

## Preliminary results of the IN4SOC first pilot: incorporation of social and citizenship competences to the 2019-20 curricular internships.

The Erasmus+ Project IN4SOC (*INternships for enhancing SOcial and Civic Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in Technical Universities*) aims at enhancing the design, development and evaluation of curricular internships through the incorporation of a transversal module that comprises social and citizenship competences. This way, technical careers would have the opportunity to introduce the students to aspects related with social responsibility, as well as to promote the development of competences that go beyond the commonly addressed at higher education stages.

This project is coordinated by the main technical university of Madrid (Spain), Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, and other four European higher education entities participate: Université de Bordeaux (France), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (Portugal), Technische Universität Darmstadt (Germany) and Miskolci Egyetem (Hungary). The developed competences will help the participant students to incorporate a set of key resources that will improve the value of their personal and professional profile, while contributing to a positive environmental and societal impact. Such resources comprise a broad list of competences, from personal and social skills to European values, including the preparedness to better cope with daily challenges related to their professional performance and the improvement of their long-life training strategies.

Among the variety of competences is worth to mention aspects such as personal balance, teamwork, communication abilities, management of own's professional career, strategies to cope with uncertainty and complexity, improved relationships with reference communities, and the understanding of the broader environment where we develop as citizens. Given the current "industrialization 4.0" paradigm, the so-called "soft skills", "long-life learning competences" or "transversal competences" provide a better differentiation and are thus increasingly demanded by both employers and job seekers. This is especially important for those cases where the digitalization and automation processes transform the way that competitiveness is conceived.

This first pilot of the project includes up to 19 internships with culturally diverse participants studying at 5 European universities. The experience aimed at testing the validity and usefulness of the different subsystems developed through the IN4SOC project: the chosen social responsibility and key competences frameworks and concepts, the evaluation criteria, the digital platform for the exchange of documents and communication (IN4SOC Moodle), the supervision and support protocols, and the experiences for sharing the results between the participants.

For the analysis of the societal and environmental impact, two key references have been chosen: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda, and the social responsibility international standard ISO 26000. For the guidance on the

development of social and citizenship competences and social responsibility, the students were suggested to focus their reflection on 2-3 Sustainable Development Goals and around 5 transversal competences based on the *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning*.

The most relevant SDGs were the following: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG#9), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG#11), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG#12) and Climate Action (SDG#13). In what concerns the social and citizenship competences, the participants highlighted the communication skills, the accomplishment of professional tasks, the presentation of results, the autonomy and the work in multicultural environments. A remarkable aspect of this pilot was the chance of presenting the achievements and experiences at public events, like the AISS Summer School, where 5 students from the German and French participating universities decided to share their insights.

The pilot allowed to confirm a broad interest for the so-called “SOC internships”, professional early experiences with a social and citizenship background. Moreover, it highlighted the positive perception of the social responsibility frameworks chosen and the desire of the stakeholders to deepen their knowledge and commitment towards these references. However, the UN 2030 Agenda has proved to be more familiar and interesting for the students.

Even though the very concept of “SOC internship” posed remarkable challenges, it was possible to test this model successfully through the finalized pilot. Additionally, even though the public presentation of results in external events was voluntary, the students have shown great interest in this option.

Among the main difficulties perceived, besides the inconveniences derived from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible to point out the diversity of internship formats (concerning duration, conditions, work fields, type of tasks) as a major challenge for the harmonization of the SOC module design and the standardization of results; other issues were related to the monitorization of the cases, the participation through the IN4SOC digital platform, and the adoption of adequate evaluation criteria.

In general, the results contribute for an optimistic perspective towards the second pilot, which has recently started and will take place during the 2020-21 course. The potential candidates can find more information and show their interest until March 2021 at: <https://blogs.upm.es/in4soc>