

JEAN MONNET MODULE AT SOKHUMI STATE UNIVERSITY: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION

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SUMMARY

At present, the support of the State in order to develop the CSR in Georgia represents important means for the sustainable development of the companies in the long run; it will enlarge the ground for the partnership between the State and business and make significant contribution into attracting new sources for the sustainable growth of economics. Finally, it will facilitate achievement of one of the key priorities of Georgia – integration into the European structures and European market.

The general objective of the Jean Monnet Module project is to improve quality of study programs at Sokhumi State University (SSU) in the field of European integration. Introduction of the module «Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the European Union: Experience for Georgia» will contribute to the training of students at SSU; it will acquaint them with the evolution and forms of CSR in the EU. In order to increase the number of student mobility in the frameworks of EHEA, it is necessary that students study the experience of CSR in the EU countries and are able to hold an intercultural dialogue. In the period of modern challenges for Georgia, the issue of development of CSR has become extremely important.

The experience of the EU carries more importance for the students, especially, for the students of SSU, where mostly internally displaced persons, also the youth residing in occupied Abkhazia (including representatives of Abkhaz nationalities) are studying, since they are facing the real politic, economic, social challenges of the modern globalized and competitive world; they should take an active part in building the country and determine the course of political and economic development. Therefore, they will be able to use acquired knowledge and experience in their future endeavors and practice at Georgian companies. Moreover, the project activities will contribute to the Georgian entrepreneurs' awareness of the CSR in the EU countries.

Keywords: Georgia, European Union, Experience, Sokhumi State University, Quality

რეზიუმე

ამჟამად, სახელმწიფოს მხარდაჭერა საქართველოში კორპორაციული სოციალური პასუხისმგებლობის განვითარებისთვის წარმოადგენს მნიშვნელოვან საშუალებას კომპანიების მდგრადი განვითარებისთვის გრძელვადიან პერსპექტივაში; ის გააფართოვებს სახელმწიფოსა და ბიზნესს შორის პარტნიორობის საფუძველს და მნიშვნელოვან წვლილს შეიტანს ეკონომიკის მდგრადი ზრდისთვის ახალი წყაროების მოზიდვაში. და ბოლოს, ეს ხელს შეუწყობს საქართველოს ერთ-ერთი მთავარი პრიორიტეტის - ევროპულ სტრუქტურებსა და ევროპულ



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ბაზარზე ინტეგრაციის - მიღწევას.

ჟან მონეს მოდულის პროექტის ზოგადი მიზანია სოხუმის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტში (SSU) სასწავლო პროგრამების ხარისხის გაუმჯობესება ევროპული ინტეგრაციის სფეროში. მოდულის „კორპორაციული სოციალური პასუხისმგებლობა (CSR) ევროკავშირში: გამოცდილება საქართველოსთვის“ დანერგვა ხელს შეუწყობს SSU-ში სტუდენტების მომზადებას; ის გააცნობს მათ CSR-ის ევოლუციას და ფორმებს ევროკავშირში. EHEA-ს ფარგლებში სტუდენტების მობილობის გაზრდის მიზნით, აუცილებელია, რომ სტუდენტებმა შეისწავლონ CSR-ის გამოცდილება ევროკავშირის ქვეყნებში და შეძლონ კულტურათშორისი დიალოგის წარმოება. საქართველოსთვის თანამედროვე გამოწვევების პერიოდში, CSR-ის განვითარების საკითხი უაღრესად მნიშვნელოვანი გახდა.

ევროკავშირის გამოცდილებას კიდევ უფრო მეტი მნიშვნელობა აქვს სტუდენტებისთვის, განსაკუთრებით SSU-ს სტუდენტებისთვის, სადაც ძირითადად იძულებით გადაადგილებული პირები, ასევე ოკუპირებულ აფხაზეთში მცხოვრები ახალგაზრდები (მათ შორის, აფხაზი ეროვნების წარმომადგენლები) სწავლობენ, რადგან ისინი თანამედროვე გლობალიზებული და კონკურენტუნარიანი სამყაროს რეალური პოლიტიკური, ეკონომიკური, სოციალური გამოწვევების წინაშე დგანან; მათ აქტიური მონაწილეობა უნდა მიიღონ ქვეყნის მშენებლობაში და განსაზღვრონ პოლიტიკური და ეკონომიკური განვითარების კურსი. ამრიგად, მათ შეეძლებათ მიღებული ცოდნისა და გამოცდილების გამოყენება მათ მომავალ საქმიანობასა და პრაქტიკაში ქართულ კომპანიებში. გარდა ამისა, პროექტის აქტივობები ხელს

შეუწყობს ქართველი მეწარმეების CSR-ის შესახებ ცნობიერების ამაღლებას. ევროკავშირის ქვეყნებში.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: საქართველო, ევროკავშირი, გამოცდილება, სოხუმის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ხარისხი.

INTRODUCTION

For the first time at Sokhumi State University, Jean Monnet Module (Erasmus+ Program, ERASMUS-JMO-2022-HEI-TCH-RSCH – Project number 101083295 - CSREU) was selected for co-financing by the European Commission.

A subject of studying is the basic directions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Public Policies on CSR in the EU countries, an opportunity of adaptation of the EU experience in Georgia;

The object of studying is CSR in the European Union countries;

Learning outcomes: formation of system of knowledge of the basic tendencies and problems of CSR in the EU; formation of skills in comparative analysis and use of the received knowledge in practical activities; Intensify the teaching and research capacity of the SSU via EU awareness rising among academic staff.

The experience of the EU carries more importance for the students of Sokhumi State University (SSU), where youth from IDPs, also the youth residing in occupied Abkhazia are studying, since they are facing the real politic, economic, social challenges of the modern globalized and competitive world; they should take an active part in building the country and determine the course of political and economic development.

The project CSREU gained high interest among teachers, students, researchers, since the given Jean Monnet Module is the first project for SSU in the frames of Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Actions. The Promotional Event “Georgia and EU: opportunities for cooperation” held in October 2022 was attended by more than 300 attendees (see Promotional event <https://shorturl.at/DOXAo>).

KEY ACTIVITIES:

This project was recognized as the best achievement in 2022 at SSU (Presentation CSREU Jean Monnet Module at the event „Best Achievement of the Year“ in the National Science Library). Also, this project is the first of Jean Monnet’s Activities in Georgia, whose Manager and Academic leader is a Professor of Business Administration.

The Module includes a new teaching course „Corporate Social Responsibility in the European Union“, a Summer School for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, an International Scientific Conference and several events in CSR.

In summarizing the three-year work of the Module, the following key activities were presented:

The project page <https://www.sou.edu.ge/content/7/78/218/0/0> was opened on the SSU website, 2022;

A Promotional event “Georgia and the European Union:

Opportunities for Cooperation” was held, where the presentation on Jean Monnet Module was made, 2022 <https://shorturl.at/DOXAo>;

The presentation of the Jean Monnet Module was held in the National Science Library at the event “Best Achievement of the Year”; this project was recognized as the best achievement in 2022 at SSU;

Syllabus “CSR in the European Union“ was developed, 2023;

The implementation of the new teaching course “CSR in the European Union“ - during 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 Spring semester, under Bachelor educational program of the SSU;

Meeting with the Representatives of the Business Sectors and Rector within the framework of the Jean Monnet Module, 2023-2025;

The Summer/Spring Schools “CSR in the Context of Relations between the European Union and Georgia” was held at the SSU, 2023-2025;

“Jean Monnet Auditorium” was opened at the SSU within the framework of the Jean Monnet Module, 2023 <https://tinyurl.com/8p6u5j2p>.

The text-book “CSR in the European Union” was developed and published printed edition within the framework of the Project, 2024 <https://zenodo.org/records/10775964>.

An International Scientific Conference “CSR in the EU: Experience for Georgia” was held

within the framework of the Project, 16 and 21 May, 2024 <https://tinyurl.com/fz32pa2p> <https://tinyurl.com/4a3e6akm>.

The Collection of Abstracts & Articles of the International Scientific Conference „CSR in the EU: Experience for Georgia“ was developed <https://zenodo.org/records/12786314> <https://tinyurl.com/26f2k5bu>.

Student Survey and Evaluation of the Teaching Course „CSR in the European Union“, 2023-2025;

DISSEMINATION

The Achieved Results:

In the Spring of 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 academic years, within the framework of the Jean Monnet Module CSREU under Bachelor educational program of the SSU, the new teaching course „Corporate Social Responsibility in the European Union“ were introduced and conducted at SSU. The teaching course was compulsory for students of bachelor programs in „Business Administration“ at the expense of free elective subjects, whereas for the students of any bachelor’s degree program was elective.

Final results of the teaching course and student evaluation:

In the 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 Academic Years, 561 students completed the teaching Course. A positive assessment was received by 326 students (58.1 %);

It is noteworthy that the course was a compulsory subject for 75 students over three years, of which 61 students received a positive assessment (81.3% of the total);

High and Good grades (in total over three years) were received by 31 students, 17 of whom are girls and 14 boys;

It should also be noted meetings of entrepreneurs (Acto Group's, TBC, Construction Company "Arena Residence"), CSR experts (Tegeta Holding, MBC) and Rector with students involved in the teaching process;

The published text-books „CSR in the European Union“, written in the frames of the given project and which is a basic guide for students, were disseminated among Georgian Universities and libraries <https://zenodo.org/records/10775964>.

Information about the teaching course is available on the web-page within the space of SSU web-page as well as in various magazines and information sources.

It should be noted that students were involved in the evaluation process, for this purpose student questionnaires have been developed and surveys are conducted. Criteria, regulations and procedures for student surveys have been developed by Quality Assurance Office of the University. Student surveys were conducted at the end of each academic year. The survey was anonymous and confidential. Within the framework of the project, the University's Quality Assurance Office conducted a survey between 2023 and 2025 involving a total of 39 students, primarily those with high academic performance. In this anonymous survey, the students shared their views and opinions regarding the academic course. It should be emphasized that the students' expressed interest and positive feedback serve as a significant source of motivation for future activities.

In 2023-2025, Summer/Spring Schools „Corporate Social Responsibility in the context of Relations between the EU and Georgia“ were held at SSU (5-14 June 2023, 3-11 June 2024, 30 April - 8 May 2025).

The Summer School aimed to raise students' awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility, the European Union's experience in this area, and to raise awareness of important issues such as: Georgia's current trends and expected outcomes of EU integration, EU tools for sustainable development, Environmental Social Responsibility in the EU, Social Entrepreneurship, and more. Both Georgian and foreign professors, as well as recognized leaders in the field, were invited to participate in the Summer School.

For three years, 391 undergraduate students (86.9% of participants) and 59 (13.1% of participants) of the Master's program took part in the Summer/Spring Schools; 25.1% of the total number of participating students (113 students) have the status of Internally Displaced Persons. All participants of the event were awarded certificates.

On May 16 and 21, 2024, an International Scientific Conference „European Union's Policy on CSR“ was held at SSU. The Conference was attended by academic staff, researchers and experts from: HEI's: 18 Georgian, 6 Ukrainian and 2 Lithuanian University, Scientific-Research Institutes, State Bodies, Entrepreneurial Structures, International Organizations, National ERASMUS+ Office in Georgia, NGO's. The Collection of Abstracts/Articles from International

Scientific Conference contains 105 publications by 173 authors, including 87 abstracts and 18 articles. Of the 173 authors, 30 are doctoral students and 8 undergraduates (co-authored with the Professor). See link: <https://zenodo.org/records/12786314>

On November 22, 2023, the Jean Monnet Auditorium was opened at SSU which will become a platform for sharing best practices, experiences and ideas of EU countries, and which will initiate conferences, seminars, roundtables, and various events for students, academic staff and other stakeholders.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS:

- To form basic theoretical knowledge in the sphere of CSR in the EU, peculiarities of the public policy, ethics; students mastering skills in the comparative analysis of CSR;
- Personal development of students' creativity;
- Forming leadership qualities of students SSU, increase in their demand on a labor market;
- To share the experience of the EU countries in the field of CSR with wide audience (students, academic staff, entrepreneurs, government agencies, public organizations).
- deepening the scientific research in the field of European integration and CSR in the EU and introduce their results to the government bodies;
- Forming positive image of University among the European high schools, and expand the opportunities of students and academic staff mobility of SSU in EHEA;
- Also IDPs (about 30% of the total number of participating students have the status of IDPs) and those who are still living on the territory of occupied Abkhazia and are students of SSU will disseminate values and experience of EU on the territory; The youth residing in occupied Abkhazia can contribute to the peace process. The experience of the EU carries more importance for them – it is one of the opportunities that perhaps would equip them with tools to build a peaceful future.

Thus, in scientific direction, the achievement of results is based on activation of students' cognitive capabilities, their attraction to scientific researches, and preparation of scientific publications. The educational field of the teaching course and Summer/Spring Schools assumes that having studied the course students will be better informed about the EU studies, EU Instruments for Smart and Sustainable Growth, EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA), main forms of the CSR in the EU, characteristics public policies on CSR in the EU, etc. It will help the students to learn the comparative analysis, to make active personal development within the framework of LLP, will allow using the received knowledge for competitive professional work. In this regards, of great benefit is the text-book „CSR in the European Union“ written and published in the frames of the given project. The textbook will significantly contribute to raising awareness of CSR in Georgia. I would also proudly add that, starting from 2024, this text-book has been included as a mandatory component in almost all study courses (syllabus)

related to CSR and Business Ethics across Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Georgia.

Implementation of the project also useful for Georgian companies, who see clearly what positive results, follow the introduction of CSR and how to take responsible approaches in their activities. Business companies play an important role in the society, which is related not only to the economic, but also to the social and environmental aspects of their activities. Proper understanding of this role will enable companies to become more sustainable, competitive and successful. Meetings of entrepreneurs (Acto Group's, TBC, Construction Company „Arena Residence“), CSR experts (Tegeta Holding, MBC) with students, locating information about EU experience in CSR at the module web-page within the space of SSU web-site and disseminating the information by other means also assist in accomplishing the task of upgrading the knowledge about European integration, EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA), CSR, public policy on CSR in the EU among students, scholars and practitioners, as well as Georgian entrepreneurs'. Published text-book, collection of works from International Scientific Conference were disseminated among Georgian Universities and libraries of Georgia; it is uploaded to the e-library of SSU that will allow interested parties to get acquainted with basic directions of CSR and public policy in EU. Graduates will be able to apply acquired knowledge in their future professional work/activities and practice.

The results of the project implementation in terms of sharing the experience of EU countries in the field of CSR is very interesting and useful not only for Georgia, but also for large and small companies from other countries and representatives of scientific research and Higher Education (students, academics, researchers); it was also interesting to share experiences with state agencies, community organizations and other stakeholders. Finally, the research carried out within the project and findings developed within the project will initiate the study of the best practices of the EU countries, sharing of experience, and the research in different countries.

The great benefit is opening „Jean Monnet Auditorium“ within the framework of the Module; This Auditorium symbolizes the quality study and research conducted by

the University in the field of European integration, best EU's practice share and its contribute to promoting European issues within the activities of Jean Monnet Action.

CONCLUSION

The Jean Monnet Auditorium is adorned with a Plaque awarded by EACEA and sent at the end of September 2023. The accompanying letter states that „The purpose of plaque is twofold. It serves primarily as a label signifying quality in European Integration studies and represents the achievements of yours Jean Monnet Modules in this field. At the same times it also provides visibility for the Jean Monnet Action, presenting it as the focal point within and outside your institutions for the promotion of European Issues.“ <https://tinyurl.com/49tbvjem>. Sokhumi State University is a University in exile (moved from Sokhumi to Tbilisi) and staff and part of students are Internally Displaced Persons; For SSU, it is important to implement interdisciplinary spheres, educational programs, the purpose of which is to train highly qualified personnel that are relevant to the labor market, competitive, modern requirements. Also for Sokhumi State University, it is important to improvement of quality of knowledge about European integration among students; SSU will spare no effort to make its modest contribution to our country's path towards European integration.

LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. „Corporate Social Responsibility in the European Union“, text-book, 2024 <https://zenodo.org/records/10775964>;
2. The Collection of Abstracts & Articles of the International Scientific Conference “Corporate Social Responsibility in the EU: Experience for Georgia”, 2024 <https://zenodo.org/records/12786314> <https://tinyurl.com/26f2k5bu>;
3. EU Strategy on Corporate Social Responsibility <https://www.switchtogreen.eu/eu-strategy-on-corporate-social-responsibility/>;
4. The project web-page <https://www.sou.edu.ge/content/7/78/218/0/0..>