

TEMPUS III: trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education, 3rd phase 2000-2006

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PURPOSE : to present the Tempus annual report 2001. **CONTENT** : the Tempus programme is a scheme which supports the process of Higher Education reform in the Partner Countries. A second phase, Tempus II, for the period 1994-1998 was adopted on 29 April 1993 and a further extension granted on 21 November 1996 to allow activities under Tempus II to continue until 2000. The most recent phase of the Programme Tempus III, was adopted on 29 April 1999 for a period of six years from 1 July 2000. It concerns the eligible countries of the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia and the non-associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The CARDS Regulation of 5 December 2000 amended the Tempus III Decision to include the participation of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and sets out the framework for Community assistance to the Western Balkans. The Tempus programme is managed by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture). Technical assistance is provided to the European Commission by the European Training Foundation. The European Commission works with a network of offices and officers in the Member States and partner countries. The European Commission is assisted in establishing overall political guidelines by the Tempus Committee, composed of representatives of the Member States. Finance for the Tempus Programme is drawn from the two general assistance programmes for the regions involved, as approved by the twin arms of the European Community's budgetary authority - the European Parliament and the Council. With regard to country specific priorities, authorities in the Partner Countries actively participate in the identification of priorities, which best meet national needs. The call for applications is launched through the Guide for Applicants. The Guide for Applicants sets deadlines and lays down selection criteria. Applications are first checked for compliance with the formal requirements. All admissible applications are then assessed by a panel of independent academic experts and their technical feasibility is subsequently evaluated by the European Training Foundation. The European Commission takes the final selection decision. The implementation of the latest phase of the programme, 'Tempus III', continued in 2001 with the second call for proposals. Under this latest phase, Tempus continued to contribute to the reform of higher education structures and institutions and their management through targeted projects in clearly-specified areas, including University Management, Curriculum Development, Institution Building, Networking and Mobility Projects. In addition, Individual Mobility Grants were available to individuals from all eligible countries. In 2001 the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became formally eligible to participate in the programme. Croatia had become eligible in late 2000, so that currently all countries eligible under the CARDS and Tacis programmes are eligible to participate in Tempus. Thus, the programme can now lay further claim to being regionally based. Concerning the development of regional cooperation, the report states that this development coincided with the new explicit emphasis on regional cooperation in the Tempus III Council decision. The Council decision also called for the Tempus Programme to align itself and seek synergies with other EU policies and programmes. Thus, in the Western Balkans, in line with the general priorities established by the CARDS regulation, the Stabilisation and Association Process, the Stability Pact and the Graz Process, there was continued strong emphasis on the promotion of regional cooperation. This emphasis resulted in a sizeable and welcome increase in the number of applications involving more than one CARDS partner country. Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans was also promoted through the organisation of a Tempus seminar on 'Regional Cooperation and Networking' in Tirana. This was the third and last in a series of such regional seminars organised by the European Commission. Set against the backdrop of the work of the Stability Pact and the Graz Process, the general aim of the seminars was to contribute to policy discussion on regional higher education development needs, but also to review the Tempus programme's priorities and selection criteria, particularly with a view to the preparation of the new Guide for Applicants. The Commission continued to see through the process, initiated in 2000, of a thorough-going reform of the programme's management and procedures. The ongoing reform process has consisted of a detailed review of basic documents (Guide for Applicants,

contracts, information documentation, etc.) and procedures (particularly selection procedures). Lastly, the report considers the future of the programme. In the autumn of 2001, preparatory work began with regard to a possible extension of the Tempus programme to eight potential new partners in the MEDA region (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia). The preparatory work included feasibility studies and estimations of resource requirements. Such an extension would represent a fresh departure for the programme, not only in terms of geographical scope but also in terms of its underlying logic, with new emphasis on dialogue and partnership.