



## Transfer of Good practices & Reinforcement of Internationalization Strategies in

The TIGRIS Project has been awarded for EU co-funding within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme “Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education”. Capacity building projects in the field of higher education support the modernization, accessibility, and internationalization of higher education in Partner Countries, in this case Kurdistan. The TIGRIS Project, which will run for 3 years from 2017 – 2020, is coordinated by the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany. The project consortium is composed of 4 European partners and 10 Kurdish partners, including the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), as well as 2 associate partners.

### Welcome

Dear Partners of the Erasmus+ TIGRIS Project, Dear Readers, welcome to the Erasmus+ programme (TIGRIS) Newsletter. This is the third issue of a series Newsletters that are issued by KISSR and supported by UGOE.

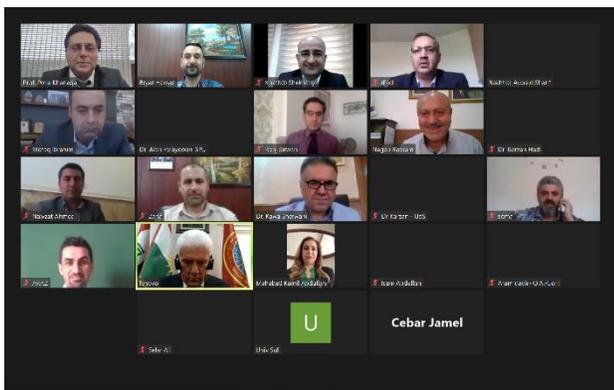
### 3rd TIGRIS Project Symposium

On 17th June 2020, partners from the Kurdistan Region held their annual regional project management meeting. This year’s meeting was hosted by the University of Halabja. As part of the TIGRIS project’s mitigation strategy in regard to the Covid-19 pandemic, partners adapted to the new circumstances conducting the meeting virtually.

### Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners (NKIP9+)

During the meeting, Kurdish partners finalised the contractual provision for the Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners, to be called “NKIP9+”, to be formed by the Kurdish HEIs partners of TIGRIS together with the KRG Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The network will play a key role in the future internationalisation of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and will serve as a platform for deliberation, consultation, pooling of resources for training, sharing of best practices and the development of new initiatives thereby contributing to the mobilisation, professionalisation and development of actors and institutions involved in the internationalisation of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

In this, the Network will host meetings, workshops, conferences and conduct other activities to facilitate and promote the internationalisation of higher education in the Kurdistan Region including joint promotion activities abroad aiming at raising the international visibility of Kurdish higher education and its institutions. Furthermore, during the meeting partners discussed and outlined the development of the Management Information



System and Database for Internationalisation of Higher Education to be developed in order to increase the partners' capacities to administer and strategically manage the future internationalisation of HEIs in the Kurdistan Region.

Both the Network and the Management Information System are identified as key for assuring the long-term impact of the TIGRIS project.

### Peer Review of Kurdish partner HEIs

During the course of July and August 2020, European and Kurdish HEI partners conducted individual peer review meetings in order to establish the progress made and setup achieved by individual partner universities from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to engage in internationalisation.

The peer reviews were conducted as part of Work Package 4 and represent a key element in the project's quality assurance activities. Unfortunately, conducting the peer reviews as originally planned as on-site visits was rendered impossible by the Covid-19 pandemic prohibiting both international and, in case of the Kurdistan Region/Iraq, even intra-country travel.

As part of the TIGRIS project's mitigation strategy to answer the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project consortium devised a new format for this activity allowing the peer review meetings to be implemented virtually and in form of structured qualitative interviews. As part of this, European partners developed an evaluation framework build around qualitative indicators to be assessed and later reported on. In addition, the qualitative assessment was flanked by a quantitative data collection.

Kurdish HEI partners prepared the meetings on their end and, instructed by previously issued guidance notes, collected and prepared relevant information and presentations.

By this framework, the consortium was able to implement its comprehensive review activities successfully and mitigating much of the global pandemic's detrimental effects.

### Final Dissemination Conference

During On 13th October 2020, the Erasmus+ CBHE project TIGRIS held its 3rd and final Annual Dissemination Conference.

Due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and as part of the project's mitigation strategy, the conference took place online and was hosted by the Erbil Polytechnic University.



The conference, titled 'Concluding the TIGRIS Project – Past Achievements and Future Outlook for Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq', garnered much interest with a total of 176 participants taking part in the event.

The conference started with a video clip presenting the International Relations Office at Erbil Polytechnic University in its new form, which was set up in the framework of the TIGRIS Project.

Afterwards, Assist. Prof. Dr. Kawa Rasul Sherwani, the President of Erbil Polytechnic University, officially opened the conference. In his welcome address, he highlighted the great importance of the TIGRIS Project both for the individual Kurdish partner institutions as well as the region as a whole.

He was seconded by Dr. Mohammed Hussein Ahmed, General Director at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, reinforcing the systemic impact of the project and expressing the Ministry's commitment to and continuous support for the internationalisation of the Kurdish Higher Education sector and ongoing reforms to aligning Kurdish and European Higher Education.

On behalf of the project's regional co-coordinator, the Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research, Dr. Zana Kareem issued his welcome address to the participants of the

conference, expressing his sincere thanks to all partners of the project and his hope for continued cooperation in the future.

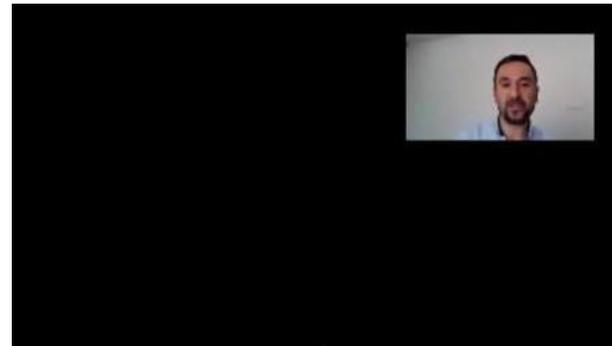
The first presentation of the conference was given by the project's coordinator, Dr. Uwe Muuss, Head of Göttingen International, in which he contemplated on the past three years of the TIGIRS project revisiting key milestones and achievements of the project while also highlighting the challenges the consortium faced in implementing the project. He expressed his sincere thanks to all partners for their commitment in addressing these challenges, especially the current global pandemic, which impacted significantly on the project in its final year. Only by the partners' commitment enabled the successful implementation and conclusion of the project.



He was followed by Dr. Ranj Abdullah, Head of Erbil Polytechnic's International Relations Office, presenting the newly set up office as well as its activities in promoting internationalisation at the university, thereby highlighting the progress made at Erbil Polytechnic during the project and making evident the significant impact of the project in enabling partners in pursuing their goal of internationalisation.

Bryar Hassan, from the Kurdistan Institution for Strategic Studies and Scientific Research, was next in presenting one of the key outcomes of the TIGIRS project: The Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners, short NKIP+9. The network, which is set up by the Kurdish beneficiaries of the TIGIRS project and supported by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, will play a key role in promoting and facilitating the internationalisation of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, thereby also guaranteeing the long-term impact and sustainability of the results achieved within the TIGIRS project. The

network, which will be open for other regional HEIs to join, is set to develop into a truly regional network.



**TIGIRS In Its Third Year – Striving For Sustainability & Systemic Impact**

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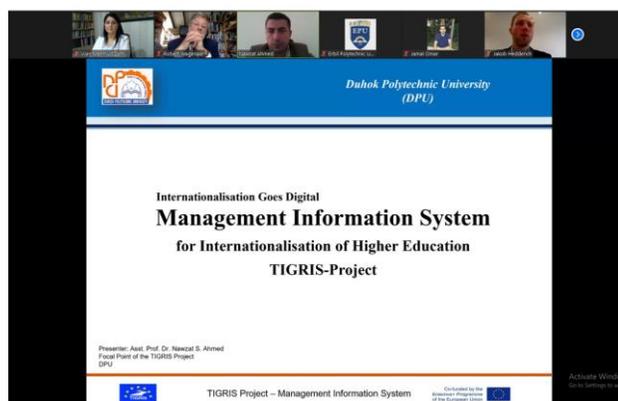
Continuing with the focus on the long-term impact and sustainability of the TIGIRS project and its results, Dr. Jamal Ali Omer, Head of the English Department at the University of Raparin, presented the university's activity in translating key literature on the Bologna Process and related reforms into Kurdish with the aim of rendering these valuable resources available and more easily accessible for local stakeholders. Translating these resources, which previously were kindly provided by the TUNING Academy, will be an important contribution for building local capacity and expertise for implementing Bologna reforms, thereby guaranteeing the TIGIRS project's impact long after its end.

Continuing with Bologna Reforms and their nexus to internationalisation, the key note of the conference was presented by Prof. Dr. Robert Wagenaar from the University of Groningen and Director of the International TUNING Academy Groningen. Being an internationally renowned expert in everything related to the EHEA / Bologna Process and reforming Higher Education, the TIGIRS consortium was especially excited to hear his remarks on the ongoing reform efforts in the the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Prof. Wagenaar, who also led a previous training workshop in the framework of the TIGIRS project, complimented the Kurdish partners on the

achievements and progress made, while also highlighting some of the inherent challenges and risks involved. Most significantly, during his talk Prof. Wagenaar presented valuable advice as well as additional tools and resources for Kurdish partners on how to continue with reforming Kurdish Higher Education and its alignment with the European model.



The final presentation of the conference was dedicated to another key result of the TIGRIS project. Under the title 'Internationalisation Goes Digital', Dr. Nawzat Ahmed, Director of General Registration from Duhok Polytechnic, presented the 'Management Information System and Database for Internationalisation' developed for Kurdish partners as a tool to digitally administer and manage internationalisation. In the future, the MIS, which was developed as a distributed server solution by Erbil-based development firm Patris Company, will support all Kurdish partner HEIs as well as the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in collecting, managing and visualising information on internationalisation of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and overall represents an important achievement in the digitalisation of Kurdish Higher Education.



'Quo Vadis, Internationalisation' was the title of the conference's final activity, the round table session,

in which partners and participants of the conference looked ahead and discussed the future of internationalisation both in a regional and global context as well as the continuation of educational reforms in the Kurdistan Region. Of course, as the elephant in the room, the covid-19 pandemic loomed large in the discussion. However, it was rightly pointed out by Dr. Uwe Brandenburg from Global Impact Institute, the crisis might also be a chance and great facilitator for change, challenging current while promoting new models of international Higher Education, especially in regard to digitalisation. Furthermore, topics like future international cooperation opportunities and frameworks were discussed, highlighting unique scientific potential and resources available in the Kurdistan Region, which partners need to start harnessing and to build lasting cooperation on.

After an extensive discussion, Assist. Prof. Dr. Kawa Rasul Sherwani and Dr. Uwe Muuss jointly concluded the conference with their farewell notes thanking the organisational team, partners and participants for their numerous participation.

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**Useful links and References:**  
<http://www.tigris-erasmusplus.eu/>  
<http://www.kissr.edu.krd/en/TIGRISProject.php>