Final results of the IN4SOC project: Incorporation of social and citizenship competences to curricular internships

A total of 35 students received their INSOC diploma

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Project summary and results

The Erasmus+ Project IN4SOC (*INternships for enhancing SOcial and Civic Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in Technical Universities*) came to an end on August 2021, as planned. IN4SOC has enhanced the design, development and evaluation of curricular internships through the incorporation of a transversal module that comprises social and citizenship competences (the SOC module). This way, technical Universities will have the opportunity to introduce 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. The project lasted three years and has been coordinated by the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain), with the collaboration of four European higher education entities: Université de Bordeaux (France), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (Portugal), Technische Universitat Darmstadt (Germany) and Miskolci Egyetem (Hungary).

For the development and testing of the SOC module, the European partnership has designed a variety of resources and tools that are now part of the IN4SOC toolkit, which aims to provide guidance for the incorporation of a socio-civic approach to curricular internships and have already been tested through two sets of IN4SOC pilots. Among the resources and tools developed, it is possible to find two guides, a checklist, a rubric, a life-cycle scheme, a list of competences, social responsibility frameworks, examples of best practices, communication materials and monitoring and certification resources. The results are available in the project's website in the form of a toolkit. This way, interested universities and organizations will be able to use the outputs for the replication, adaptation and incorporation of this SOC module into their entities.

Project pilots

Up to 35 successfully completed socio-civic (SOC) internship pilots supported the development and refinement of the resulting outputs. Culturally diverse participants studying at 5 European universities shared their experiences and insights under the guidance of the project coordinators: 9 students from UM, 8 from UBx, 7 from UPM, 7 from TUDa, and 4 from FCT-NOVA completed successfully all the requested activities of their SOC internships. The SOC internship pilots 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. While the COVID-19 pandemic affected meaningfully both the

development of the project and the design and results of the pilots, it did not hamper the successful finalization of the work and achievement of the goals. Online meetings impoverished the interpersonal relations of pilots' participants, however they also allowed the organization of international meetings for the presentation of results. After 3 years of concept design and research, the results of the pilots are now part of the IN4SOC toolkit. 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* by the Council of the European Union.

Dissemination actions

As part of the project, students at participating universities delivered during June 2021 their "SOC academic presentations". At the end of the SOC internships, a final presentation is expected, where students summarize the previously uploaded SOC report. Traditional presentation formats were used, but also other options were chosen, like "PechaKucha" or Prezi. Students shared their conclusions, concerns, and impressions regarding the impact of their projects. In addition, students volunteered to present their SOC experience in 3 European Summer Schools editions by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) Raw Materials: AMIR (2, 2020 and 2021) and AMIS (1, 2021) Summer Schools. This public dissemination helped IN4SOC increase interest among additional international students. In order to celebrate a closing dissemination event, the partners of the IN4SOC project presented in July 2021 their experiences and results in the multiplier event entitled "How to Implement Socio-Civic Internships in Technical Universities". They aimed at involving additional organizations to offer SOC internships, sharing the intellectual outputs (including the forthcoming IN4SOC Toolkit) and exploring cooperation areas among participants. The event took place online and counted with the active participation of coordinators, supervisors and students.

Further work

Given the satisfactory results and the interest raised by a wide range of stakeholders (students, supervisors at companies, organization managers, etc.), the consortium decided to make joint efforts to further develop, expand and improve the SOC internship model and to work on the incorporation of a socio-civic approach in higher education, targeting both students and professors. Future work would include an integral approach to circular economy strategies, including non-technical aspects and a systemic perspective, for which social responsibility frameworks and socio-civic competences should play a major role. Moreover, IN4SOC partners will be aligning their efforts with the goals of EELISA, an Erasmus+ alliance of Higher Education Institutions (graduate engineering schools, technology universities and full-spectrum universities) from different countries in Europe meant to define and implement a common model of European engineer rooted in society. EELISA seeks to transform European higher education while strengthening links between engineering and society in order to tackle environmental and societal challenges. As a result, additional European universities are interested in participating in these research lines. So far, Istanbul Teknik Universitesi (Turkey), and Universitatea Politehnica din Bucuresti (Romania) already agreed to collaborate for presenting project proposals and organizing educational activities aimed at promoting curiosity and attitudes towards the circular economy and social and citizenship competences among university students.