

Assessment Report for Re-accreditation

24 June 2016

ISPE College, Prishtina, Kosovo

- ≡ ISPE College, Prishtina
- ≡ B.A. in Security Studies
- ≡ B.A. in Political Science

Report prepared by a commissioned Expert Team (henceforth ET) composed of

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Resources and References

This Report is based on the following set of information:

- ≡ ISPE Self-Evaluation Report 2016 – 2017, Prishtina 2016
- ≡ Complementary documents submitted to ET by ISPE College handed over on 29 May 2016 (on site)
- ≡ Additional documents submitted on ET request by ISPE College on Students' evaluation as sent by KAA office on 2 June 2016
- ≡ Further documents forwarded by KAA office via Dop Box on 25 May 2016
- ≡ Site visit by ET on 30 May 2016. (ET was accompanied part-time by Ms. Furtuna Mehmeti, acting director of KAA (afternoon sessions) and by Mr. Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, KAA Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring.
- ≡ Feedback provided by ISPE on the draft Expert Report, submitted through KAA office on 20 June 2016.

1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of institutional achievements of ISPE college with particular regard to the design and implementation of the two B.A. programs in Security Studies and in Political Science at ISPE College, which were granted time-limited accreditation by KAA in 2010 for Security Studies in 2011 (re-accredited in 2012 and 2014 for 2 years each) and in Political Studies in 2012 (re-accredited in 2013 for 3 years). The accreditation period ends in summer 2016; hence a decision on re-accreditation is due. The ET report aims at providing KAA all necessary information to take this decision in collaboration with the authorities responsible for Higher Education in Kosovo.

The report comprises assessments and recommendations that the ET members submit in their own capacity and based on the information that was provided to them. The ET is grateful to ISPE for the openness and hospitality that its members enjoyed during their site visits, and the ET wishes to also thank the KAA staff for the professional support that the team was granted before, during and after the site visit in Prishtina.

2 Assessment

I Introduction

ISPE College is a private institution of higher education in Kosovo established in the year 2009. In 2011, the College had only three academic programmes and a total of 493 students. In the academic year 2012/2013 it had a total of 645 enrolled students. The number of students in all programs enrolled at the beginning of the academic year 2015/2016 was 645. During the last years the number of teaching staff has increased as well. While in 2011, the number of faculty was about 30 (22 full time, 8 part time), as of January 2016 ISPE had a faculty of about 79 20.2 per cent of the academic staff and 54.5 per cent of the administrative staff is female.

II Mission statement

According to the self-evaluation report and the ISPR website¹, ISPE College was established to provide support in the development of university education in the country through scientific studies and research, promoting support for meeting the standards of the integration process of Kosovo, and taking an active part in promoting effective sector policies recognized as the standard for the integration in the EU.

Emphasizing the principles of genuine human values, the provision of equal opportunities without discrimination in education, academic excellence and quality education the pillars on which the mission of the College ISPE refers to are:

- ≡ professional academic programs,
- ≡ qualified academic and administrative staff,
- ≡ selected local and international literature,
- ≡ special programs and lectures, intensive courses and
- ≡ collaboration with eminent world universities.

The ET considers the mission statement appropriate in the context of an on-going major national challenge for education in Kosovo, due to the lack of fully satisfying institutional capacity, including the need for more professional and well-qualified academic staff and for a sufficient, respectively adequate, resource base. Against the background Kosovo's aspiration to become integrated into the European structures the country is in the need of young professionals who can become part and steer this process to the benefit of the Kosovo people. An important step made to improve its staff and resource bases by the ISPE College was the adoption of the **ISPE Strategic Plan 2016-2019**, a comprehensive document that tackles a series of important challenges, such as: study programs developed in accordance with the labour market, developed human capacities and developed research capacities or develop a sustainable quality assurance system. At the same time, we have noticed that several guiding policies have been put into place, such as: a counter-plagiarism policy, a staff recruitment policy or academic grants policy, but it is important that this strategic plan will be monitored and implemented in an efficient manner. Most of these policies have been just incepted and assessment would be premature. However, we wish to acknowledge that these policies can become effective vehicles to further manage the development process of ISPE in line with the stated mission.

Needs and Opportunities for improvement, Meta Recommendations 1-3

1. Implementation of Mission: Overall, the progress the college has made in its efforts to improve strengths and to overcome weaknesses is manifest. The foundations for solid development are laid in many respects. According to the strategic planning, and in line

¹ <http://www.kolegji-ispe.org/>

with the mission statement, ISPE seeks to better integrate research into daily academic activities, which indeed is a promising way to raise the quality of academic programs. It is also a good opportunity to attract students (or students to become enrolled) to join ISPE. The efforts in this regard should be still further expanded beyond the steps that have been taken so far. First, the number and quality of research projects under the roof of ISPE is higher but still limited, although progress is really acknowledged. Involvement of students into research, even if of limited scope, has been made and can be further harnessed to increase the motivation of students and improve their employability inside and outside Kosovo. The cooperation with universities, which has been very much based on exchange of students and faculty, could continue shifting its focus more on direct and active research collaboration, including for example joint applications for research funds and projects. Second, ISPE's competitive advantage is very much with its occupation of the middle space between theory and practice. Applied research projects could result in reducing transaction costs of theory-to-practice loops in Kosovo, thus better contributing to preparing the country for the European and Transatlantic institutions, but also benefitting from mutual reinforcement effects between practice and theory. Finally, students' research could become a great asset for Kosovo and in that a comparative advantage for ISPE, since the college enrolls not only high school graduates but also practitioners, especially in Security Studies.

2. Structural resources: ISPE has at present a total number of 18 rooms of different size and capacity, ready for a maximum of 500 students at the same time. Space is currently sufficient. However, even if three shifts are assumed, the intended growth in the numbers of students should be based on exploring opportunities for new and appropriate space. We see the opportunities for growth in the context of achievements, structural prerequisites, staff and policies. However, to maintain motivation of staff and students more space will be required. This applies also to computer working-desks, library space and small-group meeting space. We acknowledge improvement, but wish to flag future risks that should be tackled in the near future if ISPE continues to grow.
3. Human resources: The constant challenge to be met of improvement and training for the teaching staff in order to align with the mission statement is obvious. The student feedback highlights that ISPE College has a unique profile by offering subjects that are not covered by any other state universities and the general impression is that the College's mission is communicated in an adequate way.

III Academic Freedom

How does the institution guarantee that through its statute and its organizational structures it provides freedom in research and teaching?

Scientific and Research work is a constant activity for all academic institutions aimed at being competitive with local intuitions and abroad – up to the European Higher Education Area. Linkages between scientific and research activities with study programs, especially at Master level, is what distinguishes a committed higher education institution from a school that offers advanced knowledge for a specific field. The statute of ISPE College places research and scientific & research work as a priority. However, the opportunities for the academic staff are still limited and we recommend the further development of the current partnerships and collaborations with other international organizations, as well as the involvement of students in the research projects.

The freedom of teaching is adequate enough for a higher education institution. The academic Staff has the freedom of organizing methods of teaching, which are diverse: from lectures, to presentations, discussions or even case studies. According to the syllabus and the exam structure, some teachers even count the results of different case-studies or presentations.

At the same time, the teaching methods are evaluated at the end of each semester by using a Student Evaluation of Academic and Administrative Staff survey. In this survey, the students have a significant part used for evaluating the teaching methods and the interaction in the classes.

Recommendation 4:

A point highlighted in the visit at the ISPE College is the need of a constant interaction and discussions on the topic of teaching methods, exchanges between the academic staff, approach that we recommend. In this way, the teachers who apply innovative teaching methods could better share their successful examples with the other members of the faculty.

IV Academic Programmes and Student Management

Do the academic programmes correspond to the institution's mission statement and the principles of employability?

The ISPE College has a unique profile, comparing the programmes with other higher education institutions in Kosovo. Overall, the academic program(s) correspond to the institution's mission statement and the principles of operation.

a) For Security Studies, the Republic of Kosovo as the newest country in the region and Europe has relatively recently established the security institutions, more precisely less than two decades ago. At present, the Kosovo Police has over 8,000 members and the Kosovo Security Forces, 3,000 active members and 2,000 in reserve. There are also other public security institutions (number unknown) plus several thousand in private security companies. In this regard, Kosovo's needs on annual basis for security institutions around 300-500 new members every year. Additionally, given that the current Kosovo institution building process (transformation of KSF into some sort of Kosovo's embryonic army) and in general more authority in the field of security should be transferred to Kosovo authorities, implies that more educated cadres in this field are needed. Hence the high number of interested students for security studies within ISPE exceeded hitherto expectations and is expected to be even higher.

The curriculum of B.A. in Security Studies programme is created in a way that includes almost all fields that are integrated with security. There may emerge a risk from the wide range of this scope. If too many topics are addressed without providing the chance for adequate reading, reflection and discussion, the level of cognition may become limited. ISPE, however, can nurture the middle ground of theory and practice that the College is occupying. If the curriculum and didactics are designed in a way that is in line with labour and market requirements, ISPE could become top-ranked as an academic institution prepare candidates to work in the whole range of Kosovo's public and private security institutions, as well as the Security Sector at large and the field of NGOs. We acknowledge that the current curriculum is in line with the general requirements for this area.

Recommendation 5:

For preparing candidates to join European and transatlantic institutions we recommend to expand the scope of English language components in readings and writings. While this is also considered to be a challenge for the expertise and skills across the faculty, we wish to remind ISPE that familiarity with English language, up-to-date literature and discourses as well as fluency in reading and writing of profession-related vocabulary is essential. Maybe the provision of more optional courses taught in English related to this matter can attract students who are interested to plan a career in representing their country at international level. We appreciate ISPE's intention to increase the share of English language courses and components over the course of every academic year to come.

The B.A. program in Political Science was also designed in the context of a continued critical reform of the political institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. As the country is in its process of reaching the standards for membership in the European Union, it needs an array of politicians who have studied political sciences with a European focus. ISPE graduates have exciting chances to become employed in the new state institutions as well as organisations of civil society and business and to contribute in building institutions based on transparency, responsibility and professionalism, helping their country to meet European standards. At the same time, the demand will grow while new institutions will be created. The ET considers the program sufficiently targeted onto these aims.

Recommendation 6:

As for the international representation our recommendations resonate with those that we have made for the B.A. in Security Studies. The number of classes taught in English can be further increased, starting, for examples, as optional courses. We acknowledge that making better use of English is not only a matter of more teaching offers but also of available language skills on the side of students.

We wish to make a comment on the embedding of the two B.A. under scrutiny into the ISPE B.A. structure and. Taking the high unemployment rate in Kosovo into account, the **B.A. in Economics** aims to meet the requirements of the current market, but may also offer a global perspective. The program's focus is on four areas: marketing; banking, finance and accounting; economics; management and informatics - which correspond with labour demands. As in the field of Security Studies we consider a connection with various stakeholders crucial, to stay responsive to the volatile labour market in Kosovo. The **LLB** program was created in the context where the justice institutions have constantly experienced critical reforms in Kosovo and are in constant search of professional law graduates who are familiar with the European legal dimension. The **MBA** program offers round-up opportunities for expanding academic knowledge related to business studies as well as principal management functions, preparing students for a career in managerial

positions, or assisting them to become successful entrepreneurs. Businesses and organizations are seeking labour that are multidimensional skilled that could perform in more than one task and are easily adjustable.

In general, the structure and curriculum of ISPE B.A. program is coherently focused on applied studies and the needs of the market. In this context, the two B.A. programs under scrutiny fit well into the structure of ISPE.

A new ISPE endeavour is a **Career Centre**, which has become operational in 2015. The main objective of this Office is to provide orientation and counsel to the students with regard to a best possible access to the labour market. Basic functions of the Career Centre include:

- ≡ Help students to plan, identify, process and achieve career goals and job search;
- ≡ Offer current information on employment opportunities and practice (Internship).
- ≡ Provide information on: studies abroad, summer schools, career fairs etc.;
- ≡ Offer current information on the labour market;
- ≡ Organize events that allow students to create links, interviews with employers;
- ≡ Promote and maintain partnerships, continuous and long-term academic departments to ensure quality exchanges between the Career Development Office, the academic community and employers within and outside Kosovo.

Recommendation 7:

ET recommends ISPE to continue its efforts to build and support a solid Alumni community in order to enable graduates to enter the labour market. Input and feedback from Alumni – all the more most of them will come from practice – can strengthen the links between the studies at ISPE and the information about skills that are requested in the field.

Are the quality, range and academic aims of the curriculum appropriate to the academic degree awarded?

The program in security studies is the only one currently existing in Kosovo. It aims to fill the gap in Kosovo society that between immense needs and supply in a state in the making. Range and aims of the program are appropriate. As stated before, the number of topics and the number of hours that are available for teaching and learning must be kept in balance.

Recommendation 8:

We recommend to prioritize among the topics based on a dynamic analysis of medium- and long-term needs from the labour market and to organise the structure of compulsory and optional courses in an intelligent and flexible way according to the identified needs. This may imply decisions to change priorities and related decisions on compulsory and optional courses within semesters without changing the overall topics by subject or number under the scheme of accreditation. Moreover, we recommend to filter redundancies or duplications and to streamline the curriculum accordingly. There is no need to cover same or similar topics in more than one program. Finally, we recommend the faculty to coordinate the two curricula of the B.A. and

the M.A. program in Security Studies in a smart manner, in order to avoid repetition and/or to make the curricula mutually reinforcing.

The program in political science must compete with a number of similar programs, especially the one at the University of Prishtina. We appreciate that a few numbers of practice-related elements have been added to the program to make it distinct and competitive, and we can only encourage ISPE to continue with efforts into this direction. As said before, the close loop between practice and theory, between labour market and College, is the most valuable advantage that ISPE can make use of in comparison to other programs.

Recommendation 9:

We strongly recommend taking practice-related elements in a more systematic manner into the curriculum (internships, project work in cooperation with practitioners etc.). We appreciate the efforts undertaken in that way, and we also recognize the difficulties to sign contracts with institutions etc. to accept B.A. students as interns. However, if the studies program resonates with the demands in the field, the interest in having motivated and qualified students s interns will rise. We propose to develop an internship strategy for the B.A. program. The curriculum as it stands has improved and taken a number of recommendations from previous assessments on board. Given the current number of students and the programs provided by ISPE College, we consider that the range and the academic aims are appropriate. The quality in applied studies (students' research, use of literature etc.) can still be approved. We recommend ISPE to improve the proven cooperation with the University of Regensburg with regard to knowledge-sharing via extended access for students to the research data based at that university.

Are the programmes based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated to and accepted by the teaching Staff?

The faculty explained during the site visit, and on request by ET, the efforts undertaken to diversify the didactic skills and methods. Overall, it can be said that the number of interactive elements in studies has slightly increased. The curriculums of both programs – in Security Studies and in Political Science –are not explicitly outspoken on didactics. What we do appreciate is the excellent mix of academic lecturers and lecturer-practitioners. According to the feedback from the students it is this Mix in particular that provides incentives for many students to stay and graduate from the College. First-hand knowledge from the field and interactive elements of studies (simulations and role-plays) are particularly emphasized as a benefit to the students and by the students. Interestingly, a number of students who have come to ISPE from practice to refresh their knowledge, advocated for more theory and theorizing in order to get as much as possible out of the program before returning to the field.

Recommendation 10:

We recommend ISPE to maintain the Mix of theory transfer and practice-related interactive learning elements. Actually, we propose to improve the quality of the program on both flanks equally and thus to strengthen the synergies and comprehensiveness of the programs' offers.

Do the academic degrees correspond to international standards?

Even during the starting point of the designing the **B.A. in Security Studies**, ISPE made a series of efforts to align to international standards and has relied on best practices in teaching and learning of the BA and MA level studies from European Universities especially those from the United Kingdom and Germany. Initially the subjects and curricula were created looking at the best practices of these two countries. Cooperation with the University of Regensburg enabled best practices and their transfer to the ISPE, bearing in mind education, social and the Institutional context in Kosovo. For the **BA Program in Political Sciences**, ISPE has relied on best practices in teaching and learning of the BA level studies at the European, especially German Universities (Bremen, Heidelberg, Regensburg). Those ISPE lecturers who had studied similar subjects in European universities brought a valuable input for a constant update of the curricula. It is also well noted that skilled guest lectures have taught and are teaching on the two programs.

Recommendation 11:

We recommend to take care of keeping the academic standards high, but also not to make nitrating elements of practice into the curriculum hostage to only this aim. Preparing high-qualified and skilful young professionals are not aims that exclude one another.

Does the structure of the programmes give sufficient opportunity for independent study, reflection and analysis? (e.g., what is the proportion of independent study time compared to online/distance teaching or classroom units?)

The total amount of hours allocated for lectures and classroom units varies from 19 hours/week to 30 hours/week. The proportion of the classroom units and independent study is about 3:1. We consider that there is enough time for independent study, but this proportion has to be correlated with the resources that the students have at their disposal to do individual study. We must underline that an important basic stock of resources is only available in English and a considerable part of the students does not have advanced English knowledge.

Recommendation 12:

We recommend to intensify language training and to make efforts to give all students equal opportunity to read the literature and use the resources that are needed to achieve the aims of the two programs. We appreciate though, that ISPE cannot fully compensate for deficits still existing in the language training system of many secondary schools.

Is the allocation of ECTS appropriate and comprehensible?

The allocation of ECTS is appropriate and comprehensible, each having a number between 4 and 6 ECTS, depending on the workload. Also, the diploma thesis and the master thesis have a separate number of ECTS, being appropriate with its importance.

Is the workload required for the academic programme manageable for students?

Students have to read a various amount of pages per week, depending on the subject. The number of pages varies from 5 to 50, most of the classes using the discussions for covering difficult topics or issues that students encounter during their reading. Having an average of 6 subjects/ semester, the total amount of pages reaches in some cases 250-300 pages/week.

There are also some other classes where students are involved in case studies, or they have to work in a team to analyse different practical situation. The visit showed that the workload is manageable by the students.

Are the teaching methods and the content of teaching units sufficient for the successful achievement of the overall programme's goals and outcomes (competences and qualifications, knowledge and skills)?

A significant number of the teaching staff uses a variety of teaching methods. Although the theoretical part is combined with practical exercises, such as class discussions, presentations or case-studies, there is no practical activity, as a distinct subject in the curricula of any of the study programs.

Recommendation 13:

We recommend a systematic development of new internships and especially the increase of sustainability of the internship program, in order to create institutionalised collaboration with potential hosts of interns. The quality of methods would benefit from a regular exchange amongst ISPE teaching staff on innovative teaching methods and their results.

Are the examination regulations appropriate?

Each subject's teacher is the one designing the final exam and performs final evaluation. Students' final evaluation results comprise both results of the final exam and results of class activities (active participation) during lectures and seminars. Final evaluation is expressed in grades from 5 (five) to 10 (ten). Grade 5 (five) means insufficient, and consequently student do not pass exam. Grades from 6 (six) to 10 (ten) are passing grades. Each student can try to pass an exam three times. After the third attempt, the student will go in front of a Commission formed of three members from the University Council. The grading system is based on points that are converted into grades from 5 to 10 and it is the discretion of each professor to decide evaluation criteria and dimensions of feasibility for final grade. However professors should and can also take into account students' seminars, presentations, activity during lectures, research, independent scientific papers or participation in summer schools.

Recommendation 14:

The criteria of equality in grading in-class and extracurricular activities should be made transparent I a written form, not only to the students, but also to the teaching staff.

We can notice an important percentage of the final written exam, in most of the cases being around 60%. In this regard, there may be an important workload at the end of the semester for the students. At the same time, teachers should take into account students' seminars, presentations or activity during lectures or research. There are cases where students do not need to pass attend the final exam and they are graded only based on their seminar activity.

Recommendation 15:

We recommend that this procedure is explained clearly to all students already at the beginning of each semester course, in order to ensure equal chances for all the students taking part in a seminar.

Methods of knowledge control are stated in details in the teaching plan, curricula and teaching regulations of studying programs. Oral or written exam methods should contain questions or exercises which require logical reasoning of student, avoiding questions that merely require mechanical reproduction and memorizing of knowledge. Number of questions or exercises that an exam contains in written form depends from the volume of module and number of lectures/classes. Each student has the right to complain in case of violation of procedural rules during exam and evaluation methods, or some form of unmerited evaluation. Complain should be in written form within 24 hours after announcement of exam result and should be addressed to Dean of the respective Faculty. The Dean decides if student complain is rightful or not and makes respective decision within two days. This decision is final.

We consider the examination regulation in appropriate to large extent but recommend a better stimulation of students by motivating didactics in order to invited them to actively participate in lectures and seminars.

Is the overlap of the academic content between the various curricula comprehensible and transparent?

The programs often involve cross-sectorial issues. In this regard, the academic Staff has made visible efforts to apply a coordinated approach in order to identify and eliminate overlaps in the academic content of various subjects. Academic freedom and coherence are to be balanced. While the mechanism that has become installed is convincing, the results of it can still be improved. In both curricula a few redundant can be found. Against the background of very comprehensive programs, taking stock and squeezing redundant elements out of the program remains a permanent task. Another useful method used by the academic staff in the ISPE College is to ask constantly for students' feedback in this matter, as a bottom-up approach. There have been cases when the students noticed overlaps in the curricula and they notified the class professors in order to tackle this issue.

Recommendation 16:

The academic staff should reserve enough time for the coordination of different subjects when establishing the curricula and syllabi.

How do the admission criteria and admission processes measure up to international standards?

Conditions for admission of students are the same for all the B.A. The conditions of admission of new students for BA programmes are generic, candidates must have completed primary and secondary education and to have successfully completed the graduation test national quotas set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. As for registration, students must have evidence, school leaving certificate and pass mark of the completion of the graduation exam, birth certificate, copy of ID and two photos.

The total number of students (currently 1222) shows an increasing trend of interest in the two programs in Security Studies and in Political Sciences, especially if compared with the other ISPE B.A. programs, which have experienced a slowing down in interest, at least if only the number of applications is taken into account.

Is the ratio of academic/artistic Staff to students appropriate?

The academic staff /student ratio at the ISPE College is 1:25, which means 1 professor per 25 students which is supposed to be profitable and appropriate for the students.

Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?

The number of qualified permanent staff has increased since last accreditation, at least for the two programs under particular scrutiny. The required level of PhD qualifications has now been full achieved, further staff is going to qualify within external PhD qualifications. In addition qualified guest lecturers who are assigned to the programs in a frequent manner bring their academic knowledge and didactic skills to ISPE.

Does the institution have an adequate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?

The level of academic and didactic skills is sufficient for B.A. Level. Individual skills are developed dependent on knowledge and experience. The mix of experienced and junior staff is satisfying. We encourage ISPE to undertake systematic efforts to qualify junior staff by using mentoring and exchange programs with partnering universities.

V Research

What are the institution's research expectations, and how do these relate to the number and quality of its permanent Staff?

ISPE College puts emphasis on developing solid scientific and research capacities in order to strengthen the quality of studies and institutional reputation as a partner in academic cooperation.

Research is a must activity for all academic institutions aiming at staying competitive with national academic institutions and others. Scientific & research work is given a strategic priority, as being stated in the ISPE Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019.

The targets of the ISPE College for the next four years cover the following topics:

- ≡ Increase of publications in peer-reviewed publications in international scientific journals;
- ≡ Creation of opportunities for publication of ISPE College Journal twice per annum;
- ≡ Staff training to develop project proposals for scientific work and for establishment of cooperation with other institutions;
- ≡ Increase of international cooperation in scientific research area;
- ≡ Academic personnel to have access into a number of prestigious scientific journals databases.

≡ Academic personnel are contractually bound to publish at least 2 scientific papers annually.

Another direction of research development is to provide institutional or, if necessary, financial support (e.g. publication fees) for publishing papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals. In addition to this, ISPE College plans to publish its own academic journal, open to staff as well as to interested researchers from other academic institutions in Kosovo and abroad. ISPE College will organize a Scientific Conference on annual basis aimed at promoting its academic staff to present their scientific work results. Finally, incentives to engage in research will be strengthened through the Research and Cooperation Office, Academic Units Offices and Quality Assurance Office. ISPE College aims to provide access and extend the number of electronic journal databases. The College already has access into some electronic journal databases. During academic year 2016/2017, ISPE College plans to secure better access in prestigious scientific journals at international level in the field of European Studies, Diplomacy, Economics or Security, however, too early to become assessed here.

ISPE has within its organizational structure an Office for Research and Cooperation which develops and proposes draft- agreements related to research cooperation in order to advance the College's programmes and research. This office manages the projects of research and the agreements of cooperation; it helps in preparing presentations at conferences, takes care of updating of programmes of cooperation and research as well as their development under current circumstances, etc.

The ISPE has applied in a few number of research projects such as: –Jean Monnet Information and research activities and the programmes Jean Monnet Chair, Jean Monnet Module and –Leadership for the 21st Century. The ISPE College continues efforts to become approved by the EU Tempus programmes, Jean Monnet and in other programmes of the foreign organizations and of the European Commission in Kosovo aiming to extend its academic fields. This Year ISPE will apply in the project in –Cooperation for Research and Establishment of Networks of corporation among Austria, Kosovo and the region of the Western Balkan.

The ISPE Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019 focuses on a better linkage between the research work and the study programs. Students will get committed in preparation of different surveys and polls regarding their field of study. They also will be able to do small research projects as part of their studies and to them more opportunities to become involved in ISPE, possibly in cooperation with other local and international partner institutions, will be provided. Some of the main objectives of these actions are:

- ≡ Increase of publications in peer-reviewed publications in international scientific journals;
- ≡ Creation of opportunities for publication of ISPE College Journal twice per annum;
- ≡ Staff training to develop project proposals for scientific work and for establishment of cooperation with other institutions;
- ≡ Increase of international cooperation in scientific research area;
- ≡ Academic personnel to have access into a number of prestigious scientific journals databases.
- ≡ Academic personnel are contractually bound to publish at least 2 scientific papers annually.

Are teaching staff involved in research activities inside or outside the institution, and do these research activities feed back into teaching/course content?

The ISPE College has initiated cooperation with other local and international institutions. As regarding the consulting services that the ISPE College can offer, from service to project management, the partnership with the B&S Company, as well as the project of providing translations to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo can be mentioned. The College continuously searches for finding out the adequate fields for application such as the calls for proposals by the Liaison Office of the European Commission in Kosovo. The ISPE College has been invited by the international institutions of higher education for participation in scientific conferences dedicated to the academic staff in order to exchange the experiences and publications of participating institutions in these conferences. Staff I actively involved in consultations about building a solid based of resources at ISPE, including the acquisition of books and papers as well as access to best appropriate databases.

Recommendation 17:

This being said, we strongly recommend a systematic research development for ISPE as a whole and also related to the profile of the programmes. Research output is a kind of business card of the college. It should be not too much on it but the quality of information must be excellent to capture the interest of the customer. A coherent research profile for the programs could help ISPE in identifying a niche and occupying a place within the research community in Kosovo and beyond.

Are students involved in research and in co-operation projects?

The number of projects where the students are involved in research is limited. If at all involved in research, the students are most often become assigned support activities, such as conducting surveys or technical support. We appreciate this at the bachelor level, because most students are not familiar at all with solid research technics when they start their college career. However, doing research is a learning process and, while we appreciate elements of learning about how to do research as part of the curricula, the combination of learning and learning by doing could pay off also to the college once the students start their postgraduate studies.

Recommendation 18:

We recommend ISPE to increase the he number of offers to student to become engaged in research according to their level of knowledge and skills.

VI International Co-operation

Is the extent and the quality of international cooperation in research and teaching adequate?

As mentioned before, ISPE is motivated to apply for joining international programs such as Jean Monnet and Tempus. This Year College will apply in the project in –Cooperation for Research and Establishment of Networks of corporation among Austria, Kosovo and the region of the Western Balkan. This project published by the Centre for Social Innovation in Vienna deals with including of researchers from Austria, Kosovo and Western Balkan to working together in the scientific projects of mutual benefit and for strengthening of the junior researchers particularly in Kosovo and to cooperate within the international projects. ISPE has cooperation agreements with a number of international universities. Foreign lecturers belong to the Staff or fly in to teach the students on relevant topics. As for the B.A. in Security Studies the engagement of two former commanding Generals of KFOR is particularly worth to note. All this taken into account, the opportunities for teaching staff to participate in international cooperation, exchange and research must be significantly improved. The foundations are laid, but more efforts are needed.

Are the strategies of internationalization and the involvement of staff and students in training co-operations and mobility programmes adequate?

The strategic plan of ISPE College outlines the following goals in this regard:

- ≡ Establishment and development of international cooperation to achieve common interests.
- ≡ Establishment of strategic alliances with international institutions interested in cooperation with ISPE College.
- ≡ Organization of trainings and provision of technical assistance for the development of project-proposals

The development of international cooperation is considered to become a complementary element to the overall advancement and development of teaching and learning processes as well as scientific research within the institution. ISPE is open to signing new cooperation agreements with Universities and other academic institutions of relevant study fields, worldwide.

ISPE College plans that:

- ≡ the majority of its academic staff will be involved in international projects;
- ≡ each department will provide at least two visiting professors in their respective study program per semester;
- ≡ financial and logistical support for implementation of international academic cooperation activities will be provided;
- ≡ College students and staff will participate in summer schools organized in the region and abroad.
- ≡ ISPE will intensively work to become a part of international programs such as ERASMUS+.

Establishing strategic alliances is considered to be another priority for the ISPE College, in order to maximize international cooperation results.

The College is willing to organise trainings and to provide technical support for writing project proposals, by engaging the Research and Cooperation Office, Academic Units' Office as well as the Quality Assurance Office. Also, trainings for members of these offices regarding project proposal development are planned. Apart from this, ISPE College plans to organize trainings for the development of project proposals for the academic personnel so they can build capacities at a departmental level to plan their respective scientific research work and attract donors for support. Finally, ISPE intends to disseminate information regarding international cooperation opportunities through Office for Research and Cooperation, using e-mail lists and informative bulletins.

Recommendation 19:

Although the objectives set for the next four years are ambitious, we recommend that these objectives are joined by a financial planning and concrete action plans for enabling the leadership of the ISPE College to monitor the progress and to allocate resources for an increased rate of success.

VII Staff

Does the institution have an adequate proportion of permanent staff and appropriate proportions of permanent and external staff?

The ISPE College for the academic year 2015-2016 and 2016–2017 expects to have approximately 79 academic staff. From the total, 63 teachers are permanent staff and 16 are external, part-time staff, a rapport of 79.7% to 20.3%.

Does academic Staff demonstrate proven ability at a high academic and didactic level and are their qualifications appropriate to the positions they hold within the institution according to the basic criteria?

According to the figures given to the ET about half of the permanent staff already has a PhD degree (34), 10 teachers are PhD candidates and 16 have a master degree. From the 16 external part-time staff, 1 is PhD, 8 are PhD candidates and 7 have an MA degree. For the two programs under scrutiny the number of qualified staff is sufficient.

Recommendation 20:

We recommend that further in-house qualification of the teaching staff stays a priority for the next years. An annual in-house qualification and HR development plan should be assigned to the planning of the B.A. Programs as well as to the planning of the M.A. in security studies and European Studies.

Is there an equal proportion of women amongst the academic/ artistic staff?

There is no equal proportion of women in the academic staff. The number of female staff is below standard, the percentage of female staff in administration is above 50 per cent.

Recommendation 21:

We strongly recommend, building on Recommendation 20, that HR planning comprises gender based consideration. One opportunity that we see, apart from recruiting qualified staff from outside, to attract male AND female graduates and post-graduates from Political Science and Security Studies alike to participate in a PhD program. Since ISPE is currently not eligible for setting up a PhD program in its own capacity it could be considered by ISPE to include such a program into the cooperation agreement with a German University or to sign a MoU with a partner faculty at the University of Prishtina.

Does the institution have transparent, competitive and quality driven regulations for the selection and employment of Staff?

Prior to engagement of the local professors the management of the ISPE College cares that their academic and professional background as well as their experience in this regard, to be in accordance with the overall criteria of employment in the College, the Statute and also in accordance with the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo. As it is stipulated by the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, titles and grades of the personnel, criteria of appointments and reappointments and other issues related to these, are specified in the statute of the ISPE College. They are opened for review by the Accreditation Agency and are in compliance with the legislation into force on the working relation in the Republic of Kosovo. The academic personnel, as well in compliance with the Bologna system, is composed by:

- ≡ Regular professors;
- ≡ Associated professors;
- ≡ Assistant professors;
- ≡ Assistants;
- ≡ New assistants;
- ≡ Lecturers.

The conditions for the election and advancement of the academic staff are the relevant qualifications and relevant experience for the work place. The academic personnel become employed after having completed the selection procedure, and signing of the working contract. Working contract with the academic personnel may be suspended in advance in cases of:

- ≡ A penalty for criminal offence by which is discredited ISPE College according to the defined procedure by special regulation of ISPE College;
- ≡ Serious violation of the code of ethics of the academic personnel, and based on the provided procedure in the code;

- ≡ Incapability to exercise the duties for physical or mental reasons, proven by a medical receipt;
- ≡ Violation of order, authority and dignity of the College; which can be proven in supporting the special regulation;
- ≡ Corruption, which can be proven according to the foreseen procedure by the Regulation.

Work, activities and behaviour of the academic personnel of ISPE College shall be in conformity with moral and ethical principles, principles of scientific truth and artistic ones and they shall protect the authority of ISPE College in the manner prescribed by the ethics of the academic staff. Violation of rules of behaviour and the failure to conduct the duties defined by this Statute, code of ethics and other acts of ISPE College by the academic and non-academic personnel, shall withdraw the disciplinary responsibility. Disciplinary procedure shall be defined by the Regulation on Disciplinary Procedure of ISPE College, which was issued by the College, in compliance with this Statute, code of ethics and other acts of ISPE College. ISPE College has drafted and finalized the Academic Staff Recruitment Policy, describing therein all the necessary elements taken into consideration when recruiting new staff.

Does the institution have development strategies to ensure that its Academic Staff maintain a continually high standard?

The third objective of the ISPE Strategic Plan 2016-2019 is the development of well qualified staff who is dedicated to the needs of ISPE College, having as planned actions the qualification and training of academic staff, as well as training for management and administrative staff. Another tool is the constant survey that the academic Staff completes, enabling in this way a constant dialogue on quality and improvement. For our assessment see our Recommendations 20 and 21.

VIII Organization, Management and Planning

Does the institution have transparent decision-making structures for governance, management and administration matters?

The decision making structures at ISPE College are the College and Management Council and the Director. ISPE College Council is the main leading body of the ISPE College. The Council consists of 5 members entitled to vote. The Chairman of the Council is elected by eligible votes from among the elected members of Council. The Chairman has its Vice-Chairperson. Another important structure is the Management Council. It is a mid-level decision making body, composed of the College Director, the Director for Research and Cooperation, the Secretary General and the Quality Assurance Manager. The functions of the Management Council are to take decisions on operational and tactical level issues, in order to make the institution more flexible on a day-to-day basis. Another important task of the Management Council is to dynamically oversee issues and challenges within the institution, and propose actions in the ISPE College Council Agenda through draft Policies, Regulations or Operating Procedures.

Does the institution have transparent decision-making structures for academic matters?

Decision-making structures in academic matters in the ISPE College are the Council, the Academic Department Heads and the Quality Assurance Office. Office for Quality Assurance is responsible for the organization of the continuous evaluation and improvement of the quality in cooperation with the academic and administrative personnel, aiming to ensure the quality at all activities of the College in compliance with national and international standards. Office for quality assurance is an independent structure overseen by the ISPE Council. This office organizes the internal assessment which includes the modules of the first and second semester, the evaluation modules and governing aspects, administration by the teachers in semester, as well as the evaluation of the infrastructure and services at the end of the academic year.

Is there a development strategy and how is it internally communicated?

Recently, the ISPE College adopted the ISPE Strategic Plan 2016-2019 with concrete objectives and actions for the next 4 years. The elaboration of this strategy was a comprehensive initiative that gathered most of the relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 22:

We recommend that the action plans and related policies should be clearly communicated to all the academic community, all students, teachers and other ISPE staff. In this way, the efforts would converge towards the achievement of the established goals.

How well does the development strategy correspond to the institution's overall aims and funding plans?

The strategy tackles important issues in accordance with the ISPE College's aims. At the same time, one of the intrinsic risks of this strategic plan is that it has no financial dimension, with numbers allocated to each objective. Having no data on the costs of the main strategic objectives may lead to expectations that have no coverage in terms of financial sustainability.

Recommendation 23:

We recommend the strategic plan to be completed with a financial dimension, for a more realistic approach.

IX Finances and Infrastructure/Space and Equipment

Does the institution have an adequate budget and sufficient financial resources and budget plan?

In 2015, the ISPE College had total revenues of 705.000 euro, 90% from student tuition fees, and expenditures of approximately 600.000 euro. The forecast for the next three years shows an

increase in College's profit, but this increase is based almost exclusively on the growth of the number of students.

We consider that this forecast must also take into account that the current facilities and spaces of the ISPE College don't allow a significant growth of the number of students, at present, the number of 1222 students being managed in three shifts.

The College has a budget plan, which is in line with formal requirements. However, against the background of shortage in space and dependency on income, a risk assessment and a risk mitigation strategic should be added to the financial planning.

Recommendation 24:

We recommend that the urgent need for more learning space is taken into consideration in the financial planning for 2017 and 2018. Also we recommend to make regular risk assessments and to develop a risk mitigation strategy to ensure sustained development and sustainable growth.

Does the institution have adequate buildings and specialized infrastructure as regards the requirements of the academic programme on offer and the research to be conducted (libraries, computers, laboratories)?

ISPE College has two (2) cabinets completed with computer equipment one cabinet is completed with 12 computers and the other cabinet is completed with 30 computers, both of cabinets are functional and equipped with accessories for working. PC with accessories; 5 Lap Top, 3 printer; 2 copiers. ISPE to implement the curriculums has the following equipment: 9 projectors for each lecture hall; 2 Videos; 2 DVDs; 2 photocopying machines, 3 scanners, and 7 TV used in lecture halls if needed. Students are offered the opportunity to access the Internet through computers in the computer room as well as with personal computers through wireless network spread throughout the five floors of the College.

The library has enough relevant literature, but most of the books are in English, which may still be an obstacle for an important part of the students. Some collections are very less used, even though the content is really valuable. The European Library, founded in 2007, also cooperates with the Goethe-Institut Belgrade, which is a German Government Institute to support the German literature and language worldwide. This cooperation is realized through a donation of 115 books that are in German, which have to do with the language, history, politics and geography of Germany.

At the same time, ISPE College has established a series of collaborations with international organizations, for establishing a NATO corner, for example, but the collections were not updated frequently. In this regard, the teachers are often in the situation of translating chapters from English materials to allow students to progress on some topics.

X Quality Management

Does the institution have a quality assurance system for teaching, research and services? Are the institution's programs assessed regularly within the context of internal evaluation processes?

In order to ensure a quality job and creating a culture of quality in the College functions a quality assurance system that operates through offices or relevant units. The quality assurance system consists of the following units: Permanent Committee for Assessment, Permanent Committee on Curricula, Office of Quality Assurance, and Quality Assurance Office of Academic Unit. All academic programs are subject to the quality assessment and management systems established at ISPE.

What methods of communication, implementation and documentation are used by the quality management system?

The methods used by the Quality Management system are adapted to the specific of ISPE College. Quality improvement takes into account reports created during the internal and external evaluation with their recommendations, conducting to new regulations, adaption of the internal procedures or improvement plans. As an example of recent improvement, we refer to the Strategic Plan for 2016-2019 and the Counter-plagiarism policy.

Recommendation 25:

The students should be encouraged to take more actively part in the quality assurance process, by involving them in discussing the College's problems and solutions as well as by responding to the students' evaluations in an open manner.

Does the institution carry out regular self-evaluations?

Permanent Commission on Assessment decides for all the self- assessment and evaluation procedures in all the aspects of the College activities, including the assessment of the quality management. This Committee is responsible for monitoring and implementation of procedures for the assessment and approval of programs in order to ensure quality for all activities of the College. The Commission is responsible for the application of international standards for quality as well as national and makes recommendations to the Council. The Commission is responsible for communicating with external assessors and the assessors of the Accreditation Agency and reports to the Council. The Commission also promotes a culture of quality in College and approves reports for publication as regarding the quality.

ISPE carries out a frequent evaluations process, applying questionnaires for:

- ≡ students;
- ≡ academic staff; and
- ≡ Administrative staff.

Then analysis of the results and assessment is done continually by the Quality Assurance Office. The forms are complex and cover the most relevant aspects for a good knowledge about the processes and the implementation of quality standards in the ISPE College.

Are the results of evaluation put to use and included in the institution's development planning?

The results are compiled by the Quality Assurance Office and there were cases where teachers had to explain to the management why they got a very low score for a period in a row.

Are the criteria for the award of academic honours and honorary academic degrees adequate?

The criteria are transparent and enshrined in the guidelines for examination.

XI Conclusion

The Expert Team has carefully assessed the institutional set-up of the ISPE, in doing so lending its particular focus on the college design and policies as well as the implementation of two B.A. programs (Political Science and Security Studies), the related ISPE curricular and conceptual planning, HR base, technical infrastructure, as well as available funds and resources.

We come to the conclusion that ISPE complies with all essential requirements to carry out Higher Academic Education programs in compliance with the underlying legal norms and academic standards. The two programs under particular scrutiny have proven a sufficient evidence of substantial improvement since their previous accreditation. ISPE's responses to the recommendations that were provided by the Expert Team are constructive as are the initial conclusions that ISPE has drawn to implement our recommendations into practice.

We propose institutional as well as program accreditation.

For Expert Team:

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24 June 2016