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POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education plays an essential role in society, creating new knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. Main processes developing in recent years in the field of education are associated with its modernization, internationalization and partnership between the educational institutions. The state of the external environment globally and the opportunities met by the educational institutions to respond to the challenges are represented.

Keywords: higher education, modernization, internationalizations, co-operation.

Higher education plays an essential role in society, creating new knowledge, transferring it to students and fostering innovation. EU-level actions help higher education institutions throughout Europe in their efforts to modernise, both in terms of the courses they offer and the way they operate [1].

For example, Europe has around 4 000 higher education institutions, with over 19 million students and 1.5 million staff. Some European universities are among the best in the world, but, overall, potential is not being fully realised [1]. Curricula are not always up to date, not enough young people go to university, and not enough adults have ever attended university. European universities often lack the management tools and funding to match their ambitions.

National governments are responsible for their education and training systems and individual universities organise their own curricula. However, the challenges facing higher education are similar across the EU and there are clear advantages in working together.

The aim of the current report is to present the possibilities of the educational institutions to respond to the challenges of the external environment in a global aspect.

New terms of society and education development

Education is changing in a way so as to succeed in solving its basic task which is: to prepare individuals with knowledge and skills in order to facilitate their adaptation to the new dynamics of living in society. This new evolution places humanity in the very center of development while education is no longer a closed system. It must perform a new function, characterized with an overall change as the process of globalization changes the political and economical map of the world. An open educational space provides numerable promising prospects and renders our diversities at the same time, however requires significant efforts to overcome the barriers and to create common educational frame that stimulates mobility and even closer collaboration.

The basic processes that develop in the field of education lately are connected with its upgrading, internationalization and partnership between the educational institutions. The purpose is to respond properly to the constantly changing labor market conditions and to set pre-conditions to create new knowledge, skills and competences to occupy new working positions.

The subjects of modernization and internationalization of higher education are multi-layer, interrelated, dynamic and could hardly be considered as separate subject-matters.

The processes of modernization of national educational systems are intrinsically linked with the processes of binding the world educational system in the contexts of globalized world exchange. It particularly applies to the state-members of EU after the Bologna process and adopting the Europe 2020 strategy.

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The modern higher education should keep up with the extremely rapidly growing business environment and the emerging of entirely new concepts and technologies. Precisely this environment requires higher education to make changes, leading to fast and effective adaptation to the new conditions.

The factors of the environment, influencing higher education are:

- Worldeconomy –rapid technology change
- New qualification world market needs
- Activating human mobility and migration processes
- Mass character of higher education and risk of reducing quality
- Intensifying competition of educational services in the world market

The trends in higher education development are to increase the quality of teaching and conducting courses in accordance with the new needs in the competitive market economy that is based on knowledge.

The new aims of higher education are to give equal start to people so they could:

- To educate in order to:
 - Learn to live together in the new global and borderless world;
 - Prepare themselves for fruitful labor activities;
 - Learn to solve practical tasks jointly;
 - Self-improvement;
 - Adapt to the radical and rapid changes in the surrounding world.
- To be capable of self development:
 - Individual and collective habits;
 - Ability of individual thinking;
 - Ability to orient in the surrounding world;
 - Ability to creative thinking.

The necessity of total quality management of the educational process is needed for the successful functioning of universities (“total quality management”, TQM). This concept aims at comprising all cells of the university structure without exception in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Another, extremely important factor for the development of education and universities is globalization. The reasons for that could be found in:

- Disappearing of the educational barriers between countries;
- Revealing of new educational markets;
- Competitionyieldsexclusivedimensions;
- Educationalresources andpeoplemovingbetweencountries withhigh speed;
- Internetcreates opportunitiesfor virtualeducation, regardless ofgeographic location. Information revolutionis aradical change inthe instrumentalbase,methods of transmissionand storage ofinformationavailablefor the activepart of the population.

All thisinevitablycreatespreconditionsfor the development ofthe internationalization ofuniversities. As maincharacteristics ofinternationalizationcan be identified [4]:

- Mutual recognition ofuniversity diplomasandspecializationsassessments;
- Development ofinternationalforms for assessing the quality ofthe educational process;
- Mobilityof students, teachersand administrative staff;
- Remote training area without limits;
- Creating andactive usage of interactivenetworks;
- Internationalization ofthe curriculumthroughmutual participation of the partner institutions;

- Increasing the impact of international trade unions on the structure and content of curricula as well as on criteria for professional training;
- International science projects;

Internationalization of universities is being considered as an instrument for intensifying the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. Competition on the global stage needs to be complemented by partnerships with other regions of the world. Transnational education should follow European standards for quality and should not be contrary to the Guidelines for Quality Assurance of UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The advantages of this process are expressed in pooling resources, avoiding duplication, extending of the scientific research.

The essence of the Bologna process [2] for the internationalization of universities is expressed in:

- Creating of a European Higher Education Area;
- Creating of European educational space.

The main objectives that Bologna sets [2]:

- Mobility of students and teachers, leading to transnational education;
- Attractiveness of education from the perspective of European employers;
- Competitiveness of European education in the international market of educational services.

The main tasks to achieve the objectives of the Bologna process are:

- Increasing the competitiveness of European higher education;
- Achieving adequacy between higher education and social needs;
- Increased academic and professional mobility;
- Achieving compatibility and comparability of diplomas, degrees, and qualifications;
- Diversification of educational structures, programs, forms of training, personalization of educational trajectories;
- Establishing systems with high academic standards and high quality higher education;
- Optimization of preparation periods and resource savings;
- Establishing culture in society for lifelong learning;
- Increasing the prestige of European higher education and expanding its export potential.

The integrated strategy for internationalization is a precondition for reconsideration and restructuring of the international portfolio of each university. Implementation of the international dimension in the activities of universities increases their attractiveness and competitiveness, thus enriching the academic mission, expanding international collaboration and eventually leading to higher quality of education, research and services. Besides all this there are a number of benefits in terms of their added value to the social dimension.

Internationalization of universities “don not kill” national education and culture, but it expands and provides opportunities for young people from other cultures to touch it.

Its essence lies in overcoming the students’ separation as national and foreign.

Particularly significant role in supporting the efforts of national education systems plays the European Commission. This is done in the following ways:

- By working closely with policy-makers from Member States to help them develop their higher education policies. The Commission published a modernisation agenda for higher education in 2011, identifying five priority reform areas for action.

- The Commission actively supports the Bologna Process [2], the inter-governmental process which promotes reforms in higher education with 47 countries, leading to establishing a ‘European Higher Education Area’.

• By encouraging the exchange of examples of good policy practice between different countries – in particular, it gathers together a group of national experts – the 'cluster' on the modernisation of higher education [5] – to share experiences and look at common challenges.

• The Erasmus Programme funds around 200 000 students every year to study or work abroad, along with other projects to increase co-operation between higher education institutions and other relevant institutions [6].

• The Commission launches studies on specific areas relevant to higher education policy by gathering, analysing and sharing information on the state of play across Europe.

Terms for collaboration between educational institutions

In the educational and training area the partnership approach in fact means active elaborating of strategies for skills development not simply their “providing”.

To be sustainable, partnerships must be built on clear objectives and to be a structural element in policy carrying out. They should involve all parties concerned, including representatives of teachers' organizations, social partners and student organizations.

Following all the trends for development in European education and carrying out the Bologna priorities, essential condition for the implementation of the cooperation between the institutions is the availability of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) [7] and National Qualification Frameworks. The objectives are: separately and clearly defining of different levels results;

arranging of educational degrees and quality of qualifications; informing civil society about the steps in the process of lifelong learning and the possibilities for professional career; providing equal access to education; transparency and comparability of qualifications; improving the processes of recognition of certificates and qualifications; improving the quality of educational services; opening the national qualification systems; promoting the European dimension of higher education; encouraging attractiveness of European higher education.

The cooperation between universities, respectively the internationalization of higher education is facilitated and by applying the principles of the European credit transfer system (ECTS) [8]. European credit transfer system (ECTS) was created by the Commission of the European Community in order to provide common procedures to guarantee academic recognition of studies for students abroad.

ECTS is a system for accumulation and transfer of credits learner-centered, based on the transparency of training outcomes and the process of training. It is aimed at supporting planning, providing, assessing, recognizing and asserting of qualifications and training units, as well as of student mobility. ECTS is widely used in the system of official higher education and can be applied to other lifelong learning activities.

ECTS is based on the principles of mutual trust and на взаємнотодовірені coherence between partner institutions expressed in:

- Information exchange (regarding syllabus and students' workload);
- Mutual agreement (between partner institutions and students);
- Using ECTS-credits for to denote the workload of the students studying a particular discipline or course.

Opportunities for cooperation between educational institutions

ERASMUS [9] helps Europe's universities and other institutions to work together towards modernising curricula, funding and the governance of higher education. International exchanges with ERASMUS have also contributed to more openness and internationalisation. ERASMUS 'mobility' actions for staff and students have greatly helped in internationalising and modernising Europe's higher education institutions. The programme also supports a number of different types of co-operation activities between higher education institutions and

businesses from different countries, to further drive innovation in the sector: *Academic Networks*: forums for the exchange of best practice, focused on specific academic disciplines or organisational aspects; there must be at least twenty-five partners; *Accompanying measures*: promote the objectives and results of ERASMUS projects, in areas such as information and communication activities, thematic monitoring and dissemination and exploitation; *Preparatory visits*: enable institutions to plan mobility actions, agreements for ERASMUS student and staff exchanges, and co-operation programmes.

The ERASMUS programme is open to all types of higher education institutions, all academic disciplines and all levels of higher education study, up to and including doctorates.

The partnership between education, the economic sector and scientific research, unions such as the knowledge unions, sector unions of skills and partnership activities under the "Maria Skłodowska-Curie" will be supported by the submitted program "Erasmus for All" for the period 2014 – 2020 [10], as well as "Horizon 2020" [11], in order to adapt education and training systems to the needs of enterprises.

Mobility strategy 2020 for EHEA has the following main objectives:

- At least 20% of graduates have participated in a kind of mobility;
- To adopt national strategies for internationalization and mobility or policies with specific and measurable goals;
- To develop new statistical indicators and indicators for measurement of mobility: mobility outside the Europe Higher Education Area (credits and degrees); for the different forms of mobility; mobility of young researchers and other academic staff, about the social dimensions of mobility;
- To open higher education systems to better balanced mobility in the Europe Higher Education Area through joint educational programs, multilingual summer schools and regional forms of cooperation;
- To increase mobility and balance with countries outside the Europe Higher Education Area.

Joint educational programs

Cooperative education programs are characterized by:

- Initiating of at least two higher education institutions, by agreement, as it is the creation of a consortium;
- Participants in the agreement/consortium must be accredited in accordance with national legislation;
- The program must be accredited in accordance with the national legislation of each participant/ or only in one of parties;
- Part of the training must be carried out in at least two universities- participants in the consortium;
- They are mainly established in the second and third cycle;
- Being encouraged as a key instrument for mobility and internationalization of higher.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in joint educational programs from 2007-2500 in the Europe Higher Education Area. In 1/4 of the EU countries, over 50% of higher education schools participate in consortia and other groups that offer joint educational programs. The leading universities are in Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands [12].

Completion of a joint educational program can be certified with:

- Joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas;
- Two or more national diplomas, depending on the nationality of the educational institutions;
- Joint (total) degree (joint degree).

The joint degree is a document, signed by university representatives (rectors, presidents and others) and the institutions that have formed a joint educational program and it replaces the national diploma. Not necessarily the joint educational program leads to the acquisition of joint degrees.

According to the communique of EC, April 2012 in Bucharest [13] the most important effort to overcome the crisis should be associated with an investment in higher education. The purposes hereinafter are – quality higher education for all; getting better employability; mobility for better acquisition of knowledge and skills in all levels of education.

Mobility is a way to better acquisition of knowledge:

- Mobility should become one of the purposes of higher education; thus will be implemented internationalization of education of students;
- Transferability of grants and student loans is being encouraged;
- Academic and professional recognition (incl. Non-formal education) are an important part of mobility success;
- The work towards the automatic recognition of comparable degrees will continue, it will be a long-term goal of European Education Area;
- National legislations shall be revised, that is not aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- Solutions are being sought for balancing mobility;
- The disclosure of more joint programs will be encouraged and national barriers will be overcome;
- Cooperation with other regions is a key factor for the development of European educational area and will be encouraged.

Another possibility for cooperation in the field of education has found popularity in recent years is the educational franchise. Universities may open branches abroad and may unite. Modern practices of higher education in terms of today's globalizing world, however, are oriented towards more flexible and operational models of cross-border activity where in the academic, research, design and innovation are "exported" across national borders.

The scope of the right of association of universities – it applies not only to scientific and applied research and to improve the qualification of graduates, but also to activities related to training for bachelor, master and doctor degree. Since 2011, Bulgaria with changes in the Higher education law, this issue was settled [14].

Carrying out the various forms of collaboration between educational institutions often encounters legal problems of different kinds, related to national legal acts of the partner countries.

Hardship and efforts, however, were worth as processes of modernization and internationalization carry within themselves significant advantages. Eventually, it is via these processes higher education area will become a transnational education.

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МОЖЛИВОСТІ МІЖНАРОДНОГО СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВА У ВИЩІЙ ОСВІТІ

Вища освіта відіграє важливу роль у суспільстві, створюючи нові знання і передаючи їх студентам, а також стимулюючи інноваційну діяльність. Основні процеси, що розвиваються в останні роки в галузі освіти, пов'язані з його модернізацією, інтернаціоналізацією і партнерськими відносинами між навчальними закладами. Представлені стан зовнішнього середовища в глобальному аспекті й можливості, які мають освітні установи для вирішення завдань з реагування на виклики сучасності.

Ключові слова: вища освіта, модернізація, інтернаціоналізація, співробітництво.

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ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА В ВЫСШЕМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

Высшее образование играет важную роль в обществе, создавая новые знания передавая их студентам, а также стимулируя инновационную деятельность. Основные процессы, которые развиваются последние годы в области образования, связаны с его модернизацией, интернационализацией и партнерскими отношениями между учебными заведениями. Представлены состояние внешней среды в глобальном аспекте и возможности, которые имеют образовательные учреждения для решения задачи реагирования на вызовы современности.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, модернизация, интернационализация, сотрудничество.

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