



**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Regional Platform**

**Venue:** the University of Ljubljana, Kongresni trg 12, Rector's Office

**Date:** 3 March 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

**In attendance**

1. Dr. Ivan Svetlik, Rector, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
2. Dr. Martin Čopič, Vice-Rector, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
3. Dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela, Head of the Doctoral School, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
4. Mr. Borco Aleksov, Ministry of Education and Science, Macedonia
5. Dr. Damir Boras, Rector, University of Zagreb, Croatia
6. Dr. Faton Berisha, Vice-Rector, University of Prishtina, Kosovo
7. Dr. Kseonela Sotirofski, Rector, Aleksander Moisiu University Durrës, Albania
8. Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič, Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia
9. Dr. Miloš Judaš, Vice-Rector, University of Zagreb, Croatia
10. Dr. Radmila Vojvodić, Rector, University of Montenegro, Montenegro
11. Dr. Vladimir Popović, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia
12. Dr. Živoslav Tešić, Vice-Rector, University of Belgrade, Serbia
13. Andrej Kotnik, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia
14. Darinka Vrečko, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia
15. Davor Šoštarič, IZUM, Slovenia
16. Dr. Vladimir Bumbaširević, Rector, University of Belgrade, Serbia
17. Dr. Snežana Smederevac, Vice-Rector, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
18. Dr. Milan Mataruga, Rector, University of Banja Luka, BiH
19. Dr. Enver Halilović, Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, BiH
20. Katja Cerar, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Apologies**

21. Mrs. Loredana Maravić, Ministry of Education and Science, Croatia
22. Mrs. Ana Tecilazić Goršič, Ministry of Education and Science, Croatia
23. Prof. Marina Matešić, Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatia

**Participants discussed the following points:**

1. Report on the Regional Platform Activities in 2016 including 1b) information on SICRIS – Slovenian Current Research Information System
2. Action plan for 2017
3. Funding of the Platform
4. Amending of the Croatian Statute of the Regional Platform
5. Election of the new President of the Platform Council
6. Other issues

## Welcome Address and Introductory Speech

Prof. Ivan Svetlik greeted and briefed the participants on the already carried out activities of the Platform. The focus of the Platform activities is to raise the quality and establish high standards for doctoral studies. To this end, the Platform has already been elaborated with agreement on minimal standards. The list of experts / potential (co)mentors or members of the committees for the evaluation of the PhD topics/dissertations has been mainly set up by individual universities and will be placed in and supported by the SICRIS research information system. In the coming period Platform activities will be focused on preparing a list of research equipment at individual institutions which will be made available and shared for research work of PhD candidates, on the creation of joint doctoral programmes and on exchange of good practices.

### 1. Report on the Regional Platform Activities in 2016

Prof. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela presented the Report on the Regional Platform Activities in 2016 (report is annexed to the minutes). She reported on achieved results regarding formation of the Regional database (lists of experts and strategic research data equipment), preparatory work on the Regional Doctoral programme "Energy", and preparation of the Ministerial Conference and exchange of good practices regarding the quality of doctoral education among the University of Ljubljana, University of Montenegro, University of Split and University of Rijeka.

As agreed on previous meetings of the Regional Platform and based on agreed standards, the University of Ljubljana and the University of Belgrade prepared a list of experts / potential co-mentors or members of the commission for the evaluation of the PhD topics/dissertations. In the next phase other universities will prepare their lists of experts (if they have not yet made them) and nominate a person who will be responsible for the list and coordination with Ms. Lidija Curk at IZUM.

The University of Ljubljana Faculty of Mechanical Engineering prepared an initial paper for the Regional Doctoral programme on Energy stating its aims, standards and criteria for the curriculum, courses and dissertations. Some preliminary coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia was done regarding organisation of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Benchmarking and Cooperation in Quality of Doctoral Education and Research in Slovenia at Brdo Congress Centre near Kranj. Its aims, participants and agenda of institutionalization of benchmarking and cooperation in research and doctoral studies, exploring how to concentrate the best research capacities within the Region and explore political and financial framework to foster regional cooperation with support of bottom up initiatives in accordance with the Berlin process and Leopoldina Statement have been outlined.

**Conclusion 1:** The Council accepted the report.

#### *1b) SICRIS – Slovenian Current Research Information System*

Mr. Davor Šoštarič presented the technical characteristics and functioning of the SICRIS (Slovenian Current Research Information System) platform, which has been used by several West Balkan countries as well (presentation is annexed to the minutes). IZUM will provide software support to the common list of experts for free, and Mr. Davor Šoštarič invited other universities to join.

#### **Conclusions 2:**

- The universities of Ljubljana, Belgrade and Zagreb will prepare and submit the lists of experts. On this basis a common list will be formed, systematised and placed in the IZUM information system.
- The lists will be made available to all member universities via the Regional Platform webpage to be administered by the University of Zagreb. Prof. Boras agreed that the University of Zagreb will develop a common web page which will also be available via member universities' web pages.
- Every university will appoint a responsible person to be in charge of its local list and to maintain contact with IZUM – Ms. Lidija Curk.
- All the other member universities are invited to form their lists of experts and join. They will be informed once more about the criteria and procedures for the formation of lists of experts.

## 2. Action Plan for 2017

Action Plan for 2017 was presented by Prof. Živoslav Tešić.

*Deadline: end of June 2017*

- 1) *List of experts*  
Preparation of the list of experts / potential co-mentors or members of the commission for the evaluation of the PhD topics/dissertations (*agreement with experts, co-mentors or members to use their personal data*); publishing lists on the Regional Platform webpage that will be administered by the University of Zagreb (*all universities publish the link on their webpages*).
- 2) *List of equipment*  
Each institution prepares a list of research equipment and makes that information available to other universities. The information is to be used as a basis for inquiries on the possible use/sharing of equipment based on the agreement with the institution in charge. The aim is to enrich the possibilities of high quality research for students preparing their doctoral theses.
- 3) *Joint doctoral programme*  
Working on the draft programme of the regional doctoral programme Energy.
- 4) *Contact persons*  
Identification of the contact person from each university who will be responsible for these activities.
- 5) *Membership criteria*  
Preparation of the rules for the membership of the other universities in the Platform.
- 6) *Ministerial conference*  
Presentation of the activities of the Platform at the Ministerial conference (*presentation of already achieved results, the action plan, financial plan of the Platform, etc.*).

**Conclusion 3:** Action Plan for 2017 has been approved.

## 3. Funding of the Platform

Prof. Svetlik welcomed Minister of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič and Dr. Vladimir Popović from the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič greeted participants of the meeting. The Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport supports the initiatives taken by the Regional Platform. She said that we need to strengthen such collaborations to share expertise and to learn from each other. Slovenia financially supports different activities in the Western Balkans to enable students to use scholarships, participate in doctoral studies, increase students and professors' mobility, share good practice between countries, etc. (budget allocation: 5 million € per year). Many exchanges have been made within countries of the Platform. Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič informed Platform members about the worldwide Ministerial Conference on open science, which will be held in Ljubljana (the conference is supported by UNESCO). Minister Brenčič also expressed her support for further elaboration of the organisation of the Ministerial conference on Platform activities in Slovenia.

Dr. Vladimir Popović (Serbian State Secretary and professor at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Mechanical Engineering) pointed out that mobility is very important for all countries. They strongly support regional collaboration, and they will continue to support these activities.

Dr. Ivan Svetlik pointed out that until now this Platform has gone through different phases. Initially, we were not active enough to draw financial resources and enhance Platform activities. The Platform therefore has very weak administrative support based on the input of member universities. Dr. Svetlik suggested establishing a permanent office, e.g. two persons, which would manage action plans, programmes, etc. As already agreed upon, it would be located at the Interuniversity Centre in Dubrovnik. He suggested a contribution by ministries of 15,000 euros per year for each partner country or a smaller amount per member university.

Dr. Maja Makovec Brenčič stressed that the Ministry could financially support such an initiative provided that a Platform elaborates concrete plan of activities and their aim for which a financial support is needed. She suggested a focus on the doctoral level and to use instruments which has already been established.

#### **Conclusions 4:**

- Calculation of costs of running the Platform's office of two persons in Dubrovnik including costs of organising regular meetings will be made.
- A proposal of how to cover the costs will be elaborated, e.g. contributions from ministries, universities' membership fees, etc.).
- All universities will approach their national ministries, inform them about the Platform activities and discuss the form of financial support.
- A ministerial conference will be organised in Autumn 2017 in Slovenia with the aim of reporting on Platform achievements and plans, to institutionalise the Platform in Dubrovnik and to provide necessary funds for its regular operation.

#### **4. Amending the Croatian Statute of the Regional Platform**

Prof. Boras presented changes in the Statute needed in order for the Platform to be located in Dubrovnik and operate as legal entity.

**Conclusion 5:** The changes of the Statute have been approved in accordance with the new Law on the Association NN 74/14 cl.55 (Novi Zakon o Udrugama NN 74/14 cl. 55).

#### **5. Election of the new president of the Platform Council**

Prof. Bumbaširević explained that Prof. Pejovnik can no longer remain in the position of the Platform Council president due to his other obligations. He proposed that Prof. Svetlik step in until the regular election in 2018. Prof. Svetlik agreed.

**Conclusion 6:** Prof. Svetlik was elected as the president of the Platform Council.

#### **6. Other issues**

Ms. Darinka Vrečko pointed out the establishment of the WISE centre (Leopodina) in Split and asked if and how it could be connected with the Platform activities.

Prof. Damir Boras undertook to check the current situation of the WWSI centre (Leopodina) in Split.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Prepared by: Katja Cerar

Prof. dr. Ivan Svetlik,  
President of the Regional Platform for Benchmarking  
and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research



Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research

Date: April 24, 2017

### Statement

As a president of the Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research I hereby confirm to accept the function of the liquidator of the Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. dr. Ivan Svetlik,  
President of the Regional Platform for  
Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research