

# Support to strengthening the higher education system in Azerbaijan



Twinning project ENI/2018/395-401

## Mission Report

Short-Term Mission on Activity 2.1 Develop and discuss concept of student-centred study programme, which includes the basic parameters for the development and review of study programmes at institutional level

(June 25, 29, July 1 2020)

### 1. Name and Function of the Expert:

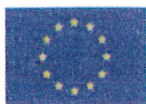
Full name of experts

Ms. Nora Skaburskiene, Lithuania

Signature

Ms. Tatjana Koke, Latvia

Signature



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## 2. Objective and Tasks of the Mission:

The mission is carried out within the framework of:

### **COMPONENT 2: PILOT STUDY PROGRAMME IN PRIORITY AREAS ARE IMPROVED TO BE MORE STUDENT-CENTRED**

Activity 2.1 Develop and discuss concept of student-centred study programme, which includes the basic parameters for the development and review of study programmes at institutional level

Benchmark for this activity is:

- Guidelines and recommendations for higher education institutions for establishment of Learning and Teaching Centers formulated



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### 3. Time schedule of mission:

Date and Time	Activity
25 <sup>th</sup> of June Thursday	<p><b>10:30-11:10</b></p> <p>Online meeting to discuss the mission objectives.</p> <p>Participants: <i>Ms. Elizaveta Bydanova</i>, RTA of Twinning project <i>Ms. Raziya Isayeva</i>, Director for Development at Khazar University which coordinated Erasmus+ Project “Establishing Teaching and Learning Centers in Azerbaijani universities (tbc)</p> <p><b>14:00-17:00</b></p> <p>Deskwork</p>
29 <sup>th</sup> of June Monday	Deskwork on guidelines and recommendations for higher education institutions on how to establish Learning and Teaching Centers
1 <sup>st</sup> of July Wednesday	<p><b>10:30-12:30</b></p> <p>Online meeting to discuss final results of the mission (Vice rectors to be invited)</p>

### 4. Relevant Background Information/State of Affairs regarding the mission

Azerbaijan universities show clear willingness and need to modernize teaching-learning process and develop academic staff understanding and competences to implement meaningful change from teacher and subject centred teaching to student-centred learning through competence-based curricula. Obviously, the key factor for teaching excellence and educational innovation is permanent further professional development of teaching staff.

During the mock evaluations conducted in January-March of 2020 in order to test the newly developed Methodology for evaluation of study programmes in Azerbaijan higher education institutions, one of common remarks from all expert’s panel was regarding teaching skills of academic staff. It was concluded that the teaching skills of the academic staff in most universities needs to be updated and renewed (according to the international practices). Experts noticed that a large majority of universities, except for some rare exceptions, use very classical methods of teaching and assessment (i.e. a transmission of knowledge from teacher to students with weak interaction and participation of students, methods of assessment are



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usually mostly limited to oral and written assignments while some other methods of assessment could also be used). Experts were of the opinion that more interactive and student-centered methods of teaching shall be used, a greater use of IT technologies for efficient teaching and learning should be promoted, a more varied methods of assessing knowledge and skills of students shall be applied.

During the mission the experts also learned about the initiative that was promoted during ERASMUS+ project PETRA to establish Teaching and Learning centres in participating universities. The project has also identified the need for the trainings in e-learning strategy, designing e-courses and applying technological innovations to the teaching and learning process. It was concluded that even though many reforms were taking place in Azerbaijan higher education, and most of the teachers had opportunities to participate in some trainings organized within their universities, these trainings were occasional training opportunities. There is no clear vision by the university administration on how to align the trainings with the needs and expectations of academic staff. These all are strongly tied to the issue that there is no strategy for next 3-5 years with clear vision, outcomes and identified resources – human and financial.

## **5. Achievement of the Expected Results**

Planned results were achieved. The Guidelines for Teaching Learning Centre were developed, experts presented experience and good practices from their home countries – Latvia and Lithuania.

## **6. Unexpected Results**

Not applicable.

## **7. Issues Left Open After the Mission**

Not applicable.

## **8. Recommendations (including recommendation for future missions)**

Recommendations to the higher education institutions:

- HEIs should strengthening the support to development of pedagogical competences of their teaching staff;
- The systematic approach should be used for advancement of teacher's training;
- HEIs administration is urged to create Teaching and Learning centres with the major focus on ensuring the excellence in all aspects of learning, teaching, assessment and digital practice. The goal of the TLC should be to provide support for the modernisation of the study process and quality improvement in accordance with HEI's strategy;
- Teacher's competences should be strengthened significantly in:



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- in modernization of study programs through competence and research-based approaches,
- in implementation of active and interactive theories of teaching and learning,
- in acquisition of research skills within studies,
- in simulation-based assessment methods allowing students to demonstrate and prove their acquired competences during studies.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

- to allocate some additional resources for the purpose to establish such centres or units in HEIs;
- Preferably, TLC as a structural unit of HEI should be mentioned in the Azerbaijan Law of Higher Education.

### **9. Acknowledgments (if any)**

We would like to thank Ms. Aytaj Ataishiyeva for timely communication, to Mrs. Lisa Bydanova for overall support during the mission.

### **Annexes (if any)**

Guidelines for Teaching and Learning Centre.



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