

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATIONS ON ENVIRONMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND LABOR RELATIONS BASED ON THE BEST EUROPEAN PRACTICES – PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Abstract: Jean Monnet project ENROL focuses on perceptions of EU policy and best practices in selected topics in the field of environmental protection, occupational safety and health and labor relations and their impacts upon workplace changes and demands, educational retraining and new competences and skills. Human and technical resources available in the field of environment and occupational safety and health including labor relations conditions and opportunities for improvement are limited, resulting in insufficient monitoring, reporting and evidence-based policy actions. The existing curriculum for educating and training of students and professionals in the field of challenging EU policy, in Serbia, is weak. Focusing on EU policy in key areas of environmental protection, occupational safety and health and labor relations, the ENROL project centers on several activities – development and implementation of blended learning summer schools which will be available for interested parties (students from HEIs, stakeholders, industries, and government). Moreover, during the project lifetime, 6 round tables are planned in order to bring academics together with industry, business, policy makers and community stakeholders. Specifically, these activities will address: EU innovation and cohesion policies; the diversity of region-specific challenges and opportunities; the importance of EU perceptions for effectively implementing policies. The relevance of European approaches and experiences for Serbia, and alignment of Serbian policy discourses with EU policy will be explored and delivered.

Key Words: EU policy, challenges, environmental protection, occupational safety and health

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union is Serbia's most important partner when it comes to introducing new education standards, development of curricula, professional development of teachers and financing the equipment. The priority of EU support is to ensure the quality of the education system according to the international and national labour market needs.

Jean Monnet Action in the field of Higher Education supports higher education institutions inside and outside Europe to promote teaching and research on European integration and to promote policy debate and exchanges involving the academic world and policy-makers on EU policy priorities. The following sub-actions are supported: Jean Monnet Modules, Jean Monnet Chairs and Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence. The main objectives of Jean Monnet Actions are: promotion of excellence in teaching and research in the field of EU studies, strengthening the capacities for dialogue between the academy and society, development of knowledge and insights in support of EU policy-making and reaching out to a wider public and spreading of knowledge about the EU to the wider society.

According to the European Commission (2019), the main mission of Jean Monnet Action is promotion of excellence in teaching and research on European integration among academics, learners and citizens around the world. Activities involve teaching in European integration studies, conducting research on EU subjects as well as the systematic publication of research results in European studies. Jean Monnet Actions have an important role to support EU knowledge for all and they are highlighting the importance of critical thinking and awareness for the general public in European affairs. The lack of knowledge and numerous disinformation on EU issues increase people's disillusion about the EU and its policies.

Martino (2015) recognized Jean Monnet Actions as a tool for reinforcing the role of the EU as regional and global actor especially in the EU countries, potential members of the EU and other neighbouring countries, which are affected by the European integration dynamics.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The worrying environmental and occupational health and safety situation on the global level, as well as increased public awareness in recent years, have led many countries to take measures to reduce negative impacts on the

environment and to improve health and safety measures and labour relations in many organisations. The European Union (EU) has been one of the most active in formulation of policies aimed at preserving health and well-being and protecting natural resources.

The specific need for current Jean Monnet project *Challenges and opportunities for implementation of regulations on environment, occupational health and safety and labor relations based on the best European practices (ENROL)* arises from insufficiently solved problem on environmental protection, occupational safety and health and labour relations issues in Republic of Serbia, Western Balkan region and other EU member states. Moreover, the insufficient knowledge and low level of awareness of EU legal aspects and strategies related to the above mentioned issues in Serbia have been recognised.

During the preparation of the Project proposal, the existing curricula at university level in Serbia was analysed. The lack of the EU issues related courses that have a great influence on competences and skills for problem-solving of graduated students and professionals has been identified. It was concluded that observed curricula include small content of courses relating on EU regulation requirements and standards and that it will be of great importance to develop and offer this kind of additional education. The project consists of one work package which contains five tasks which are chosen according to the labour market needs in Serbia and region and current state of these issues in regulatory documents:

3. ENROL CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES

During the ENROL project lifetime, three modules will be designed and presented through three ENROL Summer schools in total. Modules will be related to environmental protection, occupational safety and health and labour relations. The ENROL Summer schools are intended for graduated students, master students, PhD students, academic personnel from other higher education institutions, experts, professionals and policy-makers. The schools will be organised in English and will be offered to the colleagues from Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo that are using the same language) as well as to Albania, Macedonia and other developing and remote regions and third countries not associated to the Programme in order to promote EU values and enhance the visibility of what the EU stands for and what it intends to achieve.

The motivation for design of this multi and interdisciplinary summer schools lies in the frequent changes of legal requirements and EU strategies. During each ENROL Summer school the special attention will be paid on the importance of strong social dialogue, a strengthened evidence based policy-making, improved enforcement and monitoring of existing EU legislation, awareness-raising and mobilising funding. The students' knowledge will be improved by selecting this structure of additional education that strengthens their competitiveness and prepares them for employment in the European region. The importance of the ENROL project is that it will introduce the academic staff, students, professionals, policy makers and stakeholders to new, innovative ideas concerning 21st century learning and the European Education Area. After finishing the ENROL Summer school the participants will be granted with Certificates. Moreover, during the project lifetime, 6 round tables are planned in order to bring academics together with industry, business, policy makers and community stakeholders. Specifically, these activities will address: EU innovation and cohesion policies; the diversity of region-specific challenges and opportunities; the importance of EU perceptions for effectively implementing policies.

The ENROL project consortium includes seven teachers from the Faculty of Technical Sciences (FTS) and Faculty of Medicine (MF), University of Novi Sad. FTS team is comprised of multidisciplinary team of professors and researchers from three different departments from FTS (Department of Environmental Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Department of Computing and Control Engineering) whose knowledge, skills and long-term experience are complementary in the EU subjects and issues related to the environmental protection and occupational safety and health. The cooperation between these two Faculties, FTS and MF is fully capable of achievement of the project objectives related to development and implementation of ENROL Summer schools. Team member from MF has experience and skills for the sociological aspect in the field of environmental protection, occupational safety and health and labour relations.

The project consists of one work package which contains five tasks that have been chosen according to the labour market needs in Serbia and region and current state of environmental, health and safety and labour relations issues in regulatory documents. The ENROL project aims to support and improve multidisciplinary knowledge and specific skills about policy and law, leading to a positive impact on effective implementation of the EU policy measures. Moreover, it aims to extend education and research in the field of the EU laws and strategies and to establish the platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge between academic staff, professionals, and policy makers.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The ENROL project will contribute to the education and training of students and professionals according to the updated European Skills Agenda and the Communication on 'Achieving the European Education Area by 2025'. The ENROL Summer schools will contribute to delivering on the Digital Education Action Plan and as well as to the necessary digital transformation. The major innovation is the content of courses that will thoroughly consider the

labour market needs and requirements followed up by the development of modern teaching courses and educational materials and open education resources. Moreover, blended learning will be incorporated in teaching activities which will enable the involvement of teachers and students with fewer opportunities and from different regions, especially the low-income and remote ones.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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