

Summary report of

Parallel Discussion Group: University Career centres and their role in internationalization

Abstract:

The workshop aims at investigating how career centres can contribute to the internationalization within the UNICA network. The following topics will be discussed:

1. Diversity of tasks of career centres
2. The new 'ERASMUS for All' plan of the European Commission.
3. The backyard of the career centre: universities and companies

Universities act as motors for economic growth by stimulating entrepreneurship, new business, and more incubators for graduates, etc. For this, higher education community must work closely with all stakeholders involved. Career Centres ensure the employability of the future graduates. International work experience can enhance that employability. In the discussion group we investigate how UNICA members can help each other to offer this to the students, or better in case we already do so.

Discussion:

- Given the diversity emerging from the presentation, there is a need to have an overview of the scope and aims of career centers among UNICA members.
- The group agrees that a mapping exercise is necessary within the network, with 5-6 questions that result in a workable overview. The main questions are:
 - a. Who is interested?
 - b. What subjects is the institution interested in?
 - c. How is the internal organisation? ('who is involved?', to avoid overlap and inefficient action an internal coordination needs to be established)
- A mapping exercise for what is done in Europe is also necessary, because also on that level there are organisations that do overlapping work.
- If we want to have career centers to collaborate, we also need the support of the university leadership.
- In France soft skills are introduced at BA level (2-6 hrs/sem) as well as compulsory professional projects.
- Models such as the one in Vienna and Lausanne may not work in countries such as Spain, but we can learn from them.
- There are project opportunities available and they can help to bring universities together.
- We must also pay attention to international students who want to come to a university for an internship.

- How can universities avoid isolation of students to go abroad for a transnational internship? A way out could be to offer a mixed model, an internship combined with one or two courses at the 'local' university, so the student becomes part of the local university community.
- The participants agreed that after the mapping it is interesting to organize a UNICA workshop for directors of career centers.

Follow up:

- This report will be sent to all the members together with a call for interest (including mentioning the subject areas and the internal departments that deal with international internships)
- A request will be sent to provide information in English on the university career center (by an explanatory note, a powerpoint, or a link).
- With the mapping information a workshop will be organized on models of career centers and their involvement in international internships.
- Further follow up depends on the result of the call for interest, the result of the mapping, and the outcome of the workshop.

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