

FOREWORD OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS SILVO DEVETAK, THE COORDINATOR OF THE ANETREC PROJECT

Dear professors, dear students,

Taking into account the political, economic, security, inter-ethnic and other relevant circumstances has the ISCOMET Institute from Maribor, Slovenia in 2018 prepared a proposal of the academic Network, which program is supporting the EU policy towards Western Balkans with emphasis on regional cooperation based on reconciliation – ANETREC. The European Commission (Erasmus + programme) has entrusted a consortium of 7 universities and 2 research institutions from Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia, the execution of that 4-year project (2019-2023). The project brought together – directly or indirectly - more than 80 professors and researchers from previously mentioned countries. They work for the realisation of the project program with enthusiasm, as the modest funds of the project do not allow us to enumerate appropriate their cooperation. The ANETREC project is currently the only project, which combines in a common programme such high number of universities and experts from Western Balkans, Slovenia and Croatia.

The main goal of the ANETREC project is the academic support - through teaching programs and other adequate activities - the process of implementation of EU policies towards Western Balkans with emphasis on regional cooperation based on reconciliation as a prerequisite for peace, stability and general development in the region.

The most outstanding result of the ANETREC project is the elaboration of a common online teaching program named “European integration of Western Balkans based on reconciliation and cooperation”, which consists of the following six inter-linked subjects:

One: Different aspects of EU policies towards Western Balkans with emphasis on the specific nature of each of the countries.

Two: Theoretical and practical aspects of reconciliation as a prerequisite for peace, stability and development of cooperation in the region.

Three: The concept of multiculturalism in theory and practice of the Western Balkans.

Four: Human rights and elimination of all forms of discrimination as the basis for a democratic management of relationships within societies of the Western Balkans.

Five: The role of religion in developing tolerance, mutual respect and the reconciliation process in Western Balkans, and

Six: The problem of migrations in Western Balkans in the context of the EU relationship towards these problems.

In the process of realisation of this online teaching program the ANETREC management recorded 79 lectures of 41 professors coming from all partner universities and as external collaborators of ISCOMET Institute, the project’s coordinator - professors coming from

universities of Muenster, Germany; Trieste, Italy; Maribor, Slovenia; the New University from Ljubljana, Slovenia and the Institute for Ethnic Studies from Ljubljana, Slovenia as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to express thanks and sincere congratulations to all our colleagues - professors who took part in this grandiose action. I am convinced that all of us do hope that the realisation of this program in the education of young generations in Western Balkans countries will have a long-term positive impact on spreading the spirit of reconciliation, tolerance and cooperation in the region.

These lectures together with corresponding teaching plans, literature and other relevant information constitute the ANETREC database hosted by the ISCOMET Institute in Maribor. It will be from the winter of the 2022/23 academic year onward available to use it for organizing online lectures at the ANETREC participating universities. The subjects will be held independently or as part of existing study programmes. Universities will also have the option, the possibility to accredit the curriculum as a whole.

Besides, after the ANETREC project ends, the study materials gathered represents a good basis for future development of different forms of common studies and research programmes in the Western Balkans. More than 40 especially young professors and researchers who were indirectly involved in the ANETREC project expressed their willingness to participate in the proposed or similar topics in both education and research. Therefore, we hope that the EU would firmly support those common endeavours that could contribute to reconciliation, peace, security, cooperation and thus to the European integration and sustainable development in the Western Balkans countries and the region as a whole.