



**RELATING SOFT SKILLS TO EMPLOYABILITY:
THE ESSENCE PROJECT IS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED**

University of Economics – Varna joined the online Kick-Off meeting of ESSENCE – Enhance Soft Skills to Nurture Competitiveness and Employability, a project co-financed by Erasmus+ Programme

On February 17th, 2021, University of Economics – Varna joined the online Kick-Off Meeting of ESSENCE (Enhance Soft Skills to Nurture Competitiveness and Employability), a Project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, which brings together 7 Partners from 7 different countries (Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Spain).

The Kick-Off Meeting, hosted by University of Information Technology and Management (Rzeszow – PL), was originally planned in Brussels, but has been rescheduled online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

ESSENCE’s objective is to Improve employability opportunities for HE students leveraging on soft skills development. The objective is to maximize their engagement in the labour market offering professional development paths through training and education on soft and “intangible” skills. ESSENCE develops and deploys a flexible and permeable learning pathway: users can access and exploit the training “on-demand” and “on a need basis” to enhance their soft skills literacy and professional self-empowerment.

Back in 2016, analysts from the World Economic Forum foreseen a major switch in what would have been by 2020 the “top 10 skills” for employability, recruitment, career development and business competitiveness. According to the [report](#), the opportunity for fresh graduates and HE students to compete on the job market would depend increasingly on soft and relational skills, rather than mere technical competences...

<u>in 2020</u>	<u>in 2015</u>
1. Complex Problem Solving	1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking	2. Coordinating with Others
3. Creativity	3. People Management
4. People Management	4. Critical Thinking
5. Coordinating with Others	5. Negotiation
6. Emotional Intelligence	6. Quality Control
7. Judgment and Decision Making	7. Service Orientation
8. Service Orientation	8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Negotiation	9. Active Listening
10. Cognitive Flexibility	10. Creativity

Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

WEF’s findings are corroborated by numerous international and academic resources that pinpoint with great emphasis the relevance of soft skills for employability in the new incoming decade.

On the basis of that, in the following two years ESSENCE will sustain the development among HE students of intangible and soft skills (such as sense of initiative, critical thinking, creativity and people management) to better strengthen their employability competitiveness in the labour



market; its innovative methodology relies on demand-drive and bottom up approaches that will lead partners in the creation of several strategic results:

1. Online interactive platform (OER Platform) in Multilanguage version
2. Transnational report highlighting the “most wanted” soft skills for employability in the EU labour market (desk research + survey conducted among 100 employers)
3. Online business glossary to be used as a concepts-map as well as a reference to orientate students across the universe of soft skills
4. Custom-made training courses related to self-empowerment soft skills for employability
5. Visibility Events in the participating countries and international awareness of the project

Moreover, Partners foresee that project results will be disseminated, mainstreamed and made visible to an overall audience of more than 4 Millions contacts – as an estimated sum from the engagement of the public via Offline and Online communication.

For further information on ESSENCE and other University of Economics – Varna’ initiatives:

<https://ue-varna.bg>

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