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## Aspects Regarding the Organization and Functioning of the Student Entrepreneurial Societies (SES) in Higher Education System from Romania

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**Abstract:** Student Entrepreneurial Societies (SES), as structures without legal personality, created at the level of higher education institutions in Romania, represent a system of support, development and encouragement of entrepreneurship in the university environment, in order to organize activities that ensure acquiring and development of entrepreneurial skills of students and graduates of higher education. By these entities it is wanted to change the way of thinking of students to look at entrepreneurship as a career option by analyzing their own qualities as entrepreneurs, stimulating interest in entrepreneurship, in order to transform their profile of job seekers into job creators by providing the necessary tools to substantiate specific notions in the field of entrepreneurship, constantly updated to changes in the economic environment.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship; entrepreneur student; job creators; job seekers

### 1. Introduction

Student Entrepreneurial Societies (SES) were established in 2017 based on OM no. 3262/2017<sup>4</sup> and have the mission of creating a favorable environment and a complementary framework for supporting and developing the entrepreneurial spirit of students from all educational cycles, including in among their own graduates from the last 3 years.

The Ministry of Education finances Romanian universities through the Fund for Institutional Development (FID) in several directions<sup>5, 6</sup>: increasing social equity and access to higher education; internationalization of higher education in Romania; ensuring the proper functioning of university botanical gardens, teaching stations, practice bases and other infrastructures to support teaching activities within universities; improving the quality of teaching activity; supporting research excellence in universities, as well as supporting the activities of student entrepreneurial societies (SES) within universities.

A student entrepreneurial society has the following main attributions<sup>4</sup>: realization of informative materials as support for students in the elaboration and development of business plans and financing

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<sup>4</sup> Monitorul Oficial nr. 138 (2017). *Web page*. <https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/ORDIN%203262-2017.pdf>, date: 18.05.2021

<sup>5</sup> Consiliul Național pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior (CNFIS) (2021). *Web page*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnfis.ro/competitia-fdi-2021/>, date: 18.05.2021

<sup>6</sup> Consiliul Național pentru Finanțarea Învățământului Superior (CNFIS) (2021). *Web page*. Retrieved from [http://www.cnfis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pachet-informatii-FDI-2021\\_15032021.pdf](http://www.cnfis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Pachet-informatii-FDI-2021_15032021.pdf), date: 21.05.2021.



Source: UDiManager platform (2021)

UDiManager is a platform that facilitates the implementation of research and development project calls, being an important instrument in reducing administrative burden in public research and development funding process. After connecting to the platform, the main page will contain the following information such as: short information about the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, information about the user and changing the password, general description of the programs of the National Plan for Research-Development and Innovation, submitted Projects, statistics on managed calls, user guides of the online funding application platform, terms and conditions of using the platform and contact details for technical support<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. Student Entrepreneurial Societies in Romania

### 2.1. SES-UGAL

In Romania, there are several student entrepreneurial societies implemented at the level of each university. Among them is the student entrepreneurial society within the Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, called SES-UGAL (in Romanian - SAS-UGAL), figure 2.



**Figure 2. Logo of SES-UGAL**

Source: Find Global (2021)

Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, benefited between 2017 and 2020 from 4 projects won through national competition. Through the FID 2021 competition concluded in May 2021, the university received a new funding for SES-UGAL.

SES-UGAL has as purpose to organize activities that ensure the acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills of students and graduates of Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, for establishment of companies, especially start-ups or spin-offs<sup>1</sup>.

SES-UGAL activity is addresses to the students of the higher education institution in which it operates, regardless of the study program on which they attend or education form, including students coming to study through mobility programs and for graduated students in the first 3 years after graduation. SES-UGAL is established for an indeterminate period and is leading by an Executive Council which consists of 9 members of which: four of them are representatives of the teaching staff from the Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, two are representatives from the local business environment and three of them are representatives of students and graduates of the Dunarea de Jos University of Galati<sup>1</sup>.

SES-UGAL benefits from the competitive advantage conferred by the quality of the Dunarea de Jos University of Galați as a member of European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), through which it can facilitate the interchange of good practices with other members of the foundation (business faculties around the world), regarding the activities to support entrepreneurial business. The society aims to attract students motivated and constantly concerned with their personal and professional

<sup>1</sup> Ministerul Educației Naționale, Universitatea „Dunărea De Jos” din Galați (2017). *Web page*. Retrieved from [http://www.ugal.ro/files/hotarari/hs/2017/07\\_09\\_anexa\\_2\\_hs\\_77\\_Metodologie\\_SAS-UGAL.pdf](http://www.ugal.ro/files/hotarari/hs/2017/07_09_anexa_2_hs_77_Metodologie_SAS-UGAL.pdf), date: 24.05.2021.

development, by providing the tools necessary to substantiate the notions of general interest in entrepreneurship, constantly updated with changes in the economic environment<sup>1</sup>.

SES-UGAL provides students with viable information, which they can use in forming their own ideas about entrepreneurship and economic market requirements. In this sense, these informations can be obtained through concrete actions such as: direct meetings between students and former students (current entrepreneurs and current employees); job fairs, where current students have the opportunity to learn how to recruit future employees; entrepreneurial speeches at the beginning of each academic year, holidays of the faculties or festive courses<sup>1</sup>.

Since the establishment of the society, over time, SES-UGAL has achieved several activities, such as:

- the initiation program Common skills: Entrepreneurial skills and the training program Expert access to European structural and cohesion funds, figure 3, both programs being authorized by the National Authority for Qualifications;



**Figure 3. Poster of Expert Access to European Structural and cohesion Funds Training Program**

*Source: CNFIS-FDI-2018-0132, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati (2018)*

- organization and development of workshops and mentoring activities: HEInnovate workshop-self-assessment tool of the Entrepreneurial University; HEInnovate is a self-assessment tool for higher education institutions wishing to explore their innovative potential, a guide that involves setting priorities and planning actions in 7 key areas. With the help of HEInnovate, students will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the university, but also the main challenges or obstacles related to the needs in the field of entrepreneurship, on the 7 dimensions of the HEInnovate tool<sup>1</sup>.

- entrepreneurial career counseling and guidance activities correlated with mentoring sessions at the Career Counseling and Guidance Center of Dunarea de Jos University of Galati;

<sup>1</sup> Universitatea „Dunărea De Jos” din Galați, Facultatea de Economie și Administrarea Afacerilor (2019). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://feaa.ugal.ro/competitia-future-makers-cu-premii-de-20-000-de-euro-vine-la-galati/>, date: 15.05.2021.

- supporting the activity of simulated companies (training courses with over 100 students) - reactivation of 3 simulated companies from those previously created within the „SIMPRACT” project (POSDRU/160/2.1/S/138113).
- realization of rebrandings of companies, through new visual identities;
- elaboration of a service catalog of a database with other simulated companies from Romania (ROCT network, figure 4) and from other countries (EUROPEN PEN International network) and realization of commercial sale-purchase transactions with other simulated companies;



**Figure 4. ROCT Network**

Source: <http://www.roct.ro/>

- the organization of the second edition of Future Makers entrepreneurship workshop, in which discussions were held about future trends, as well as how future entrepreneurs can generate sustainable business ideas, figure 5.



**Figure 5. Future Makers Entrepreneurship Workshop**

Source: <https://futuremakers.ro/>

During this workshop, a business idea competition was launched with prizes of 20000 euros. At the end, 50 finalist ideas will be selected from all the applications received in the competition which is held at national level in over 20 cities. For 3 months, they will enter in the incubation program where they will receive support to move to the next stage of developing the idea or business plan<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Universitatea „Dunărea De Jos” din Galați, Facultatea de Economie și Administrarea Afacerilor (2019). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://feaa.ugal.ro/competitia-future-makers-cu-premiu-de-20-000-de-euro-vine-la-galati/>, date: 15.05.2021.

## 2.2. SES-UTCB

Another student entrepreneurial society is the one within the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest - SES-UTCB, figure 6.



**Figure 6. Logo of SES-UTCB**

*Source: Student Entrepreneurial Society, Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest (2019)*

The mission of this society is to create a favorable environment for supporting the entrepreneurial spirit of the students from this University from all educational cycles, including among its own graduates from the last three years<sup>1</sup>.

Through its actions, the Student Entrepreneurial Society of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest aims to raise awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities, self-employment and promote a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial culture among students.

SES-UTCB is led by an executive council, approved by the Senate of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest and consists of 9 members of which 7 are professors, proposed by the representatives of each faculty of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest, a representative student, which is part of the representative organization at the level of university and a representative of the industry entrepreneurs<sup>2</sup>.

The financial resources of SES - UTCB are<sup>2</sup>: sponsorship from industry collaborators; resources obtained from the consolidated budget of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest on the institutional development component; non-reimbursable funds and extrabudgetary resources attracted by the University.

Since the establishment of the society, SES-UTCB has achieved several activities, including the launch of the project „Cultivating Entrepreneurial Skills - CLAR CNFIS-FDI-2019-0420”. The main objective of this project is to encourage, support and develop the entrepreneurial culture among the students and graduates of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest. The realized activities within the project were the SES-UTCB summer school, the project management course and a business plan competition „Constructor AntREprEnoR - CAREER”, addressed to candidates who are part of the target group of the project „Cultivating Entrepreneurial Skills - CLAR CNFIS-FDI-2019-0420”, figure 7.

<sup>1</sup> Societatea Antreprenorială Studențească, Universitatea Tehnică de Construcții București (2019). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://utcb.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ROF-SAS-UTCB.pdf>, date: 16.05.2021.

<sup>2</sup> Societatea Antreprenorială Studențească, Universitatea Tehnică de Construcții București (2019). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://utcb.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ROF-SAS-UTCB.pdf>, date: 16.05.2021.



**Figure 7. „Constructor AntREprEnoR - CAREER” Business Plan Competition**

*Source: Student Entrepreneurial Society, Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest (2019)*

In 2020 the first start-up was launch among students or graduates of the Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest by „Cultivating Entrepreneurial Skills - CLAR 2.0” project, figure 8.



**Figure 8. „Cultivating Entrepreneurial Skills - CLAR 2.0” Project**

*Source: Student Entrepreneurial Society, Technical University of Constructions from Bucharest (2019)*

The objectives of the project are the development of skills specific to entrepreneurial and managerial activities for 60 students and graduates of the Technical University of Constructions Bucharest, facilitating communication of students and graduates with the private environment and with those from other universities, as well as organizing an awareness campaign on the project activities among students and graduates on online and offline communication channels, throughout the project<sup>1</sup>.

Within this project, a business plan competition was launched, in which 3 business plans were selected, in order to reward them, respectively by offering support in the eventual establishment of the society<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.3. SES-UPT

Another student entrepreneurial society is the one within the Polytechnic University from Timisoara - SES-UPT, figure 9.

<sup>1</sup> Societatea Antreprenorială Studențească, Universitatea Tehnică de Construcții București (2020). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://utcb.ro/cultivarea-abilitatilor-antreprenoriale-2-0-clar-2-0-cnfi-fdi-2020-0379/>, date: 17.05.2021.

<sup>2</sup> Societatea Antreprenorială Studențească, Universitatea Tehnică de Construcții București (2020). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://utcb.ro/cultivarea-abilitatilor-antreprenoriale-2-0-clar-2-0-cnfi-fdi-2020-0379/>, date: 17.05.2021.



**Figure 9. Logo of SES-UPT**

*Source: SAS-UPT (2020)*

The Student Entrepreneurial Society from Timisoara aims to organize activities to ensure the development of entrepreneurial skills of students and graduates of the university, as well as providing the necessary support for university functioning in an entrepreneurial concept based on a good governance<sup>1</sup>.

The society is formed for an indefinite period and is led by an executive council, approved by the Polytechnic University from Timisoara Senate consisting of 9 members, of which 4 are professors, proposed by the representatives of each faculty of the Polytechnic University from Timisoara, 3 representative of students and 2 representative of the economic environment<sup>2</sup>.

Among the activities realized within the student entrepreneurial society from Timisoara is also the Future Makers entrepreneurship workshop, figure 10, in which students worked on the development of the business model, created a space for conversation about how different industries will evolve and what types of solutions must be built today which will be sustainable in the future and participate at the business idea competition where, the selected ideas received support for the development of the business plan<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 10 Future Makers Entrepreneurship Workshop**

*Source: Replica Editorial (2019)*

Other activities organized by SES-UPT are the realization of 2 workshops, namely: ENTREPRENOR 21 - Spring Edition and Start up Your Future, in which various successful entrepreneurs were invited, who provided information about the steps necessary to start a successful business, developing a business plan, as well as financing solutions and business implementation strategies, figure 11.

<sup>1</sup> Societatea Antreprenorială Studentească, Universitatea Politehnică Timișoara (2017). *Web page*. Retrieved from [http://www.upt.ro/img/files/hs/2017/08.06.2017/HS\\_192\\_08.06.2017\\_Regulament\\_Societatea\\_Antreprenoriala\\_Studenteasca.pdf](http://www.upt.ro/img/files/hs/2017/08.06.2017/HS_192_08.06.2017_Regulament_Societatea_Antreprenoriala_Studenteasca.pdf), date: 20.05.2021.

<sup>2</sup> Redacția Replica (2019). *Web page*. Retrieved from <https://www.replicahd.ro/future-makers-concurs-cu-premii-de-20-000-de-euro-pentru-tinerii-pasionati-de-antreprenoriat/>, date: 20.05.2021.





**Figure 11. ANTEPRENOR 21 - Spring Edition and Start up Your Future workshops**

Sources: *Convention of Polytechnic Student Organizations (COSPol) (2019) and Student Entrepreneurial Society InoHubUPT (2021)*

### 3. Development of the Student Entrepreneurial Societies

In the future, the student entrepreneurial societies want to implement:

- business incubators, which are organizations that help entrepreneurs to capitalize their ideas and even establish new businesses;
- science parks, which are organizations established by universities and research and development units for the launch of companies that will use new technologies and for the transfer of technologies between production and research units;
- research parks, located on the premises of universities or of research institutes where basic or applied scientific research is realized out the professors and students;
- technology centers and parks, created for companies that use new technologies, especially in the field of research and development and develop production, service and sales activities and are, at the same time, centers of innovation in support of newly established companies;
- spin-offs, which are businesses initiated by the university professors, researchers from universities, graduates or people from outside the universities who commercialize the results obtained from the research realized in universities.

### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, student entrepreneurial societies have the role of supporting, developing and encouraging entrepreneurship among students and graduates of higher education institutions in Romania and have as objectives the organization and development of activities to promote entrepreneurship. These societies want to represent for students, in a non-formal and friendly way, a place where their ideas take shape and entrepreneurial initiatives are supported and also to change the way students think to look at entrepreneurship as a career option in the sense of transforming their profile of job seekers into job creators.

### 5. Acknowledgement

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