



Podgorica, 28.10.2011

INTERNSHIPS FOR STUDENTS

Centre for Civic Education (CCE) believes that more extensive participation of students in non-formal education programmes during their studies is a key prerequisite for inclusion of future generations in the process of Montenegro's Europeanization and democratization. Today, the competitive European market does not merely require a high grade average, but also familiarity with certain competences and skills. In order to acquire these, students should have a chance to gain some practical experience, which is not offered to them through our system of higher education, except for those studying tourism, but even then they often only sign a training agreement and never get to try their hand on the job.

CGO believes that all departments of the University of Montenegro ought to introduce mandatory internship programmes as part of instruction. The goal of the internship is to reduce the gap between the demands of the employers and the overly theoretical teaching offered by the institutions of higher learning. Practical training during studies should take minimum three months and maximum nine months. Naturally, the employers who take the students to train them in the useful working skills will decide whether the students will receive a certain amount of money or perform their training on voluntary basis. Either way, practical experience, paid or not, is valuable and essential to the process of academic education and preparation of young people for the labour market.

Experience of European Union countries shows that internships during studies are the most effective way to prepare the students for future challenges. *France*, for instance, introduced mandatory traineeships in the course of the 3rd or 4th year of studies, where the student can choose the company/organisation that would host them during their practice. In *the Netherlands* the internship is also mandatory. The students can also choose where they would like to work but, as in France, the company/organization decides whether to pay the students and how much, and most of the internships are unpaid. In *Italy*, or rather at the University of Bologna, it is impossible to receive a Bachelor diploma if the student had not completed an internship during his/her studies.

CCE urges the Ministry of education and sports to consider introducing a mandatory internship during the 3rd or 4th year of studies. Internships during studies will be highly beneficial to students by improving their chances on the labour market after they have received their diploma: they will have the necessary knowledge and experience in the field of their interest. Moreover, they will have an incentive to use their prior experience to take more initiative, and have the capacity to see their ideas through or at least assess their feasibility, as they would have had a chance to learn it in practice.



*Centar za građansko obrazovanje
Centre for civic education*

CCE believes that a chance to do practical work during studies will improve the professional standing of students, as well as their future competitiveness. Every day there is more need for able, qualified workforce, which would be able to meet the societal challenges, especially those that arise with the process of integration, and it is necessary to take systemic action to make sure that the next steps in this complex process do not find us unprepared.

Nikola Đonović, programme associate