Tuning project

The European Union (EU) universities understand the necessity of the building European common educational space on the Higher Education (HE). Common educational space is perceived as the unification of HE curricula and the all EU HE system uniformity. EU educational activities like the Bologna Process, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) implementation and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Higher Education, are perceived as unification and a common European reference. Many EU universities want to protect rich and worth full diversity of HE in EU. To offer a concrete approach to implement the EU HE integration processes with the conservation of the best practices in EU HE, the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project [1] was launched in 2000 under the strong support by the European Commission (EC). Nowadays, the Tuning Project includes practically the majority of the Bologna signatory countries. The Tuning methodology, developed by the project, is recognised by EC and strongly recommended in different educational programmes, like Tempus [2].

Tuning Model

The main part of the Tuning methodology is the Tuning model. It has been developed for designing, implementing and delivering curricula within one or more universities [1]. The main phases of this method are presented in the figure 1.

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Figure 1. The Tuning development life cycle [1]
**ERAMIS Project**

ERAMIS project is a Tempus project (159025-TEMPUS-1-2009-1-FR-TEMPUS-JPCR) titled European-Russian-Central Asian Network of Master’s degrees “Informatics as a Second Competence” (ERAMIS), and started in 2010 [3]. The project’s aim is to create an academic curricula offer on the second HE level in the field of Information technology (IT) for non-computer areas graduated (as a second competence).

The ERAMIS project involves participants of universities from the Russian Federation (Central Volga Region: Astrakhan, Saratov, Kazan, Voronezh), Kazakhstan (Almaty, Karaganda, Pavlodar), Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek) and EU (Grenoble in France, Alicante in Spain, Berlin in Germany, Savonia in Finland and Lublin in Poland). Furthermore there are 3 partners from the software industry coming from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the project consortium.

The main aim of the ERAMIS project is the development of a common Computer Science (CS) curriculum at the second level of HE as a second competence for partners of the three beneficiary countries: Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This project is inspired by a successful similar degree stemming from the Pierre-Mendès-France University of Grenoble, France and from the very positive results of the previous Tempus project (JEP-26235-2005 titled “Master Computer Sciences as a Second Competence in Kirghizstan”) carried out from 2006 to 2009 [4]. Due to the different profiles of the partner universities and formal requirements in different countries, the CS curricula should be very carefully harmonised. The Tuning methodology is very useful for this task.

**The method of the ERAMIS project curricula developing**

The first activity written in the ERAMIS project reads as “Analysis of the needs in relation to professional openings in concerned regions in Russia and Kazakhstan, in collaboration with some of the businesses of the consortium, and analysis of specific requirements of involved universities”, which clearly fits checking whether the basic conditions are met (Tuning step 1). The participants of the Kazakh National University of Almaty, Kazakhstan put up two questionnaires, one directed to potential students and one directed to enterprises. The aim of the first questionnaire is to know whether students would be interested in studying such a program. The aim of the second questionnaire is to identify the needs of enterprises regarding IT/CS specialists. Each beneficiary university adapted the questionnaire to its own context and consulted students and companies. The results that were presented during the second coordination meeting of the project in Saratov held end of June 2010 show clearly the need for this programme. The results of the consultation show also that enterprises in different places have differentiated needs. Further discussions during the Saratov meeting have also shown that the necessary resources for the programme are available among the partners taken as a whole (Tuning step 1) and have put into light conditions that have to be met for the programme to be recognized in the different countries (Tuning step 1).

Due mainly to the differentiated needs of enterprises it has been decided during the Saratov meeting to define the degree profile (Tuning step 2) as constituting of a common core or generic competences complemented by options or specific competences (Tuning step 4) that confer to the degree a speciality like network specialist, security specialist etc. All universities should offer the generic competences while specific competences may be offered in selected universities only. The sharing of generic competences makes it possible for students to move to another university if the speciality they would like to study is not offered in their home university. The definition of generic competences makes it also possible to share teaching material among all partners. During the same meeting the work to describe the learning outcomes of the programme (Tuning step 3), the identification of generic and specific competences (Tuning step 4), the topics to be covered, the description of the modules and credits using ECTS (Tuning step 5) as well as the detailed content (as the syllabus template) of the module (Tuning step 6) has been initiated. Detailed syllabuses definition should be finalized at the third meeting to be held in Almaty middle October 2010. This
work builds upon the description of the similar programme of the French partner and on the resources already available at each university.

The ERAMIS project foresees the establishment of a common student assessment process through an internet platform (Tuning step 7) that should be put in place in 2011. During the kick-off meeting held in Grenoble, France in February 2010 it has been decided that the Moodle [5] platform will be used to share teaching and assessment material among all partners. The platform will be administrated by the Saratov State Socio-Economic University from Saratov, Russia. The ERAMIS project also foresees the creation of the monitoring, evaluation and improvement committee of the ERAMIS network (Tuning step 8). This committee has also been put in place during the kick-off meeting. It is leaded by the Spanish partner and includes an external expert of the project belonging to the French University Paris 8.

Conclusions
The ERAMIS project proposal has been written taking the Tuning methodology into account and the project runs implementing it. Though the project is still in its initial phase (first year), following the Tuning methodology proves to be very useful and profitable. The results of the consultation of both students and enterprises as well as the identification of available resources and specific conditions for the degree to be recognized among partners (Tuning step 1) has lead us to take an important decision regarding the profile of the degree: the definition of generic and specific competences. Following Tuning steps 2 to 7 allow us to share teaching and assessment materials and enables students and teachers mobility. Till now quality control (Tuning step 8) exists only on paper. The experience of each EU partner dealing with accreditation of degrees speaks in favour of its usefulness to guarantee that the degree will continue to harmonize over the years.

Literature