Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Report on best practices in student advocacy in EU universities of Higher Educational Establishment of Ukoopspilka "Poltava University of Economics and Trade" within the project Erasmus + AESOP "Advocacy Establishment for Students through Ombudsman Position" (561640-EPP-1-2015-1-AZ-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

Within the WP 2. Identify Best Practices and Prepare Guidelines and Training Materials representatives of PUET visited 3 European universities:

- on April 4-6 participants of the project Yuliya Perehuda, Kseniia Verhal, Maryna Ivannikova and Inna Pakhomova visited University of Warsaw (Poland);
- on May 2-4 participants of the project Alina Tkachenko, Anna Bychkova, Kseniia Verhal and Maryna Ivannikova visited University of L'aquilla (Italy);
- on May 23-26 participants of the project Alina Tkachenko, Inna Pakhomova, Yuliya Perehuda and Oleksiy Nestulya visited University of Minho (Portugal).

During these study visits the members of the project team had meetings with ombudsman and staff from each university. As a result we have analysed the features of ombudsman position activity in each university that is shown in a table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of features of ombudsman position activity in European universities

Features	University of Warsaw (Poland)	University of L'aquilla (Italy)	University of Minho (Portugal)
For whom? (students, staff)	Students, Scientific and Administrative Staff	Students	Students
Legislation (European, national, Statute of the university)	Statute of the university	Statute of the university	Statute of the university, national legislation

Subordination	Rector	Rector	Rector
Employment (full-time, part-time)	full-time	part-time	full-time
Salary	+	-	+
Electivity	appointed by the Rector	elected by the Academic Council according to the proposal of the student self-government	elected by the General Council
Term	4 years	3 years	2 years
Reporting	Annual Report (Rectors) Presentation to the Senate (Senate) Current financial matters (Chancellor)	annual report	annual report
Communication (face-to-face, e-mail, phone, site)	Admission schedule of face-to-face meeting. Ombudsman accepts cases reported to her in person, by phone, by e mail and by post.	Mostly phone and e-mail communication, face-to-face meeting for special cases	face-to-face meeting, e-mails
Cooperation with other departments	Office for Personnel Affairs Office of Student	University Student Counselling and	Pedagogical Council

	Affairs Office for Persons with Disabilities International Relations Office Legal Office /Legislative Office Press Office/Promotion Office Rector's Deputies Student Unions Trade Unions	Support Service, Services for disabled students, Legal department, Joint Commission Professors/Students, ADSU, Sexological Counselling,	
Term and way of solving problems	Solution as soon as possible	Solution as soon as possible	Solution as soon as possible

Upon the information received and the comparison provided and taking into account internal rules and regulations in the university our project team members together with the representatives of all participants of educational process have come to the conclusion that the Regulation on university ombudsman needs to be prepared and the main principles of the creation, development and performance of the ombudsman office have to be mentioned in it.

The ombudsman in PUET is going to protect and support rights and interests of students, academic and administrative staff.

The Ombudsman is independent and subordinates directly to the Rector.

The recommendations set out in the Regulation are developed in accordance with the requirements:

- Directive 2008/52 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on certain aspects of mediation in civil and commercial matters;
- Directive No 2013/11 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union "On Alternative Dispute Resolution with Consumer Participation";
- Regulation (EC) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union "On Regulation of Disputes involving Consumer Online";
- The Constitution of Ukraine, 1996, with the latest amendments No. 1-rp / 2016 of March 15, 2016;

- The Civil Code of Ukraine, 2003, with the latest amendments No. 1999-VIII of 05.04.2017;
- Code of Labor Laws of Ukraine, 1971, with the latest amendments No. 2005-No 2005-VIII of 06.04.2017;
- Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education", 2014, with the latest amendments No. 2122-VIII of 11.07.2017;
- The Statute of the Higher Educational Establishment of the Ukoopspilka "Poltava University of Economics and Trade", 2016;
- Strategy for the development of the Higher Educational Establishment of Ukoopspilka "Poltava University of Economics and Trade" for 2017-2022, 2016.

Procedure of the Ombudsman election

1. The Ombudsman is elected by an absolute majority of the members of the Academic Council of the University which consists of the researchers, the staff and the students and represents at least 20% of university members.
2. The Ombudsman performs his duties for three years and is a full-time employee.
3. The Ombudsman can not consider or decide on issues when he is a part, by himself or as a representative of the other party, or when he has any personal interest.

Purpose and objectives of the Ombudsman performance:

The Ombudsman's implementation in PUET helps to solve the following tasks:

- to receive complaints from all participants of the educational process;
- to resolve disputed issues that arise in the process of interconnection between all participants of the educational process;
- to control the observance of the rights and duties of all participants of the educational process;
- to lobby the rights of all participants of the educational process among other organizations, associations, entities with which they cooperate in Ukraine and abroad, including their social activity;
- to perform mediator functions for all participants of the educational process and specialized structures in Ukraine and abroad in case of the impossibility of solving issues on their own;
- to promote alternative methods of dispute resolution in the academic environment of PUET.

The areas of the Ombudsman performance:

1. Ombudsman is obliged:

- to consider complaints and statements from all participants of the educational process on actions or inaction of the structural units;

- to act as a mediator, condemning conflicts between students and other members or agents or university services;

- to prepare reports on the investigation for the reporting to Rector;

- to prevent or correct the controversial situation;

- to notify the Rector of the University and the competent authorities in the matter of urgency about the threat to life and the restriction of the freedom of any of the participants of the educational process;

2. All the organizational units are obligated to cooperate with the ombudsman, in particular, by providing prompt and timely information and providing the necessary documents in order to ensure the proper performance of their duties.

Procedure of the Ombudsman performance:

1. The Ombudsman receives applications from students and other participants of the educational process through personal appeal or via e-mail.

2. The personal reception of visitors is carried out as follows:

- the Ombudsman considers appeal in writing form within five working days and informs about the possible way of its resolution;

- if necessary the Ombudsman attracts the qualified structural units both within the University and abroad.

3. When receiving a complaint via e-mail, the Ombudsman considers it within one working day and informs about the possible way of its resolution.

4. If an urgent problem is to be solved, the Ombudsman can begin to resolve it immediately.