs to be pre-tested.
- The field work training, taking place in Belgrade in January 2013, is to ensure the efficient organisation of the Graduate Survey.

Work Package 3

- The tasks after the field work of the Graduate Survey include data cleaning, data analysis and reporting. The Analytical Unit will be supported by the EU Partners and receives specific trainings.
- SPSS will be used as software for data analysis.
- It has to be clarified what information shall be included in the standard reports.

Work Package 4

- During an Expert Workshop, taking place in Bielefeld, the potentials of analysing graduate survey data shall be discussed. All HEIs will be provided with their institutional data and are encouraged to carry out further analyses.
- Strategic Management Workshops will be held at all participating institutions. Both the institutional Graduate Survey results and the implementation of these results into institutional practice shall be discussed.

Work Package 5

- Quality control and monitoring will be carried out continuously. All EU Partners will visit selected HEIs throughout the project lifetime for monitoring purposes. Evaluations by external experts are also foreseen in the CONGRAD quality scheme.
- As pointed out by Sofija DUKIC (NTO Serbia), the National TEMPUS Offices will also carry out monitoring visits on a regular basis. The first monitoring visit by NTO Serbia is planned for June 2012.

Work Package 6

- The Deans and the Rector should support and promote the Graduate Survey within the institution. Promotional visits to selected HEIs will take place during March 2012.
- For dissemination purposes, a project website will be established at www.congrad.org. The HEIs' Public Relations Offices should be involved in the dissemination. Media coverage is to be encouraged.
- CONGRAD Project leaflets are designed at Bielefeld University and will be printed at University of Belgrade. At a later stage leaflets about the Graduate Survey results can be distributed by the Career Development Centres or the like.
- The Graduate Survey results will be presented and discussed at the Regional Conference in Novi Sad and the Closing Seminar in Tuzla. Additionally, the CONGRAD Project results shall be presented at non-partner HEIs.

Work Package 7

- An action plan for the implementation of regular graduate surveys after the project lifetime shall be developed. Future possibilities of funding will be discussed.
- The HEIs shall make use of the Graduate Survey results. The results shall be included in the institutional procedures regarding self-evaluation and quality improvement.

Work Package 8

- Regular meetings of the CONGRAD Steering Committee will ensure the efficient and successful project implementation.
- The Administrative Unit (Bielefeld University and University of Belgrade) is responsible for the financial administration and bookkeeping.

TO DO: Tasks until April 2012

1. Report on existing contact data collection practices
2. Start contact data collection for 2012 graduates
 - e-mail addresses
 - leaflets, official letter by the Rector etc.
3. List of 2007 graduates
4. Organisation of promotional visits
5. Institutional logos

SESSION 3: CONGRAD Steering Committee Meeting / Visit to Subotica Tech

The first meeting of the CONGRAD Steering Committee was attended by representatives from all CONGRAD Consortium institutions. The following topics were covered in the constitutional meeting of the CONGRAD Steering Committee:

- Role call
- Budget revision
- Accession Form & Financial ID
- Consortium Agreement
- Financial management
- Financial rules
- Planning: Bielefeld Seminar, Prague Seminar

Minutes from the Steering Committee Meeting will be provided to the Steering Committee members.

Participants who are not members of the CONGRAD Steering Committee were invited to visit the hosting institution Subotica Tech – College of Applied Sciences. Piroška MOLČER STANIĆ (Subotica Tech) kindly provided a tour of the institution.

DAY 4: Saturday, 04 February 2012

Day of departure.

Meeting of Bielefeld University (UNIBI), University of Belgrade (UBG) and Centre for Education Policy (CEP) to evaluate the CONGRAD Kick-off and to arrange for follow-up procedures.

Participants

Bielefeld University (Germany)

Jana NÖLLER	Research Associate (CONGRAD Deputy Project Coordinator)
Johanna HUESMANN	Research Assistant

Centre for Education Policy, Belgrade (Serbia)

Jelena BRANKOVIC	Researcher
Dejan ČABRILO	Researcher
Predrag LAŽETIĆ	Director
Ivana ŽIVADINOVIĆ	Researcher

Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic)

Radim RYSKA	Deputy Director of Education Policy Center
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Higher Business Technical College, Užice (Serbia)

Ljubica DIKOVIC	Director
Dragoljub DRNDAREVIC	CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator

INCHER-Kassel (Germany)

Harald SCHOMBURG	Research Associate
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National TEMPUS Office Serbia

Sofija DUKIC	Deputy Coordinator
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School of Higher Technical Professional Education, Niš (Serbia)

Boban CVETANOVIC	Head of Study of Industrial Engineering and Environmental Protection, CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Anica MILOŠEVIĆ	Professor of Professional Studies, President of School Council

Singidunum University, Belgrade (Serbia)

Mihajlo BABIN	Teaching Assistant, CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Miloš ERIĆ	Teaching Assistant

Subotica Tech – College of Applied Sciences, Subotica (Serbia)

Igor FUERSTNER	Vice-Dean for Education
Miklos POT	Teacher, CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Piroska STANIC MOLCER	Professor

Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (Spain)

Andrea CONCHADO PEIRO	Research Associate
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University of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Jelena ROŽIĆ	International Relations Officer
Ognjen ZEC	Financial Officer

University of Belgrade (Serbia)

Tamara ČOLIĆ	CONGRAD Administrative Coordinator
Ana JANKOVIĆ BAROVIĆ	Coordinator at Centre for Career Development
Marija JOVANOVIĆ	Program Coordinator at Centre for Career Development
Dejana LAZIĆ	Head of Centre for Career Development, CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Nada M. SEKULIĆ	Assistant Professor
Marija ŠOLA	International Relations Officer

University of Jyväskylä (Finland)

Juhani RAUTOPURO	Researcher
Maarit VIROLAINEN	Researcher

University of Kragujevac (Serbia)

Olivera MIJATOVIĆ	Head of Sector of International Relations and International Projects, CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Predrag VUKOMANOVIĆ	Career and Students Counselling Officer

University of Montenegro (Montenegro)

Božo KRSTAJIĆ	Director of Center for Informatic Services
Saša MILIĆ	CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Miloš MRDOVIĆ	Engineer at Center for Informatic Services

University of Novi Sad (Serbia)

Bojan JANICIC	CONGRAD Institutional Coordinator
Jasna MILOŠEVIĆ	Administrative staff

University of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Nihada DELIBEGOVIĆ DZANIĆ	Assistant Professor
Alma HUREMOVIĆ	Assistant Professor
Izet ŽIGIĆ	Professor

Picture

