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## **JEAN MONNET MODULE EUinCEE**

Report of the international workshop

### **“Protection of Minorities and Sustainable Development in the European Union”**

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The international workshop **“Protection of Minorities and Sustainable Development in the European Union”** was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 at the University of Maribor (Slovenia). This activity is part of the **University of Trieste Jean Monnet Module “The Rule of Law in the European Member States”** and is aimed at encouraging the research about European integration studies in higher education institutions.

The event was organized by prof. Serena Baldin, EUinCEE Jean Monnet Module Coordinator, in collaboration with prof. Cocou Marius Mensah, Jean Monnet Module Coordinator at the University of Maribor. The event was attended by over 40 people.

The workshop was opened by Professor Serena Baldin, who made an introduction speaking about minority protection and the construction of a sustainable future for Europe. The security



of minorities became a responsibility of the international community after the fall of the Berlin wall and is one of the most critical political impacts of EU conditionality on Central Europe and the Balkan states. Talking about this aspect, it is possible to say that there has been an internationalization of the constitutional law of the states in the Eastern part of Europe. The protection of minority rights became an international mission, and it is also a key objective for building up a sustainable future for the EU. Thus,

among the three pillars of EU sustainable development (economical, environmental, and social), the social pillar is fundamental and ensures equality and non-discrimination. The EU

Roma Strategic Framework for Equality is between the strategies formulated to achieve these goals. At the end of her speech, professor Baldin highlighted that the culture and language of minority groups are part of the European cultural heritage and need to be preserved, mainly because traditionally, the EU tends to celebrate its shared culture, forgetting the subnational groups.

Ensuring that minorities are treated fairly is also one of the Council of Europe's key priorities. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages have been approved to promote universal standards accepted in the whole EU. This is also fundamental to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Emeritus Professor Silvio Devetak from the University of Maribor addressed the importance of the international protection of minorities. Until recently, the security of minorities has not attracted the same level of attention as that accorded to other international affairs. However, there has been a heightened interest about some issues related to minorities, as ethnic, racial,



and religious tensions have escalated, threatening the economic, social, and political fabric of States and their territorial integrity. The European law on ethnic minorities is based on norms adopted at the national and bilateral level, or within the Council of Europe. The EU has not yet adopted universal legal standards on the status and rights of ethnic minorities. Therefore, the primary sources of

European law in this field are the international instruments that have been adopted until now by the Council of Europe. Professor Devetak pointed out that an adequate education would enhance people's devotedness to democracy, eliminating intolerance and prejudices, and diminishing the support for violent extremism. People should be educated on how to live together in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world.

Professor Mensah gave an interesting speech about the connections between respect for minorities and sustainable development. His presentation started by considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Professor Mensah noted that the first SDG was fighting against poverty. Minorities are a resource for the EU and the world; people should all be given the same opportunities. Only by doing so will we be able to achieve the SDGs, especially the first one. At the end of



the presentation, Prof. Mensah talked about his experience at Maribor University and praised professor Devetak for his brilliant career.

In the second part of the conference, three students of the Master's Degree in Diplomacy and International Relations of the University of Trieste, who had attended the Project Cycle Management (PCM) course, presented the characteristics of PCM in the EU and the work they had been doing with their group mates.

Ms. Giada Donzel made a presentation to explain the concept of PCM, the primary set of project design and management tools adopted by the EU Commission since 1992. She also provided some suggestions about how to start a project. The first step is always defining the problem one wants to solve and formulating the “problem statement.” This stage is fundamental: if the project team members do not know what problem they are supposed to solve, the project is likely to fail. The team must share the vision and the mission of the project. At the end of her presentation, Ms. Donzel explained how to choose a good call for proposals that fits one's ideas and the common mistakes that call applicants make. Before applying to a call, it is essential to know the eligibility criteria, define the project objectives clearly and spend a lot of time planning; it is not recommended to apply if there is not enough time to be well prepared.



Then, Ms. Isabella Marchese explained the Eu funding programs. The EU provides funding for various projects and programs covering almost all areas. It is an excellent opportunity to have EU funds, because it is possible to finance an idea that may also require a large amount of money. However, it is not just a matter of money; it is also an opportunity to create international cooperation between several partners who participate in the project. The negative notes are linked to time and resource management, that is fundamental for the application and for the realization of the project itself. It is also necessary to manage intellectual and property rights complexity. Moreover, there is always the element of uncertainty about the acceptance of the project. In the end, Ms. Marchese pointed out that it is essential to know how to manage the organization's time and management in a considered way.



It is also necessary to read the announcements and observe every technical detail. Only in this way it is possible to be funded.

The last speaker, Ms. Ivana Calabrese, presented to the public the project that her group was preparing to apply to a call for proposals in the simulation for the PCM class at the University of Trieste. The project's title was "My Town in Europe" and insisted on the dimension of European integration. It aimed to make young people aware of the engagement of the EU in their town and inform them about the possibilities it offered to them. Many young people do not know a lot about the EU, and some of them are not satisfied with its action in the local context. To increase the awareness about the EU's role among young people, the group of Ms.



Calabrese proposed to make a regional contest where youngsters were invited to express how they recognized the EU in their town. This was supposed to increase the participants' sense of identity as young EU citizens. The call this project was responding to was emitted by the European Youth Foundation in the context of the European Year of Youth 2022.

At the end of the conference, Emeritus Professor Devetak signed the copies of the book "From an Individual to the European Integration – Discussion on the Future of Europe" and offered a copy to the participants.