



International dual studies in the European Region Danube-Vltava

Workshop at the University of Applied Sciences Landshut on 12th of October 2015

Summary

Introduction to the concept of international dual studies and to conditions in the European Region Danube-Vltava

The Welcoming was held by Professor Maurer, vice-president of the *University of Applied Sciences (UAS) Landshut*, who presented briefly the concept of dual studies, encouraged the participants to look for international partnerships and stated that it was possible to remove the obstacles for international dual studies as they are perceived currently.

The moderator presented the agenda of the day and outlined the aims for the meeting:

- Exchanging knowledge, getting information
- Building networks and
- Starting and enhancing common projects

Kathrin Altman, Project Manager of the knowledge platform “cooperation of universities” of the *European Region Danube-Vltava* underlined that experience and knowledge on similar projects was available on their platform and that questions and concerns related to university cooperation could be addressed to her.

Susanne Stöver who manages the project “Study & Work International” at the initiative *hochschule dual* gave a detailed insight in the concept of dual studies in Bavaria with its two models, either the combined studies (academic degree course + apprenticeship) or the cooperative studies (academic degree course + extensive practice in one company). The project “Study & Work International” pursues two objectives, one is to establish an online platform with work placement offers abroad for Bavarian students. Secondly, *hochschule dual* organizes a Summer School for international students to discover work and study conditions in Bavaria. Ms. Stöver suggested to use these means to internationalize dual studies in the Danube Vltava region, as for example supporting the regional cross-border exchange of student interns and organizing a summer school for students from the region. Ideally, institutions and employers from the three countries of the Danube-Vltava region could directly aim for dual studies in a trans-border context (cross-border-commuting on a regular basis).

Ulrike Bettinger, Project Coordinator for English Study Programs, started the exchange on good practice examples and spoke about the Dual Study course in Taxation at *UAS Landshut*. She introduced to the holistic concept in which tax offices, the chamber of commerce, UAS Landshut and the vocational business school were cooperating.

Ulrike Sauckel from the International Career Service at the *Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT)* introduced the international dual system at DIT and explained how both companies and students could benefit from the system.

Professor Roman Čermák, Vice-dean for international cooperation at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the *University of West Bohemia in Pilsen*, showed study structures as well as challenges

and lessons learnt from previous projects. He stated that the biggest challenges were 1) to close the gap between academia and industry and 2) to internationalize the study structures.

Petr Rathner showed the specific study structures of a double degree between the *University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice* and *Johannes-Kepler-Universität Linz* combined with master theses or internships in the industry.

Afterwards, the participants discussed in small groups on what kind of support is still needed and which specific steps are to be taken to implement international dual studies.

Further information is available in the presentations.

Results of the discussions

1. Project management for establishing international dual studies

Establishing an international dual study offer is a complex issue requiring a certain amount of human resources. To this end, project teams should be built, to plan and schedule actions, e.g. to analyze the current situation (like labor market fit, resources needed). The responsibilities should be clear. It is recommendable to start with small projects.

2. Legal conditions and agreements

The legal conditions matter in the case of international dual studies and create several obstacles. Therefore, strategic support from the top should be granted. The universities need an internationalization strategy including dual study models. Accreditation of more practical courses should become possible. Standards of dual study offers have to be clearly defined.

The existing obstacles can be removed, for example, by new agreements between institutes of higher education. Joint study modules and even joint or double degrees of universities in different countries already exist. They can serve as a good base for creating joint dual offers.

3. Information and networks

Still there is a lack of information. Best practice examples and frequently asked questions and answers should be collected on one website. As a next step, networks and partnerships have to be built, while information on existing networks must be spread.

4. Marketing for students

Specific PR and marketing activities for international dual studies should already aim at pupils, as they usually lack information on the neighbouring countries to the East. Interest in international dual studies could be fostered by school exchanges and marketing for “studying next door”.

5. Support for students

Studying in English is still difficult for many students, so preparatory courses should be offered. Apart from that, students would need information and help related to daily life issues in the other country.

6. Funding

As offering international dual studies causes additional costs, long-term funding is regarded as indispensable. Students need support for equalizing income differences. ERASMUS+ might be a suitable

source of funding for cooperation between academia and business.

7. Acquisition of partner companies

Finding external supporters, including partner companies, is perceived as a further challenge. However, the network of chambers of commerce and industry (e.g. the German-Czech Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Pilsen Regional Office of the Regensburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce) could help in identifying partner companies doing business in several countries of the border region. "Europe Direct" offered to use its company network for this purpose.