



Field report

1st Virtual Intensive Study Program for Higher Education learners and Teaching Staff

Timișoara, Romania

22-26 November 2021



Smart Teaching in Accounting – Meeting Place Online

STAMP Online, an Erasmus+ project launched due to the changing environment of auditing. Digitalisation is advancing and making itself felt in all aspects of life, including the professional world. Many professions are affected by change. It not only enables a global exchange of information but also brings changes in terms of data, interfaces, people and experiences. The digital transformation brings many achievements and indisputably stands for progress and growth. However, it poses new challenges for many professions, including tax advisors and auditors. It is changing the auditing environment as well as the way of working through the changed possibilities of data provision, analysis and processing and thus also the education, research and practice in accounting. STAMP Online aims to identify and respond to the needs of students. To this end, the program creates an international exchange to enhance students' knowledge and key competencies and skills and prepare them for the international financial accounting job market.

This year's program included four major focal points and related case studies:

1. digitalisation and IFRS;
2. Non Financial Information, CSR and Ethics in the Digital Era;
3. Taxation in the Digital Era;
4. big data and audit

Due to the current Corona situation, STAMP Online had to take place online this year as well.

Excellent planning and organisation by the University of Timisoara in Romania enabled a smooth international exchange for all students. Students from 12 countries participated:



Team Austria

Presenting Team Austria



From right to left: Bentner Aileen, Ranacher Michael, Ruggenthaler Luca, Bacher Tobias, Benacchio Leonhard, Univ.-Ass. Sabine Graszitz PhD, Simona Holzknrecht MSc, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Rudolf Steckel

DAY 2

In the morning, the international teams came together again and continued to work on the first case study. This also included the preparation of a presentation on the solutions that were developed and presented at noon. This concluded the first topic and the students were able to take away important information on booking but also on intangible assets, such as bitcoin.

After the lunch break, the second topic (Non financial Information, CSR and Ethics in the Digital Era) and the related case study were presented to us in the plenary session. First, we received general information about Non financial Reporting, more specifically about CSR and its Directive 2014/95/EU. The first task was to compare the EU directive with the implementation in the respective countries. For this, the national teams got together and compared the directive with the implemented law in their country. We were provided with an Excel file in which various facts were listed. We selected these from both the European directive and the national law and compared them. Presentations were prepared to give the other students an insight into the respective national laws and to show how they were implemented and which agreements and discrepancies occurred. It turns out that in some countries there are deviations from the EU Directive, which is due to the fact that an EU Directive is not directly effective and binding. The directive must first be implemented by national legislation to become effective, and it is up to the individual member states how they implement the directive, which is exactly what the case study made clear to us. It was interesting to have the different implementations explained in more detail.

DAY 3

In the morning, we got together in international teams to work on the second sub-task in the topic area of non-financial statements. We formed a total of four international groups and looked at one company assigned to us within each group.

The four companies were each large and important companies from four of the participating countries. We were also provided with an Excel file for this task. In this file, different topics were listed that were to be covered by the non-financial statements of the companies.

So we took a closer look at the non-financial statements of the companies and searched for the different topics such as environment, employees (diversification; share of women), stakeholder information, etc. The groups finally presented their companies. Finally, the groups each

presented their company and how well they covered each topic. This concluded the second topic area (Non financial Information, CSR and Ethics in the Digital Era) and we students were able to take away new knowledge in this regard.

After the lunch break, all students gathered in the Plenary Session to learn about Case 3. For this, we were introduced to the field of Taxation in digitalization Era. Digitalisation is advancing at an ever faster pace and the digital economy is becoming more and more of an economy in itself. New highly digital business models have emerged and parts of traditional business models are also becoming increasingly digital. Digitalisation enables the global exchange of information and the sale of goods and services and challenges existing international tax rules. It is also accompanied by intensified problems of profit reduction and profit shifting, and to counteract this development the OECD has drawn up a BEPS catalogue of measures. In order to familiarise ourselves with this and the national rules, our first task involved research in national teams on the following four questions:

- Review the provided EC&OECD documents and describe the rules against tax avoidance practices and digital tax policies
- Analyse how these rules are implemented in your country's national regulation
- Which country/ies in your group have the most favourable corporate tax considerations?
- Are there advantages for fintech ecosystem in that country? If yes, what are they?

We researched these questions until the end of the day and presented our preliminary or final results.

DAY 4

In the morning we went back to our groups and continued to work on the different tasks. Again, we were asked to do a lot. Calculating the tax advantages and disadvantages in the different European countries with the help of an Excel file turned out to be more complicated than we had thought. Some points that the template had covered, we as a group had not really considered. With good teamwork and after some discussions, we managed to come up with a plausible calculation.

Afterwards, the different approaches and legal bases were presented and explained by the different national teams.

The country with the lowest withholding tax rate in the EU is by far Hungary. However, there are other points that should not be forgotten when making a decision. We noticed that Austria is in the middle of the field in terms of tax rates, but has other advantages such as good infrastructure or connections to other countries.

After the presentations, it was already time for the lunch break.

Case 4:

In the afternoon plenary session, Klaus Henselmann (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany) introduced a new topic and the last one for this week. This time it was about Big Data and Audit. Nowadays there is a lot of data to analyse in order to get information. This also brings about a change for auditing. This is because the traditional audit approach, which relies on the auditor bringing in their personal experience to review a company's processes and policies, needs to be adapted to the new possibilities. New audit procedures can be developed through software-based systems, analytical algorithms and artificial intelligence, making the traditional auditor more efficient, faster, more reliable but also cheaper.

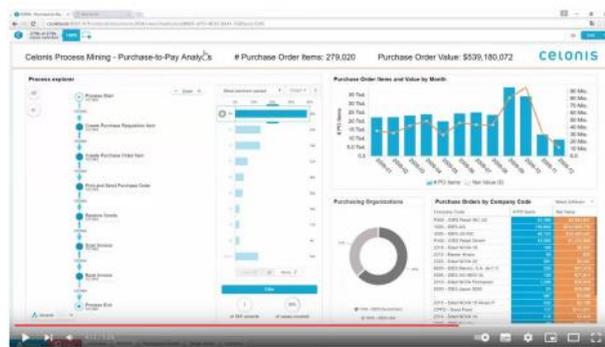
It is precisely around these new possibilities and procedures in auditing that our case study deals with, in order to introduce us to the new technology. First, the case study included theoretical knowledge to familiarise us with process audit, P2P and process mining.

To be able to apply our knowledge in practice on the next day, we received an introduction to the Celonis programme at the end. This process mining software makes it possible to discover real processes from the data of a company (e.g. from ERP systems) and to compare them with planned processes.

A. 4. Process mining

Task:

In the following word puzzle you can find nine words related to process mining, which were mentioned throughout the introductory part. Find them and try to remember their meaning.



DAY 5

Also on the last day of the project, we worked on the last case study of the week. Even though there were a few minor organisational difficulties at the beginning, we were able to apply our new knowledge about process mining and the associated work with the Celonis programme in the morning. For this purpose, we were provided with real company data from a company that is supported and advised by EY Germany. With this data and the support of the German team, we were able to analyse and present various issues with Celonis.

As the programme was new to all of us, it was quite a challenge. With the help of the other students and the good instructions and assistance of the teachers, we were able to more or less master all the questions.

After the last lunch break, there was a final plenary session attended by all participants and organisers. The main actors of the week said goodbye and thanked all participants.

CONCLUSION

All in all, it was an exhausting, demanding but also exciting and instructive week for us as Team Austria.

We would like to thank our LV leaders, Univ.-Ass. Sabine Graschitz, PhD, Univ.-Ass. Simona Holzkecht, MSc, Univ.-Ass. Irina Hosp, MSc and last but not least to Univ.-Prof. Dr. Rudolf Steckel, who made it possible for us to participate in the project in the course of our Master's studies and ensured that we were able to work under the best possible conditions and expand our knowledge.

