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FINAL REPORT

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Erasmus Plus project

euroPS

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Introduction

In order to assure the quality of the project EuroPS which took place in the framework of the *Erasmus+ Curriculum Development joint European Political Science MA* (CBHE 561485-EEP-1-2015-1-AT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP / 2015-2793/001-001), an external monitoring and evaluation was set up. Its aim was the systematic and critical evaluation of the project and the depiction of eventual difficulties in communication and project management on all levels. Therefore, Work Package 11 Quality Assurance and Monitoring should assure the quality of communication among the project partners, the management and the functioning of administrative procedures as well as the impact on national and regional stakeholders and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The External Quality Assurance Plan was divided in three sub-fields to be monitored: communication among partners, equivalence of methodologies and administrative procedures. The quality of these aspects was evaluated by a questionnaire that was to be filled in three times during the project by project coordinators in the participating institutions, teachers, administrators and quality managers, by regular communication with the project management and by further interviews and sources such as the Moodle-Platform. It addressed three indicators for good communication: clarity, responsiveness and comprehensiveness.

According to the subcontract between the Lead Partner of the project, the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Department of Political Science and Sociology and us as the external evaluator EURODEMPPA, our team developed measures in order to supervise the activities in progress and to ensure that objectives and targets were fulfilled and that they met with the project goals.

The evaluation was understood as a tool to improve the communication and the dialogue between all stakeholders and to help the project management in identifying problems at an early stage. It was not conceptualized as a control instrument but as a contribution to the overall success of the project. Concrete subjects of evaluation were the quality of and the satisfaction with the process and the results, the communication between project management, coordinators, teachers, administrators and the equivalence of methodology and administration among participating project participants. As the partners came from different countries and regions, the evaluation took into account the different geographical (international, inter-regional) and institutional (inter-institutional and intra-institutional) dimensions of the cooperation.



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1 General observations and summary

The project EuroPS started in October 2015 with a kick-off meeting in Tirana. Lead Partner of the project was the Paris Lodron University Salzburg (Austria), Department of Political Science, represented by Dr. Franz Kok, who initiated and coordinated the project. Project partners were the University of Tirana (Albania), European University of Tirana (Albania), Sarajevo School of Science and Technology (Bosnia/Hercegovina), University of Sarajevo (Bosnia/Hercegovina), University of Business and Technology (Kosovo), Fama College (Kosovo), Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (Macedonia), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and University of Pavia (Italy).

Already in the run-up of the kick-off meeting and in the months before the project started, the management from the University of Salzburg had been very engaged in preparing a close network of participants in the Western Balkan. The project manager travelled to the partners and tried to involve them into the different steps of the project proposal from the very beginning. This participative way of project management should ensure commitment and motivation of all partners and ease the communication. When the project officially started with the kick-off meeting in Tirana, the majority of participants, especially coordinators and quality managers, already knew each other and had worked together during the preparation of the project. Furthermore, the project manager had visited all partner institutions and other stakeholders in the region and many of them had met in Salzburg for a preparatory workshop. In all these meetings, the working plan and requirements were communicated in a very transparent and participatory manner so that most partner institutions not only got a very good basic information about the expectations and goals but also the possibility to bring in their own views, suggestions and expectations.

After the start of the project, however, there was considerable confusion about payment modalities of the European Commission that had changed only shortly. The consequences of new payment rules were long delays in payments in some partner institutions which caused dissatisfaction among staff members. This was in some cases erroneously addressed to the project management of the lead partner. It must be said that the aggravated start of the project was not the fault of the project management, but of unclear and confusing newly developed rules. Nevertheless, the high motivation of the consortium did not suffer from this. Furthermore, in a very early stage the project design was well perceived by the EU officials as pertinent and the communication as efficient. Also the relevance of EuroPS was highlighted in a message to the project management (see Midterm Report 2016).

During the running time of the project, positive feedback of the EU was expressed in several occasions and the difficulties could be overcome step by step. The results of our ongoing evaluation back this positive perception. In all our meetings, we could find a very experienced and self-reflexive project management team at the University of Salzburg which was in every moment of the project highly aware of the concrete situations and institutional contexts of the participating institutions.

Summary of main results

The project *Erasmus+ Curriculum Development joint European Political Science MA* (EuroPS) reached its goals as formulated in the application form. These are:

- A joint MA was developed from 2015 to 2017 for 9 partner universities from Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Italy, Slovenia, Kosovo and Macedonia. Only one project partner (Pavia) could not go all the way due to internal legal barriers in the implementation procedure.
- The European accreditation procedure was successfully finalised at all institutions with the exception of University of Pavia (Italy), where all the pre-conditions are fulfilled as well.
- Partners from the Western Balkans were supported in different questions of the introduction of the MA.
- Cooperation for the ongoing joint MA and its management was installed with a Board of Coordinators.
- A common quality management and adequate procedures were developed.
- The participation of students is guaranteed.
- An executive manager was introduced.
- A decision making procedure was agreed and introduced.
- The exchange of data and the common degree procurement were agreed.
- Services for students were introduced, like the eLibrary and an e-learning platform.
- Software against plagiarism was developed.
- Stakeholders in the region of the Western Balkans were reached and involved.
- A network around the MA could be established and strengthened.
- The multilateral cooperation between the partners from Western Balkans (WB) and Western Europe (WE) took place in high intensity and quality.
- The quality of communication, project management and coordination, participation and participatory governance was on a high level and could be improved during the duration of the project.
- There was a remarkable improvement in the equivalence of administrative methods.
- Satisfaction with the project among partners was high and could be improved during the project.
- The impact of the project on the participating institutions and the whole region of the Western Balkans was perceived as very relevant.
- Europeanization of participating institutions took place and is sustainably installed.

2 Evaluation results in detail

The evaluation that took place in Work Package 11 was focused on the communication and coordination in the project, the equivalence of methodologies and administration as well as on the satisfaction with the different fields of activities. In the following chapters, the results are subdivided into different categories. First, the overall success of the project and the outcomes are described and compared to the goals. Second, the communication and management procedures are analyzed according to the results of the three rounds of online questionnaires. Furthermore, the impact of the project on different levels is evaluated and finally, general impressions among project members are taken into account.

2.1 General output and deliverables according to project goals

In the application form and the proposal of EuroPS, a number of concrete goals and impacts were mentioned and summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Impacts and goals

Short term impact	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Accreditation of new JD MA curriculum	Departments, University	Number of accreditations for JD MA	Innovative content, didactic and governance of JD MA program.
QM is established	PP management, students	Number of QM tools available at how many PP.	First time offer of QM tools or of improved QM tools
Increasing cooperative Governance at PP	PP management, teacher and administration	Number of courses offered in JD MA	Changes of content, didactics and learning outcomes in offered courses at MA level
Rising relevance of Pol. Sc. studies	Students	Number of registrations/applications for JD MA	Rising motivation to study MA Political Science
Intra national and WB cooperation of PP	PP	Number of intra national and intra WB meetings and cooperative activities.	Increasing relevance and cooperation resulting from knowledge about and communication with PS institutions regarding research and education.
International recognition of PP in education and	International Pol. Sc. community	Number of international projects and exchange activities PP involved.	Higher reputation of PP regarding research and education of Pol. Sc. within

research of PS.			the scientific community, ins society and at political stake holder.
Rising attention on Pol. Sc. as experts for political innovation and development of multilevel European governance.	Stake holder, institutions and social movements at local, regional, national, WB and European level	Number of stakeholder reached with dissemination activities.	Attention of stakeholder to the new JD program and offered places for internships of issues for MA thesis works.

The most important impact was the accreditation of the new Joint Degree Master Curriculum in the partner institutions. This accreditation took place and was successful from both, the quantitative perspective as well as the qualitative. With the exception of the University of Pavia, all partners could achieve the accreditation. Also, the Quality Management tools were set up in the partner institutions with the exception of University of Pavia, for which it would be available as well. Moreover, the project could develop an innovative content, didactic and governance in the most participatory way. The innovative content was developed among coordinators, quality managers and staff of the participating institutions in intensive workshops. Didactic on a high qualitative level was ensured by the seminars of excellence. And the principles of participative governance could be institutionalized by the introduction of Boards, in cooperation between coordinators, administrators and quality managers. The elaboration of this Joint Degree Governance System took place in WP 2 and includes rules, procedures and institutional responsibilities. The Board of academic coordinators acts as the steering and decision body. The Board for Quality Management and Student Affairs is a supervisory body for the coordinators board in which quality managers and students are represented. Quality Management was also designed in order to supervise the curriculum development and the application for accreditation.

Besides the development and accreditation of the integrated curriculum for a joint MA and the governance system, services for students and teachers were developed and introduced, such as an e-library, an e-learning platform, software against plagiarism and a website of the study program.

53 students started their application to PoSIG, 24 documents were uploaded and 14 positively evaluated (by end of October 2017). At the Paris Lodron University, 10 students started with their first year (all with Erasmus+ KA 107 grants).

The relevance of the cooperation increased over the duration of the project which can be shown by the assessment of its impact in the chapters below. In several occasions, the project partners had the opportunity to meet other colleagues of the discipline of Political Science in conferences and by the exchanges in the frame of the seminars of excellence and other workshops. The reputation of the project partners was strengthened in the scientific community, which can also be shown in the chapters below and the perception of results among the project partners. Moreover, stakeholders from politics, economy and other fields of society could be reached by different ways of communication, so that the general reputation and relevance of the project, its partners and the newly introduced MA program could benefit considerably.

One of the important events in the time before the project started, but after it was applied, was the Bologna conference in Yerevan in 2015 with an agreement on Higher Education. The cohort of students that started the new joint MA at the University of Salzburg (winter semester 2017/18) will finish the studies on of the partner universities of the Western Balkans. They all get the Erasmus+ Credit Mobility Grant in the framework of KA 107.

The main result of the project is the Joint Master’s Programme in Political Science – Integration and Governance (PoSIG) which represents the ambitious cooperation of the EuroPS consortium. It is based on international standards and benchmarks of teaching political science in accordance to level 7 of the European Qualification Framework. The partners from the participating countries (Albania, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Slovenia) contribute with their specific academic profiles in Comparative Politics, European Integration, International Relations, Public Administration and Political Theory. The Western Balkan partners additionally deliver the specific expertise regarding political developments in the region. The curriculum offers five modules, from which students will need to select two in order to pursue their field of specialization.

The Master consists of 10 obligatory courses, one internship, 24 Credits according to ECTS of additional courses, and a Master’s thesis, with a total number of 120 ECTS credits.

Table 2: Modules and ECTS

Modules	ECTS
Obligatory Elective Modules (2 of 5)	36
Political Theory	(18)
Comparative Politics	(18)
Public Administration	(18)
International Relations	(18)
European Integration	(18)
Obligatory Courses	24
Internship	(6)
Course Methods I	(6)
Course Methods II	(6)
Master’s Thesis Seminar	(6)
Obligatory Elective Courses (1 of 2)	6
Advanced Methods in Political Science	(6)
Applied Course	(6)
Additional Courses	24
Master’s Thesis including Master’s Thesis Defence	30
Total	120



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An important aspect of the Master is international mobility, which is realized by the obligation to study at least at two and at most at four partner institutions.

2.2 Evaluation of communication, management and impact

In order to measure and evaluate the quality of communication, coordination/management and the impact of the project, a survey was developed and filled in by the participating partners three times: A first round took place in spring and summer 2016, the second one in winter 2016/17 and the last one at the end of the project in summer 2017. After the surveys, interviews and skype talks were held in order to complete the picture. The results of the first round were already described in detail in the mid-term report. The following description shows the development of evaluation results over time.

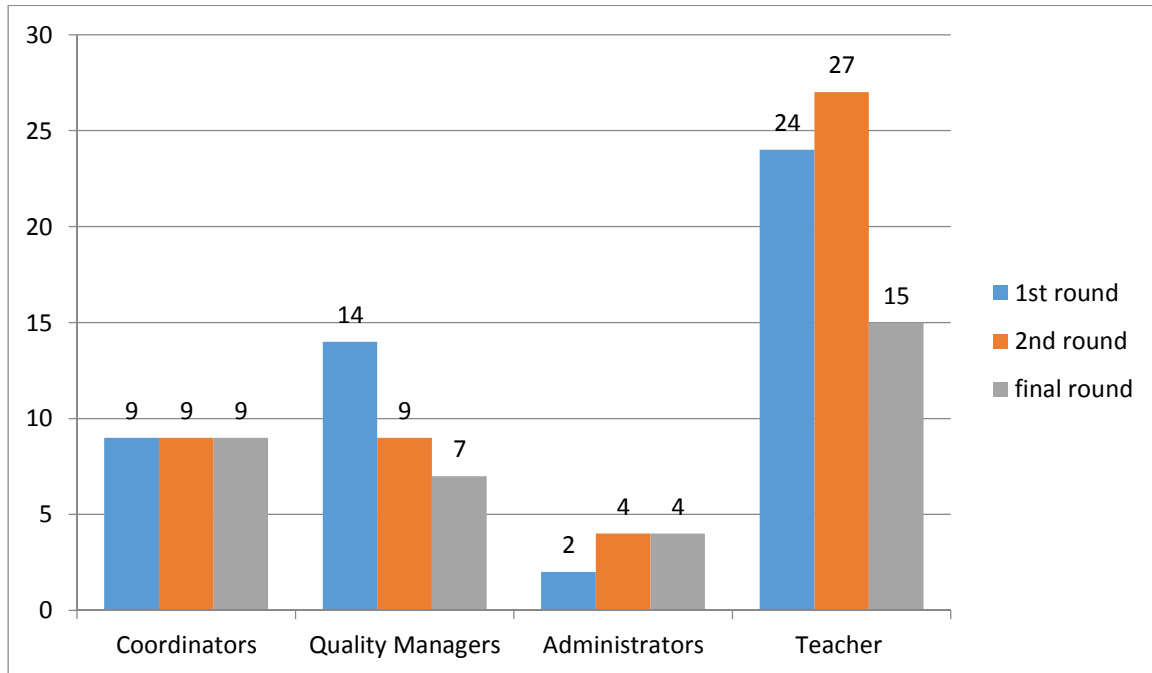
2.2.1 General description of questionnaires

In cooperation with the project management, EURODEMPA developed an online questionnaire (survey EuroPS Barometer) for the first time in March and April 2016 that was subdivided in questions about awareness and knowledge about the project, own role and roles of partners, satisfaction with communication, satisfaction with results, time and engagement, possible hurdles for the fulfilling of the tasks and needs for further support. In each round, an e-mail message was sent out to the coordinators, quality managers and administrators of the project in the different institutions and countries with a link to the online questionnaire. Moreover, the link and an information message were posted in the project platform under WP 11 at the same day. Some weeks later, the project management disseminated the information in other Work Packages so that all persons who have participated in different tasks and activities that had been performed by then got the invitation to participate and could be directly reached.

The statistical population of persons involved in the project was about 80, but changed over time due the part-time involvement of the teachers. Taken together, the participating persons could be categorized along their roles in the project as follows: 10 coordinators, 10 to 15 quality managers, 11 administrators and technicians and about 50 teachers. The online surveys were filled in by 50 persons in the first round, 49 persons in the second round and 35 persons in the final round.

First, the respondents were asked to specify their role in the project.

Graph 1: Roles of respondents in the three rounds



Graph 1 shows that 9 coordinators out of 10 filled in the surveys in all rounds. As in the first round, 14 respondents defined themselves as quality managers, there could have been a misinterpretation in the understanding of their own role. We could not clarify this point, but the results show that the awareness of the own role was relatively low in the first round as will be shown later. Two administrators responded to the first round of the survey, four in the second and third round. The largest discrepancies in the number of respondents were seen among teachers, with only 15 respondents in the last round. We suspect two reasons for the lower number of respondents in the last round: first, many of the participants had fulfilled their tasks and saw themselves released from their obligations in the project; second, the survey was to be filled in during the summer months, thus in a vacation time. Both reasons were confirmed by some of the participants in the aftermath.

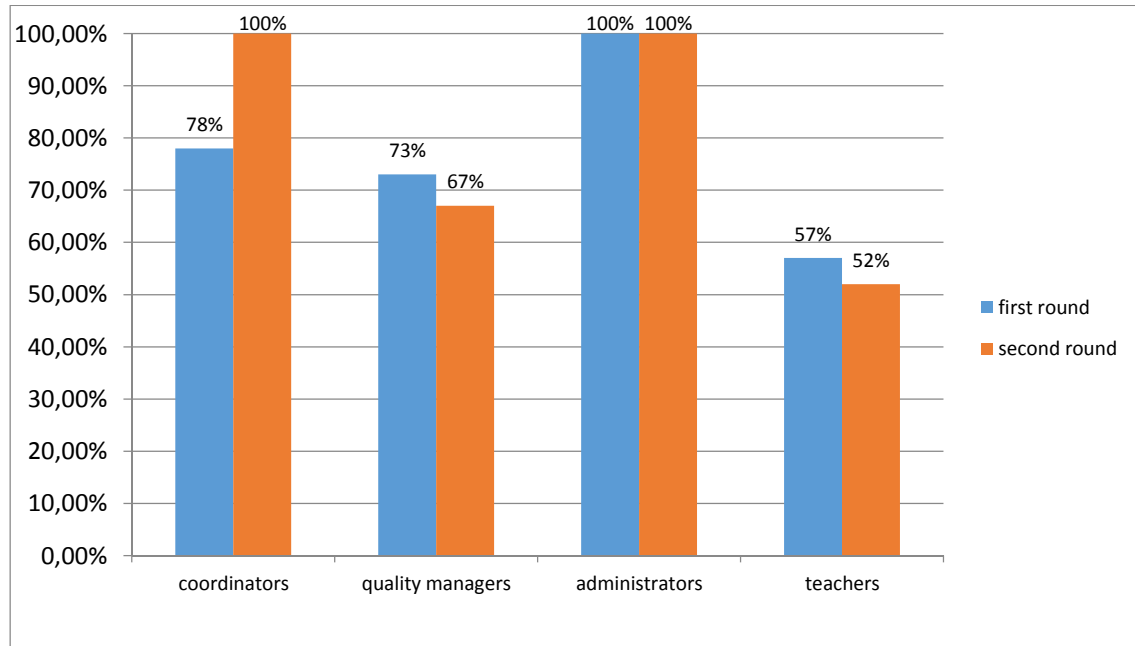
2.2.2 Awareness of different aspects of the project

The first part of the survey consisted of questions about awareness of different aspects on a scale from 1 (fully aware) to 5 (not at all aware).

Awareness of project objectives

The survey started with the question “Are you aware of the overall objectives of the project”. The answers show that the general awareness was very high among the respondents over the duration of the project.

Graph 2: Full awareness of objectives in respondent groups

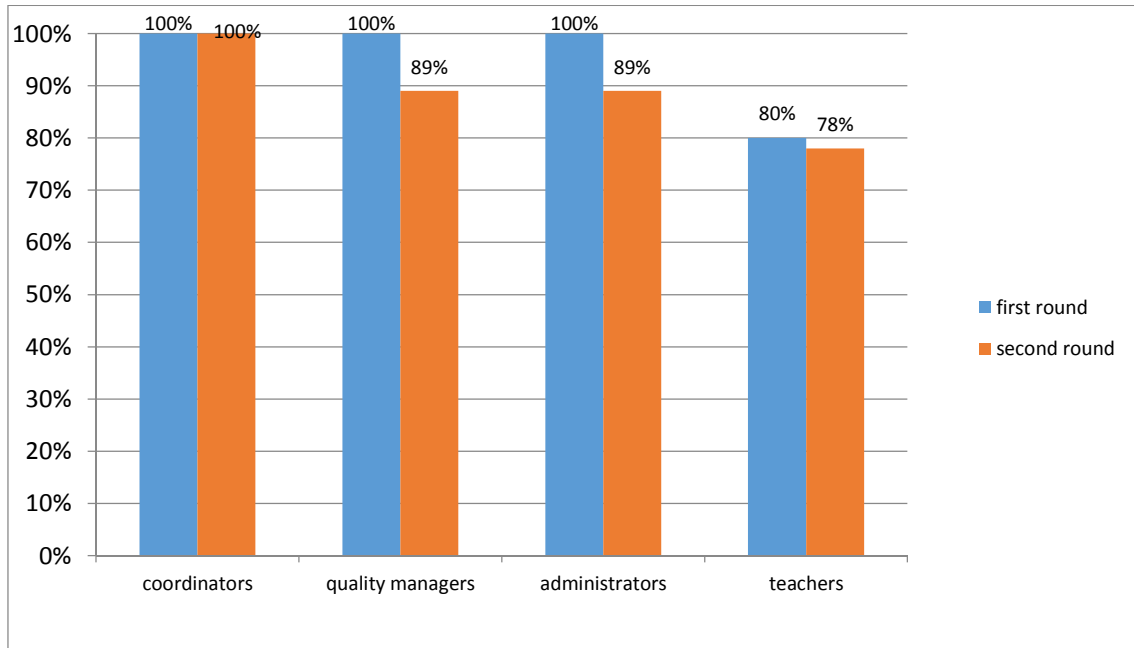


The highest awareness of the overall objectives of the project existed among coordinators and administrators. Graph 2 shows the development of full awareness between the start of the project and its midterm. Awareness among those who remained involved in all activities of the project developed on a high level to the 100 %. Quality managers who came in a little bit later in the project and teachers had weaker awareness than coordinators and administrators. Middle or lower awareness can be explained by a lack of personal engagement as interviews after the surveys have shown. Given that the project was presented in all institutions and by different means including an online platform with detailed information, the project management did its best to guarantee the awareness and to inform as concrete as possible. Moreover, statistics on the information platform show that teachers only rarely visited the platform and some have never done so. Thus, they could not reach the same level of information as those who regularly participated in the project activities and who regularly informed themselves about the progress.

Awareness of the work program and activities

Awareness of the work program and activities was lower than the general awareness, but still high.

Graph 3: Awareness of work program and activities in respondent groups

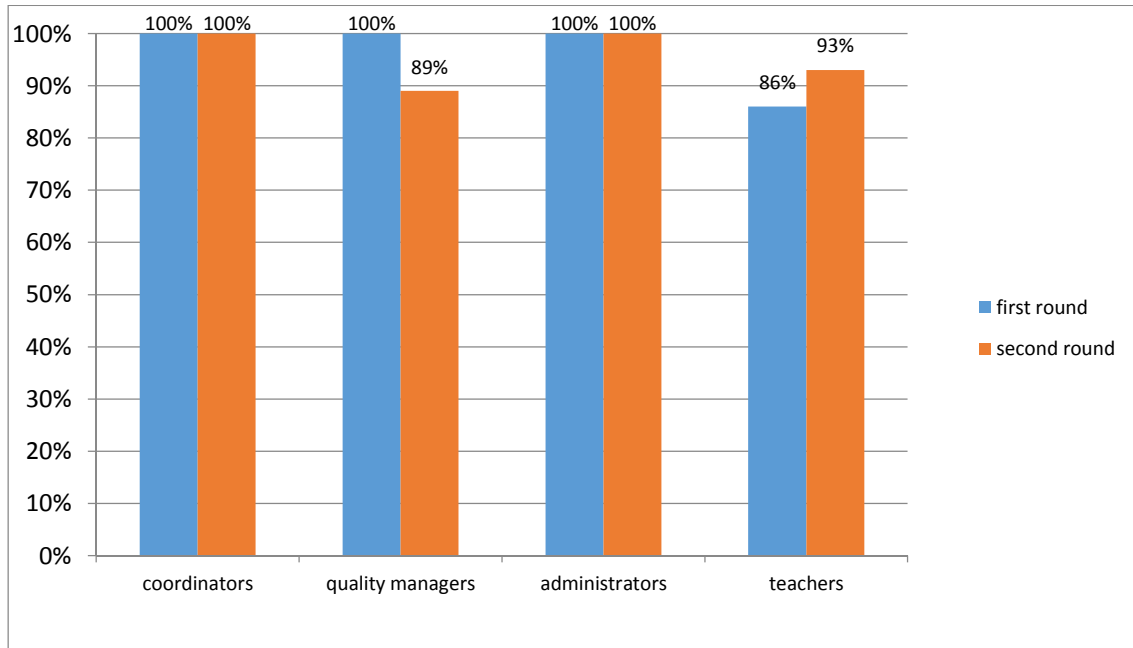


Awareness of work program and activities was very high among the coordinators. They were fully aware of both. Interestingly, among administrators and quality managers, the awareness of the concrete work program diminished a little bit between the first and the second round, but was still very high. Although the question was not asked in the final round, we know from interviews that in the mid-term, when the highest level of complexity during the project was reached, the awareness about all steps was lowest. Again, the difference between the groups is little surprising taken into account that quality managers and teachers were not that much involved in the general project activities as other groups.

Awareness of specific own and others’ roles

In a further question, participants were asked about their awareness of their own role and the roles of other project members (“Are you aware of your specific role, responsibilities and tasks?”). The answers show a high level of awareness concerning the own role.

Graph 4: Awareness of own specific roles in the project in respondents' groups



The awareness of the specific roles was very high among all groups, but a little lower among teachers and quality managers. While the latter communicated a fewer awareness in the second round, teachers were more aware than before. This can have to do with different stages of involvement and complexity. Information from the project management was regularly given in several occasions and was available on the platform. After the midterm report, the project management started an even stronger initiative of information which was undoubtedly helpful and important for the awareness of the role.

Further questions were the awareness of others' roles in the project, which was generally on a lower level. To sum up, the awareness about objective and roles was very high among coordinators and administrators, thus the main actors, during the whole project and a little bit weakened in the midterm among quality managers due to the complexity. Teachers declared high awareness concerning their own role, which improved from the first to the second round of the survey. The awareness of anything that could prevent project participants from fulfilling their tasks was asked in the following question: "Are you aware of anything that could prevent you from fulfilling the tasks, outputs assigned to you or your institution?" Answers were disperse, but on an average level of 1.98 on a five point scale in the second round. This was an improvement vis-à-vis the first round of 0.12 points.

Picture 1: Answers and means in respect to awareness in the second round

	fully aware (1)		2. Spalte (2)		3. Spalte (3)		4. Spalte (4)		not at all (5)		don't know (6)			
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Ø	±
the overall objectives o...	31x	65,96	13x	27,66	2x	4,26	1x	2,13	-	-	-	-	1,43	0,68
the work programme and..	20x	42,55	20x	42,55	4x	8,51	3x	6,38	-	-	-	-	1,79	0,86
your specific role, respo...	34x	72,34	10x	21,28	2x	4,26	-	-	1x	2,13	-	-	1,38	0,77
all other project partner...	14x	29,79	16x	34,04	11x	23,40	3x	6,38	3x	6,38	-	-	2,26	1,15
anything that could prev...	18x	38,30	16x	34,04	7x	14,89	1x	2,13	2x	4,26	3x	6,38	2,19	1,42
the reporting mechanism..	17x	56,67	4x	13,33	2x	6,67	-	-	-	-	7x	23,33	2,43	2,08
your responsibilities con...	17x	70,83	-	-	2x	8,33	-	-	-	-	5x	20,83	2,21	2,06

Picture 1 shows that the mean in the answer was relatively good (1=fully aware; 5=not at all aware) with the worst results for the awareness of the reporting mechanisms (2.43), the responsibilities concerning documentation responsibilities and other partners roles.

Comments

Comments about awareness are summarized here out of the second round:

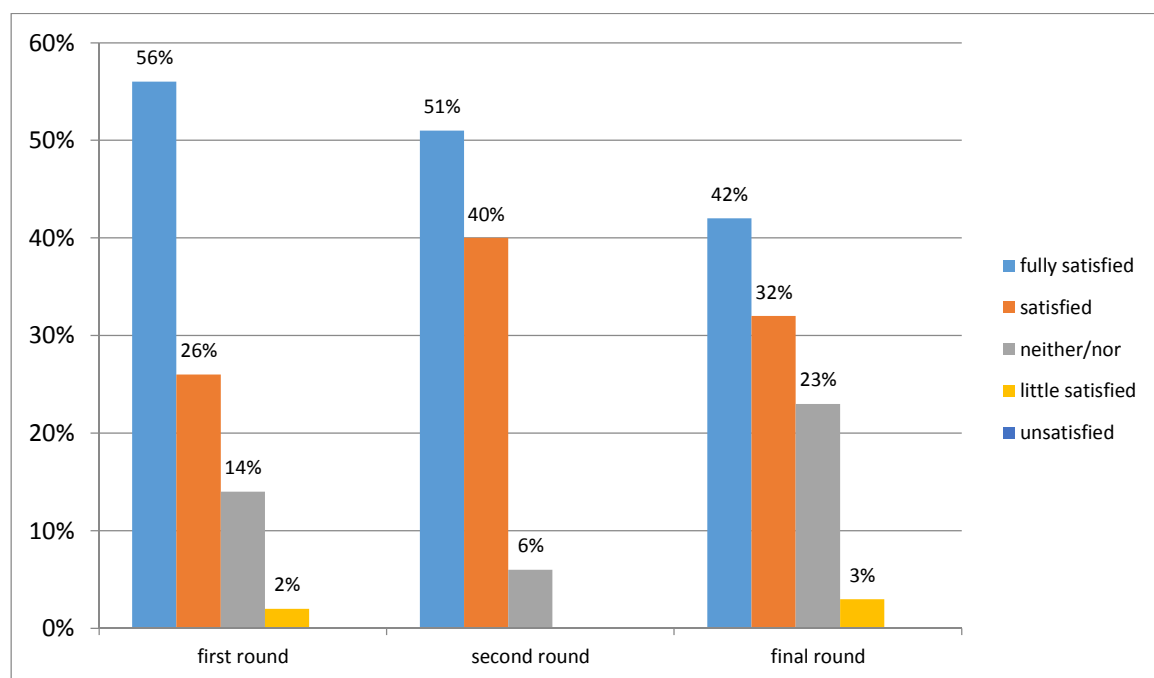
- * *project description and contracts clear, at meetings we can clarify every detail of required activities.*
- * *Not much communication on the overall project beyond coordinators.*
- * *Clearer assignment of responsibilities and clearer communication of objectives and long-term expectations for individual teachers.*
- * *Follow up emails by project leader are useful to be better organized*
- * *The vice general coordinator should give responses at a given time as it is specified in the agreement but so far the we did not receive any response.*
- * *We could not anticipate the difficulties that would prevent our institution to participate to the final phase, joint degree. These difficulties arose from internal problems of our institution, not from the project management.*
- * *perfect prepared by the coordinator*

The comments brought up different aspects and critical remarks. Some of them were addressed to the project management, mainly about the clarity of roles and objectives. The project management tried to react to these remarks with the publication of an organigram on the platform and other information channels like meetings or face-to-face dialogue.

2.2.3 Satisfaction with different aspects of the project

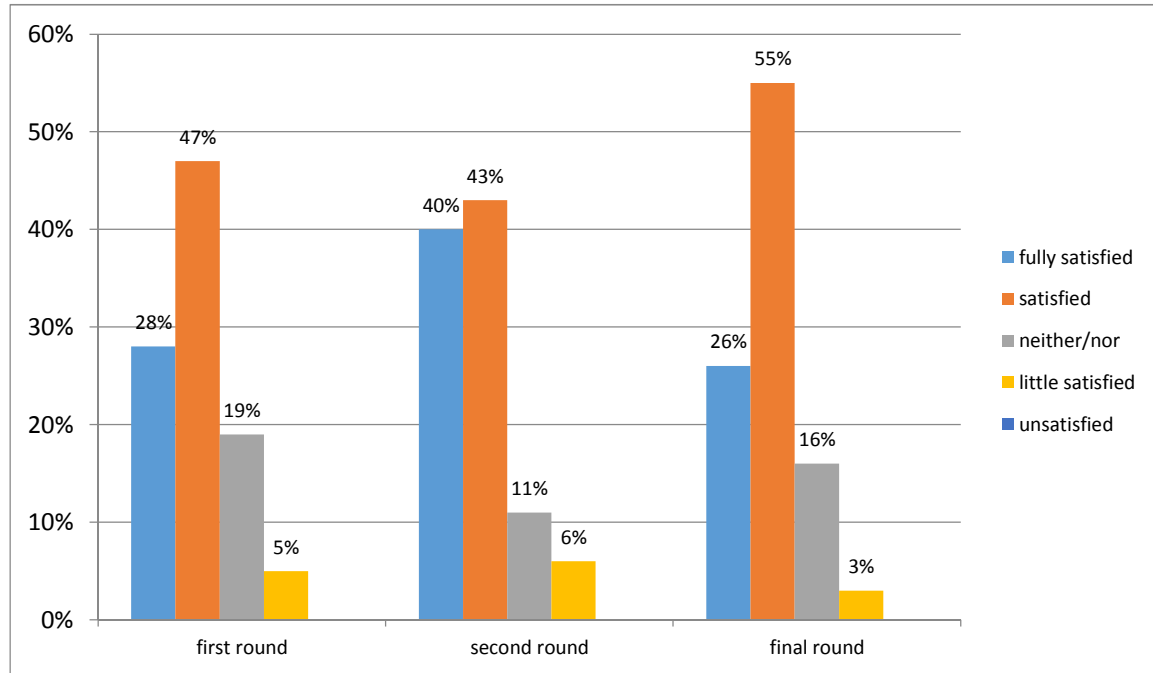
The second part of the survey was dedicated to the satisfaction with different aspects in the project: the possibilities to bring in own expertise, the overall project management and the project management at the different institutions.

Graph 5: Satisfaction with the possibility to bring in own expertise



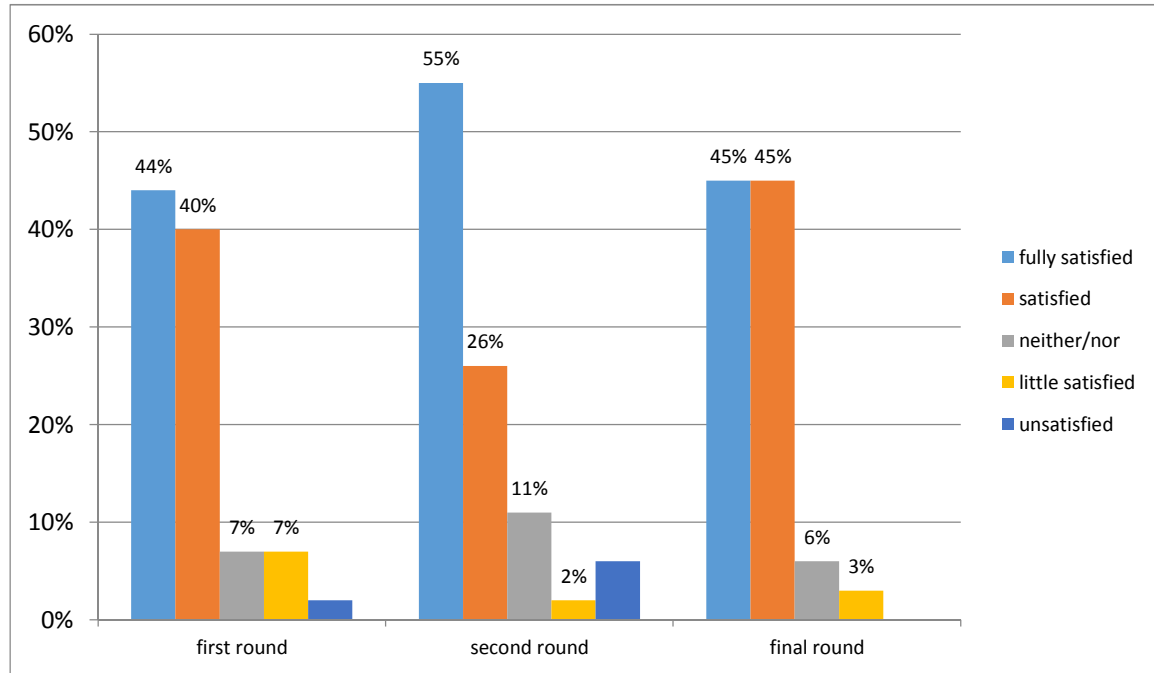
The satisfaction with the possibility to bring in own expertise changed over time. At the beginning and still in the second round, more than the half of the respondents was fully satisfied. Taken together those who were fully satisfied or satisfied, we reach 82 % in the first round and 91 % in the second round, but only 74 % in the final round of the survey. Split up into respondent groups, coordinators' satisfaction diminished clearly from the first to the final round. Among quality managers, the highest satisfaction was reached in the second round (77% fully satisfied) when they played a major role in the development of QM tools. In the last round, their satisfaction fell clearly to 43 % declaring full satisfaction. Teachers remained on a similar level during the project, and administrators were very satisfied especially in the second and the final round. We can explain a part of this development again with the involvement during different project steps and activities, but obviously the participatory aspect became weaker over time. Still, the general satisfaction is clearly in a positive range with more than two third fully satisfied or satisfied also in the last round. The positive perception of participatory possibilities among administrators shows that equivalence in administration could be improved through many meetings and interventions.

Graph 6: Satisfaction with the overall project management



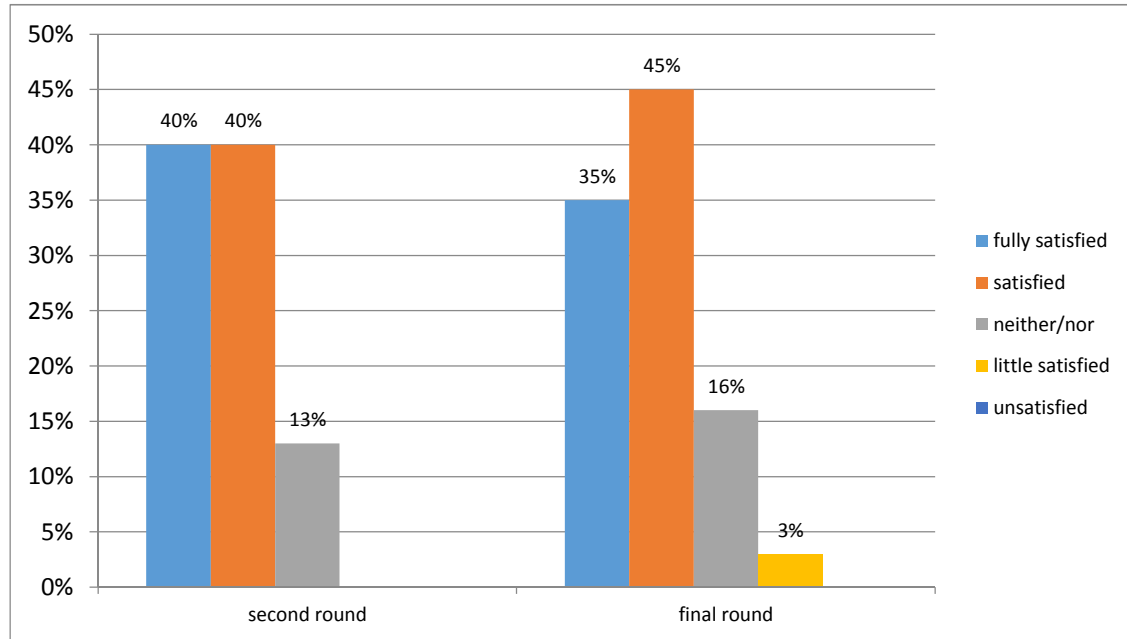
As graph 6 shows, the satisfaction with the overall project management (full satisfaction or satisfaction) reached 73 % in the first round, 83 % in the second round and 81 % in the final round, thus very high scores in general. Nevertheless, we can remark that a peak was reached in the second round with less satisfaction at the beginning and the end of the project. Thus, while the performance of the overall project management was positively perceived in general, the start and the end phase were seen more critically. This might have to do with needs and requirements in project procedures and documentation. It is possible that in the final phase, a stricter and more hierarchic style was necessary in order to reach the goals, to get the accreditation and to deliver the documents for the payment procedures. However, satisfaction with the overall project management improved from the first to the final round where it reached almost 90 %, while quality managers and administrators were less satisfied at in the end phase. The comments at the end of this chapter stress that there were some very concrete problems that can explain these changes in satisfaction.

Graph 7: Satisfaction with the project management at the own institution



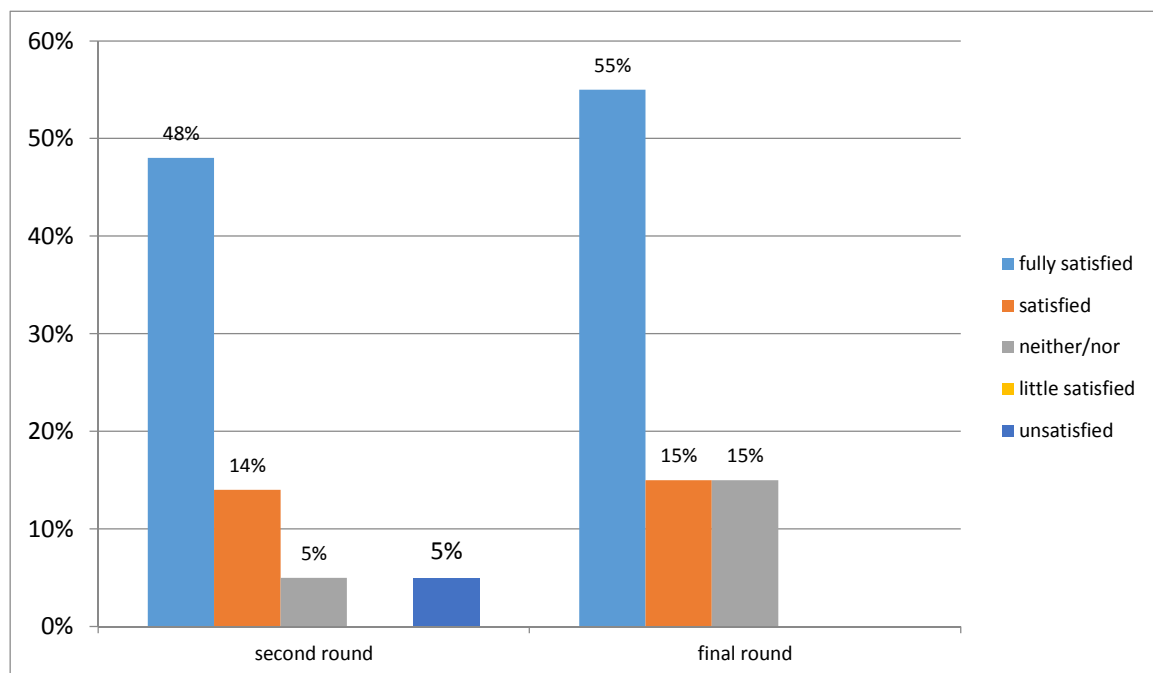
Graph 7 shows that the satisfaction with the project management at the own institution improved over time and reached a peak with 90 % at the end of the project. This is a very positive development that shows that equivalence of methods and administration obviously improved and that coordinators at the institutions at the Western Balkans and the Western European institutions performed better than at the beginning of the project. The project undoubtedly strengthened the expertise and the knowledge of institutional coordinators in dealing with such kind of joint degrees.

Graph 8: Satisfaction with the own performance



The satisfaction with the own performance was only asked in the second and the final round. Results show that this satisfaction was high among most respondents, but more critical in the final round.

Graph 9: Satisfaction with the financial reporting of the own institution



Satisfaction with the own institutions' financial reporting improved clearly from the second to the final round (not asked in the first round), which shows that a learning process obviously took place on the different levels of administration.

Picture 3: Answers and means in respect to satisfaction with different aspects of the project

	fully satisfied		2. Spalte		3. Spalte		4. Spalte		not at all satisfied		don't know		Ø	±
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)								
the possibilites to bring ...	Σ 13x	% 41,94	Σ 10x	% 32,26	Σ 7x	% 22,58	Σ 1x	% 3,23	-	-	-	-	1,87	0,88
the overall project mana..	Σ 8x	% 25,81	Σ 17x	% 54,84	Σ 5x	% 16,13	Σ 1x	% 3,23	-	-	-	-	1,97	0,75
the project managemen...	Σ 14x	% 45,16	Σ 14x	% 45,16	Σ 2x	% 6,45	Σ 1x	% 3,23	-	-	-	-	1,68	0,75
your own performance a...	Σ 11x	% 35,48	Σ 14x	% 45,16	Σ 5x	% 16,13	Σ 1x	% 3,23	-	-	-	-	1,87	0,81
the financial reporting o...	Σ 11x	% 55,00	Σ 3x	% 15,00	Σ 3x	% 15,00	-	-	-	-	Σ 3x	% 15,00	2,20	1,79

Picture 3 underlines the results mentioned above (1=fully satisfied; 5=not at all satisfied).

Comments

In the comments, respondents highlight positive general outcome and management of the project, but also mention bureaucratic aspects as problematic, mainly in respect to payment rules:

** “During the project work it became visible how complex a joint MA program is and related to that the project was excellent in its support of expertise and the support to solve institutional problems connected to the implementation of a new curriculum and new models of international collaboration”*

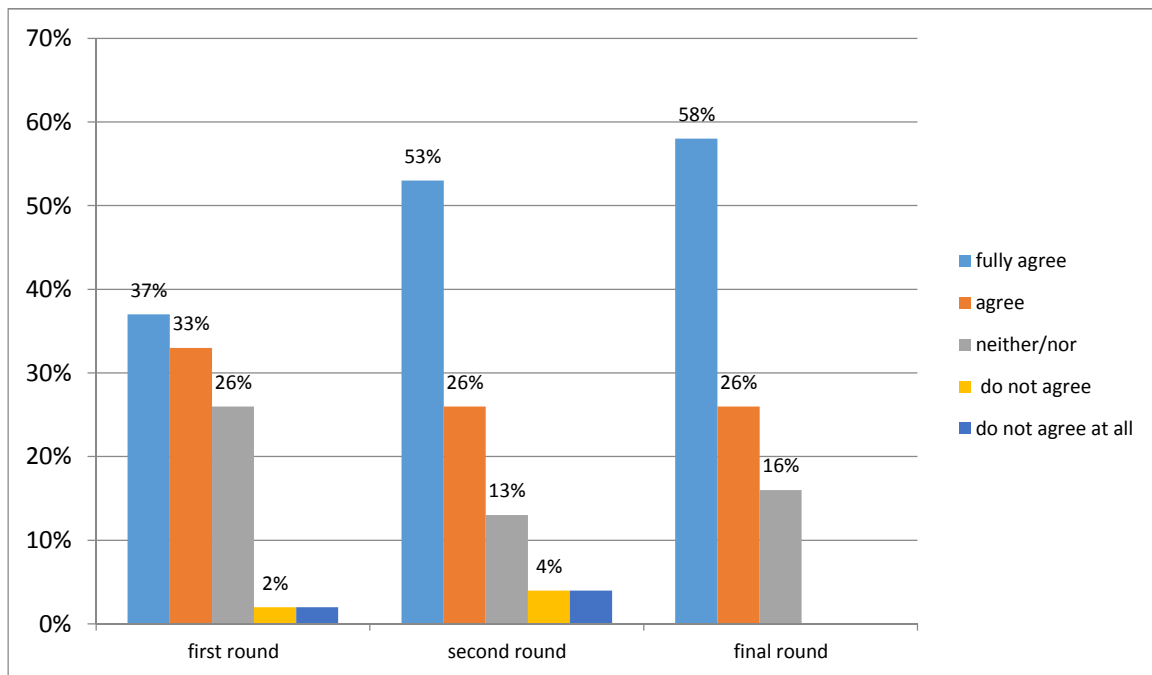
** “There are long delays with the payments. They should be done more often, in smaller periods of time.*

** “Similar to the first year and with much better efforts, the management of the project has improved. Activities have been streamlined and prepared on due course, stakeholders involved, partner universities staff and management involvement, support has been provided for all management issues.”*

2.2.4 Communication

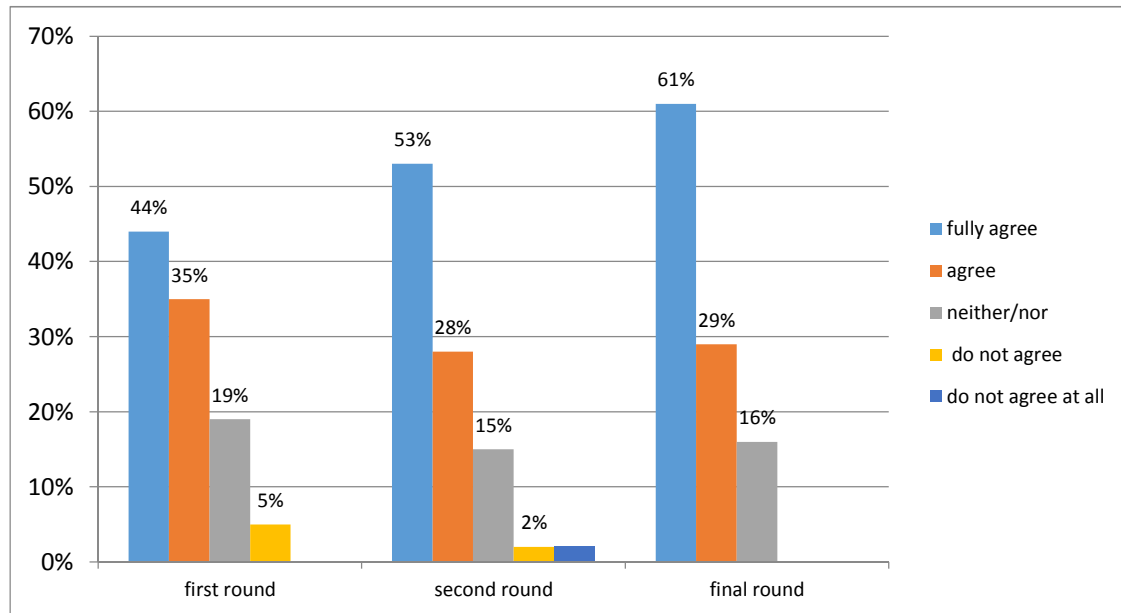
To get a clearer picture of reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with different aspects of the project, the survey included a section on communication in order to analyze clarity, comprehensiveness and responsiveness.

Graph 10: Clear communication (“The communication in the project is clear”)



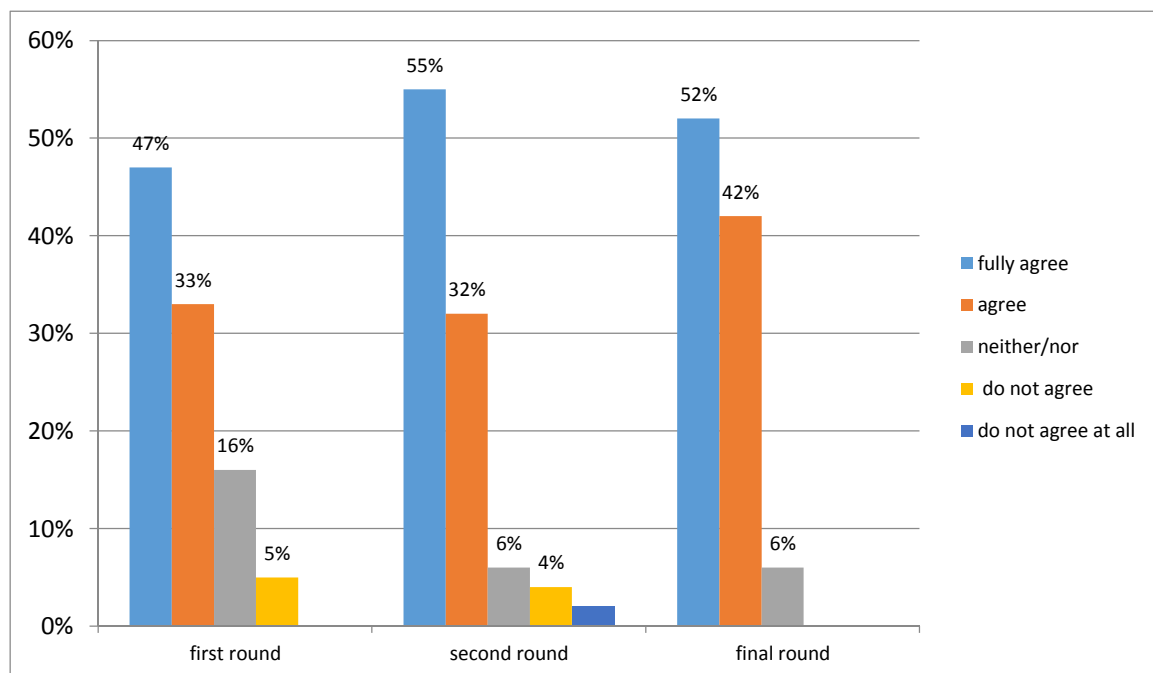
Although the general satisfaction with the overall project management fell a little bit in the last phase of the project, this is not reflected in the perception of clarity of communication. On the contrary, communication is perceived as much clearer at the end than at the beginning.

Graph 11: Comprehensive communication (“The communication in the project is comprehensive”)



A similar picture emerges in the question of comprehensiveness. Again, the communication improves clearly from the first to the last round where 90 % of the respondents perceived the communication as comprehensive.

Graph 12: Responsiveness of communication (“The communication is responsive”)



Graph 12 shows that also the responsiveness of communication improved over time. In the end phase of the project, 94 % agreed with the statement that communication was responsive. In the comments to this section, some respondents mention their high respect for the communicative performance of the project coordinator and the complexity of the development of such a MA with so many partners.

Picture 4: Answers and means in respect to the perception of the internal communication

The project's internal communication was...

Anzahl Teilnehmer: 31

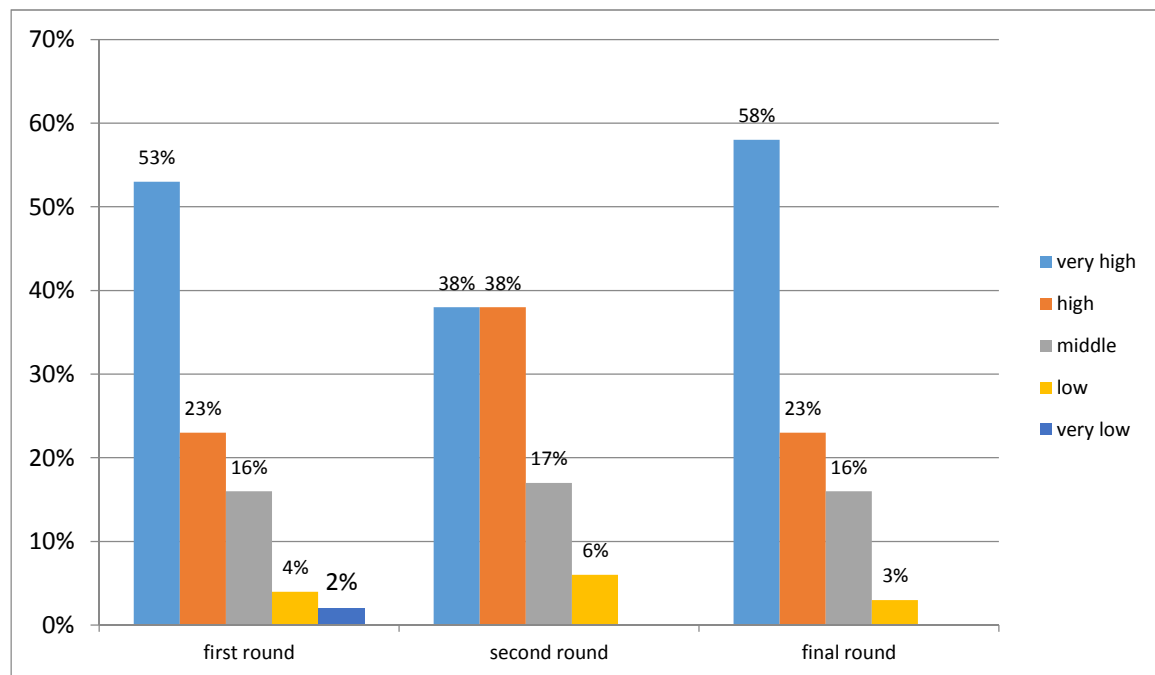
	fully agree (1)		2. Spalte (2)		3. Spalte (3)		4. Spalte (4)		do not agree at all (5)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
clear	18x	58,06	8x	25,81	5x	16,13	-	-	-	-	1,58	0,76
comprehensive	19x	61,29	9x	29,03	3x	9,68	-	-	-	-	1,48	0,68
responsive	16x	51,61	13x	41,94	2x	6,45	-	-	-	-	1,55	0,62

Picture 4 shows that the communication in the final round of the surveys was perceived as very clear, comprehensive and responsive. The means are all around 1.50 (1=fully agree; 5=do not agree at all).

2.2.5 Impact of the project

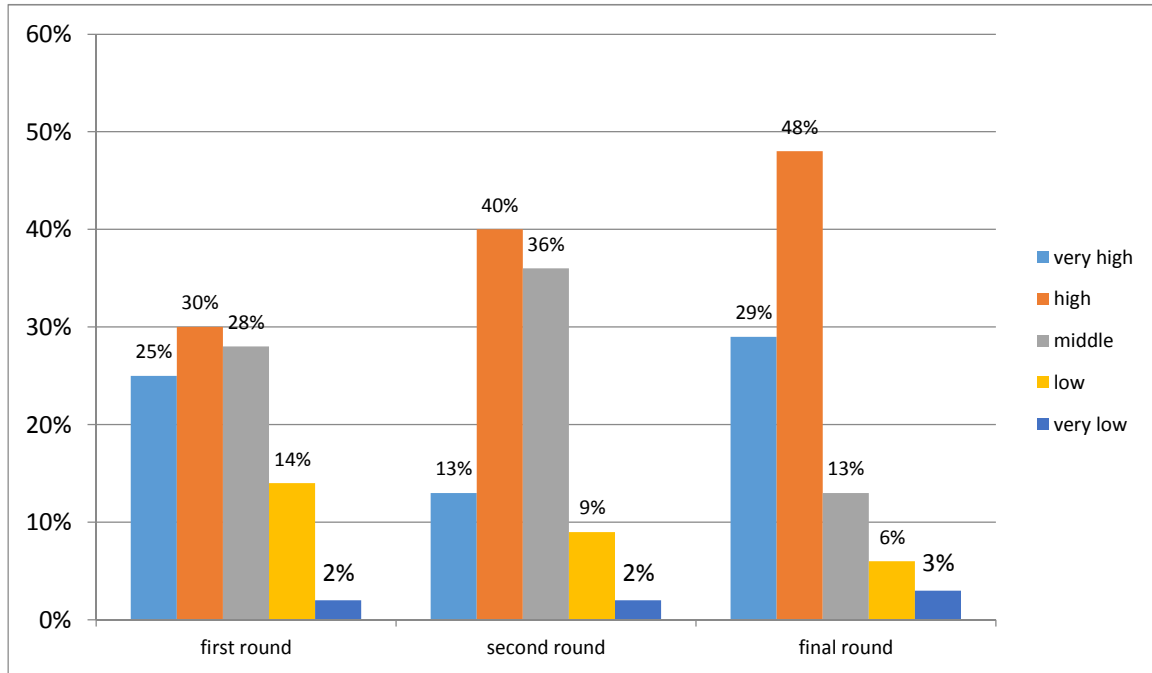
In the next section of the surveys, respondents were asked to evaluate the estimated impact of the project in different contexts.

Graph 13: Assessment of project impact on own organization



The project's impact on the own organization was valued highest in the final round with 58 % very high. Taken the answers "very high" and "high" together, we reach 76 % in the first, 76 % in the second and 81 % in the final round. This is not surprising since the introduction of a new MA obviously influences an organization and its procedures. Thus, with the successful accreditation of the MA, the impact had to be considerable. However, interviews suggest that the impact went further, so that not only a Europeanization of concrete procedures and programs took place but also a Europeanization in the minds or cultures of the institutions involved.

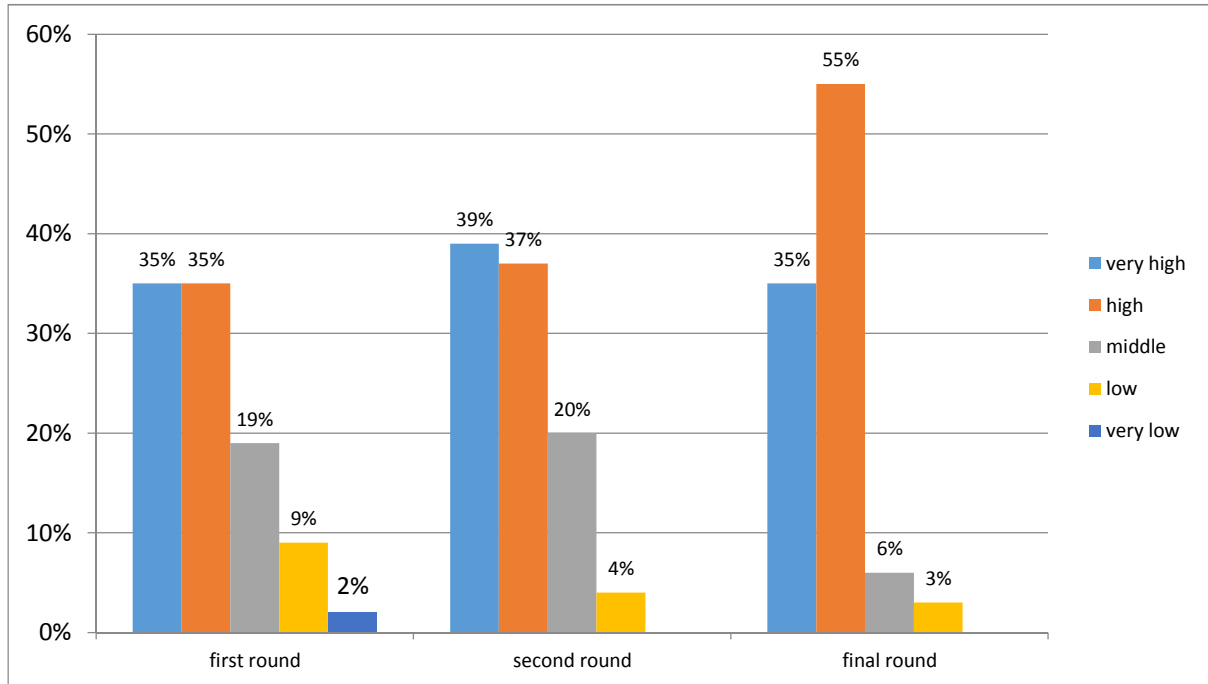
Graph 14: Assessment of project impact on your national stakeholder



The perception of the impact on national stakeholders has improved clearly from the first to the last round. Graph 14 shows that while only 55 % in the first and 53 % in the second round assessed the impact as high or very high, there was a strong such perception with 77 % in the final round. Obviously, in the end phase of the project the impacts on national stakeholders and their involvement could be strengthened a lot.

Some very important events and initiatives for dissemination took place during the project and all the participants of course had their own networks and integration into European networks where the project and the study program were presented, disseminated and promoted. If we take into account that far more than 50 persons, many of them researchers, lecturers and experts of high profile, participated in this project and – during the running time – continued their professional exchanges with colleagues not only from Europe but from all over the academic world, the impact can hardly be summarized in a few numbers. It is plausible that hundreds of political scientists, politicians, potential students or other stakeholders have heard from this initiative in the last months and years.

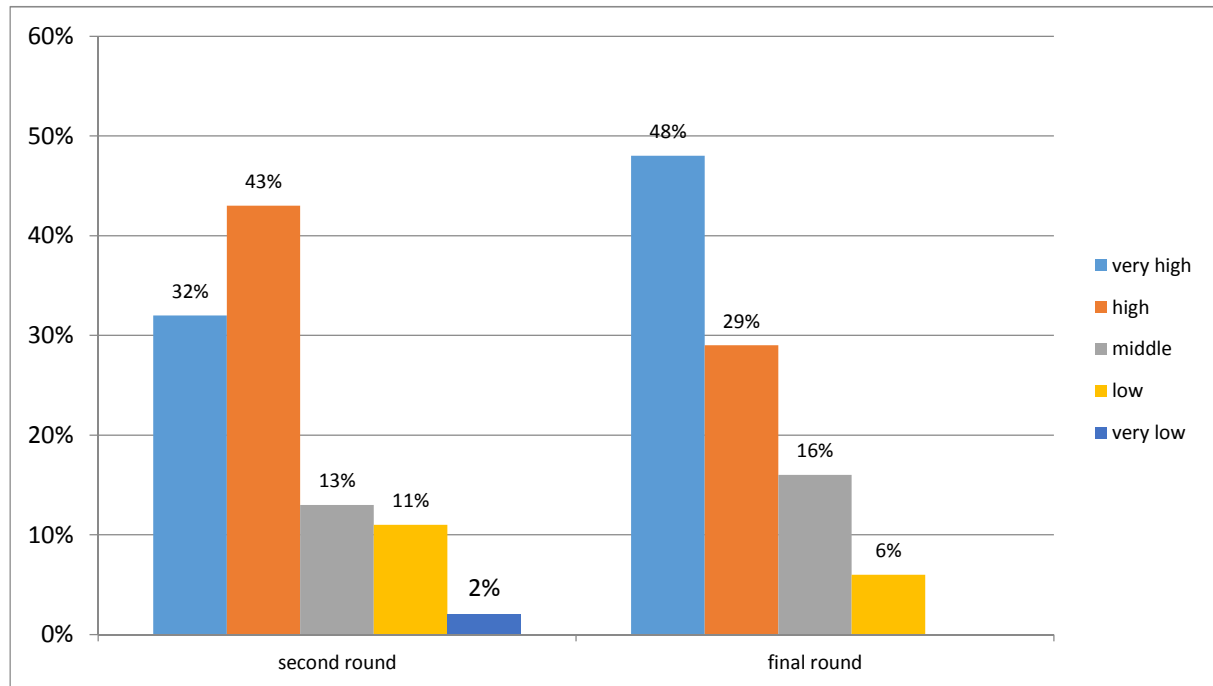
Graph 15: Assessment of Project impact on the region of Western Balkans



Graph 15 shows that also the assessment of the impact on the region of the Western Balkans improved considerably, although not among the answers “very high”, but clearly among those who perceived a high impact. Already in the first round, 70 % assessed it as very high or high, 76 % in the second round and 90 % in the final round.

Again, we can expect that many people and stakeholders in the region heard about the project and got information through different channels. The cooperation between institutions from Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia/Herzegovina and Macedonia as well as concrete events like Bridges within Europe could undoubtedly contribute to a high impact and interest in the region and beyond.

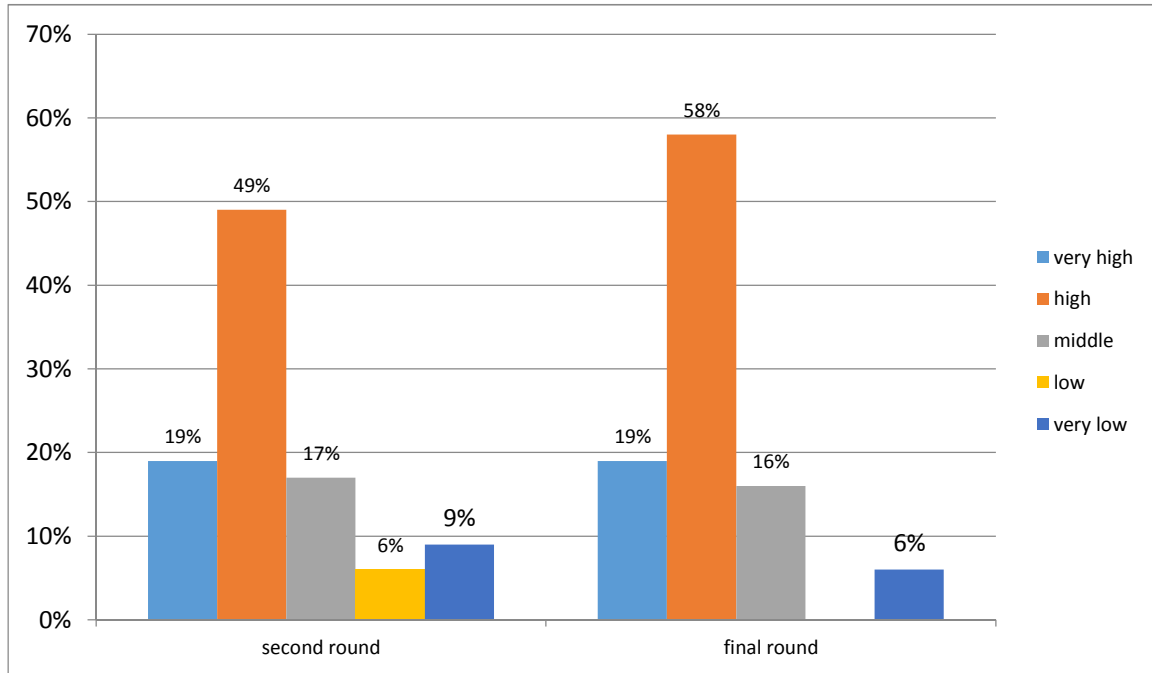
Graph 16: Assessment of project impact on the European dimension of own institution



The impact of the project on the European dimension of the own institution was perceived as high as well among most respondents (not asked in the first round). This shows that the equivalence of methodology and administration was improved and Europeanized throughout the project. With 75 % in the second round and 77 % in the final round, the impact is assessed as high or very high by a clear majority of the participants. Since the accreditation of the explicitly European degree, this result is not surprising.

It is very important to mention at this point, that Europeanization is not a one-way-road. As much as the institutions at the Western Balkans benefitted from their participation and exchange with Western European institutions, as much is this true vice versa. Since many of the participating researchers, lecturers, teachers, coordinators, quality managers and administrators from the institutions of the WB are excellent experts in their fields they could also offer their experiences and expertise to the institutions of Western Europe. It is the exchange of knowhow and experiences that makes the project successful as a European project.

Graph 17: Assessment of project impact on the role of individuals in the European community



A strong improvement can also be noticed in the perception of the impact on the role of individual participants in the European community. The project undoubtedly strengthened the participants in this respect as Graph 17 shows. 67 % assessed a high or very high impact already in the second round, but this score could be improved to 77% in the final round.

Picture 5: Answers and means in respect to the assessment of impact (final survey round)

	very high (1)		2. Spalte (2)		3. Spalte (3)		4. Spalte (4)		none at all (5)		Ø	±
	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%	Σ	%		
your organisation?	18x	58,06	7x	22,58	5x	16,13	1x	3,23	-	-	1,65	0,88
your national stakeholders?	9x	29,03	15x	48,39	4x	12,90	2x	6,45	1x	3,23	2,06	1,00
the region of Western Balk...	11x	35,48	17x	54,84	2x	6,45	1x	3,23	-	-	1,77	0,72
your personal role in your ...	12x	38,71	11x	35,48	6x	19,35	-	-	2x	6,45	2,00	1,10
the European Dimension at...	15x	48,39	9x	29,03	5x	16,13	2x	6,45	-	-	1,81	0,95
your role in the European c..	6x	19,35	18x	58,06	5x	16,13	-	-	2x	6,45	2,16	0,97

Picture 5 shows that the lowest impact of the project was seen for the own personal role in Europe and in the own institution with a mean of 2.51 and 2.00. Also, the impact on the national stakeholders is

lower than other aspects with 2.06. But still, this perception is clearly in a positive range. Only two persons think that there is no or only little impact in these fields. Among the coordinators who have the best overview of initiatives, contacts and networks within the project, are all much more optimistic and believe that the impact is high in all the relevant aspects. This is also reflected in the comments.

Comments

Several positive comments were made about the high impact of the project:

“WB universities are benefitting significantly of the resources namely in terms of expertise both in terms of construction and management of new curricula and in terms of identifying and articulating teaching contents in the various sub-disciplines of political science. Returns for my institution are less relevant since WB are not identified as a priority in the institutional strategy of internationalization and since the very strict top-down regulation at the national level of university curricula in Italy doesn't leave much space for innovation and experimentation. Certainly engaging itself in a project of CB in the area of WB may increase the awareness of the significance of intensifying interinstitutional cooperation with HE institutions in the area.”

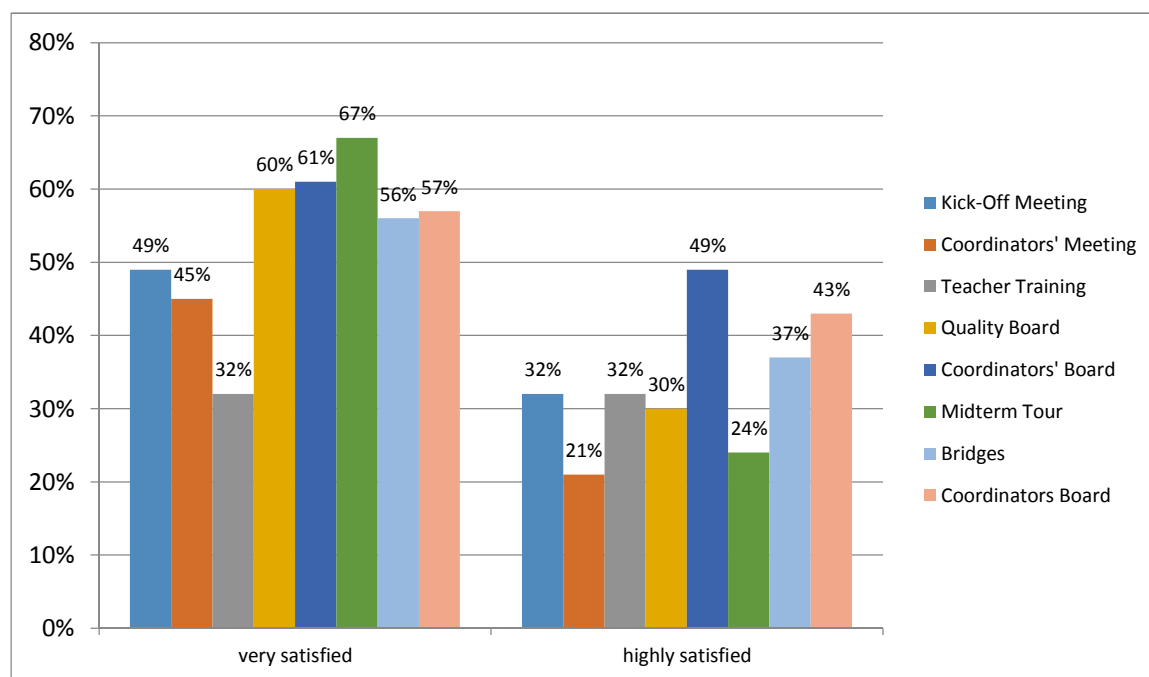
“The project produced a new young community of teachers and researchers in Political Science at the Western Balkans and a new visibility of the subject. It supported the self-assurance of the discipline.”

“Wonderful collaboration platform with neighborhood at Western Balkans and in the European networks, Salzburg is opening for us.”

2.2.6 Satisfaction with events

The survey also included an evaluation of some events that have taken place in the project.

Graph 19: Satisfaction with events

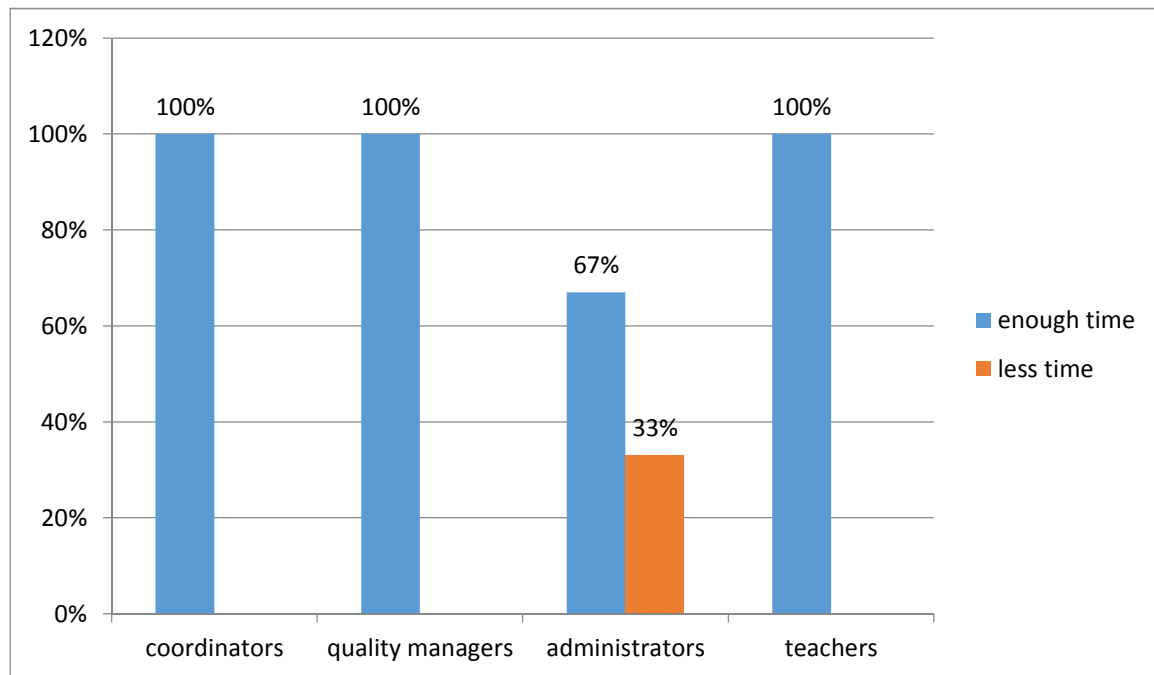


Satisfaction with the project events was very high in almost all cases. Teacher trainings reached the lowest values with only 64 % highly satisfied or satisfied. Also the first coordinators' meeting was not that well perceived with 66 % satisfaction (highly satisfied or satisfied). The kick-off meeting reached 81 % of satisfaction, the Quality Board 90 %, the midterm tour of the project coordinator 91 %, the event Bridges Within Europe 93 % and the two coordinators' Boards 100 % of satisfaction among the participants.

2.2.7 Engagement of project participants

The engagement of project participants was measured by the time spent so far and the impression to have enough time. A corresponding question in the survey was: "How much time have you spent on the project?" Most respondent groups have spent as much time on the project as required. This is true for 55 % of all respondents. But this also means that almost the half has spent more or much more time than required: 16 % much more time than required and 29 % a bit more than required. None of the respondents has spent less time than required. The groups that clearly spent more time than required were administrators and mainly coordinators. Also some quality managers spent much more than required. Among teachers, most spent as much time as required.

Graph 20: Amount of time (Did you have enough time for the tasks assigned to you in the project?)

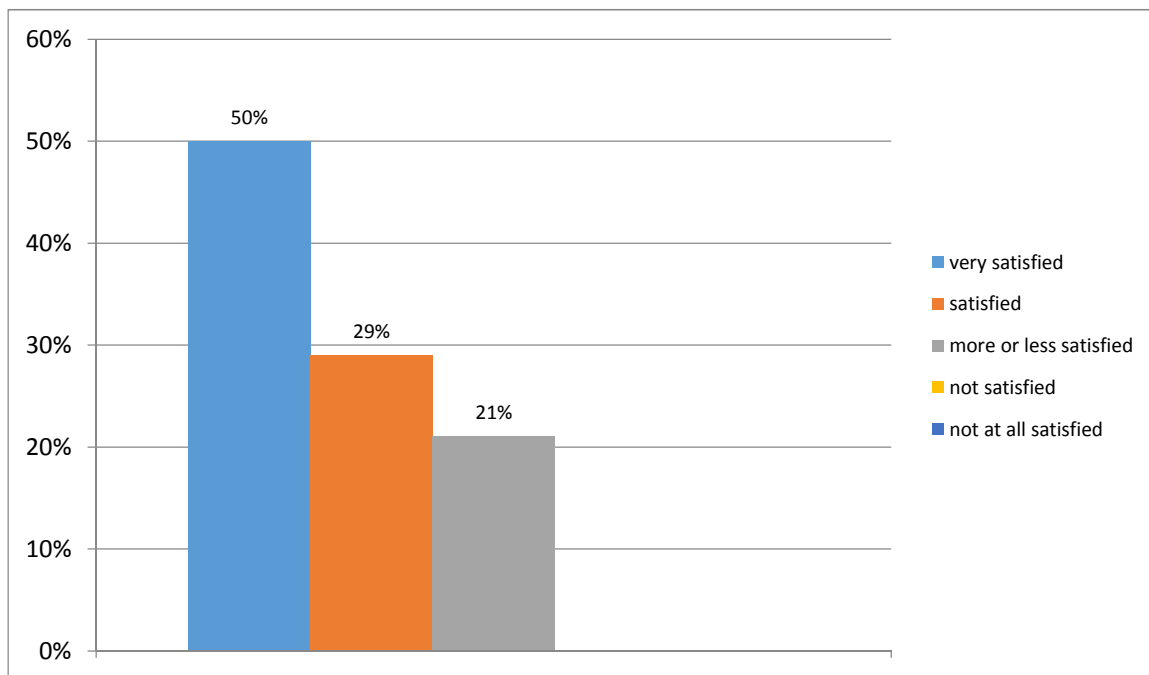


It is interesting to see that although some groups have spent more time on the project than required, they had enough time for the tasks assigned to them. This seems to be contradictory at first sight. We can, however, find the solution in such tasks and activities that were not assigned directly to the specific groups in the project plan, thus dealing with uncertainties and unexpected situations. It is clear that documentation and the fulfillment of requirements in respect to payment rules and administration have influenced the time management. On the other hand, the results show that the working and time schedule of the proposal came close to reality, which is due to a very well structured and planned project management.

2.2.8 Satisfaction with the general results of the project

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to give information about their satisfaction with the overall results of the project.

Graph 21: Satisfaction with general results



Graph 21 shows that 50 % of the participants were very satisfied with the general results of the project. Further 29 % were satisfied and 21 % more or less satisfied. No one was not or not at all satisfied. Among the coordinators, 88 % were very satisfied. Only one person was satisfied. The quality managers were more critical with only 33 % very satisfied, 33 % satisfied and 33 % more or less satisfied. All the administrators were very satisfied. Among teachers, only 25 % were very satisfied, 42 % satisfied and 33 % in the middle field of satisfaction.

At the end, the respondents were asked to describe their main impressions in a few words. These are the answers of coordinators.

“A new, selfassure generation of teachers in Political Science at Western Balkans became visible and will continue with cooperation also after the project. Partner not using the opportunities of the project have lost reputation.”

“Very useful in bringing different thoughts and approaches together.”

“This has been a very important project for our institution to introduce for the first time a joint degree accredited at EU level, however challenges remain with the local implementation of the Yerevan Agreement.”

“working together, bringing different thoughts together and sharing information.”

The quality managers gave the following statements:

“Very good coordinator with a very serious and commendable approach.”

“Networking”

“Exchange of different experiences from other institutions, in the quality management of study programs.”

“It comes in the proper time that the University of Tirana can offer a Master course in English language and compatible with the EU standards.”

There were no comments from the administrators or teachers in this section. Taken together, the general impression was very good. In none of the comments, a general critique was expressed, but there were some minor concrete points of dissatisfaction.

2.2.9 Interviews with coordinators

In order to complete the picture that could be drawn out of the surveys and the meetings with the project management, EURODEMPA also carried out interviews and exchanged e-mails with project participants from different institutions at several occasions. The feedback was informative and completes the positive picture. They can be summarized as follows:

- Satisfaction with the overall project results was very high among most partners. They are happy and proud to have participated and that accreditation was successful.
- The decentralized and participatory governance approach of the project management was highly appreciated, especially in the preparation phase of the project.
- The responsiveness of the coordinator was highlighted in several statements, although sometimes combined with the remark that communication partly was too complicated and diffuse.
- Main problems were caused by the bureaucratic rules of payment. Although this could be handled after the first phase, in some cases dissatisfaction remained with the long delays in payment.
- The impact of the project was seen as very important to most partners. They expect that the real impact will only be seen in the next years and with first students finishing their MA. .
- The project was perceived as highly relevant for the individual development of the participants as well as for the broader idea of Europeanization.
- Institutions and individuals learned a lot during the project. Europeanization in terms of administrative procedures and the quality of teaching was successful and will even be strengthened in the next years when the program runs.

Conclusion

As the results of the evaluation show, the project was very successful and caused high general satisfaction among the participants.

- Respondents were particularly satisfied with the overall results and the general idea of the project.
- The impact of the project was considered high, especially at the end of the project. This shows that the special events for dissemination and networking were important and brought the expected publicity in the relevant communities.
- The communication and management of the project were highly responsive and got clearer and more comprehensive throughout the project.
- Time and workload were well planned.
- The equivalence of administrative methods and procedures could be improved during the project so that at the end the satisfaction among administrators was high and the accreditation could be finalized in all but one institution.
- The Boards and the decision making procedures are examples for future initiatives on the European level and for further MA joint degrees.
- It is highly recommendable to disseminate the expertise and experiences of this project in the academic world and among all those who plan European collaborations and joint degrees.
- The expertise of the project coordinator in Salzburg and the coordinating partners in the participating institutions can be an important support for similar projects.
- Finally, it is important that the European Commission thinks over the procedures and the rules of payment and documentation. Motivation to apply for EU projects and to build European networks can suffer from unclear rules that cause risks for participating and engaged partner institutions.