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## 1. Description of the project

### THE PROJECT

The project "Centre of Excellence in ICT" (ICT COE) is the first of its kind in Croatia and will act as a pilot for similar projects in the region. The aim of the project is improvement of ICT education for pupils and students as one of the most effective ways to create a knowledge based economy in Varazdin, Croatia. Therefore measures were undertaken to ensure that ICT becomes a vital part of the education system. In early 2009, the ICT Centre of Excellence was established in Varazdin. The centre aims to provide ICT education to advanced pupils and students at the primary and secondary educational level. Within the "ICT COE" project new pedagogical approaches are introduced to ICT mentors. Subsequently mentors apply these methods during ICT classes for pupils and students. As a result young people become skilled professionals who are able to face future challenges in a globalizing world.



## 2. Presentation of the partners

### THE PARTNERS

The "ICT COE" project is a cooperation between Flemish and Croatian partners. The project is funded by the Flemish Government.

#### Faculty of Organization and Informatics Varazdin

FOI (University of Zagreb Faculty of Organization and Informatics in Varazdin, Croatia) is the only faculty related to computer science and ICT in the Varazdin Region and one of the first higher education institutions for applied ICT technologies in Croatia. Currently, approximately 100 members of teaching staff are engaged in the education of 2.500 students. FOI is very active in promoting education, ICT and new technologies. As well, FOI implements various science, research, development and commercial projects related to ICT education. The "ICT COE" project is one of these projects.

## First Gymnasium Varazdin

First Gymnasium Varazdin is a secondary school in Varazdin, Croatia. They offer three national programmes (general, scientific and languages), a bilingual programme in English/Croatian and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). They also provide extracurricular activities, which enable students to express their talents and creativity. First Gymnasium fosters ICT education by organizing various ICT competitions and holding additional ICT classes for advanced students. Apart from that First Gymnasium is the seat of the Centre of Excellence in ICT and partner in the "ICT COE" project.

## Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel

Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel (HUB) is a Flemish higher education institution based in Brussels, the economic and political heart of the European Union. HUB offers both professional and academic education. Approximately 7.000 undergraduate students are subscribed, 1.000 others follow continued education and about 1.100 employers are working for the institution. HUB's mission statement emphasizes internationalization as one of its top priorities. With the "ICT COE" project HUB takes up this challenge. The institution is promoter of the project. Within HUB the fields of study of Applied ICT Education and Secondary Education, and the Project Office are jointly working on it.

## Varazdin County

Varazdin County is a regional government in Croatia which represents the interests of local communities within the jurisdiction of the 22 municipalities and 6 cities in Varazdin region. The County implements activities that focuses on raising the quality of life of its inhabitants. Education is one area in which Varazdin County is involved. As such they are a partner in the "ICT COE" project.

## 3. News

### KICK OFF MEETING

In September 2010 the "ICT COE" project was kicked off in Varazdin, Croatia. Both Flemish and Croatian partners were present. Mr. Pavlekovic, deputy mayor of Varazdin, opened the meeting. During the meeting the overall development of the project was discussed. Partners agreed on the first steps to be undertaken in the months to come. The meeting ended with a visit to the Croatian organizations involved in the project.



Varaždinska  
županija



## BENCHMARK

The first step within the project is the analysis of the actual ICT training in the Flemish and Croatian education system. Three questionnaires were developed to measure the state of the art of ICT education in Varazdin: one for school principals, one for ICT teachers and one for pupils and students. The questionnaires were sent to 54 primary



and secondary schools in Varazdin region, from which 17 schools were asked to participate in extended part of the survey. At this very moment the results are being analyzed. They will be used in later stages of the project to decide on the further development of the project.

## STUDY VISIT

From 21 till 24 February 2011 the Croatian partners visited Flanders together with 10 Croatian ICT mentors. During their stay, several workshops on different aspects of ICT were organized. The Croatian visitors also followed an introduction in making an ICT competence profile. Finally, they visited a secondary school close to Brussels. This way they could see the resemblances and differences between Flemish and Croatian schools. Returning home Croatian partners stated that the study visit was a great experience during which they learned many new things about ICT and education.



## 4. Next steps

In the months to come the answers on the questionnaires measuring the state of the art of ICT education in Varazdin, Croatia, will be analyzed. This will result in a document identifying the main issues of the current ICT education in Croatia. Together with the ideas which the ICT mentors developed during their study visit to Flanders, this will lead to the creation of an education methodology for renewed ICT education in Varazdin. More detailed information on these next steps will follow in the second newsletter.

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