Visegrad Fund

The project is co-financed by the Governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

On 11 September, a conference related to the implementation of the project 'IMPACT: Boosting capacity to manage international projects at V4 Universities' - 'IMPACT Meet up conference: What makes us special' took place in Budapest. All project partners participated in the event, with the main organisers being Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, as the leader of the project, and Obuda University, which extended an invitation to its doors.

After the official welcome by the project manager (Barbara Srokowska, WUEB), all partners gave presentations about their universities, answering the question 'What makes us special?'.

Dr Gyula Szigeti and Zoltan Marton from Obuda University discussed their management model and the STEAM Excellence Programme, which combines the following elements: academic English, self-awareness, robotics, and digital technologies. Through this programme, students develop their STEM vocabulary, learn coding and strengthen their teamwork skills through practical projects (LEGO robots or building cities in Minecraft).

Subsequently, Aleksandra Marchewska, Karolina Jankiewicz-Duleba, and Ewa Sowinska-Łuc from the Project Management Centre at the Wrocław University of Economics presented an overview of the university's operations and structure, listing the most important projects being carried out there. The representatives emphasised that their PMO is the crucial place where projects are created and implemented – from the birth of an idea, through the development of an application, to the implementation of its assumptions. This approach is of great importance for effective management, as it enables complete control over each stage of project implementation.

After the coffee break, Dora Göndöcsné Agócs and Bernadett Balázs-Barnaki from the University of Pécs gave their presentations. They described the university's long tradition and their extensive experience in project implementation. Dora and Bernadett identified the following as the main 'principles' of project management: centralised management, effective teamwork, clear communication, ongoing reporting, efficient and secure information flow and complete documentation.

Olivia Blanchard from the University of Economics in Bratislava briefly presented the history and structure of her university. EUBA attaches great importance to cooperation with both prestigious companies and many international firms. Olivia also presented initiatives of high value to their university, including the Behavioural Economics Laboratory and the 'Science Café for Women', which promote equality and innovative research

approaches. Beatrix Riecká then discussed her responsibilities at the university, the projects she is working on, and how she supports her colleagues in their tasks.

The University of Ostrava, represented by Jan Machacek, presented its organisational structure and development paths for students. We learned about the number of project managers in each of the six faculties and the grant award system. Jan also boasted about recent successes in the field of project management, including strengthening the university's research potential by attracting new experts and researchers, and Ostrava scientists receiving Neuron Prizes – important and prestigious distinctions. The main threats to the University in the field of project management were identified as intense competition in the EU and grant programmes, as well as the heavy workload of administrative staff, which causes delays in project management.

Michael Valek, a representative of St. Cyril and Methodius University in Slovakia, highlighted the intensive development of the university's research infrastructure, with particular emphasis on the potential for regional and international cooperation, which is one of the main areas of their strategic development. Michael also discussed the exhibition 'Kenya yetu hakuna matata,' organised by FMK staff, which is not only a report of their stay in Kenya but also promotes the Erasmus+ programme. Another initiative implemented by FMK is an innovative media, marketing, and digital games centre, one of the first in Central Europe to offer sustainable education in the fields of games, mass media, and marketing, focusing on combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

The presentations were followed by a stimulating discussion, which provided an opportunity to explore the challenges and threats faced by other universities implementing externally funded projects. The conference also provided an excellent networking opportunity, allowing participants to establish new and valuable professional connections. The meeting not only facilitated the exchange of knowledge but also helped to build lasting relationships between participants, as exemplified by the planned visit of an EUBA representative to the University of Economics in Wrocław in November as part of a job shadowing programme.

The diversity of partners in terms of size, experience and management approach is one of the key strengths of the project. Despite their differences, the partners are united by a common goal – the implementation of the activities planned in the IMPACT project. A shared vision for the future and a willingness to share knowledge and experience form the basis for continued cooperation, which has the potential to endure even after the project is completed. In addition, each partner brings valuable experience and specific expertise to the project, making the collaboration unique and synergistic. Regardless of the

Visegrad Fund

The project is co-financed by the Governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

university's size, the partners jointly strive to achieve the project's objectives, which, despite differing perspectives and courses of action, are convergent and complementary. Larger institutions contribute knowledge about large-scale project management and experience in working with diverse stakeholder groups. Smaller universities, on the other hand, contribute innovative solutions and a dynamic approach to problems.

The conference was the first stage of the mutual integration process, one of the main objectives of the IMPACT project, implemented under the International Visegrad Fund between 1 July 2025 and 31 December 2026

It also proved to be an essential event, bringing measurable benefits in both planning future activities and building new professional relationships.