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ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME, KEY ACTION 2
CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Furthering International Relations Capacities and Intercultural Engagement to Nurture
Campus Diversity and to Support Internationalisation at Home
(FRIENDS)**

AD HOC WEBINAR
12th March 2020

MINUTES

Venue: online session at gotomeeting.com

Attendees: Representatives of all 16 project partner institutions took part in the webinar

1. COVID-19 and its implications for the project

Christina Armutlieva, FRIENDS project coordinator welcomed the webinar participants and verified that all 16 partner institutions are represented at this ad hoc online meeting. She gave the floor to Gyorgy Tury from BMU in who briefed the partners on the recently declared state of emergency in Hungary due to COVID-19. Gyuri informed the partners that as a result of this, BMU will need to cancel the FRIENDS 4th project meeting in Hungary scheduled for the period of 24 – 27 March 2020. In view of the unprecedented measures undertaken by the Hungarian State, incl. the fact that the universities in Hungary are to be soon closed for a certain period of time BMU is not able to host the meeting. Christina asked Gyuri to share with the partners an official letter issued by BMU that lists these facts and justifies the need to cancel the meeting. The letter will need to be added to and retained with the project files.

Concerning the force majeure clause included in the Grant Agreement, Christina drew partners' attention to EACEA's recent note clarifying that the force majeure clause *"may apply to mobility restrictions, as a direct consequence of the measures taken by the competent national authorities in charge. However, the existence of an event of "force majeure" suitable to concretely hinder the ordinary implementation of the planned actions will be analysed on a "case-by-case" basis, and in due time, i.e. when the eligibility of the costs will be assessed."*

The Budapest FRIENDS meeting's preliminary agenda covers a number of important and timely project matters, incl. the upcoming drafting and submission of the project progress report to EACEA. The project progress report is to be prepared as a result of a joint exercise in the consortium and with the input of all project partners. In view of this, and due to the lack of clarity on when the COVID-19 situation will settle down, Christina suggested that from now on the partners start meeting online on a regular basis at least once a month. Christina suggested that the next project webinar is scheduled for 10 am Brussels time on 9 April 2020.

Finally, in terms of internal project communication, Christina asked the partners to always contact her and VUM project team via the dedicated email addresses.

2. IACD MOOC and WP3 activities progress

Christina informed the partners that with the exception of BMU units' transcripts, which are still missing, all other documents and videos are already uploaded on the IACD MOOC platform. Christina asked the BMU project team to send through the missing files no later than 11 am Brussels time on 13 March 2020, Friday to ensure the IACD MOOC is ready and complete for the upcoming pilot testing session.

The IACD MOOC pilot testing is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 18 March 2020 during the predefined time slot between 10 am and 2 pm Brussels time. All appointed testers will have four hours at their disposal to test the platform functionalities and to look for bugs and technical issues. The purpose of the pilot testing is timely identification and troubleshooting of technical problems and issues rather than evaluation of the IACD content and teaching methodologies applied. In the feedback to be submitted as a result of the pilot testing, testers are expected to be specific about any technical issues identified so that these could be solved in the course of the next days prior to IACD MOOC actual start on 6 April 2020.

Christina shared with the partners a summary of the IACD MOOC registration stats as of 12 March 2020. She reassured the partners that VUM will continue to send every Friday updates to each of the 12 Asian FRIENDS HEIs. Once the IACD MOOC kick-starts, VUM will also start sending information on the registered MOOC learners' learning progress and achievements.

Registrations in the FRIENDS Intercultural Passport		
Date: 12th March 2020		
Name of University	Number of registered students	Min. target to achieve until 17 May 2020
Bhutan		
RTC	22	100
RIM	10	100
Cambodia		
SRU	47	100
DIU	5	100
Malaysia		

APU	76	100
BUC	131	<i>Bravo! Keep up the good work!</i>
Philippines		
SLU	416	<i>Bravo! Keep up the good work!</i>
UC	210	<i>Bravo! Keep up the good work!</i>
CTU	46	100
Thailand		
PSU	12	100
PYU	11	100
MSU	123	<i>Bravo! Keep up the good work!</i>

3. Equipment

The partners got updated on the project equipment purchase and delivery matter. All partner HEIs in Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines as well as PYU in Thailand have already received their equipment. Payments from VUM to the partner HEIs in charge and further to the suppliers have been completed in these countries and HEIs. PSU in Thailand has confirmed the delivery of the equipment but regardless of the payment made from VUM to PSU, as of today no evidence of the payment processed from PSU to the supplier has been provided. MSU in Thailand has also received from VUM the necessary funds to purchase the equipment but as of today, only a delivery protocol draft has been sent by MSU to VUM. Christina encouraged the partners at MSU and PSU to keep in touch with VUM procurement team and send through all missing documents as soon as possible so that their equipment dossiers could be completed and closed within the shortest possible period of time.

Christina also reminded the partners that as soon as the equipment is delivered to the partner HEIs in Asia, partners should proceed with its instalment and subsequent use. The delivered equipment should be used for the purposes of project activities implementation, incl. to support students to register and follow the IACD MOOC in WP3.

4. Q&A session

Finally, Christina opened the floor for questions. Ayse from IAU in Turkey wanted to know if it would be still possible to organize a meeting in Budapest at a later project stage. Christina replied that at this point, there are many unknowns to this. Firstly, the organization of a FRIENDS meeting in Budapest at later in the project needs to be a decision taken mutually by the whole consortium. Secondly, there should be a clear justification and a relevant agenda for such meeting. Thirdly, the consortium will need to mutually agree on a meeting period that suits everyone and that does not disrupt the already approved upcoming meetings schedule. Finally, a prior authorization from EACEA would need to be requested.

Andy Seddon from APU asked if more project team members could join the pilot testing on 18 March 2020. Christina confirmed that it is possible to include more testers and that everyone willing to test and provide feedback on the IACD MOOC is most welcome to do so.

Finally, Christina mentioned that regardless of the current critical COVID-19 situation, project activities in FRIENDS are very much organized in a way that these support virtual mobility by default. In this respect, the FRIENDS consortium will continue to implement the project activities as originally planned and without any interruption. She thanked the partners for their proactive cooperation and support in FRIENDS and wished everyone all the best.