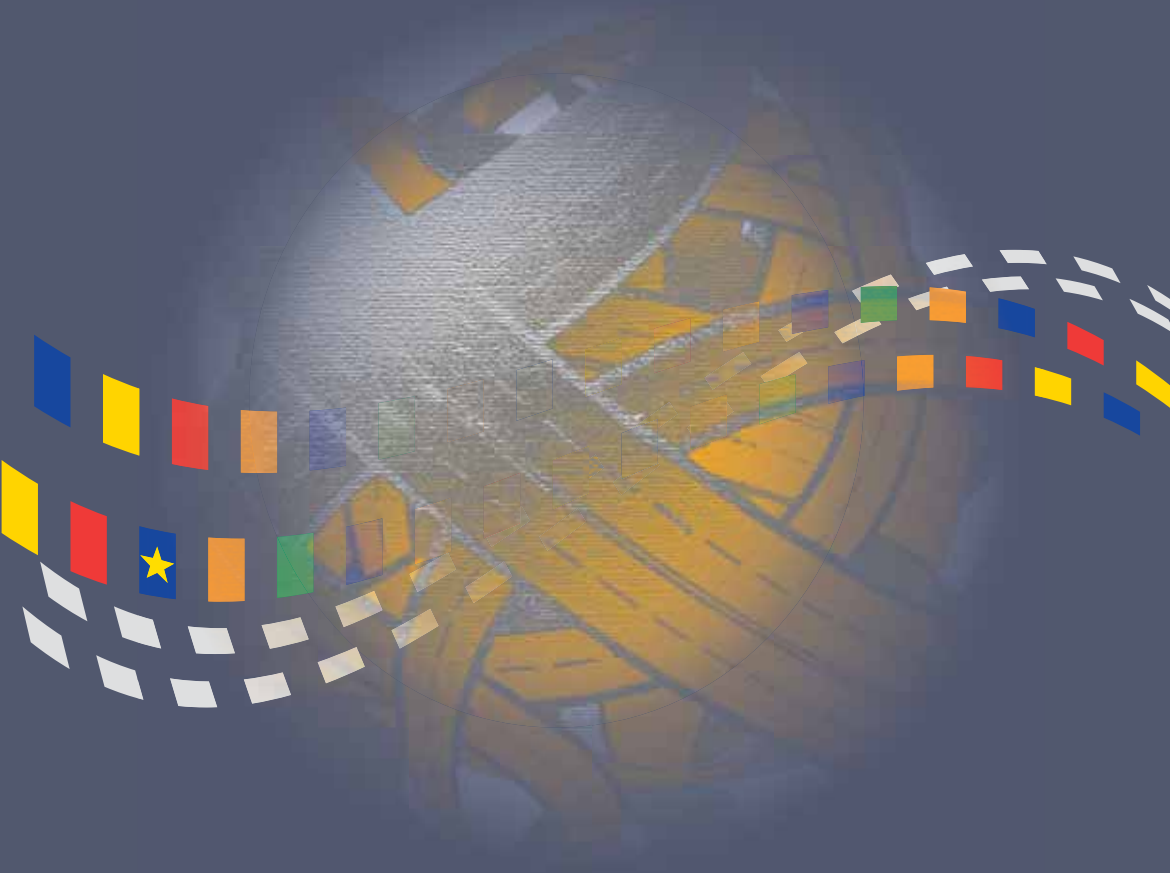
Paths to internationalisation



Higher education policies, trends and strategies in Europe and Slovenia

Klemen Miklavič (Ed.)

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Contents:

About CMEPIUS

CMEPIUS coordinates numerous activities and forms of cooperation devoted to tertiary education. The Centre is thus also the body responsible for one of the support instruments for internationalisation in measures 30[1], 31[2] and 32[3] of the National Higher Education Master Plan 2011-2020 (NPVŠ)[4]. It also helped shape the initiative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MVZT) and members of the National Team of Bologna Experts 2009-2011, that the National Consultation on Higher Education in 2011 should focus on the internationalisation of higher education, and the next generation of National Team of Bologna Experts for the period 2011-2013, which operates within the framework of the project of the European Commission (as a support activity of the European and national higher education area) and coordinated in Slovenia by CMEPIUS, is also focusing on this theme.

CMEPIUS is also the central institution in Slovenia for coordinating European and other (national and regional) programmes of internationalisation and above all institutional cooperation in the sphere of education and training. On the basis of a Decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, it has been operating since October 2003 and, as a public service, performs expert technical and administrative tasks for implementing programmes of the European Communities for education and training and ensuring student mobility. In addition to the basis activity – implementation of the programme of the European Community for Lifelong Learning and thus the most prominent and numerically most extensive forms of international cooperation within the framework of the Erasmus sub-programme and its activities[5] – CMEPIUS has also taken responsibility for other programmes that support and enable international

1 *Measure 30: »Establishing cooperation with the region of the Western Balkans as a case of good practice in the field of regional mobility to 2020.«*

2 *Measure 31: »Removing administrative obstacles and the concentration of sources of financing for international mobility.«*

3 *Measure 32: »Setting up special targetted support for the mobility for Slovene students abroad and also the best foreign students to Slovenia.«*

4 *In terms of content, the Centre has already been performing, extending and supplementing the activities and tasks described in NPVŠ since the very start of its activities.*

5 *Erasmus individual mobility of students for the purpose of study and/or practice, individual mobility of lecturers for the purpose of teaching and staff for the purpose of education, Erasmus intensive programmes (shorter forms of work in the form of summer schools), Erasmus intensive language courses (as language and cultural preparation of students for mobility to a foreign country) etc.*

mobility and international cooperation in performs the tasks of the national structure of the European programme Erasmus Mundus[6], contact and information point of the European programme Tempus[7], the national office of the regional programme of mobility CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies)[8], it provides administrative and expert technical support to MVZT in the coordination of programmes and calls for applications for Bilateral Scholarships awarded by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to foreign students for studies in Slovenia, administrative assistance in coordinating projects of the Slovene Scholarship Fund[9], is responsible for the content and technical maintenance of the Slovene portal for the mobility of researchers of 'EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion' and it coordinates the national network of EURAXESS contact points, heads activities of support to projects of the programme Lifelong Learning – National Team of Bologna Experts and provides information on other European and national calls for applications in the sphere of international cooperation (e.g., EU – ZDA (Atlantis), EU – Canada). CMEPIUS is also involved as an active partner in a consortium of international projects which bring European added

6 *The purpose of the programme Erasmus Mundus is to improve the quality of European higher education (mainly through financing the implementation and provision of scholarships for joint study programmes, promoting the European Union as a centre of excellence of higher education and through cooperation with non-European countries to encourage intercultural dialogue and the development of higher education in these countries.*

7 *European programme of cooperation in the sphere of higher education between Member States of the European Union and countries in their vicinity (countries of the Western Balkans, Eastern European countries, the countries of Central Asia, northern Africa, the Near East and the Russian Federation). Each year, institutions and partnerships composed of institutions from Eurpean and neighbouring countries have the opportunity to obtain funds through Tempus calls for applications, for implementing joint projects for the transfer of knowledge between those taking part in the projects and also for the introduction and implementation of wider planned forms of higher education in neighbouring countries. The programme encourages voluntary reduction of developmental differences between European countries and countries in their vicinity in the sphere of higher education which derive from the Strategy Europe 2020, the Strategy Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (EU 2020) and the Bologna Process.*

8 *'Central European Exchange Program for University Studies'. CEEPUS is a regional programme which began to operate in 1995. The programme establishes and encourages the mobility of students and professors between countries that are entitled to participate in the programme and, at the same time, on the basis of friendly links encourages the formation of joint study programmes. Higher education institutions from Albania, Austria (co-founder), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosova (Priština), Hungary, Macedonia (FYR), Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia (co-founder) are participating in the CEEPUS programme.*

9 *The financial mechanism EEA and the Norwegian financial mechanism (hereinafter NFM/EEA grants). The financial mechanism was set up by the countries of Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway in 2004 for the support of social and economic cohesion in the extended European Economic Area. The mechanism provides support to international cooperation, transnational partnerships and the implementation of mobility for increasing the internationalisation of higher education and research activities between Slovenia and countries of the EEA - EFTA.*

value to the Slovene higher education area and thus higher education institutions. Through its activities (seminars, consultations, workshops, connecting and cooperating with Slovene and European institutions in the sphere of higher education, handbooks, brochures and information) it enables and promotes the institutional cooperation of Slovene higher education institutions (and higher vocational schools) in the European and wider regional and also the world area and thus contributes to its recognition.

On the other hand, through international projects, programmes and exchanges of Slovene higher education institutions that CMEPIUS coordinates in the Slovene higher education area, it brings the new ideas required for development, more and different (new) knowledge and the possibility of transfer and application of foreign cases of good practice into Slovene practice of teaching, research and the operation of a higher education institution.

As coordinator of the European support project of the National Team of Bologna Experts, CMEPIUS regularly looks after the cooperation of Slovene members at international seminars abroad and in Slovenia and thus enables contacts and the exchange of knowledge and experience with foreign experts in the sphere of higher education.

Sonja Mavsar,
coordinator of the National Team of Bologna experts project

Foreword

The inspiration for this publication came from the national consultation on the internationalisation of higher education in Slovenia which took place in Brdo in February 2011. In the following period the idea matured into a proposal for a monograph representing a critical overview of the internationalisation process at Slovenian higher education institutions. The monograph seeks to foster a discussion of the future of higher education and does not pretend to be a scientific book aimed at the research community. The expected readers of this publication range from university teaching staff, students in the social sciences and university leaderships, to policymakers, civil servants, the main stakeholders in higher education and the wider informed public.

The collection of eight articles presents case studies and contemporary discussions concerning the internationalisation of higher education in Europe and globally, with insights into trends and strategies in Slovenia. It addresses several global trends and shifts in modern societies in an attempt to shed light on higher education in the modern societal context. Some authors are particularly sensitive to the consequences of commercially oriented internationalisation strategies, along with concerns stemming from poorly regulated transnational education, global rankings, or the underfunding of public higher education systems. The articles in the book therefore tap into the topical discussion of the interplay of local and national level policy goals and regulatory frameworks, as well as global level higher education markets in which higher education institutions from peripheral, little-known regions often struggle to find a place.

The majority of the contributors, who are all presented at the end of the book, have rich experience in institutional leadership and internationalisation strategy development/implementation. Especially the articles presenting case studies of selected institutions have mostly been left intact by the editor in order to allow the original structure, content and writing style to reveal the approach, level of commitment, discourses used and priorities of the institutional leadership. This inclusive monograph highlights both the principal concerns of the student organisation as well as the views of employers, one of the main stakeholders in higher education.

The editor thanks the authors who honoured their commitment and submitted their articles despite their busy schedules. The CMEPIUS staff deserves special gratitude for their outstanding patience and accuracy with their technical and editorial assistance. The librarian of the Faculty of Education also made a gracious contribution which was invaluable for ensuring that the publication would meet the appropriate standards. Finally, thanks are due to the two reviewers who volunteered with their priceless critiques and suggestions for improvement.

Klemen Miklavič

More Than a Tradition and Ambition: Internationalisation in Higher Education

Hans van Ginkel

Abstract

In this article the importance of internationalisation for the survival and quality of universities and their societies is analysed in depth. Five core processes leading to a change in our societies have a strong impact on the working conditions and future perspectives of universities and the contributions they can make to their society. As a consequence, internationalisation in higher education is a process that goes far beyond student mobility, important as that is. Close co-operation in learning and research programmes lies at the core of the internationalisation of higher education. The quality of international networks to which HE institutions belong indicates their international prestige. A Copernican change has taken place: it is no longer the national system that indicates the quality of an institution; rather, it is the international ranking positions of the individual institutions that indicate the quality of the national system of (higher) education.

Key words: Globalisation, Localisation, Internationalisation, Universities, Glocalization, Knowledge Society, Accreditation, Institutional Assessment, Institutional Integrity

Introduction

Internationalisation is more than a tradition and an ambition: it is a necessity! No country can allow itself to fall behind in the rapid development of our increasingly globalised and knowledge-intensive world. Internationalisation in higher education is about more than just mobility, it is about participation – participation in our dynamic world, in the rapid development of knowledge, creativity and innovation. In this ever more interconnected world, human beings, *individuals* and their *"knowledge",* are and will be the major resource for future social, cultural and economic development. Here participation also means sharing, access

to new knowledge and innovations, new applications that can benefit all of humankind.

Therefore, internationalisation is not just an *add-on* but an essential part of all the activities in higher education and scientific research and their service to society, which is the core business of *"true"* universities. It has been both a tradition and an ambition of all true universities throughout history, with the exception of the age of the *"anomaly of national universities".* This is roughly the century between 1870 and 1970 in Europe: from the time modern states started to organise higher education within their national education and social and economic development policies and when the European Union started its higher education policies with a view to creating *added value* by internationalising higher education institutions and promoting their co-operation in both teaching and research so as to strengthen *"Europe"* and its member states and peoples.

It is a tradition *not* because of the nice gowns and ceremonies, although folklore can be important for bringing people together. It has become a tradition in daily practice as the *crossing of borders* between disciplines, theory and practice, but in particular between countries, offering opportunities to build on each other's work, has proven essential to achieve progress! Standing on each other's shoulders has given opportunities to reach further and move faster. In particular, at present it is also an ambition for good reasons because our world and humankind, like never before, are so strongly interconnected that universities must also be. Former rectors of this distinguished university here in Ljubljana, such as Professor Kralj, have acted from this perspective and contributed much to how Slovenian and European universities function today.

Internationalisation is crucial for the quality of research and its applications, but in particular also for the adequate preparation of new generations of students to play leading roles in a world in which labour markets and, indeed, all economies are regionalising beyond national borders, internationalising and even globalising. And so are trends in society, fashion and culture. Increasingly, all countries need new generations well prepared to participate and share internationally, while still contributing to their own society and country. There lies the importance of internationalisation in higher education for all. The proof

of the pudding of the success of this internationalisation is not simply the numbers involved in mobility programmes, but the extent to which this international orientation leads to broader, stronger and more in-depth co-operation in teaching and research. Programmes that can help understand each other better and that can also help open up a brighter future for all, wherever they may live.

In this contribution, I will explain further why internationalisation in higher education and research is crucial for success in the world of today and tomorrow. I will pay specific attention to the *Copernican change* that has taken place in the (international) positioning of universities, as well as to questions regarding the continued interest of the state and society in universities, issues of relevance and accreditation, the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) as a learning opportunity, and issues of institutional integrity and governance.

A Paradoxical Time for Universities

Universities are going through a very paradoxical time. Never before have the expectations of their potential contributions been so high, and never before have doubts about their quality and performance been so serious and widespread. As a consequence of growing pressures on state budgets, allocations to universities are under strict scrutiny and budget cuts have become a fact of life. *"More for less"* is today's omnipresent reality. At the same time, demands on universities are increasing and becoming ever more diverse, in line with the development of society itself: becoming more and more complex.

The expectations are not the same for all people. Parents hope that through higher education their children will qualify for higher level jobs, with higher prestige and income, ensuring a brighter future and a better quality life. Students hope to find new challenges and new ideas to enjoy a lively and creative environment which will enable them to have an interesting future. Governments hope that universities will do an effective and efficient job in preparing new generations for the needs of the present and future society and labour markets in particular. The money spent on universities should guarantee the adequate availability of study opportunities and teaching programmes of the highest quality,

as well as access to those facilities and programmes for all capable young citizens. However, at the same time, states expect their universities to perform in research at the highest levels of excellence, internationally, and early and effectively contribute the applications of their results to regional and national companies and the economy.

The crucial importance of universities was emphasised at UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, Paris, 1998). For instance:

"…Owing to the Scope and Pace of Change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based, so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations…"

This importance of universities has, in fact, been understood since their early beginnings. To be able to serve their continuously changing societies better and focus their research on the still unknown, based on truly breakthrough thinking, universities have been granted *"academic freedom"* and *"institutional autonomy".* The importance of these principles of the "true" university has been demonstrated many times and was, for instance, acknowledged in the *"Magna Charta of the (European) University"* formulated on the occasion of the 900th Anniversary of Bologna University and signed by the 388 universities present at the main celebration event (Bologna, 1988, see the annex) and by hundreds more since then.

The roles of universities are diverse and they are not always well-understood by "outsiders", the public at large. In general terms, universities are presented as being responsible for the *"development, transfer and preservation of knowledge".* However, this remains quite vague for many and much more pragmatic and functionalistic views are often advocated whereby universities are primarily seen as responsible for the training of teachers and the development of (school) curricula, as well as the training of medical doctors and the provision of top-level healthcare, or also the training of all kinds of professionals and providing knowledge support for legal and administrative systems, industry, business and so on. All of this is true, but at the same time it obscures a clear view of the most *crucial* tasks of universities as *centres of knowledge and culture.* These crucial roles include: (1) sustaining and developing the intellectual base of society itself, the basis for all future development and growth; (2)

promoting human development and security while helping to preserve the cultural identity of society in the age of globalisation; (3) giving inspiration and justified pride to citizens regarding the achievements over time of their own society; and (4) as promoting dialogue and understanding to appreciate and respect cultural diversity. Strengthening internationalisation in higher education is a prerequisite for success in all of these roles.

Core Processes Leading to Change

We are living in a time of profound change in an increasingly interlinked world. The rapid development of improved systems of communication and transport has changed our world from a complex and sometimes chaotic patchwork of territories and borders to a hierarchical system of nodes and channels. The frequency and volume of the exchange of goods and the mobility of people, money and ideas have created a situation in which no one can allow him or herself to live in isolation. Our world is becoming ever more *globalised and knowledge-based.* Our society is getting more complex and heterogeneous, consisting of individuals characterised by *intriguing sets of multiple identities.* Together, we have set out on an unsustainable course, using so many of our planet's natural resources that the future of younger generations is in jeopardy. The pressure on the limited resources that are available is leading to ever greater political tensions about oil, water, fertile soils etc., tensions between the *"haves"* and *"have-nots".*

These changes are both for the better and worse. The positives can also be negatives and the negatives positives. When international terrorism can strike from a great distance, good can also be done over a great distance. Together, we can make the choice to contribute to a better life and a safer world for all – now and for our grandchildren and their children. When we ourselves live in an affluent society we cannot ignore poverty, either in our own society or in poverty-stricken countries. We can no longer ignore the *interlinkages* between globalisation, trade, poverty, development and the environment: the five closely interlinked topics on which the *"World Summit on Sustainable Development"* in Johannesburg rightfully focused (WSSD, 2002). This is what *complexity, diversity and sustainability* are all about: to understand the whole, diverse, complex reality and to act

in appropriate, informed ways. That is where education comes in; also to be aware of our individual responsibilities to contribute, to make responsible choices, to respect other people, nature and diversity. In particular, universities have to play an important role here as they train teachers and in most cases develop curricula.

Five ***"core"*** processes can be distinguished which are leading to profound changes in our world and, therefore, to the working conditions of and in universities:

1. ***Globalisation and Localisation:*** *globalisation* has become an increasingly *complex concept.* However, it is important to realise that it is not a *new process.* Sometimes it appears as if many are completely surprised and as though globalisation has only been around for the last 10 years or so, and this of course is not the case. We only have to think of the *Huns* coming to Hungary or trade routes like the *Silk Road.* Yet the question is *whether the globalisation we are experiencing actually represents something different.* It would seem that there is a tremendous difference in both the *scale* and *pace* of the globalisation process. The principle difference is that the impacts of globalisation are being felt *simultaneously in places across the entire globe.* It is this simultaneity – combined with the speed – which differentiates globalisation, as we know it, from the foreign influences of earlier periods. Modern information and communications technology is the key to the present state of rapid and profound change. In the past, the exchange of ideas required *our actual physical displacement, and "meeting"* people could only be achieved at a *single place* and a *single time.* Instead, we can now interact with many different people in many different places around the world at the same time.
   The major element of globalisation is in fact *the shrinking of distances.* The whole concept of distance has changed in character over time, as clearly explained by F. Braudel, a major exponent of the French school of historians and social and economic scientists, the *Annales.* In his magnificent book on the Mediterranean world in the time of Philip II, he focused ***on the pace and scale*** of that age (Braudel 1972-73). He demonstrated that, over time, the *concepts of space* have altered in value, making the comparison between the time needed for a letter mailed in Venice to arrive in London: at least two weeks in those days, as opposed to a few hours now with an express service. Today, by

using electronic mail we can send our messages *simultaneously* and *instantaneously* to *many* places around the globe. Thanks to modern technology, we may maintain continuous and simultaneous contact with many places and people and, as a result of this shrinking of distances, the *frequency* and *volume* of our contacts have in many respects grown, as have the frequency and volume of trade. Yet how this works out in concrete terms in the economy and in social and cultural life depends very much on the rules and regulations of the sector in society being considered: trade, development, education, health etc.

One of the most important effects of the shrinking of distance is that *we are increasingly functioning at different levels of the geographical scale at the same time.* One of the earlier scientific leaders of the *Annales,* the founder of the *French School* in human geography P. Vidal de la Blache, introduced already in the 1870s the dual concepts of *"vie régionale"* and *"vie nationale"* (Vidal de la Blache 1921; Claval 1964). In those days, life at these two different scale levels at the same time was in fact completely separate. However, in our time, the number of geographical scales has expanded dramatically and *many live at different levels, concurrently.* We can now live and act at a local, provincial, regional, national, international or global level on the same day. Further, there are *networks* at each of these scale levels and, as opposed to other periods in history, on a daily basis people now regularly jump from one scale to the next. In fact, the major challenge facing universities today is to link their activities and contact patterns at the different scale levels from the local to the global with each other in a positive manner. The rapid increase in the frequency and volume of our contacts and international co-operation all around the world have completely changed our opportunities and perspectives. This has simultaneously led to ever stronger interest in the *"roots"* of individuals and the *"identity"* of communities and even nations. Alienation, losing grip on the global, in many cases leads to a strong reaction and greater interest in the *"local",* developments closer to home, at the lower levels of the geographical scale. *Globalisation* is thus only one side of the coin, with localisation on the other. In fact, globalisation and localisation go hand-in-hand: ***globalisation.*** For universities, this means they must increasingly compete at the international, macro-regional, for instance European, and global levels. At the same time, they have to *"root"* themselves more strongly

than ever before in their local, micro-regional and national societies (Van Ginkel 2003).

2. ***Development of the knowledge society:*** the increasing knowledge-intensiveness of society and of science itself are closely linked to the rapidly growing *"pace and space"* of our times. More and more knowledge is being produced continuously. Estimates indicate that the amount of knowledge doubles, now, in *less* than every five years. The *"shelf life"* of knowledge is declining rapidly. American publications cited in the patent rolls in 1975, for instance, were eight years old on average, but only ten years later they were no older than six-and-a-half years. *It is becoming ever more difficult,* consuming ever more time, energy and equipment *to even arrive at the research frontier,* let alone to participate in real *breakthrough research.* This makes it increasingly difficult for universities to perform at the level of global excellence.

   In line with these developments, *average levels of education are also rising.* The whole concept of education is shifting as a result of this knowledge-intensification. Multiple careers and learning throughout the course of one's working life will play an important role. As a consequence, the profile of the student population as well as the learning styles and study programmes of schools and universities must change fundamentally. Internal organisation and external presentation will have to follow. N*etworking, both nationally and internationally,* is needed to be able to provide an adequate response to all of these challenges.

   The *knowledge-intensive economy* is replacing the work-intensive economy and the capital-intensive economy. Henry Etzkowitz (2000) was the first to call attention to what he named *"the Second Academic Revolution"* (also see Van Ginkel 1994-95 and 2005). The Government of the Netherlands was one of those to have already – very early on! – stressed the increasing importance of education and science for our future society: *"Today we are witnessing waves of important discoveries. These are so significant that some people even compare them to those of the first industrial revolution".* This fundamental change seems to be occurring in the newly industrialised countries even far more rapidly than in many developed countries; in this way, the knowledge gap between these two groups of countries seems to be closing rapidly.

   Indeed, ***education and science themselves have also become highly***

knowledge-intensive. Managing education, knowledge, processing other people's research, and staying abreast of development elsewhere are all becoming increasingly important. The profession of *knowledge-broker* is getting ever more important. Whole infrastructures are changing and this process even seems to be accelerating quickly. Polytechnics/Universities for Applied Science and, indeed, growing numbers of the present *"research"* universities will in their regions and countries focus on this function rather than on pursuing fundamental research. Education and science have to contribute to the next generations of *locally-rooted, but well-informed global citizens* capable of jointly ensuring *"peace and progress",* the ultimate aims of the UN. Those working in agriculture are really no exception to this general trend and are increasingly becoming part of an international system of production, marketing and consumption. Good academics have *always pushed frontiers back and crossed borders,* not only in the sense that the limits of human knowledge and ability are expanded, but also in the sense that political and geographical borders are continuously bridged. As increases in scale and globalisation progress further, as well as the knowledge-intensity of our society, we not only need good academics to do this since in fact *all citizens should be adequately prepared* to contribute to bridge frontiers in order to create a better future.

3. ***Growing importance of ethics and values:*** a third process is underway and has a profound impact on the roles education and science can perform in *broadening understanding* to create a better future for all. Here, we understand peace as far more than just the absence of war between states and as including the absence of civil strife and violence within states; positively – *the growth of a Culture of Peace,* the prevalence of tolerance and harmony. Achieving such peace is not an easy, straightforward task in an increasingly complex world and global society. Many new dilemmas and paradoxes have arisen, sometimes precisely as a consequence of economic, scientific and technological progress – new issues that, themselves, create confusion and tensions. *We are, therefore, increasingly confronted with questions about the direction which education and science must take* on a number of crucial issues: bio-ethical and bio-medical dilemmas, bio-diversity and bio-technological questions, climate change and environmental degradation, access and benefit-sharing, legal and equity issues, social and cultural aspects of our interconnected

world. Indeed, one of the major issues today is *cultural diversity.* In our diverse and intensely inter-connected world we have many neighbours, nearby and faraway, neighbours who often come from very diverse backgrounds. More than ever, the strong development of international activities and relations is needed. At the same time, this presents the internationalisation of the university campus with the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in a very immediate, direct way. In such circumstances it is essential to increase and improve knowledge and information about other people, cultures and societies. To achieve this, one must be prepared to engage actively *in dialogue;* unconditionally and with a truly open mind. *Not trying to "win"* as in a debate, *but trying to understand the other by listening carefully* (Van Ginkel (2001).

4. ***Climate change and environmental disasters:*** it has been estimated that if we are to continue the present course of development humankind will soon need the resources of two or even three planet Earths. That, of course, will be impossible. The urgency of the situation is illustrated by the fact that the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to the IPCC *(The International Panel on Climate Change)* and to Al Gore for his *"Inconvenient Truth".* Indeed, they succeeded in raising the profile of the issue and elevating climate change to the top of the political agenda of the world community. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, for instance, included climate change among the top two priorities of his term in office, acknowledging the need for both: ultimate efforts to mitigate climate change and all-out efforts toward *early adaptation.*

   With all due respect to the proven capacity of the last two contributions, to mobilise political support for addressing the Climate Change Challenge (C3), I believe that the *Millennium Eco-system Assessment*[1] has done a greater job in bringing the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change closer to home, to the people. By focusing its analysis on *ecosystem services* in a more detailed way for 33 different ecosystems, it has opened the way to understand the real problems – on the ground – and possible ways to address them: *"Think Globally. Act Locally",* but also the reverse: *"Think Locally, Act Globally!".*
   Environmental risks have increasingly become the principal source of

[1] *www.millenniumassessment.org/*

human *in*-security. Of course, human communities will always face natural hazards such as floods, droughts, storms, volcanic eruptions or earthquakes. The sobering reality is, however, that today's disasters are too often man-made and that human action or inaction exacerbates virtually all of them. Developing countries and the people living in them are suffering the most. *There is a clear relationship between poverty, environmental degradation and disasters.*

The term *"natural disaster"* has become, increasingly, an anachronistic misnomer. In reality, human behaviour transforms natural hazards into what should really be called ***un*-natural disasters** (Kofi Annan 1999, p.4). It is here that universities must come in with their research, study programmes and services to assist society. After all, education serves as a powerful tool for moving nations, communities and households towards a more sustainable future. Education for sustainable development (EfSD) builds the capacity of nations to create, broaden and implement sustainability plans. EfSD improves sustainable economic growth by improving the quality and skills of the workforce, while addressing the overarching need for environmental integrity and social justice. EfSD also creates an informed public that can support enlightened environmental, social and economic policy and legislation and raises the quality of life for all members of society (Van Ginkel 2004).

5. ***Fundamental shifts in the balance between "public" and "private":*** present economic conditions as well as the development of the modern state are leading to a continuous re-assessment of the responsibilities of both the state and the citizens. The ageing of the population seen in most countries, for instance, is leading to growing expenditures on pensions and healthcare. The stronger participation of women in the labour markets calls for better provisions to take care of young children, also beyond regular school times. The greater participation in secondary and higher education places heavy demands on the availability of facilities and study opportunities, and so on. The expenditures on higher education and scientific research are among those *"public"* expenditures that are undergoing continuous and serious scrutiny.

Time and again questions are being raised as to the extent to which students can take care of their own expenditures, perhaps through loans which could be tax deductible, once they earn their own money. In the same way, universities are being encouraged to find their own research money through contracts with industries, with foundations or in competition with (national and European) grant organisations. As a Finnish minister of (higher) education once said: *"We have given the universities more autonomy to find their own money; to do more with less".* As a consequence, universities are more and more in a position where they have to operate in much more *entrepreneurial ways and to compete nationally and internationally* (Van Ginkel 1999 and 2005).

A Copernican Change

Globalisation, localisation and the rise of the knowledge society present universities with several challenges and opportunities. We must try to see what these are and which strategies universities might deploy in order to cope with these issues. What can be said at the outset is that these processes are occurring concomitantly with the gradual decline in the relevance of borders and with the emergence of the *"network society"* as analysed by, in particular, Manuel Castells (1996). This has led to a ***Copernican change*** in the positioning of individual universities (Van Ginkel 2003). No longer can universities see themselves as only part of a national system, protected by the state which sets rules – often in the framework of their higher education laws – on the programmes of studies to be provided and the research to be done. In Europe, the Bologna Process clearly illustrates this new reality (Bologna Declaration 1999).

Increasingly, universities must rely on ***their own performance*** in order to secure sufficient funding for high-quality programmes of teaching and research. They will find increasingly themselves *unprotected* and *in a highly competitive world.* Even within largely state-run university systems individual universities must increasingly *compete for students, research* and *adequate funding.* They have to strengthen and diversify their external relations with stakeholders, as well as their financing sources. Consequently, ***universities must rethink*** their modes of *governance,*

financing, internal structures and *external relations,* as well as their *modes of operation.* Their internal organisation must change in order to allow universities to operate in more *entrepreneurial* ways (Van Ginkel 1999 and 2001). In fact, *governments have become dependent* on the goodwill and performance of their universities in order to establish a *"name"* for the country and its higher education system, since it is the prestige and ranking position of these universities, individually, that gives the quality mark to the system.

Clearly, this statement is especially true for countries possessing *predominantly public university systems,* where governments set the framework within which universities *must* operate. Yet the statement also holds true *for private universities* since, although they have been left more or less alone to look after their own affairs, they operate within *national frameworks* and these will not continue to exist in the same way in the future. It is indicative that Japanese *state* universities, traditionally the more prestigious part of the Japanese higher education system, are being placed at a greater distance from the national government and becoming state-sponsored, yet largely independent institutions.

The Continued Interest of the State and Society

However, in contrast, society *cannot allow* itself to completely lose control over the activities and development of their higher education. The performance of the higher education sector is *too important* for the future of the state and society to let that happen. Society not only needs well-educated specialists in the labour force. It also needs to generate adequate *intellectual elite to reflect on and give guidance to the future of the nation and of all humankind.* Society will, therefore, continue to have a keen interest and a direct stake in providing an *adequate supply* of, and *access* to, *quality teaching and research programmes* in universities. Thus, whatever modality is chosen for the organisation of higher education, ***adequate supply, access and quality*** will always constitute the imperatives for which some kind of solution will have to be found (Van Ginkel 2005). Internationalisation, networking and mobility should broaden the available opportunities and contribute additional quality, not chaos.

With regard to the opportunities and challenges globalisation creates, it is also important to look at how they affect universities in their ***actual functioning.*** Internationalisation, for instance, was seen for a long time after the Second World War as crucial for peace and progress and many people thought that *studying abroad* was the key. In the meantime, however, it has become clear that *studying abroad is in itself far from enough.* This is not to say that it is not important, but that it does not in itself constitute *internationalisation;* it is simply part of it. However, it is at least as important for teachers to travel and work abroad, and it would be well to ask to what extent the *host institutions,* not only the visiting teachers, benefit from this experience. It is rare for this issue to be considered from both points of view. *Each party must benefit* from the experience to ensure its sustainability in the longer term. Further, one might also ask to what extent this experience abroad really impacts on *the teaching and research programmes* of an institution. Or to what extent does it truly lead to *joint* research and/or learning *projects?* Any discussion about internationalisation must take these different aspects of the question into consideration.

The same is true of ***access.*** Regarding access, it is very important that everyone with the talent to study, regardless of his or her socio-economic background, has the possibility to enter a university, preferably the institution of their choice, as long as their capabilities match their ambitions. This has been achieved, over time, in a number of countries, but is by no means guaranteed everywhere. However, the discussion of access to higher education changes character the moment entrance levels are brought into the equation. Few realise that there are ***one to two years' age difference*** – and development or maturing – among entry-level students in different countries around the world. The quality leap between secondary and higher education is not the same all around the world. What happens during these two years? They either form part of secondary education or part of tertiary education, and this is decisive. Thus, when a country indicates that it wants 80% of its young people of an age cohort to become students and enter *"higher"* education, **two questions** must be asked. The **first** is whether the system will have sufficient capacity. But the **second** and most important question is whether 80% of the population is, indeed, ***talented enough*** and capable of undertaking ***higher*** education; and which quality levels should be attained in *higher* education? It is clear that the situation becomes

really complex when open border policies lead to a situation in which foreign institutions start to create branches in other countries with quite different regulations, conditions and opportunities in comparison to the country of origin. Governments can only move in very prudent ways in such circumstances.

Relevance and Accreditation

A further area of discussion revolves around the ***relevance*** of university programmes. In its World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998), UNESCO focussed on four major aspects to better prepare universities and higher education in general for this age of globalisation:

(1) relevance of the programmes (***pertinence***);
(2) **access** for all those with the capabilities to successfully finish the chosen study programme;
(3) **internationalisation;** and
(4) **finance**.

Other issues discussed included the role of modern information and communications technology, the role of higher education for sustainable human development, preparation for the world of work and relations with other levels and types of education. Yet all of these can easily be subsumed under this heading of *pertinence* (relevance).

In a globalised world characterised by ever greater competition for funding – in particular public funding, but certainly also private – the question arises as to what universities are really contributing (Van Ginkel and Dias 2007). As soon as quality is taken into consideration, and accreditation is at stake, a whole new series of questions arises: ***Accreditation*** **for what?** For which qualities? What kinds of qualities do we really want? Who will be the ***gatekeepers*** of the system? What will be their ***criteria?*** Such questions must be specified and answered before any serious decision can be made. From one side, it is important in an increasingly interconnected world that *studies anywhere lead to diplomas that are understood and appreciated everywhere.* On the other side, it is important to acknowledge the relevance of diversity, cultural and otherwise. Diplomas should stand for assessed quality at defined levels, not for uniformity and standardisation. The ultimate aim of quality assessments and accreditation should also not be to establish conformity

to some standard, but to *promote excellence, creativity and innovation.* It is for this reason that the Bologna Declaration pays so much attention to the so-called *"Diploma Supplement".* It is with regard to such questions that international university organisations, like the European University Association (CRE/EUA) and the International Association of Universities (IAU, Paris), can play and have already played an important and supportive role in the preparation of credible *systems of accreditation* and preparing individual universities to be accredited (Van Ginkel 2002).

Institutional Integrity and Governance

The final issue – and directly related to the previous one – is that of ***institutional integrity,*** which can be discussed from two perspectives. The *first* is the degree of *objectivity* and *neutrality* of the science carried out by an institution which claims its autonomy and academic freedom. The *second,* however, is equally important: Given the changes in communication and information technology, there is a great tendency for specialists to create *worldwide networks.* Does this call into question the integrity of the institution in terms of the kind of ***integral approaches*** to major programme areas which are multidisciplinary in character that it proposes? In an article on *"University 2050: the Organization of Creativity and Innovation"* (Higher Education Policy 1994), I have further elaborated this issue of *"Universities: Networks or Barracks?".* Will it still be possible, given the state of tension between this type of horizontal and vertical organisation (***over space and in place***), to bring people together in multidisciplinary, issue-oriented university programmes? And to do so in conditions which make participation in prestigious worldwide – in general disciplinary and highly specialised *"networks"* – much more attractive because of the related impact scores and their influence on rankings? This is a major question that is increasingly confronting many universities. What balance can they strike between the global and the local from this point of view?

When trying to cope with all these challenges and opportunities, it will be highly important to consider *which changes* in the fields of governance, internal structure and organisation and modes of operation *might be possible and appropriate.* For example, when demanding state-run systems of largely public universities during budget preparations to

provide complete staffing tables for the following year, and/or to apply for new buildings five years in advance to secure funding, you are not really *challenging the leadership* of a university to be very entrepreneurial. In other terms, ***each government gets the university leadership it deserves,*** namely, more traditional risk-avoiding and bureaucratic or more innovative and entrepreneurial. The more governments limit university autonomy and take over managerial and administrative tasks the smaller the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of university leadership will be (Van Ginkel 2001).

The reality in universities has become far ***too complex*** for detailed government involvement in their regular management and administration. Indeed, over the last 10 years, even in state universities, the tendency to become both *more independent* and *more entrepreneurial* has become more obvious. Recent experience in Japan, where public universities have been taken out of the state system and will in the future be financed on something approaching a subsidy basis, already indicates that the traditional, internal structures are coming under pressure, and that an intention to adapt, including the merging of activities and even institutions, is developing. In many European countries this has already happened. When an individual university must look at the world around it and learn how to survive, a complete change in thinking takes place, which leads to changes in its finances, structure and modes of operation.

In such circumstances, when attempting to *address real-world problems* a structure with faculties defined along disciplinary lines does not represent the optimal solution, while simply using a multidisciplinary field as an extra pillar in the edifice is also no solution. The challenge is therefore how to create a ***matrix organisation*** which reunites disciplines and problem orientations. In this situation, *a time limit* must be provided in the internal organisation which brings these elements together for limited periods only in order to prevent the cells of the matrix from developing into new pillars. Such *adaptability* in organisation will help universities interact more efficiently — in an age of globalisation — with other institutions, the world of work, major stakeholders; in fact with the society they aim to serve.

To Conclude: A Focus on the Future

Internationalisation is more than a tradition and an ambition: it is a necessity! Five core processes are influencing the roles of universities and the ways in which they can play these roles: glocalisation, the development of the knowledge society, the increasing importance of ethics and values, climate change and environmental disasters and the shifting balance between *"public"* and *"private"* responsibilities and interests.

In particular, globalisation and the rise of the knowledge society have brought about a *Copernican change* in the positioning of individual universities. No longer can universities see themselves as only part of a national system, protected by the state. They have to do it all *by themselves.* In fact, it is their performance, *internationally,* as expressed in the main *rankings,* which decides their prestige and that of the national systems they belong to.

In combination with the tendency of having to do *"more with less"* public financial support, they have to find a larger share of their budget elsewhere. They must therefore become much more *entrepreneurial.* They must make every euro last longer and extend further. They must rethink the balance among their local and regional, national and global presence. To do that, they need to rethink the ways they organise themselves and their activities. Here they must continuously realise that they have to operate, simultaneously, on different geographical scale levels, all with their own characteristics and patterns of activity and relations.

The *shrinking of (relative) distances* makes it impossible to continue to live in the *"splendid isolation of the ivory tower".* Internationalisation in higher education is no longer limited to just student mobility, or even staff mobility. It is far more than just the nice *"add-on"* that it sometimes used to be. It is *crucial for the survival* of the institutions, but also for the societies they belong to and serve. In fact, universities are trying to illustrate their *"quality"* by seeking access to the most prestigious international networks possible in their fields of academic activity; the most prestigious and useful they are able to be admitted to. In doing so, they are increasingly co-operating internationally in both learning and research programmes.

Since the early 1990s, university associations such as CRE/EUA in Europe have made major efforts to help prepare their member institutions for the future and help them, for instance, through the *Institutional Evaluation Programme* for the quality assessments and accreditation schemes that would undoubtedly come, and to strengthen their *strategic steering capacity* and their *capacity to change.* There is no longer much time left for tradition and folklore: *the focus is on the future!*

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Globalisation and internationalisation: Crossroads of ideas on the future of higher education

Klemen Miklavič

Abstract

Internationalisation is often used as a catchword for modern processes in higher education. The wave of reforms in the name of internationalisation is also a response to the radical change in social circumstances, the globalisation process and the new mass character of higher education. This paper is devoted to the reform trends in Europe and globally and examines the discourses and ideas that propel them. It is argued that in the European and global contexts there are coexisting and often conflicting ideas on the future of higher education. I highlight two dominant and antagonistic conceptual trends which accompany the creation and implementation of policies at European and national levels. The national debate on the internationalisation of higher education in Slovenia is analysed as an example and some discourses and ideas on the future of higher education in this country are outlined.

Key words: Internationalisation, globalisation, Bologna Process, ideas, commodification, knowledge economy, discourse

Introduction

The key shifts that occurred in higher education in the second half of the 20th century created the need for a careful reconsideration of its future. Some authors talk about a crossroads of the paradigmatic dimension and about two divergent projections of the results of the European reforms in higher education: first, favouring the transformation of university in order to fit the modern world without renouncing its authenticity, academic freedom and social responsibility, and the second giving way to the business and market imperatives (de Sousa Santos 2010). The term internationalisation of higher education is often used to address the

large changes in higher education which reflect the social and economic dynamics of the modern world. In this context, internationalisation stands for a number of policy discourses that address a broad spectrum of contemporary processes in higher education.

In February 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia organised a conference about the internationalisation of higher education. The event was intended to facilitate a discussion of the status and progress of the integration of Slovenian higher education into the global space of education and knowledge. It was attended by representatives of universities, independent higher education institutions, students, research centres, government departments and experts from abroad. Such opportunities are rare in Slovenia so this one offered a much stronger basis for an analysis of discourses, policies and the implementation of reforms at the national or university level. Around the same period, there was a discussion in Slovenia about the draft of the National Higher Education Masterplan (MVZT 2011), which was adopted by parliament on 24 May 2011. At least on the level of discourse, the internationalisation of higher education is regarded as one of the leading political concepts in this document.

Internationalisation features as an important element in most modern discourses on higher education and, in conjunction with the outstanding political ideas, in Europe and beyond. Public debates, professional and policy forums and co-ordination among stakeholders are important arenas (or communicative political spheres) for persuasion and establishing the discourses and ideas of various political actors (Schmidt 2010: 3, 4). In order to understand strategic interests and policy directions or processes, it is important to be familiar with the ideas. These can be identified and/or extracted from the discourse , persuasive rhetoric , conceptualisations, argumentation line etc. that are used on various occasions in various forums. The outstanding strategic ideas, in combination with social norms, values and historical development, are often the basis for the formulation of policies and indicate the dominant interests in the process. The internationalisation of higher education represents a range of discourses that attempt to legitimise reform measures on all levels of higher education (Nokkala 2007). Discourses on internationalisation therefore often legitimise reforms aimed at opening national higher education up to the international space (e.g., mobility, recognition of

qualifications, ECTS), as well as those typically pertaining to the national domain (e.g., quality assurance, financing, diversification).

In this paper, I will present through the discourses that occur in the context of the internationalisation of higher education the strategic guidance, reform dynamics and conceptual aspects of modern higher education in Europe and worldwide. I will extract the main conceptual approaches and discursive strands by which the basic views on the role and development of higher education in the modern (Western) world can be described. I will use as an example the above mentioned communicative political scenes on the occasion: 1. the public discussion on the draft National Higher Education Master Plan[1] and 2. the public debate on the internationalisation of higher education in Slovenia[2] which took place in Brdo, in February 2011 (hereafter referred to as the Brdo debate). I will explore how European and global policy discourses are reflected on the national scene. In doing so, I will also consider some policy elements that do not relate directly to opening up national higher education to the international space but nevertheless reflect ideas conveyed by the internationalisation discourses.

Ideas become important and influential when they are expressed and reproduced in various policy arenas so, as the basis of discussion, I have borrowed the thesis that the Minister of Higher Education used to open the aforementioned conference, which was much referred to and paraphrased in the further discussion. He distinguished the internationalisation of higher education from the globalisation of higher education and recognised the antagonism between the two. This distinction largely reflects the plurality of discourses and ideas about the role of higher education in society. I will return to this duality later, but will start with the basic concepts and a review of the history of the modern phenomenon of the internationalisation of higher education.

1 *Given the limited scope of this paper, I will not go into a detailed analysis of the text of the National Higher Education Master Plan. I only highlight major trends and some of the reactions and the public debate to adoption of the document.*

2 *Reference: http://www.mvzt.gov.si/nc/si/splosno/cns/novica/article/12361/6910/37eca0ae75/ (15. 3. 2011).*

Globalisation, accompanying social trends and the international dimension of higher education

Globalisation is one of the most controversial concepts in political and academic discourses. It often refers to different and sometimes conflicting processes (Nokkala 2007: 67). According to the definition of Held and McGrew (2003)[3], globalisation is a "process (or set of processes), which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions [...] generating transcontinental or inter-regional flows and networks of activity, interaction and exercise of power." The concept of globalisation is usually used to illustrate the globalisation of markets and the economy, which is often referred to as an inevitable and unstoppable process (Nokkala 2007:67).

The discourse of knowledge society and economy is being strengthened parallel to and intertwined with globalisation. The development of information and communication technologies has contributed to a relatively rapid change in the circumstances of higher education, which has led to unification of the global space (Marginson 2008). In these circumstances, at least since the 1990s, the international dimension of higher education in Europe, as we know it today, has been reinforced.

Universities and other higher education institutions are becoming less confined to the national space and are also increasingly working beyond the logic of national borders (Teichler 1999: 6). Although international co-operation between universities can be traced far back in history, and despite the universality of knowledge, higher education was explicitly national, at least in the 19th and 20th centuries (Teichler 1999, Corbett 2006). Most of today's universities were established during this period so we can speak of a national university as the traditional type of European university. Since the Age of Enlightenment, education has been a national concern. In the EU, the member states are still accountable and responsible for their education systems (Zgaga, 2004: 18).

The traditional national university faced many insurmountable impediments to the mobility of students and teachers which since the 1980s has encouraged the intensification of initiatives to foster the exchange of teachers and students between universities and across

[3] *Adapted from Nokkala 2007:2 67.*

national borders. EU Programmes (Erasmus, Tempus, and the Framework Programme for Research etc.), regional academic programmes and other forms of inter-institutional co-operation have demonstrated strength in academic, employment, social and cultural terms (Zgaga, 2004: 12-14). International relations have moved from the periphery to the centre of the idea of the university (Marginson 2008).

Strengthening the international dimension in higher education policy is, to a large extent, a response of European countries and universities to globalisation and to the emergence of a society and economy of knowledge (Huisman and Van der Wende 2004; Marginson and Van der Wende 2007; Nokkala 2007). Such a policy can be characterised as a systemic and a systematic effort to increase higher education's responsiveness to the challenges of society, the economy and the labour market (Kälvemark and Van der Wende, 1997[4]). The process is intended to cover a comprehensive reorganisation of curricular content, organisational structures and institutional strategies, and it should manifest itself in the form of universities' increased flexibility in global competition (Nokkala 2005: 12).

Views on the cross-border expansion of universities include some that are explicitly critical. The process of the internationalisation of higher education is connected with power and domination in the global environment (Teichler 1999: 9, 21). He recognises neo-colonial elements in them which could increase the unequal development of the world. Political forces have often advocated the benefits of global technological and economic competitiveness and in this context also include higher education. In the next section, I will return to the instrumentalisation of higher education for the sake of economic competitiveness and a critique of the cross-border expansion of higher education.

Internationalisation vs. *globalisation* of higher education

The term internationalisation of higher education does not describe the phenomenon entirely appropriately and completely. Various interpretations and definitions of this concept can be found (Huisman and Van der Wende 2004, Knight 2004, Nokkala 2007, Teichler 1999,

4 *Adapted from Nokkala 2005: 2*

Zgaga 2007). The Slovene Minister responsible for higher education in his previously mentioned speech distinguishes internationalisation from globalisation. In an attempt to provide the minister's configuration of internationalisation discourse with a conceptual frame, I will borrow the Van der Wende (2002: 49) explanation of the difference between the internationalisation and globalization of higher education. This leaves the paper vulnerable to the critique that the conceptualisation is outdated and oversimplified. However the paper does not intend to dwell on conceptual questions on globalisation of higher education, but uses the proposed distinction to illustrate and discuss the plurality of discourses, ideas and tensions related to them.

She defined internationalisation as the increasing *interconnection* between national higher education systems by removing boundaries, but maintaining the competences of national governments, while globalisation means increasing *integration* of flows and processes over and through links, which leads to a transformation of the spatial organisation of social relations in higher education and, in particular, to a change in the role of the national state. Processes do not have a linear relationship: they can even contradict each other. Internationalisation is based on the world order, which is dominated by nation-states. In the case of the globalisation of higher education, it is mostly about processes associated with the cross border activities of universities, the liberalisation of trade in services, online education (ibid.) and other phenomena that take place within the global division of labour and competition. These processes are a part of the overall decline of the period of the centralised expansion of government services (Welch 2001: 485) and undoubtedly interfere with relationships between the state, university and students (Van der Wende 2002: 49).

The globalisation of higher education can, to some extent, be interpreted as a deviation from the established goals and values of the academic world. In the political arena, ideologies are being put forward that make the pretence of understanding higher education as a national asset, as an industry that can help strengthen national competitiveness and as a profitable service that can be sold in the market (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005). The growing popularity of utility of knowledge replaces the idea of knowledge as a goal in itself (Morley, 2003: 7). Education, in all its vertical segments, is under pressure of being converted and transformed

into serving macroeconomic objectives and market needs. An exemplar aspect of utilitarian understanding of higher education is related to the needs of modern labour market. Educational policy is ever closer to active employment policy based on the relationship between human capital and economic growth and based on the search for a solution to a lack of suitable skills on the labour market (Lavdas et al 2004: 4).

Related to the utility trend, there is a perceived necessity to increase the scale and efficiency of knowledge production, burdening least possible the public budget. The private sector is thus expanding, introducing a combination of private and public funding of higher education, the professionalization of management and the separation of academic and managerial staff. Research activity contributes significantly to the competitiveness, reputation and attractiveness of universities. The intensity of research activities largely determines the status and perception of the quality of higher education (Marginson, 2008). This is also expressed through ranking scales, which will be highlighted in the following sections. Universities are hence being transformed into autonomous, entrepreneurial and competitive entities (Nokkala 2005: 2), which could undermine the wider socio-cultural role of higher education; including those functions that Zgaga (2004: 17) defines as "the conservation of various (specific) value systems and cultural identities."

An even sharper definition of these trends talks about the *commodification* of higher education, because education is a process of the production of exchange value. So not just knowledge, but the educational relationship is being transformed into a commodity: the teacher becomes a *producer* of goods, the student becomes a *purchaser* or a *consumer* (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). Friction is thus created between the traditional understanding of the role of higher education and the more modern view, with its accent on economic instrumentality (McNay 2006: 10).

An important dimension of the globalization of higher education is the emergence of transnational education. The initiative comes mainly from the English-speaking world, hence the appearance of many public and private universities, which, in various ways, offer educational services in a global environment. In recent decades, this has become a profitable business and formed part of the WTO agenda on the topic of the liberalisation of services (Robertson and Verger, 2008). Some authors see

in the provision of transnational education a supplement to inadequate higher education systems, particularly in less developed countries. Proponents of this phenomenon welcome the diversity and expansion of education and choice of contents, which sovereign countries should adopt as a welcome contribution to improving the quality of higher education, and should liberate regulation to the benefit of stimulating the additional supply of educational services. (Alderman 2001.)

To conclude, the global convergence of the educational and research process on the basis of market principles is a fundamental dimension of the differences between the globalization and internationalization of higher education as conceptualised in this paper. A kind of paradoxical situation is indicated: in a postmodern society, one would expect a rejection of major harmonisations, since the era of universal ideologies has passed (Zgaga, 2004: 18), but the circumstances of globalisation contribute to concentrating economic power and the emergence of transnational political organisations, the resources of strategic agendas, producing monolithic and universal solutions for complex and varied social and political issues (Welch 2001: 486).

The Bologna Process – the European response to globalisation

The central and most recognisable process of the Europeanisation of higher education is called the Bologna Process, which is the basis of the *European Higher Education Area.* Mechanisms are being established to facilitate comparability and compatibility among the higher education systems of European countries in order to facilitate inter-university co-operation and the mobility of students, teachers and researchers.

The Bologna Process has been designed on an international level and, as such, has introduced something new into the higher education strategy of European countries. These have never known the serious co-ordination of national strategies on a transnational level. The Bologna Process was formulated in the first phase by the signatory governments, together with the European Commission, inter-governmental organisations and higher education stakeholders. The impetus for reform can be traced to a complex set of circumstances that put the university in an entirely

new position in relation to society and which require government intervention in the system in order for higher education to serve the needs of modern society. Despite the fact that the Bologna Process does not call into question the competencies of the governments of European countries in the field of education, a *European Higher Education Area* has been created with common instruments in the sphere of qualifications and quality assurance (Zgaga, 2007). In this context, some countries yield some instruments to the European level, meaning that the Bologna Process contains elements of integration.

The mixture of different approaches, the integration of governments and supra-governmental institutions and non-governmental agents and the wide range of measures indicate that Europe has opted for a complex political formula to respond to the general processes of globalisation and a knowledge-based economy. Such a strategy is not in line with the idea of improving quality through competition and dealing with higher education as an instrument of economic growth.

A good decade after the Bologna Process, different and often conflicting views about its political and ideological character have emerged. While some authors argue that "Bologna" was used to realise the economic strategy of the EU (e.g., Tomusk 2004), others see in it a response to the loss of national control over the domain of higher education on account of globalisation trends and the growing strength of the European Commission (EC) (Olsen and Maassen, 2007: 11). Governments have sought, through the Bologna Process, a balance between strengthening national higher education systems, which would boost the attractiveness and competitiveness of domestic universities and enable them to break into the global arena while, at the same time, serving as a defence of the national space against domination by the global market and privatisation trends (Kwiek 2004: 9).

A somewhat deeper analysis suggests that the origin and content of the Bologna Declaration is best understood if they are not regarded as academic papers but as a reform agenda in higher education that takes social and economic conditions into account (Haug, 2005: 203). This is derived from the thesis that the Bologna Process is based on the heritage of European universities, which includes the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Public responsibility for higher education also continues

to maintain that legacy and hands it on to future generations (Bergan, 2005: 25). The Bologna reform should abandon the popular concept of human capital in favour of the thesis that universities shape a person and citizen, not just create human capital, subject to market fluctuations like other types of capital (de Sousa Santos, 2010).

On the other extreme of the spectrum of interpretations of the Bologna reform, we find civil society movements and some teachers' unions which reproach the Bologna reform for its integration into the ideological, neo-liberal paradigm. They claim it focuses on deregulation, the privatisation of higher education and leaves higher education to global market forces and *commodification* (see above). These movements are known for street protests[5] that are being directed against attempts to place higher education within the agenda of the liberalisation of trade in services within the World Trade Organisation.

The Bologna Process is thus also torn between interpretations of the opportunities and threats. This largely depends, of course, on the observer's own set of beliefs, values and ideas. It also depends on how a Bologna agreement is implemented by each country. In some respects, the Bologna Process can be a dead letter or even a cover for governments that want to realise other political agendas (Musselin, 2006). It is certainly a process that has deeply marked Europe's higher education system and significantly contributed to the internationalisation of higher education within the European region. The Bologna Process has proved to be an excellent avenue for formulating policies and strategies of internationalisation and Europeanisation, whereas the current issue of implementation and the evaluation of achievements, despite political efforts at the international level, remain levers that are largely in the hands of nation-states.

Ranking higher education institutions – the globalisation trend in higher education

It is worth paying particular attention within the context of this analysis to the ranking of universities. This phenomenon has in fact been so popular

[5] *Reference: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20100314085140689 (18 February 2011).*

and so often discussed in the last few years that it is impossible to ignore its relevance in the context of internationalisation and modern ideas on the future of higher education. With mass studies, higher education has become attractive to the wider community. Through mass enrolment, the public is much more involved in issues of quality, employability, the reputation of a university etc. Discussions about universities and studies are therefore increasingly exposed to the scrutiny of the media, and various popular approaches to promoting the transparency of the multitude of different higher education institutions. The ranking of universities is a characteristic product of the popularisation of higher education as well as the result of opening national higher education systems to the international or global space; it is therefore part of the globalisation process. There is major public interest in the ranking, mainly due to the tempting simplicity and attractiveness of sports-like ranking tables.

Ranking tables are compiled and published by the media (e.g., *Times Higher, Der Spiegel*) and research institutions (probably the most notorious ranking is prepared by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education). In the USA, the ranking of higher education institutions has long been part of the system. The rankings are supposed to contribute to transparency and help shape students' decisions. Universities are supposed to have a better overview of their position in relation to others and a starting point for designing strategies. A classification in ranking scales is also used as a measure of quality and for financing. (Hazelkorn, 2008.)

Ranking is also an accompanying phenomenon of creating a global space of knowledge and a central part of research in relation to economic performance. The classification of universities high on the scale is becoming ever more closely associated with their returns in the global knowledge market (Marginson, 2008). Classification on the scale is an important commercial advantage for the profitable industry of transnational education. Striving for inclusion on the scale stimulates the market behaviour of providers and, for the successful, brings the reputation that is needed to enter new markets.

Criticism of ranking higher education institutions is directed primarily at the dubious credibility of the criteria and the controversial effects on the organisation and quality of higher education. Classification on the ranking

scale simplifies the complexity of higher education, particularly in terms of the performance and status of institutions and creates the impression of a vertical hierarchy among them and the countries in which they are based. Horizontal differences, such as types of institution, missions, purposes, functions in society etc., are left out. (Marginson and Van der Wende 2007: 55.)

The harshest critics characterise the phenomenon of ranking as a reflection of an over-reliance on measurable categories, neglecting the non-measurable effects on society and highlighting the pressures on the effectiveness of institutions in the educational market and the enforcement of consumer attitudes to education. Ranking is supposed to lead to the evaluation of scientific fields in their market price and the impoverishment of those disciplines that are not commercially attractive. It is also supposed to lead to standardisation and overcrowding in prestigious and expensive universities in the developed world (de Sousa Santos, 2010). The race for inclusion on the scale encourages institutions to adopt and include performance indicators from ranking scales into their own strategies, to develop and change cognitive frames and values, and to potentially change the motivation and mission of higher education (Dale, 2010). A practical illustration of creating strategies based on ranking, for example, (both by government decree, as in France, and also as a self-initiative) is the trend towards the concentration of universities in order to expand the critical mass and increase the likelihood of achieving the criteria to climb up the ranking scales (Marginson 2008, Labi 2011).

Views and responses to internationalisation/globalisation trends in Slovenia

In the introduction I mentioned the minister's speech at the Brdo debate on internationalisation, which indicated an attitude to the internationalisation of higher education. In order to express that, the minister employed a definition that distinguishes the globalisation of higher education from internationalisation. In internationalisation, national governments play the central role in designing a sound strategy and set clear policy objectives in addressing contemporary domestic and international challenges such as, for example, mass enrolment in higher education, an increase in staff, institutions, disciplines, costs, and the trend

towards privatisation etc. With the concept of the globalisation of higher education, however, he addressed increased cross-border activities, economic influences on higher education systems and the integration of market mechanisms into the regulation of higher education. This matches the above explained use of terms internationalisation and globalisation.

An attitude to one concept or the other depends, of course, on the socio-political context, i.e., norms, beliefs, dominant discourses and, finally, the political and ideological direction of the current government. In his speech, the minister pointed out that the cross-border dimension of higher education can be an opportunity or a threat. The scenario characterised by the globalisation of higher education is seen by the minister as a threat, bringing with it undesirable consequences. Higher education will not meet its multi-dimensional role in society on the basis of the principles of global market competition and free trade in educational services. The minister therefore designated globalisation in terms of market principles in higher education as something negative. He attributed a positive role to internationalisation by contrasting it with the concept of globalisation. The focus was placed on the controlled development of the international dimension of higher education by upgrading democratic regulation and maintaining the central role of the state.

The minister's ideological stance at the conference is roughly consistent with a document prepared by the ministry during the same period which later, after adoption by the National Assembly, became the *National Higher Education Master Plan.* The National Higher Education Master Plan locates higher education predominantly in the domain of public accountability, attributes a multitude of different social functions to it, while declaratively rejecting the concept of education as a chargeable service (in the form of tuition fees). When it comes to public funding, public universities are favoured and thereby ascribed special importance. Both in the national programme and in his contribution at the conference, the minister thus identified a closer understanding of higher education as a central social institution which should not rely on market principles. Higher education as an instrument of economic goals is somewhat overshadowed (at least on a discursive level), but this does not mean that it is absent.

Despite the declarative stance in the introductory section and in most of the Master Plan text, measures and guidelines that could be attributed to

the commodification or economistic vision of the development of higher education can be found in the text of the national programme. These were identified in the public debate by particular groups within the university, the Slovenian Student Union and the movement *Mi smo univerza* (*We Are a University*)[6]. In the conceptual basis of the document, the importance of social discourse and public accountability is mixed with a powerful discourse of a knowledge-based economy and society, which indicates an inclination towards the idea of the direct involvement of higher education in ensuring economic growth. In addition, in his public appearances the minister advocated student loans and *repaying* the money in the case of failing to complete one's studies on time. The minister, therefore, does not completely reject the understanding of study as a service (which, in his opinion, a country gives to successful students, but the less successful will have to buy it). In his public appearances[7], the presentation of this measure was accompanied by a populist rhetoric reminiscent of the discourses developed to legitimise the rise in tuition fees in the UK and used by Tony Blair's government in 2004.

To return to the Brdo debate on internationalisation: the discussion demonstrated that there is no unity in the Slovenian space or that internationalisation is at a very early stage and that there has been no deep reflection on the future of higher education and the creation of an integrated development strategy for higher education institutions. Both speakers and participants from the audience often referred to ranking of the universities. Without exception, a positive attitude regarding this phenomenon was expressed. The Rector of the University of Ljubljana did not hide his satisfaction that the institution over which he presides is classified among the top 500 in the world according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong rankings. He gave the impression that this is the ultimate achievement and the best proof of the performance of the largest Slovenian university. The Rector of the University of Maribor[8] showed a similar attitude to the global ranking. He announced the imminent ranking of the University of Maribor in the premier league of universities in the world and announced it as a goal of his efforts. None of the about 200 people present expressed any doubts about the decisions and statements of the two rectors.

6 *The concerns and opposition of these groups were expressed in the public debate on the draft National Plan for Higher Education in the National Assembly, 13.4.2011. http://www.dz-rs.si/index.php?id=96&cs=4&sb=3&sd=0&unid=PMT%7C0C1588C39EFE6AD8C125787A002231AE&showdoc=1 (25 May 2011).*

7 *E.g. in the Odmevi programme on RTV Slovenia on 24 May 2011.*

8 *Rector Ivan Rozman appeared at the conference, his term expired soon after.*

Apart from the references to ranking, the consultation produced relatively few interventions in terms of the commodification of education and economistic ideas on the future of higher education. Judging from the language used in her speech, the President of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) came closest to a discourse of understanding higher education as an instrument for economic goals. She intertwined the advantages of internationalisation with concepts from the world of marketing, such as "the competitiveness of graduates, competitive advantage, liberalisation, competitive use of knowledge". She also understood the future of higher education as analogous to initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia under the slogan Go International. It is probably no coincidence that she comes from the Faculty of Economics which, compared with other faculties of the University of Ljubljana, is highly market-responsive and, in this sense, the most internationalised in Slovenia. Among other things, the Faculty of Economics boasts three international sectoral accreditations. These are supposed to contribute to a certain extent to the marketing and attractiveness of the faculty to foreign students.

An economistic perspective on the development of higher education and its related vocabulary is not new in the Slovenian political and academic space. The peak of influence was reached in 2005 when a group of economists in the role of government advisers prepared a package of reforms that included a comprehensive proposal for intervention in higher education (Šušteršič et al. 2005). The document was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia about a month after its presentation[9]. The suggested "market reform of higher education" was in the context of "competitiveness" and "consumer benefits". A shift towards subordinating the entire educational system to demand and the principles of competition was clear in the proposals to introduce vouchers for higher education, increase the number of universities, put the financing of private and public higher education on an equal footing, and introduce tuition fees. None of the formulations of the reform proposals contained elements of the discourse on the role of universities in social mobility, strengthening democratic values, individual self-fulfilment, encouraging

[9] *Okvir gospodarskih in socialnih sprememb za povečanje blaginje v Sloveniji. Government of the Republic of Slovenia, November 2005: http://www.vlada.si//util/bin.php?id=2005122710110054 (23 September 2007)*

critical thinking, the development of academic fields etc. The authors did not mention the Bologna Process or the Bologna reform of Slovenian higher education, which had then already been in progress for a year. The economists' approach received a hostile and negative reaction from the major stakeholders in higher education (Miklavič, 2008).

The proponents of competition among higher education institutions have been louder in discussing the draft National Higher Education Master Plan. Their argument has primarily been directed at the regulation of the academic and professional programming track, the strict conditions for providing a doctoral programme, the favouring of the existing public universities (in terms of status and funding) and the central role of the quality assurance agency in the higher education system. Such an attitude is explained in the context of the research and other aspirations of these institutions. They need public recognition and research status from carrying out doctoral programmes in order to be recognised on the international scene. The proposed system of programme separation and the strategic focus on developing a limited number of public universities may mean that, within the public system, these faculties would in the long term remain only non-university institutions, which is probably not in line with the ambitions of the relevant academic communities[10].

The tension between the representatives of small private institutions and the Government can also be explained by the conflict of elites in the post-socialist societies of Central and Eastern Europe. A university is embedded in the spheres of both society and culture and holds a key position in the conceptual and epistemic structures of power and interest (Nokkala 2007: 65). It has been popular in some of these countries to rely on the private sector as an alternative to the old public universities, which have remained largely in the hands of the old elite and been deemed to be serving the perpetuation of its intellectual and educated wing (Tomusk 2003). Traces of this phenomenon can also be identified in Slovenia[11] (Miklavič 2008).

10 *More about the strategy and international ambitions of one of the small private faculties in an article by the authors Golob, Macura, Makarovič will be discussed in one of the following articles in the monograph.*

11 *Eg. in an article entitled Družba znanja po sovjetskem vzoru (The information society according to the Soviet model) (Večer, 05/24/2011), Dr. Matevž Tomšič (a representative of one of the small private faculties) finds a clientelist attachment of those who control the state university complexes to authoritative (actual centre-left) policy, which leads to closure and maintaining monopolies.*

A consensus on two fundamental obstacles in the internationalisation process was formed during the Brdo national debate on internationalisation: 1. the language provision in the law, which complicates the implementation of educational activities in English; and 2. administrative obstacles to the mobility of teachers and students from outside the Schengen area. In both cases, participants from the audience urged the government to make changes. In the case of the language provision, in particular, a dramatic shift in the perception of priorities could be sensed. In 2004, the prevailing opinion in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia was that protecting the Slovenian language at the academic level is more important than making Slovenian higher education attractive to foreign students, teachers and researchers. Concern for language is one of the functions of higher education, which is ascribed relatively great importance in the Slovenian political space but is in conflict with the speedy opening of educational policy and the establishment of market imperatives. However, it was possible to detect an agreement among the participants on the need for concessions to help facilitate the implementation of study in a foreign language.

The administrative obstacles to the residence of students, researchers and teachers who come from outside the visa-free EU and neighbouring areas demonstrate the lack of a national strategy that, with inter-ministerial co-ordination and adaptation of administrative procedures, would support the internationalisation of higher education. In contrast to some European governments, the Slovenian Government has not followed the path of a strategy of seeking additional revenue from tuition fees of students coming from outside the EU. The Slovenian Government has also so far shown little determination to promote mobility and increase the attractiveness of Slovenian higher education to foreign students, teachers and researchers for any other strategic motive.

Conclusion

It is clear that the higher education systems and institutions need to be modernised in accordance with the characteristics and expectations of contemporary society, but the reform path depends on what role is attributed to higher education in relation to shaping the society of the future. Internationalisation is a broad term and covers a wide range of

discourses, ideas and reform measures filling the agendas of governments, the European Commission, the Bologna Process, international organizations, academic institutions and other stakeholders in higher education.

The ideas and the related higher education reforms can be shortly described within the framework of two opposing concepts: Internationalisation and globalisation of higher education. 1. On one hand, there is a vision of higher education as a central institution of society which, in addition to education and the advancement of science, serves to shape personality, a critical citizen, consolidate democratic values and balance global society; and 2. competing with this is a view of higher education as primarily the production of knowledge and human capital to ensure economic competitiveness and the development of society. In this vision, education is exposed to market imperatives, because this is deemed the effective way to ensure the quality of higher education and adapt to new realities in the global society.

On European level of policy discussion none of these two ideational lines and the pertaining persuasive discourses appears in a pure form. However they are both present in the processes that constitute the Europeanisation of higher education and represent the polarity of ideas on the future of higher education in an age of fast globalisation and related challenges. A balance between national authorities, supranational structures and stakeholders is overlooking a dynamic debate on policy directions and priorities. The discourses stemming from internationalisation/ globalisation/ Europeanisation affect national communicative spheres where various ideas and interests meet again.

In Slovenia, internationalisation is a relatively unplanned phenomenon, left to the will and ambitions of the various higher education institutions and their members. Here, too, there is a duality of views on the future of higher education in the context of internationalisation and globalisation. However, those familiar with the situation can conclude without scientific effort that such tendencies are only a superficial phenomenon and certainly not the result of the deep reflection and strategic direction of one player or another in the higher education field. References to the outcomes of globalization such as ranking universities, the discourse of the knowledge-based society, competition, encouraging the private sector

etc. as well as a reliance on public accountability, academic freedom, the critical and complex nature of the role of higher education in society are all present.

Provided that the National Higher Education Masterplan it is consistently implemented, a more sophisticated and consisted internationalisation of higher education can be expected in the near future. It will thus also be possible to analyze the systematic conceptual trends in placing Slovenian universities on the European and global map. The adopted Masterplan, too, is the result of a compromise among the ideological currents. Because of its eclecticism it cannot be attributed to a single ideological platform, as critics from one side or the other attempt to do. The strategy is in harmony with the principles of the Bologna Process as a basic set of reform principles and measures in Europe. This indicates the strong influence of the European coordination on higher education reforms on the domestic policy.

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Internationalization of higher education – raising quality or the invasion of market mechanisms

Jelena Štrbac

Abstract

The paper deals with the concept of internationalization in higher education through the context of broader social changes, particularly globalization. The first section provides an outline of the situation in Slovenian higher education (adoption of national strategies and legislation) and briefly presents the development of internationalization over time and its transmission to the space of higher education. The paper continues by focusing on the internationalization of the European higher education space, in which the Bologna Process plays the central role. Through analysis of this process (documents and contributions), the influence of internationalization on improving quality in higher education is demonstrated. On the other hand, the article critically highlights the issue of the commercialization of higher education, which may even be further increased by internationalization. At the end of the article, conclusions, findings and some recommendations are presented for consideration during the preparation of the national strategy of internationalization, which should not allow a shifting of knowledge away from being a public good.

Key words: internationalization, Bologna Process , globalization, quality assurance, mobility, transnational education, higher education market , competition

Introduction

During the last decade, since we actively entered the Bologna Process, there has been increasing debate about internationalization also in the context of higher education. The trend of globalization has been carried over into the autonomous academic space, drawing behind it both positive and negative effects of processes that have radically transformed our society in recent decades. In this context, it is worth devoting particular

attention to the notions of competition and market liberalization and the concept of free movement of goods and services. Although innocent and often in entirely different contexts, the use of these concepts or their transfer to the field of higher education can allow much wider implications than merely the renaming of certain processes that must be considered separately from the market and its legitimacy. With the intrusion of these commercial concepts into the sphere of higher education, we can fairly quickly reach a completely different understanding of current processes: knowledge is shifted from being a public good to being only an element in the market, teaching becomes a range of services, the variety of courses and number of higher education institutions become the competition, fighting for their share of the financial cake with the state or on the open market.

In Slovenia, the debate on competition in this context began with reform of higher education here, which aimed at the rapid establishment of many new higher education schools and faculties and, consequently, increasing the range of more or less similar courses, with different "providers". The concept of competition and/or competitiveness is now occurring in a second, international context. Social change towards greater integration, free exchange (goods, services, personnel...) have caused not only a greater openness and integration of individual societies but also created a need to redefine certain generally accepted concepts, including education and the concept of knowledge as such. The latter is no longer understood as information and data, but rather, above all, as competence and qualifications, and an individual is someone who uses them to solve problems in the complex, changing present. (Čok 2005: 16).

With the new definitions of knowledge, the importance of lifelong learning is coming to the fore, which also means a shift in the understanding of the process of education and learning (van Ginkel: 2011), as well as the individual learner. In this new role of knowledge, a so-called "knowledge society" is ever more often discussed and Slovenia has set it as one of the goals in its new proposal for a national higher education program[1] with the suggestive title "Bold Slovenia – a Knowledge Society". This document, as well as general discussion on the subject, which we could follow, sees internationalization as a mainly positive component, which will contribute to improving the quality of education. A quotation from

[1] *Draft National Program for Higher Education 2011-2020.*

the document demonstrates this: *"Internationalisation of Slovenian higher education is the key to its development, since it is a feature of its quality."* (NPVŠ 2011)

Although the document states that internationalization is only one of the elements of quality, it is hard to avoid a "messianic" sense that is ascribed to the international dimension, which will (or rather: should) in various ways (raising the quality, common study programs, joint research projects, mobility of students, teachers and staff etc.) somehow save our higher education from all the quandaries which are currently troubling it, and even those that will happen in the future due to demographic trends.

The aforementioned national program has ambitious objectives: positioning Slovenia in the global higher education space, in which it will constantly compete with the best foreign institutions, the establishment of Slovenia as *"an attractive destination for foreign students and professionals for higher education study and for teaching, research and professional work"* (NPVŠ 2011), not to mention financial incentives in the form of a special mobility fund. Among the objectives or measures to achieve the set goals, the program also requires the creation of a national strategy for internationalization, whereby we must ask what we were doing in the past decade in this area, when it was obvious from a number of declarations, communiqués and agreements that we signed, as well as from actual events, that internationalization would be one of the key chapters of the transformation of higher education in the future, i.e., in this decade.

We cannot here just go on talking about this concept without realizing the long-term consequences that such transformation brings to all those involved. Once we actually destroy all the boundaries of the (at least) European higher education area, not only in official documents but above all in the thinking of all those who help shape this area, there will be no turning back or at least such a path will not be easy. It is therefore necessary to address this sphere with careful consideration and with a clear vision of what we want to achieve and where we want to go. That vision or strategy is currently non-existent. The issue is partially touched on by the proposed national higher education program, which, (regardless of whether we agree with it or not) is after all a government document that we assume will be adopted with a greater or lesser degree of consensus.

It seems that precisely in this segment it arises from current practise and current legislation and only further enforces it by emphasizing the strengthened position in the Balkans, it which one cannot ignore the well-known saying: »Better a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond«. However, the question is whether this is a "strategy" that pays in the long run. Highlighting the importance of only two internationally oriented institutions is also dubious; even professionals have different opinions about the two. The chapter in the proposed national program is therefore a strategy in miniature, a strategy before the final strategy, although it can reasonably be assumed that this will be somehow its starting point.

Another important document that is being adopted at the same time is the Criteria for Transnational Education. This is an essential regulation, which is required by the actual situation, but it is worth stressing that the legal basis for such document is poor (the issue touches only one article of the existing higher education legislation) and what is even more alarming: the criteria is being designed before we have a complete strategy. The question here arises: how can we prepare specific criteria, regulations for transnational education, if in fact we do not know what we want, where we should go and what can actually be achieved in this area. This is also reflected in the draft criteria, which has been presented to the expert public and which, in fact, with its restrictive legal basis, only partly resolves the issue of transnational education. More important for further discussion is the terminology itself used in these criteria (not for the first time), which also confirms the highlighted problem of the intrusion of the commercial principle into higher education.

Taking into account the different available policies, both international and national, the question posed in the title cannot be ignored: will internationalization really create the potential for improving the quality of our higher education or will it just be one of the factors that contribute to increased supply and market competition. As can be seen from the current situation, this does not necessarily mean higher quality but rather the opposite: more options for seeking "innovative" ways and shortcuts to achieve the desired objectives.

We will try to highlight in this article some aspects of internationalization, particularly in the light of an overall rise in quality, as well as point out

some specific risks and threats posed by this process itself, or which can be triggered by our actions (conscious or unconscious), including with inadequate definitions of the field or lack of placement in the current context of our higher education.

Internationalisation - a multifaceted reflection of contemporaneity

Internationalisation in general means all forms of international cooperation and a variety of processes of exchange between different countries; it is therefore certainly a process that cannot be viewed separately from the environment in which it is happening. Internationalization in higher education means various processes involving different higher education stakeholders, which consequently leads to a number of different understandings of this process. For example, on the one hand, internationalization for students means mobility during study or the opportunity for practical training abroad; for teachers and other staff, on the other hand, it means joint projects and research activities, the transfer of programs to other countries (transnational education), integration of the global dimension in the curriculum and/or teaching methods and, last but not least, international comparability in ranking scales. Despite the fact that the notion of internationalization is usually connected with the positive effects it brings, it makes more sense to use a more neutral definition (Knight: 2008).

As observed by Braček (2007), the internationalization of education has a long history. The concept first appeared in the 12th century, a period that is strongly characterized by the migration of peoples and Christianization, which was then in some sense the cause of internationalization, since "mobile" students and academics primarily spread Christianity. Later (New Age) these motives are replaced mainly by economic and political factors, which, taking into account contemporary circumstances, such as the motives for internationalization, can be discussed today, although at that time, internationalization in this sense principally served colonization.

Despite the early development of the concept, the notion itself of internationalization of higher education emerged in the eighties of the

past century[2] *"after 1980 /.../ the development of internationalization of higher education was marked by the globalization process"* (Braček 2007: 15), with its positive and negative impacts, mainly related to the dominant model of capitalism. Internationalization, as observed by Knight (2008), can be based on a number of intertwined concepts: social/cultural, political, economic and, ultimately, academic; the motives (of countries or institutions of higher education) for choosing internationalization derive from these concepts.

As can be seen from the summary of the historical development of internationalization, it always had a clearly defined purpose or results, benefits. It is therefore important that before establishing a national strategy for internationalization, the following questions are answered as specifically as possible: what will be the purpose of the process, what should be its results or benefits, who are the key stakeholders of the process, who will be responsible for its implementation at various levels, and who will benefit from this (Knight, 2008) and what do we gain from the process of internationalization? It is difficult to speak of more or less "pure" or "fair" motives, although it may be possible to generalize them in this way. However, the strategy for this area must take into account the particular motives that are directed towards higher quality, academic networking, exchange of scientific research and other findings, best practices, experiences and cultural characteristics. On the other hand, of course, the economic motives that often arise from the increasing costs of education and the proportionally smaller budgets dedicated to this area must also be understood; however the danger of internationalization becoming merely a tool for obtaining funds on other "markets", including at the cost of quality, must be taken into account. The financial aspect of internationalization is also reflected in a revised system of financing Slovenian higher education institutions, namely, through the so-called variable part of the financing pillar. One of the indicators with financial value is that of international cooperation, laid down in the Regulation[3] (2011) as *"the proportion of students of regular studies of the first and second degree, without graduates, who go on academic exchange abroad and foreign students who come to Slovenia on study exchange, from the past academic year compared with the academic year of two years ago."* It can be seen from the given definition that this method of financial reward

[2] *Cf. The Erasmus program began in 1987 (van Ginkel 2011).*

[3] *Regulation on the public funding of higher education institutions and other institutions (OJ RS, 7 / 2011).*

is driven by mobility, although the indicator speaks of "international cooperation", and even when this is quite succinctly defined, as it is not quite clear what it means to "go on exchange." A justified concern can here be expressed that quantity will have precedence over quality and mobility will be discussed or defined in a manner that allows the best possible statistics, rather than a discussion of the actual quality of the exchange itself, whereby students finish a good part of their duties abroad and become familiar with new content as well as ways of teaching and, of course, the culture of the area in which they reside during the period of mobility.

The Bologna Process - the European path to the internationalization of higher education

The concept of internationalization of higher education is today further strengthened by the Bologna Process, which clearly defines objectives in this area and where we can emphasize integration of the European (higher education) area, including with the aim of achieving the desired competitiveness in the international context (internal reinforcement for greater strength outwards), taking into account European diversity.

The signatories were already bound to the recognition of higher education qualifications within the European region in 1997, with the Lisbon Convention, by which the diversity of educational systems is recognised, which additionally contributes to a further enrichment of this area and facilitates transitions within it for individuals. Unification of the *European Higher Education Area* (EHEA) is later specifically defined by the Bologna Declaration (1999), of which one of the main objectives is: *"the creation of the European higher education area, /.../ which leads towards the establishment of mobility and employability of citizens and the overall development of the Continent."* Even the set goals move towards unification of the EHEA and thus enable maximum mobility, which is also a separate objective (within the scope of the main objectives), which can be achieved through open access and recognition of completed education.

The signatories subsequently (usually after two-year cycles) monitored the development of the EHEA, evaluated the success in achieving the set goals and designed more specific objectives for each section, and it is

internationalization that gained in importance throughout this process. First and foremost, the signatories committed themselves to eliminate all barriers to free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff (Prague Communiqué 2001), although the excessively slow progress in this area can nevertheless still be critically evaluated. Many barriers have thus remained for students in certain regions (especially outside the EU area), as well as academic staff, which often face overlong and over-bureaucratic procedures, which restrict freedom of movement.

The European dimension appears not only in mobility but should be reflected in the content of (mostly common) study courses, which should add a more "European content" or orientations, which should further strengthen the European dimension in both teaching and employment (Prague Communiqué 2001). Here, too, certain institutions[4], programs[5], modules and/or content, can be seen bearing the name "European" or "international" in their titles; however the actual implementation of this dimension in the program will be judged when those graduates come onto the (European) labour market. Sometimes, when emphasizing the external, international, European ... one cannot avoid the feeling that it is ultimately only a well-prepared advertising campaign, with a very domestic central message: "the grass is always greener on the other side" and everything foreign or international is therefore more attractive.

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) set as priority goals, attention to ensuring quality and promoting mobility, with a stress on student mobility. Despite the efforts, though, the aims were not set in a specific manner, with clear performance indicators. On the other hand, there has been some progress in the implementation of the European dimension in programs, which is also shown by an increased number of these so-called common programs.

In addition to the European dimension of internationalization, these documents also convey a tendency to increase the attractiveness of the

4 *The register of higher education institutions (April 2011) contains 3 private higher education institutions that contain a derivation of the word »European« in their name, 2 institutions have a derivation of the word »international«.*

5 *At public universities, five programs contain a derivation of the word »European« in their name, 5 have a derivation of the word »international«, and one has »global«. Among private institutions, 4 »European« programs and 4 »international« programs can be found.*

EHEA outwards, to non-European countries. The Bergen Communiqué (2005) thus also clearly highlights a desire to identify partner regions and design a strategy for the external dimension of this process. This strategy[6] was subsequently also adopted, in London (2007).

The Leuven Communiqué (2009) also provides concrete and measurable objectives in the area of mobility, namely: *"In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the countries of the European Higher Education Area should spend part of the study or training period abroad."* It stresses here that mobility is a factor for improving the quality of programs and research work, and should be implemented in all three cycles (levels) of education. At the same time, the practical aspects related to information, funding, recognition, visas (or work permits...) are also highlighted in contributions by the Student Organisation of Slovenia (ŠOS 2010a and ŠOS 2010b).

The importance of mobility has also been raised by the European student union (ESU[7]) in their documents, in which they stress the equal opportunities for mobility of all students, demand the allocation of more and higher grants for mobility and demands for an orderly system for the recognition of different forms of education. ESU also expects that, within the framework of the objective set in the Leuven Communiqué, we will get a more specific definition of what is considered to be a form of mobility. It appears that students understand internationalization primarily through mobility, which is the form in which they are closely involved. In this paper, we do not want to be limited only to this component of internationalization, but to determine through the entire process how internationalization can contribute to improvements and which dangers may occur in doing so. In the last decade, as the Bologna Process has been implemented, internationalization has become an increasingly important component of higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area. In addition to developing shared values and strengthening the common European culture, internationalization also means new forms of cooperation, the development and implementation of programs and, ultimately, new ways of finding financial resources. We can hope that internationalization, given the low culture of (some) higher education institutions, will not gradually become primarily the latter - a way of seeking new or additional financial resources - while ignoring

6 *The European Higher Education Area in a global environment*

7 *European Students' Union.*

other dimensions of this process and, above all, the quality of higher education.

With the aim of evaluating quality or the contribution of internationalization to quality, we will try to define the ways that higher education and the higher education area are enriched - through the exchange of different views and practices.

The internationalization of higher education as an element of quality

In the following discussion, we will focus on internationalization within the European Higher Education Area, based on the fact that we previously proceeded from a definition of the contribution made by the Bologna Process to the importance of this area. EHEA, in addition to discussions on internationalization, has facilitated discussion on quality assurance, to which particular importance has been assigned. Quality assurance has become one of the main principles of the Bologna Process, within which a number of shifts have been achieved in the area. In accordance with the Bergen Communiqué (2005), European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance[8] were designed by the working group E4[9].

These processes strengthen and unify (on the European level) the concept of internal and external quality assurance, to which member states and, consequently, higher education institutions are committed. Despite the framework standardization, differences are still present, since the concept is developing in individual countries in line with the previous situation, university system and culture of quality. In particular, it is important in the field of quality to ask what our objective is, because it certainly cannot be quality "per se", still less mere bureaucratic compliance with obligations, which is still too often how self-evaluation reports, student surveys etc. are understood. This is a question to which many institutions respond with the term "international comparability", which somehow completes the circle between internationalization and quality, which are mutual cause and effect.

8 *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.*

9 *EUA, ENQA, EURASHE ESIB (now ESU).*

In connection with international comparability, international accreditations can be highlighted as an element of quality, and they are intended to prove the quality and international comparability of related programs, which contributes to greater visibility and recognition in the international environment, resulting in more exchanges (both students and professors), but also more funds, or at least different routes to obtaining funds.

As observed by Čok (2005: 24), Slovenia has been successful for several decades in international integration in the field of research. If the Bologna Process highlights the international dimension in teaching, the enforcement of a common European research policy[10] is meant to give an appropriate emphasis to the integration of research work, with the aim of achieving greater efficiency and added value, which is transferred to the economy. Exchanges can certainly add to increased quality. They can be basically divided into exchanges of students and exchanges of professors (since exchanges of other university staff represent a negligible share). The exchange process brings many benefits, both to the individual who participates and to the institution. Student exchanges may be somewhat neglected in this respect, since they are still primarily regarded as "a matter for the student" and do not contribute to the enrichment of the study process at the institution to which the student returns, with experience and knowledge of foreign practices - even in the forms of teaching. Exchanges of academic staff are therefore highly valuable, also for the students, enriching the learning process on substantive and operational levels. There are still many obstacles observed in this area, mainly related to the regulation of labour and wage rates for foreigners. Another aspect of improved quality in the context of internationalization is joint study programs (only a handful in Slovenia) and many forms of transnational education[11], which are only in process of being established here (including the procedures associated with establishing criteria for implementing such forms of education). In this respect, it is not excessive to be concerned with the intrusion of the commercial concept into the higher education area, in which the number of "service providers" can quickly spread uncontrolled. We cannot agree with the authors (Baldwin and James in Dimc 2010: 26) who argue that the introduction of the

10 *Towards a European Research Area.*

11 *The notion of transnational higher education encompasses all forms of education in which students study out side the country of the institution providing the study program and also providing a publicly recognised document.*

commercial concept has been the key to improving the quality of higher education (cf. Australia) and that market mechanisms enhance quality. First of all, the quality of the higher education community (universities and other communities of teachers, researchers and students) is increased by the fulfilment of the basic missions of higher education and socially responsible actions. If we were blindly to follow the definitions that recognize the market as a key element of quality, we might conclude that the "old universities" were not of good quality, because their activities did not involve the market concept. This can easily be refuted by the centuries of tradition of the university as one of the main institutions of European civilization.

Many authors (Braček, 2007) state different motives for internationalization, some of which are also economic or of economic nature. However, the educational, research, developmental, cultural and other motives must not be forgotten, which, together with internationalization, also help to raise the quality of educational institutions and should be - as opposed to the commercial concept - highly encouraged in higher education. Improvement of the quality of higher education institutions and higher education teaching is one of the key reasons for internationalization. Only the quality of institutions and programs can limit the negative trends of globalization and the consequent impact on the autonomous higher education area.

Internationalization - the invasion of commercial mechanisms into higher education area

Internationalization (of higher education) is also or only understood as a commercial concept because of an association with the concept of globalization and the associated free movement of goods and services in the global market. To this can be attributed the trend towards privatization in higher education, whereby the educational offer is mainly based on the "interest of the market". Despite some common elements between the two processes (globalization and internationalization) they should be considered separately, but taking into account the effects that the globalization process has on higher education and the various higher education stakeholders.

Braček (2007: 23) defines the elements of globalization (the concept of a "knowledge-based society", ICT, market economics, liberalization of trade and the creation of new national bodies for international cooperation) that affect the internationalization of higher education on a number of levels or in many different forms. These are manifested through new forms of education and qualifications and, consequently, new providers of education, the commercialization of universities, the subordination of educational programs to the needs of the labour market, increased transnational education, as well as increased levels of mobility and changes in the roles and tasks of the bodies responsible for of higher education.

These changes, as well as the capitalistic perception of education as a commodity, are leading to the situation in which higher education is perceived as a service in an open international environment – a services market. This also comes from encouraging universities to find other financial resources in addition to public resources, especially in the economy[12], where the individual is perceived as a consumer in the market. Despite the fact that the cooperation of these two spheres is necessary because only by research findings we can enrich the economy and contribute to sustainable development, the question of the subordination of higher education to the economy and, consequently, to the market, still remains. On the other hand, the internationalization process itself is responsible for the introduction of the commercial concept.

> *"Being comparable with similar institutions abroad has become a postulate of the modern higher education area, in which customers of educational services choose between different options of education in the broadest sense, one might even say "shop" (choose the program, institution and the like). Being "better" than the competition means achieving a competitive advantage of the institution in the educational markets, which in internationalization processes are not limited only to a "local area". /.../ The market "requires" diversity and difference, while aiming towards satisfying the desire of various target groups and clients."(Dimc 2010: 6) .*

In order to explain the conflicting perceptions of higher education as a market, in which knowledge is sold as a service, we here provide the

[12] *Cf. Likewise, the proposal of NPVŠ introduces the institute of donations.*

basic definition brought by this concept and definitions to which we tend within the higher education processes. Within the framework of developing marketing policies, Jančič (1990) provides a definition of the various stages in the development of integrated social marketing but, unfortunately, we find that regardless of the overall development of the concept of marketing orientation, as described previously, we still remain with obsolete concepts of perception of the services market, which are being imposed on the higher education area. Jančič (1990) highlights the product, production, sales, marketing and social-marketing orientation. Referred to the above, as well as to the perceived situation in practice, it can be said that we are somehow "stuck" between production and a sales orientation, in which the latter means an increased role of sales in the realization of the offer. The offer is still at the heart, the requirements of the "consumers" are disregarded, although they are persuaded through aggressive sales and promotion. In the theory of marketing development, a marketing and social marketing orientation follow the aforementioned. These two orientations bring a transformation in understanding a way that could be more appropriate to the processes that are taking place in higher education. A marketing orientation was a transformation towards the consumer, by adapting services to the wishes, needs and demands of consumers, whereas a social-marketing orientation (the concept of social marketing) means upgrading the previous orientation, primarily in terms of responsibility towards the environment and society at large, or the process of exchange with the entire environment (Jančič, 1990). This means in practice that all stakeholders help shape a process that is no longer "selling" but exchange, through which all those entering this process gain. If the concept is transferred to higher education, we must consider the responsibility of higher education stakeholders to the wider society and achievement of the fundamental mission of higher education.

However, as observed by Braček (2007: 16), in most countries *"internationalization is conducted entirely in the spirit of entrepreneurship and commercialization"* (tuition fees, market-oriented transnational education etc.) but, on the other hand, as we would like, on the basis of academic factors (exchange and activities to improve quality). Regardless of whether it is a profit or a non-profit activity, an increasing market orientation and market-oriented activities in education can in general be seen. Van Ginkel (2011) notes that "the notion of a "knowledge economy"

does not at root mean the restructuring of the economy on the basis of scientific knowledge. On the contrary, it means that the domain of knowledge production is being "economized", or as we note in this paper, the concept of marketing is being transferred to the sphere of higher education.

Davies (in Braček 2007: 32) believes *"that the motives for the internationalization of higher education are closely related with the cutting down on finances and entrepreneurship nature of education services,"* which confirms our thesis that some entities choose internationalization in order to obtain (additional) funding, whereas some go even further in search of the answer and see internationalization as a way *"to ensure the economic competitiveness of each country".*

As Braček (2007: 90) states, European universities also see commercialization as the greatest danger of the internationalization of higher education, while in Slovenia, the greatest danger is (still) a brain drain, an increased number of foreign diplomas, a low quality of providers of those and, consequently, the loss of cultural and national identity.

Conclusion

In the last decade, the area of higher education (both national and international) has been thoroughly transformed and internationalization has gained a very special, if not central role. Through this contribution, we have tried to show the development of the concept of internationalization in higher education in conjunction with other developments in the wider social environment and to highlight the influences that internationalization has in the field of higher education.

Like all processes to which we are witness, this one also brings many advantages and opportunities, as well as disadvantages and weaknesses, which are often associated with inappropriate (staff, financial and other) resources, and which lead to the introduction of concepts that are inappropriate and unacceptable for higher education. We have highlighted in particular here the intrusion of market mechanisms and commercialization into higher education, which moves higher education away from its original mission and away from being public and socially

responsible. Knowledge, previously regarded as a public good, following the logic of capital, turns into services or goods on the market, for which an individual has to compete and, in some cases, also pay. The positive effects of education and educated individuals to the wider society are often ignored, although society should also be investing in progress through public and accessible education. The concept of commercialization is also recognized by many foreign authors but they attach different connotations to it. Proceeding from our own given reasons, we have tried to analyze in particular the negative aspects of commercialization of higher education and knowledge in a given social context and to highlight the dangers of hastily adopted measures in this area.

Given that higher education institutions are also agents of social development, the strategy of their - even international - activity must carefully consider all available information and be aware of the dangers that can transform higher education area beyond recognition. We certainly should not ignore the positive aspects that international cooperation brings to all involved and, at the same time, we must specifically identify the key stakeholders, their role, functions and benefits. Only with a generally accepted and internalized strategy in this area will we be able to follow the objectives that have been set within the European Higher Education Area.

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Internationalisation and Globalisation in Higher Education: The Nordic Experience

Per Nyborg

Abstract

The article describes Nordic co-operation, including in the higher education sector, the recent trends in student and staff mobility in Nordic countries and the tensions between internationalisation and globalisation. The five Nordic countries have a long tradition of co-operation, supporting the mobility of students and staff between these countries and internationally. However, the rapid growth of a global market for educational services has resulted in the introduction of tuition fees for international students in three of the countries, weakening the long tradition of the social dimension in higher education. As there is also a global labour market, the focus is shifting from academic mobility to job migration due to the increased need for highly skilled personnel. Market-oriented EU policies are increasingly dominating over traditional Nordic policies based on equality and social cohesion. There is no common Nordic policy to meet the challenges of the global market in higher education.

Key words: Internationalisation, higher education, Nordic cooperation, European cooperation, social dimension, Globalisation, Global market, Student mobility, International students

Internationalisation and globalisation

International co-operation is central to higher education. The mobility of students and staff has been an action line in the Bologna Process – to the benefit of home and host countries alike. However, alongside this co-operation a global market for educational services has been rapidly growing, dominated by institutions and enterprises in a few large English-speaking countries as sellers. Large young economies can be found at the buying end. Small countries with their own national language may not

easily adjust to the challenges arising from the market, where at best they will be buyers – if they can afford to be. The poorer countries should be prepared for an increased brain-drain as the people involved in job migration may outnumber those involved in academic mobility.

Let us try to clear up the terminology: The term international is used for processes relating to or affecting two or more nations (international co-operation, international competition), whereas the term global is used for processes relating to or affecting the entire world (global pollution, the global market).

In higher education, the term internationalisation is widely used to describe co-operation between individuals, institutions or education systems. It is also used to describe sending students out or taking foreign students in. In the literature, Kritz (2006) uses the term to denote institutional arrangements set up by governments, institutions and education agents that involve the delivery of higher education in two or more countries. The OECD uses the term cross-border higher education to convey the same concept.

Kritz (2006) reminds us that for decades students have migrated to other countries to obtain higher education and today they are continuing to do so in growing numbers. The traditional form of cross-border flows in higher education has involved students migrating from one country to another to advance their studies. Several economic and social factors encourage international student mobility and competition between countries for foreign students. Students themselves are eager to advance their education and, if opportunities and resources permit, they are willing to do so by leaving their homelands and migrating to another country.

The governments of countries that send or receive foreign students usually view this type of international migration flow favourably. Many receiving countries even recruit and provide scholarships to foreign students as a means of enhancing their international status and relations with other countries. Because most foreign students pay their own living costs and student fees, governments recognise that they bring in foreign exchange by way of their expenditure in the cities and regions where education institutions are located, thereby stimulating local economies. Governments have also long seen the training of foreign students as a means of advancing development.

Globalisation can be described or defined in a vast number of ways; see, for instance, Scholte (2000) discussing the globalisation of economic, social, political and cultural life in the contemporary world. When applying the term to higher education, Kritz (2006) follows Knight (1999) in using globalisation to mean the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas ... across borders. Globalisation affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities.

Knight points out that the internationalisation of higher education is one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalisation yet, at the same time, respects the individuality of the nation. Thus, internationalisation and globalisation are seen as different but dynamically linked concepts. Globalisation can be thought of as the catalyst while internationalisation is the response, albeit a response in a proactive way.

The Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – have been good at internationalisation, having worked very closely together for a long time (Nyborg 1996). However, as shown by a Nordic team (Carlsson et al. 2009) describing recent trends in higher education in each of the five Nordic countries, the Nordic co-operation has been unable to develop a joint strategy to meet the global challenges in higher education. The present article builds on the paper by Carlsson et al. by focusing on new developments in the individual countries.

Nordic Co-operation

Nordic co-operation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden is based on close cultural, linguistic, economic and political ties. These ties are reflected in a number of formal and informal co-operation schemes. In the university sector, informal networks have existed for a long time, with the resulting exchange of students and scientists and joint publications. On the formal side, parliamentarians co-operate in the Nordic Council (since 1952) and national governments co-operate in the Nordic Council of Ministers (since 1971). In the university sector, the Nordic Association of Universities was established in 1995 to link the national university networks and establish joint contact with the Nordic co-operation schemes set up by the ministers. In many respects, the Nordic countries have acted as a single unit: "Norden".

Nordic countries have succeeded in combining economic growth with social cohesion. Social cohesion has also been a leading principle of Nordic co-operation. Observers around the world have been amazed that the Nordic economies can prosper and grow in spite of the high tax wedges and the egalitarian distribution of income.

The social dimension of higher education was introduced in Norden already 50 years before its appearance in the Bologna Process: All qualified applicants should have the possibility of a higher education, irrespective of their socio-economic conditions. In each country a college sector was established parallel to the traditional university sector. Gradually the differences between the two sectors have been disappearing; with colleges being renamed polytechnics or university colleges, some of them have been accredited as universities. Today, 1 million study places are serving a total population of 25 million.

Nordic co-operation in higher education culminated in the 1994 Agreement on Admission to Higher Education, signed by the five Nordic countries. The Nordic Council of Ministers then decided that citizens of the various countries within the Nordic group should be treated equally with regard to higher education. It was made clear that, as far as opportunities in higher education were concerned, the Nordic countries should operate as a single unit. The development leading to the 1994 Agreement and Nordic student mobility in this period is described by Nyborg (1996). Although mobility was generally high, the increase was not within Norden but with countries in the European Union.

European co-operation and global challenges

As the Erasmus programme was opened up to EFTA countries and Finland and Sweden followed Denmark into the European Union, the Nordic dimension was gradually overshadowed by the European dimension. With the Bologna Process, European co-operation has significantly influenced the Nordic higher education systems. Together with other European countries we have been building a common framework to realise the idea that students and staff shall be able to move freely within the European Higher Education Area, with full recognition of their qualifications. Each country has developed a three-cycle degree system

and introduced national quality assurance systems co-operating in a Europe-wide network. The long-standing Nordic mutual recognition of degrees and study periods was broadened to a Europe-wide obligation through the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Thus, 50 years of Nordic co-operation has been built into European co-operation in higher education that has transformed the education system in each country, now with a common structure, also including for instance for the first time a common degree system in the Nordic countries. This makes Nordic co-operation easier, but it is also opening up to a wider market.

What will be the consequences of the Lisbon Agenda, the enlargement of the EU, and other developments with respect to European higher education for the Nordic structures that were set up to support Nordic co-operation in higher education? These structures may be inadequate to meet the challenges of globalisation. More importantly, the basic Nordic ideas of equality and social cohesion may not the best platform for entering the global market. A more fundamental question is whether the Nordic model of free and open education can survive in the long run.

For the time being, governments in all Nordic countries continue to support their outgoing students, whether it is for a short-time exchange or a full degree. The support of students from developing countries is still strong, especially in Norway and Sweden.

One of the countries – Denmark – has developed a national strategy to meet the challenges of globalisation. It started with a report from a governmental committee chaired by the Prime Minister himself (Danish Government 2006). This strategy identifies two main challenges for Danish society: Denmark should be a strong competitor in the global market but Denmark should also continue to have strong social coherence promoted through a welfare system. It was followed by a report on the challenges for knowledge policy (Danish STI Ministry 2008). That report contained a number of proposals directed at the internationalisation of Danish education, such as:

- to increase the marketing of Danish educational programmes abroad;
- to expand the amount of flexible stipends and tuition waivers in order to attract talented students from abroad to Denmark; and
- to stimulate talented students from abroad to stay in Denmark after they graduate.

Danish universities are now expected to compete for international students in the global market, not only to recruit good students, but also to create extra income for the university and surrounding communities.

The Swedish parliament recently passed a law outlining tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students. These fees will apply from the 2011/2012 academic year but will be supplemented by scholarship programmes. This is not a "for profit" approach like the Danish strategy, but an adaption in response to the existence of a global market. The Finnish government is contemplating a similar strategy. Namely, Finnish higher education institutions may soon be legally allowed to charge tuition fees to non-EU/EEA students for English-language master's degree programmes. In these circumstances, there is no basis for a common Nordic stand with regard to the globalisation of higher education.

Nordic student mobility in a global perspective

As already stated, Nordic students have long been mobile. Table 2.1 shows some overall trends in the 2000-2006[1] period. Table 2.1 reveals a decreasing trend in the number of students going abroad for a full degree. There may be several reasons for this: the introduction of bachelor and master's degrees have opened up new possibilities at home, the rise in fee levels at foreign universities compared to the absence of a fee in the home country and, in Norway, also a slimming down of the generous support scheme for studies abroad. Iceland is an exception. Denmark has had and still has relatively few students abroad, with one reason being that up until 2008 no support was provided for tuition at foreign institutions.

[1] *Developments in individual countries since 2006 will be commented on separately.*

	International students	Out 2000	Out 2006	In 2000	In 2006
Denmark	Exchange students	4312	4950	3725	6713
	Full degree students	4245	3154	3432	7757
Finland	Exchange students	6880	8610	4805	8191
	Full degree students	5340	4360	6372	10066
Iceland	Exchange students	213	376	248	498
	Full degree students	1944	2705	239	370
Norway	Exchange students	3520	4498	4516	4455
	Full degree students	14745	12375	6323	12680
Sweden	Exchange students	4100	5100	6533	11232
	Full degree students	21300	19000	5531	16865

Table 2.1 shows incoming and outgoing students to and from the Nordic countries. The figures are from national sources and not directly comparable (Carlsson et al. (2009)).

There is an upward trend in the number of Nordic students taking part in exchange programmes but, apart from Finland, this increase in outgoing exchange students does not fully reflect the increased focus on internationalisation in the respective national strategies since the Bologna Process started in 1999.

Incoming mobility shows different trends. In Denmark, Finland and Sweden there was a 70-80% rise in the number of incoming exchange students from 2000 to 2006, while in Iceland the numbers have doubled. For Norway, there was no increase in the same period. One possible explanation is that one cannot easily survive in Norway on an Erasmus grant.

The numbers of international full-degree students have grown significantly in the Nordic countries. All Nordic countries are welcoming international students, although for students from countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) the immigration procedures have been complicated and time-consuming, with this being one reason that the number of foreign students who enrol has been much lower than the number of applications from qualified applicants. An obvious reason for the escalating number of applications has of course been the Nordic non-fee regime in higher education.

Following the introduction in 2006 of tuition fees in Denmark for students from non-EU/EEA countries, there has been a drop in the number of international full-degree students. In the 2008/2009 intake Norway was the largest source country with 1,394 students, followed by Sweden (931) and China (868). In spite of active marketing, the expected substantial income from tuition-paying students in Denmark has not materialised. Not only has the number of non-EU/EEA students decreased since 2006 (see Table 2.2), but data from universities in Denmark show that most of them are excused from paying tuition fees.

	2005/06	**2006/07**	**2007/08**	**2008/09**
EU/EEA	1,733	2,030	2,477	1,975
None-EU/EEA	1,274	741	813	962
Total	**3,048**	**2,778**	**3,293**	**2,939**

Table 2.2 Intake of international full-degree students in Denmark in 2005-2009.Source: Danish Agency for International Education http://en.iu.dk/

After the Swedish degree structure was changed according to the Bologna bachelor – master structure in 2007, the number of foreign citizen students has been high and increasing – for instance, enrolment in two-year master's programmes rose from 4,985 in 2007 to 7,430 in 2009 (data from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, see http://www.hsv.se/). It remains to be seen to what extent the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students will dampen the influx to Sweden.

In Norway, where foreign students do not pay tuition fees, the number of non-EU/EEA students increased from 1,922 in 2005 to 3,036 in 2009 according to Norwegian immigration authorities. In 2010, 14,980 foreign students were registered Norwegian higher education institutions, an increase from 11,772 in 2005. Russia topped the list in 2010 with 1,035 students (although a large share of the Russian students are distance students). China came fourth with 601 students in Norway, after Sweden and Germany (see http://www.siu.no/). These numbers may continue to grow as the introduction of tuition fees in neighbouring countries comes into full effect. However, there is no indication that the Norwegian non-tuition fee policy will change.

International PhD students in Nordic countries

In all Nordic countries a three-tier degree system is in place, with a PhD being the third degree. Candidates for a PhD degree are seen as students in most countries. In the Nordic countries they will usually be supported by the university and they can be regarded as university employees instead of students.

For example, in Norway PhD candidates are not considered to be students and are not included in the student statistics. To be accepted for a PhD candidate post in Norway, one must apply for a temporary position as "stipendiat". International candidates may compete on equal terms. As a result of the increasing number of "stipendiat" positions for PhD work at Norwegian HE institutions, the number of doctorates has more than doubled since 2000. The number of degrees awarded to foreign candidates was 81 in 2000. This number had risen to 308 or 24% of the total in 2006 (see Table 3.1). A particularly interesting question (still unanswered) is how many internationally recruited candidates will stay in Norway after they graduate as competent specialists working in Norwegian research, industry or businesses.

Table 3.1 also shows where the foreign PhDs come from. A special programme supports candidates from developing countries. There is a marked increase in degrees awarded to men and women from Asiatic countries. A similar tendency has been seen in Sweden.

Citizenship / award year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Norway	566	548	628	577	636	675	688	789	936
Norden	13	21	17	27	27	34	37	43	42
Western/Southern Europe	20	30	22	33	37	42	50	55	83
Eastern Europe	11	14	16	14	14	20	23	38	40
North America	4	3	5	6	5	7	8	7	11

Africa	15	27	17	31	30	37	38	42	54
Asia	15	33	28	31	29	36	54	49	64
Total	647	677	739	723	782	855	905	1030	1244
Foreign citizens	13%	19%	15%	20%	19%	21%	24%	23%	25%

Table 3.1. PhD degrees in Norway
Source: Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (see http://www.nifustep).

Staff mobility – academic exchange or job migration?

Increased staff mobility has been one of the goals of the Bologna Process and also eagerly taken up by the Nordic countries. Yet, the "Bologna vision" of staff mobility is not well articulated. There has been little consideration of the objectives and means to reach them. What kind of mobility do we want to encourage, and how can it be realised?

In the Bologna Process, staff mobility has mainly been related to teacher exchange and the development of joint study programmes – traditional academic mobility. However, issues such as social security and pension rights have also been brought up, bringing in the aspect of job migration – another form of mobility. Visas and working permits have been obstacles to mobility between the EEA region and outside countries. This is now rapidly changing.

Again taking Norway as an example, the international exchange of staff between higher education institutions is reported on a regular basis. The exchange of academic staff increased from around 1,500 in 2003 to more than 2,500 in 2007 for outgoing staff and from 800 to nearly 1,600 incoming visiting staff staying for more than one week.

Little is known about the job migration of HE staff between countries. In 2001 13% of the tenured staff in Norwegian universities and university colleges held foreign citizenship. No systematic follow-up has been done yet. However, recent reporting by individual institutions indicates that

since then there has been a marked increase in job migration by university staff. The Norwegian University of Science and Technology reported that in 2008 26% of the research staff had foreign citizenship, and so had 35% of those working for a PhD degree. The University of Oslo reported that 25% of its research staff had foreign citizenship in 2008.

The EU Commission recently made some very visible efforts to stimulate the mobility of researchers by introducing the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (European Commission 2005) and the Scientific Visa for researchers from third countries (European Council 2005). A Human Resources Strategy for Researchers has been announced for better job opportunities (European Commission 2008), including a proposal for Social Security and Supplementary Pension Rights for Researchers[2]. Clearly, the Commission is now focusing on job migration, not so much on academic exchange.

Recruitment of highly qualified specialists

All Nordic countries and most European ones have to face a shortage in the national recruitment of skilled workers and specialists over the coming years. The present financial problems in Europe may delay this shortage, but will not make it disappear.

These countries must look abroad to recruit the right type of specialists. This is presently much more actively done in Denmark than in Norway. Methods used in Denmark are, for example, green card arrangements for certain professions, special salary arrangements, proper and inexpensive schooling for accompanying children, job opportunities for accompanying partners and special (low) tax arrangements. A foreign specialist working in research is for a limited period ensured income tax at a maximum of 25%, which is approximately half the normal taxation level in Denmark. This has helped attract foreign specialists, but if they do not bring their family they usually leave again.

However, the driving force in this field is the European Union. The introduction of the EU Blue Card System (European Council 2009) indicates new actions to recruit highly qualified specialists:

[2] *A Researchers Mobility Portal was recently (2011) established at http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/.*

The directive establishes more attractive conditions for third-country workers to take up highly qualified employment in the member states of the Union, by creating a fast-track procedure for issuing a special residence and work permit called the "EU Blue Card". The Blue Card will facilitate access to the labour market to their holders and will entitle them to a series of socio-economic rights and favourable conditions for family reunification and movement across the EU. Under the rules set by the directive, EU Blue Card holders will enjoy equal treatment with nationals of the member state issuing the Blue Card, as regards working conditions, including pay and dismissal; freedom of association; education, training and recognition of qualifications;[...] (EU Council press release. Brussels, 25 May 2009).

On this basis, authorities in all European countries may see international students in their higher education institutions as candidates for highly qualified employment in the host country after graduation. Danish authorities are shifting their focus from regarding international students as a possible source of income for Danish universities to regarding them as potential candidates for highly qualified work in Danish industry. Norwegian authorities may perhaps more clearly also see their international students as a reservoir of upcoming specialists for Norwegian employment – not only as a contribution to internationalisation.

In this context it is necessary to also take the issue of brain drain from less developed countries in account and consider appropriate measures to limit this phenomenon. In Norway, students from developing countries are supported on equal terms as Norwegian students. To stimulate the return to the home country, loans from the Norwegian State Loan Fund for Education will be converted to grants after a year at home. However, international standards will be needed to prevent graduates from developing countries being actively recruited to work in rich countries.

Nordic challenges and dilemmas

Fifty years before Bologna, the social dimension of higher education was seen as a central element of the expansion and broadening of higher education systems in the Nordic countries: There were no tuition fees and in each country a financial support system was set up to give all young people equal higher education opportunities. Activating the intellectual

potential of the population may be one of the reasons for the success of the Nordic model.

It has been argued by both politicians and economists that the money could have been used more effectively in a support system combining tuition fees and grants, placing more responsibility on the students to study full-time and finish on time. Over the years some adjustments have been made, for instance partially converting grants to loans or introducing a bonus for those finishing on time. Such changes have generally had little effect on students in their home country. One possible explanation is that, although student organisations claim that loans and grants should be sufficient for full-time studies, individual students today prefer a combination of studies and part-time work for a more comfortable life. Private institutions charge tuition fees. The fact that private institutions in Iceland receive funding from the state according to the same rules as public universities has led to a discussion of whether public universities should also be allowed to charge tuition fees. However, the right for a free higher education is so deeply rooted in Nordic countries that it could easily be political suicide to propose a change to the system. The Nordic countries will most probably continue the no-fee policy in state institutions for their home students.

Quality has in recent years been a central concept in higher education policies. The White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament that introduced the Bologna Process in Norway as the Quality Reform (Norwegian Government 2001) expressed it this way:

The report places a major emphasis on fostering and further developing the institutions needed for development of the knowledge society. Universities and colleges are to function as spearheads in such a process. They must be in the forefront internationally and fulfil their role in the knowledge society as regards quality and provisions for participation in education
(Report No. 27 to the Storting 2000-2001).

Using this argument, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions convinced the Parliament that extra funds were necessary for the reform to succeed (Nyborg 2007). However, in Norway (and to some extent also in the other Nordic countries) the political focus has not been on the highest possible rankings of individual institutions but on

the best possible higher education for the population. Elite institutions can only educate a minority and do not easily combine with equal rights for everybody. With the Quality Reform, Norwegian colleges were given the option of a university accreditation and, ten years after the reform, three former colleges have been accredited as universities. One may, of course, question whether this is the best way to improve the quality of the system.

Students who consider going abroad for their degree have been much more under the influence of the support system than home students. Support for studies abroad may not cover all the costs and possibilities for part-time jobs may not be good for foreign citizens. Costs become an element when deciding where to go, even more so when tuition fees in some countries may be high above what can be obtained from the support system in the home country. For example, even with the still generous support scheme of the Norwegian State Loan Fund, the high tuition fees at UK and US universities have drastically reduced the number of students going to those countries. Further restrictions in the support scheme have turned out to be an effective brake on the exodus to Australian universities. On the other hand, the possibility of English-taught medical education in low-cost countries in Eastern Europe has considerably increased the student flow to Hungary and Poland. If Norwegian authorities were to decide that the country does not need a higher density of medical doctors (already among the highest in Europe), they could simply stop supporting medical studies abroad.

Higher education was defined in 1995 as a service to be traded under the regime of GATS and the World Trade Association. Governments supporting students abroad may then be inclined to see international higher education more as an import of services to the country than as a benefit for the students. Schemes for supporting international students may be changed accordingly. Even in Nordic countries the right to higher education may not in times to come imply the right to buy an education in the global market, sending a substantial part of the bill to the government in their home country. Why should the home country pay for an international education if the candidate does not come back after graduating? Why should it pay for the offspring of an increasing number of guest workers, perhaps supported as international students in their country of origin? Questions like these may corrode the system.

Looking towards the global market for educational services, Nordic countries are individually small units in a big world and they have (with the exception of Denmark) not fully taken a stand regarding their relationship to this market. Nice words have been said in the Nordic Council about joining forces, but nothing substantial relating to education has emerged (Nordic Council of Ministers 2010). In a global perspective, the Nordic Region is barely visible. Nordic countries and their students going abroad are buyers in the global market for education. At least one of the countries also hopes to establish itself as a seller.

To sum up, the following questions can describe the challenges for the future of higher education in Nordic Europe: Will a common Nordic approach to the challenges of the market be possible? Can the Nordic model of free and open education survive in the long run? Has it perhaps already started to corrode?

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Is a mobile student also a more employable student? Research on employers' perceptions of academic mobility

Alenka Flander

Abstract

International student mobility has in recent decades and in the context of the internationalisation of higher education become an important strategic direction for countries and institutions of higher education. The effects are often directly related to young people's employability and competitiveness in the labour market. Research on the effects of mobility during the time of study and its correlation to graduates' employability is relatively rare in Europe and around the world. At CMEPIUS (the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Education and Training Programmes) we conducted a survey of companies. We determined how companies in Slovenia value the international mobility of students, which experiences they have with graduates who have studied or worked abroad and how they take this into account in employment. In this paper we highlight the problem of mobility in relation to the labour market and the results of CMEPIUS research on this topic.

Key words: CMEPIUS, international mobility, internationalisation, employability, employers, labour market, skills

Introduction

International mobility is an important issue in today's global and competitive world. International co-operation, learning mobility and internationalisation of the entire educational structure, especially at the tertiary education level, are promoted and encouraged in terms of increasing the competitiveness and employability of young people.

Mobility is one of the key mechanisms for achieving the five European goals by 2020 since the EU aims to achieve "smart growth" through the mobility of young people, enabling them to be better prepared for the labour market; Europe will thus provide for the greater efficiency and attractiveness of European universities in the international environment and consequently improve all levels of education and training (academic excellence, equal opportunities). International student mobility falls within the priorities of the Bologna Process and is highlighted by the National Higher Education Programme until 2020. The European Union strongly supports international mobility via the Erasmus programme and other programmes (Leonardo da Vinci...) with financial resources since one of Europe's main objectives is the aspiration to make young people, as the future workforce, more mobile.

Despite the large financial resources and emphasis given to this subject, very few studies have aimed to examine the actual effects which would emphasise the benefits of young people's international mobility. In Slovenia, they practically do not exist.

Most of the available studies of international mobility (study or placement) focus on the student aspect, only a few contain questions regarding the relationship between the labour market and international academic mobility. Those studies that have been dedicated in part to this subject show that it is difficult to talk about the direct benefits of international mobility during studies for young people in search of employment.

Yet the majority of students (including Slovenian ones) feel that this experience does bring some benefit, in particular in terms of improving their language skills, knowledge of new cultures and personal growth and development. They also believe that the key competences (independence and social competence) gained during international mobility are those which employers consider to be the most important.

Since significant investments are made in developing students' international mobility (more than 2.5 million EUR per year), we were interested in Slovenian employers' opinions on those effects, or whether the objectives pursued through international mobility are actually being achieved, particularly those related to increasing young people's employability when they search for their first job. How do Slovenian

companies value practical work or study abroad when searching for new employees? Are these experiences actually important to them or do they not play any role in deciding amongst candidates. It is therefore our intention to examine international mobility in terms of employers and whether they believe that students with international experience are in fact better candidates for a job.

However, as Čelebič (2008) states, in addition to the international mobility of students and teaching staff, the quality of mobility is important. To achieve its (significant) positive effects it is advisable that higher education institutions define the goals of mobility precisely and carefully plan all activities that will be included in their strategies. It is also important for staff and students to be aware of the importance of quality and for an institution to approach international student mobility in a systematic manner according to inter-university agreements, to evaluate all of its forms and develop and monitor relevant quality indicators.

Vande Berg (Lederman, 2007), Vice President for Academic Affairs at the American Council for International Education, stated in his speech entitled "It's Not All About the Numbers: Maximising Student Learning Abroad" that university graduates should be "internationally competent" and that study abroad, when done correctly, can help students gain that intercultural experience. He emphasised that today many students are unfortunately left to their own quantitative goals in their international experience, while many studies show that students can effectively learn from this international experience only if those who are educating and training them are included in mobility before, during and after its implementation. It is therefore necessary to invest primarily in those mobility programmes that meet the relevant quality criteria – and thus also support students before going abroad, monitor students during their stay abroad and evaluate and monitor the effects upon their return.

The applicability of students' international experience in the labour market

Up until recently, the quality of education was mainly measured on the basis of characteristics of primary factors such as number of qualified teachers, adequate school resources and the curriculum. Towards the

end of the last century, the rapid expansion of new technologies and globalisation also triggered a debate on whether the existing educational structure was adequately preparing young people for the requirements of their future life and work; ever more colleges and universities began to focus their attention on the quality of results and the impact of their work – that is, the knowledge and skills of their students. In Europe and the USA these discussions are primarily based on needs of the labour market which had demanded school system reforms and more measurable educational results. Despite the great political emphasis on measuring educational achievements, measuring education remained uncorrelated to a broader discussion about what young graduates actually need to successfully live and work. What the labour market, policymakers and educators were believed to need was a widening of measurements of educational achievements and a broader conceptual framework to link the different results together (Salganik, 2001).

In the field of measuring the effects of international academic mobility, the focus has only recently started to shift from the achievement of numerical targets to examining quality and related results. In Slovenia as well as in a large part of Europe, higher education institutions and political decision-makers' promotion of educational mobility is still largely based on the general belief that the international mobility of students, citizens and society in an increasingly international society is in itself a good thing.

The effects of mobility on students are primarily studied through the self-evaluation of students. Studies mainly focus on one dimension of international mobility, such as improving language skills (Maiworm & Teichler, 2002), knowledge of the international environment (Carlson et al., 1990), higher self-esteem and self-awareness (Williams, 2006), personal and cognitive development (Thomas, 2005; Graban, 2007) and cross-cultural and global competence (Patterson, 2006; Fernandez, 2006; Emert, 2008). There is a lack of studies analysing the overall effect on students' competence and those analysing the effects in correlation to the labour market.

The employability of students with international experience

In line with the growing emphasis on quality assurance in education seen in the last decade (Knight, 2001; Teichler, 2001), it is important to consider whether a shorter period of international study or placement actually helps to achieve the desired added value in career terms.

Čelebič (2008) mentions two dimensions of international student mobility – the extent and quality. She points out that the effects of mobility are stronger on the level of the higher education institution if the goals are precisely defined and when both the staff and students are aware of the potential positive effects. It is also necessary to carefully plan the related activities and include them in the strategy of the higher education institution and, on the other hand, to evaluate its effects to ensure that the quality of mobility becomes part of the organisational culture (Čelebič, 2008).

The objectives of internationalisation often primarily focus on increasing the number of students participating in international mobility and, in line with EU guidelines, aim to include 20% of the total student population in international mobility. Measuring progress in such a quantifiable form is one of the most common criteria for the internationalisation of institutions, although in the last few years growth in student enrolment numbers has started to wane (in the old EU members), in recent years also in Slovenia. Since the majority of students (also due to limited financial resources) do not have access to international mobility, the debate on so-called internationalisation at home has begun (Crowther et al., 2000). The first attempt to better define student internationalisation in study programmes and in institutions themselves came from Canada where the British Columbia Centre for International Education limited the effects of international mobility to five categories of competence: language knowledge and skills; international business ethics; the global perspective; the home environment; and intercultural competence and skills to manage change (Stanley and Mason, 1998, Stronkhorst 2002). The definitions of these competencies have been developed according to the competences recruitment companies seek.

However, studies in Europe and in the USA show that the added value of international student mobility is a common subject of analysis, although the majority (95.6%) focus solely on the level of individual (student) perceptions of its effects, especially in terms of satisfaction (Van de Berg, 2003). This is followed by research that focuses on the development of language skills (40%), the effects of academic knowledge (35.6%), personal development (26.7%), cross-cultural dimensions (15.6%) while only 11.1% of such studies concentrate on the career impact of international mobility (ibid.).

The effect of mobility on an individual's personal competencies is generally perceived very positively (Stronkhorst, 2005), yet this added value differs from the added value higher education institutions wish to achieve through international mobility. An increasing emphasis on the political as well as the programme level is required by studies that go beyond the analysis of student satisfaction and focus on a more structure-oriented goal (Van der Wende, 1996). In order to achieve the desired objectives, in their goals and programmes higher education institutions must state the clearly defined intended effects of international mobility and how they should be achieved or assessed/monitored (Teichler, 2002, Van der Wende, 2003).

In conjunction with career and professional effects, the studies reveal that study or placement abroad should increase the scope and choice of employment (Maiworm and Teichler, 1997; Pavlin, 2009), although realistic data based on long-term monitoring of the employment of former participants in international mobility do not exist. In principle, employers support international co-operation and mobility, but this is unlikely to play a role in employment (Bremer, 1998; Hannigan, 1997; Pavlin, 2009).

European and national programmes and strategies to support educational mobility

In the Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the "Europe 2020" strategy[1], considering the annual

[1] *2011/C 70/01*

review of growth for 2011 presented by the Commission, including the report on progress of the Europe 2020 strategy, macroeconomic reports, the draft Joint Employment Report and the Integrated Guidelines of the strategy, the European Council emphasised that education and training are essential for achieving the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as laid out in the "Europe 2020" strategy. This is primarily because they promote social cohesion and inclusion, and help citizens gain the skills and competencies needed for the European economy and European society to remain competitive and innovative (Council of the European Union, 2011, 1).

According to the Council, two of the leading initiatives proposed under the "Europe 2020" strategy are particularly important for education and training: Youth on the Move, and the Agenda for new skills and jobs. The first one (Youth on the Move) is intended to help young people fulfil all their potentials in education and training and improve their employment prospects. At the same time, this initiative encourages academic institutions to improve the quality and relevance of their programmes and invites them to promote learning mobility in the entire education system along with informal settings, such as at work. In addition, the initiative stresses gaining more experience in the workplace, acquiring more entrepreneurial skills and creating more opportunities for volunteer activities, self-employment and work and education abroad (Council of the European Union, 2011, 1 pt. 3 (i)).

The other initiative (Agenda for new skills and jobs) focuses on the need to improve skills and employability, emphasises that education and training must match labour market needs, and ensures the greater recognition of skills and competencies acquired through non-formal or informal learning (Council of the European Union, 2011, 1, pt. 3 (ii)).

European education and training systems should provide the right combination of skills and competencies to produce a sufficient number of graduates in science, mathematics and engineering, they should provide basic knowledge, skills and motivation, and teach people how to learn, they should promote the development of inter-disciplinary competencies, including those that: facilitate the use of modern digital technologies, promote sustainable development, citizenship, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (Council of the European Union, 2011, 1, pt. 4).

As a response to the challenges of globalisation, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia introduced a National Programme of Higher Education until 2020, named Drzna Slovenija (Bold Slovenia). Again, this points out that "at the beginning of the 21st century we are facing the challenges which predict a thorough restructuring of the world as we know it today. In the Slovenian and international higher education area, the number of students has grown rapidly, increasing the mobility of students ... new circumstances are emerging such as globalisation, remarkable technological advances, transnational decision-making, the need for better quality in higher education, the growing cost of education and a number of other political, social, ecological and also economic changes. ... The processes we are witnessing further emphasise the need for knowledge, which is a value that fulfils the individual and gives him or her a proper place in modern society, enabling social inclusion, a sustainable lifestyle and economy, all of which lead to a higher quality of life and an equitable society" (Drzna Slovenija – Družba znanja, 2011).

The strategy also emphasises that the internationalisation of Slovenian higher education is the key to its development since it acts as a catalyst for its quality. It brings an increase in knowledge; it means improving or gaining personal, communication and cultural skills, a new palette of studies for the future labour market etc. (Drzna Slovenija – Družba znanja, 2011).

The main instrument used for internationalising the future highly skilled labour force is to provide opportunities for international mobility (study or placement) during studies. The European Union strongly supports this financially through the Erasmus programme as well as other (Leonardo da Vinci etc.) programmes. The aspiration that young people as the future work force become as mobile as possible is one of Europe's crucial objectives. While in 2000 1.8 million young people were studying at foreign universities, it is projected that over 7 million students will be included in international mobility by 2025 (Böhm et al., 2002).

Analysing and monitoring international mobility's effects on young people's employment situation

Studies substantiating the belief that international mobility actually improves young graduates' employment chances are scarce. The benefits of international mobility are generally considered more as a dogma that is not to be questioned. Students' exciting stories upon their return home give the impression that international mobility has been and is still very useful. The benefits of international mobility have a positive impact on individual career development, personal skills, the deepening of international business knowledge, an improvement in foreign language skills and acquiring knowledge about foreign countries and cultures (Henthorne, Miller & Hudson, 2001; Sidel et al., 2003, Otero et al., 2006). Experience abroad should improve their competitiveness in the labour market. After they finish their studies, they should learn to adapt, co-operate and become more independent and confident. Staying abroad also has a positive influence on individual's personal development (Baiba and Teichler, 2007, European Commission, 2008).

Studies of the literature also show that the international mobility gives students the opportunity to improve their professional and educational prospects. All forms of international academic mobility are aimed at broadening and strengthening career, personal and professional skills, as well as cultural and intercultural identity (Myers, 2005; Spiering and Erickson, 2006).

Graban (2007) focused his study on students' self-evaluation of their experience abroad, where it became clear that the students had mainly decided to participate to establish their career. The very nature of international mobility gives a young person a unique experience and opportunity to improve their skills; the personal and interpersonal skills needed for a lifelong professional identity (Rangel Chavez, 2010).

In her study, Rangel Chavez (2010) relies on a recognised model of interest structures, namely the Holland RIASEC model (Holland, 1985). In his theory, Holland explains that "the choice of profession is an expression of personality" and that six typological elements (real, exploratory, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional) which he defined can be

used for both physical characteristics and job description. In line with Holland's theoretical model, Rangel Chavez (2010) states that individuals seek such environments and backgrounds which enable them to meet and express their personality characteristics according to their chosen career path. In this connection, she states that students, despite their differing motives for studying abroad, have a personal commitment to career-related activities. It may still not be fully identified by them, but it occurs through the pursuit of their career goals. According to this theory (Holland, 1985 and 1991), Rangel Chavez argues that the primary factors when selecting professional development are the individual's personal interests and characteristics. Personality is developed in an interaction among inherited characteristics, the activities a student is exposed to, and the interests and competencies that derive from these activities. This means that an important part of students' personal development and identity takes place in the context of experiencing and interacting with the foreign environment during the time of their international mobility.

However, only a few studies supporting this assertion are available, along with those that have given more information on the actual effects of international mobility on participants' careers. According to such information, less than 10% of institutions state that they monitor and evaluate the effects of international career mobility (Sidel, n.d.).

Research on employers' relationship with international academic mobility

The growing importance of mobility in European and global higher education has brought to a series of studies on the effects of mobility. Studies on this subject focus on different aspects of mobility. Especially in Europe analyses of the effects of mobility on graduates' success in the workplace are being increasingly carried out. A study commissioned by major national organisations – agencies for international mobility (IIe, DAAD, British Council and the Australian Education Office[2]) – examined the market value of mobility and what employers and former participants feel about this experience and its effects (Tillman, 2005). While it appears that employers value interpersonal skills the most and consider them to

[2] *Australian Education Office*

be improved by international mobility (Thompson 2004), only 3% of surveyed students said they decided to study abroad to improve their employability.

This information raised the question of whether students are to be encouraged to participate in international mobility for altruistic motives – to expand their world views and to experience other cultures, a goal stated by over 30% of students in the study (Flander, 2011), or whether their participation should focus more on career building and improving professional practice (Tillman, 2005). Before we focus on the Slovenian case study we will briefly look at the findings of three similar studies.

The USA

The American CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) conducted a survey on employers' attitudes to international academic mobility (Trooboff et al., 2008). With help of four directors of career centres of American universities (Pennsylvania State University, University of Kentucky, University of Notre Dame and Pacific Lutheran University), they came into contact with employers who had attended the annual career fairs and had held interviews with their students at the end of their studies. Thus, 352 representatives of businesses, organisations and agencies from different sectors in the USA filled in the online questionnaire. HR personnel and company directors were also asked to respond. 29% of the people responded and 11% of them were directors. From the remaining responses, 65% were HR personnel; other responses came from other employees in the companies.

The importance attributed by the companies to studying or a placement abroad is mainly limited to knowledge of foreign languages and depends on a company's size since the larger companies seem to have a bigger appreciation for this sort of experience. Further, the results showed that, contrary to the expectations, HR personnel placed a greater emphasis on international mobility than the company managers and also believed more in the positive effects of international mobility on the desired competencies and skills. Researchers (Trooboff et al., 2008) assume that the reason for this lies in the fact that more than 15% of them had themselves studied abroad, and they are aware of the positive effects of international mobility on the basis of their own experience.

Further, the study showed that employers value certain personal qualities and skills, particularly those based on intercultural and global competences. They especially appreciated good listening and observation skills, adaptability to change, the ability to work under stress and to analyse, evaluate and interpret, and to work effectively in a less friendly environment. The importance they attributed to international mobility also depended heavily on its duration (longer mobility has a greater effect). Many employers demonstrated a preference for international programmes that provide hands-on training, especially because the students involved are able to describe their experiences abroad in terms of their preparation for employment and the labour market.

A survey conducted by Michigan State University (2008) showed that approximately 57% of 320 large multinationals analysed do not pay any attention to the international practical experience of students. Only 3% of respondents felt that this element is very important in students' CVs. International mobility was regarded by many as "academic tourism" because in interviews students often put more emphasis on what a good time they had rather than emphasising academic and professional effects and experiences. Often the students themselves did not know what international mobility actually teaches them, nor were they able to describe the effects in the jargon and in terms that are understood or expected by employers.

Finland and Sweden

Two studies in the European context focus on employers when recruiting young graduates who have participated in international mobility. They both come from Scandinavia.

In Finland (CIMO, 2005), the first survey showed that employers have doubts about the actual effects of international mobility on knowledge, skills and competencies they seek and need. The study covered a total of 2,000 Finnish companies from the public and private sectors, with a 36% response rate (N = 716). The employers stated that this sort of experience benefits personal development and internationalisation i.e. general competencies, but more than half believed these are not important factors when deciding which candidates to employ. At the same time, it was apparent that an international experience can be an advantage

for a candidate who applies for a job in a company with international connections, yet that can also be a hindrance if the position is in a Finnish company focused on the domestic market.

The other major study on this topic comes from Sweden (Internationella programkontoret, 2010) and covered 4,764 companies, of which 21% responded (N = 973). It showed that Swedish companies, in comparison to Finnish, have better opinion about international mobility in education and attribute more importance to this subject in relation to employment. When searching for new people to fill their positions, the employers look for motivated, responsible candidates with good communication skills, which may be developed with the help of international mobility. In the event of a choice between a candidate with international experience and one without, most employers in Sweden opted for the former. The Swedish study also showed a significant correlation between the competencies and skills that companies look for and those Swedish students believe they developed during their stay and work abroad.

In addition, it appears that employers believe work experience is particularly relevant, and that in Sweden only a small proportion of Erasmus students take up a placement abroad (10%).

At the same time, the Swedish study also showed that Swedish companies are poorly informed about foreign diplomas and education degrees; almost no one in the labour market had heard of or knew of a Diploma Supplement, which certainly reduces the significance of this "certificate" because it was meant to acquaint employers with the knowledge and skills in addition to those gained by the diploma itself.

Slovenian employers and mobile students

Since in Slovenia we lack analysis of companies' opinions of international mobility, we at CMEPIUS prepared a study based on the Finnish model. Dr. Irma Garam, who led the study in Finland, sent us the questionnaire which was slightly adapted to Slovenian conditions, while preserving the main characteristics so as to allow a comparison of the results with the Finnish. The purpose was to examine whether international experience (study or placement) during studies actually affects Slovenian employers' decisions regarding employment.

As in Finland, we wanted to interview people actually involved in the decision-making process so we worked with the Slovenian Human Resource Association, the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia and the Centre for Professional Education and Training within the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, which all forwarded the link to our online questionnaire to their networks. The online questionnaire was then sent to 520 addressees, and we received 144 responses (27.7%).

Structure of the participants

38.6% of the responses represent the public sector and 61.4% represent the private sector. Among those responding to the questionnaire, 83.1% have international co-operation in place; this means that their work also includes co-operation with foreign countries.

Most of those who co-operate with foreign countries co-operate with foreign partners (31.7%), work on international projects (29.5%) and sell their products abroad (12.9%). For the rest, co-operation with foreign countries represents imports (10.8%), their own branch abroad (10.1%) or other forms of international co-operation.
For 50.6% of the participants international co-operation represents an important part of their work, whereas for 39.5% international co-operation is only occasionally included in their regular work.

The questionnaire primarily addressed HR personnel or employment decision-makers. It emerges from the responses received that there were 21 HR workers, 28 directors and business owners and 9 managers (according to descriptions of their positions in the survey) who play a role in making decisions about employment. Other participants in the survey were not directly involved in the employment decision-making process. Only 29.6% of the participants had studied or worked abroad.

Among the responses received, most respondents came from the following fields:

- education (28%);
- trade and services (25%);
- other public, social and personal services (11.4%);

- civil engineering (8%);
- processing industry (6.8%);
- public administration (6.8%); and
- financial intermediation (3.4%)

The participants were mainly from companies (39.5% in total), 29.5% from small- and medium-sized companies with fewer than 250 employees and 10.7% came from large companies. Other respondents represented staff in educational organisations (16.4%) and public institutions (5.7%).

Analysis of responses of the entire sample

Respondents had the possibility to choose the importance of certain competencies on a four-point scale (not important, minor importance, important and very important).
In assessing the competencies that are considered with regard to employment, the respondents thought the following were very important or important:

- capability of the applicant (80.33%);
- work experience or a placement in the field of expertise (64.06%);
- the applicant had completed a practice in a company abroad (53.13%);
- work experience in general (50.00%);
- a degree of the appropriate level (university, graduate qualification) (47.62%);
- that the applicant had studied abroad (41.27%); and
- a degree in the relevant field (39.68%)

Almost the same level of importance as a degree from the appropriate field was attributed to the fact that the applicant was known (37.10%) or that they themselves knew someone who had recommended the applicant (43.55%).

In evaluating the importance of the skills held by students who have just graduated, they believed that the most important factor for employment is that the candidate:

- is responsible and able to bear responsibility (75.81%);
- is reliable (75%);

- can seek information and use it (73.44%);
- can apply their knowledge to different and new situations (70.97%);
- is able to collaborate (69.35%); and
- is proactive (67.19%).

Also interesting are findings on whether employers actually consider international experience when recruiting students. 35.5% of the respondents would value an international experience in employment, although it is not a deciding factor in candidate selection. 29% stated that international experiences give applicant advantage, but they are not a prerequisite for the job. Almost a quarter (22%) believed that the international experience during studies was a good thing, yet not relevant to employment.

This was followed by a section where respondents were asked which applicant in either case would have an advantage in their organisation. In the event that two students had applied for a job where one had been abroad on an extended internship and the other for study purposes, 60.7% of the respondents would favour the student who had pursued a placement abroad. They would also favour a candidate who has work experience in Slovenia (44.1%), while 33.9% believed that the two were equally good applicants.
If they had to choose between two candidates, namely one who had worked as a student in a foreign country and another who had work experience in the home country, 47.5% believed that they were two equally good applicants and 29.5% would favour the candidate who had undertaken a placement abroad.

When comparing a candidate who had studied abroad with a candidate who had graduated with honours, 46.7% did not see the difference between them. When deciding between a student who had studied abroad and a student who had completed his studies ahead of time, 41.7% would have acknowledged both equally and 31.7% would have selected the student with international experience.
Among candidates with practical experience at home or abroad, 39.3% believed that both had the same opportunities. Almost the same distribution of answers can be seen between those who would have prioritised a foreign experience (31.1%) or work experience at home (29.5%).

The employers did not see any difference (70.5%) between a degree achieved at home or abroad; however, 18% would have preferred a candidate with a foreign and 11.5% with a Slovenian diploma.

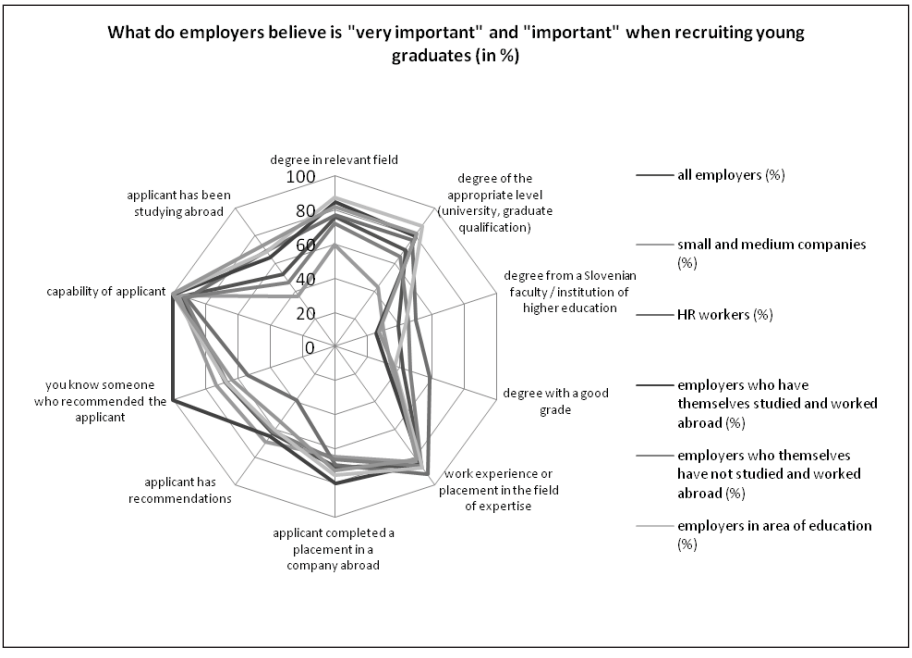
Employers considered foreign languages (23.5%), learning about new forms of work (19.7%) and other cultures (11.5%), and establishing contacts with foreign students (10.4%) among the most important competencies gained by students participating in international mobility. However, they concluded that international mobility had a smaller impact on flexibility, boosting self-confidence and expertise in the field of study.

72.88% agreed with the statement fact that the placement was very important or plays an important part of studying, while 64.41% believed that studying abroad is important.

Analysis of responses for each type of participant

Small- and medium-sized companies – the importance of internship and work experience

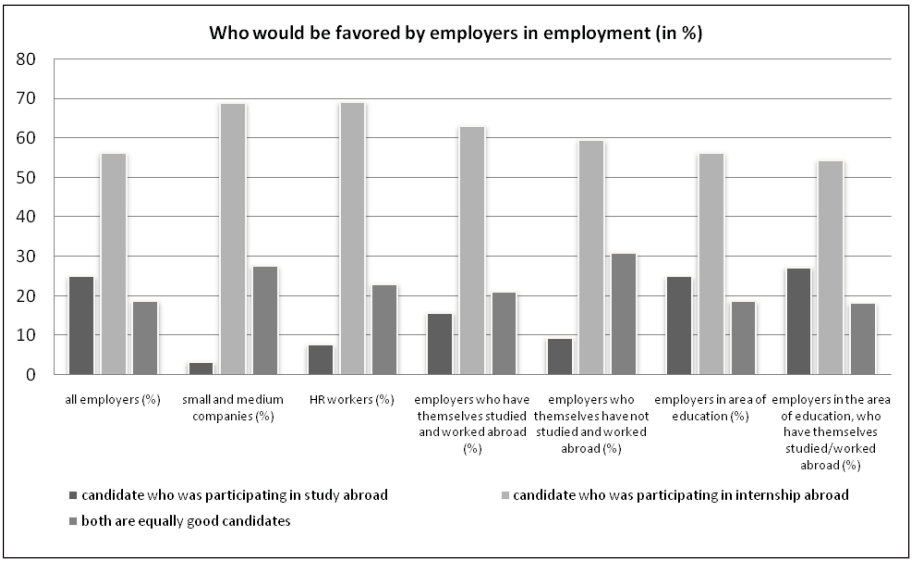
Small- and medium-sized companies are companies with less than 250 employees and they represented 29.9% of all participating companies, which translates into 43 responses received.
Employers from small- and medium-sized companies (50% of them come from the retail and services sectors) are of course predominantly privately-owned (94.4%) and of them only 22.2% had also studied or worked abroad. Most of them feel that studying abroad is not a relevant experience (40%); only 3.33% believe it is important. 45.16% regard a placement abroad as important and only 19.35% as very important. The most important factors are considered to be the skills of the candidate (78.86%), work experience in general (63.33%) and in the field (61.29%).



Among the characteristics of candidates, small- and medium-sized companies especially value reliability (74.19%), responsibility (72.41%) and the ability to work (68.97%).

When recruiting, they would give preference to students with an international placement (69%), 60.7% would favour a candidate with home work experience as opposed to students who have studied abroad. They would consider work experience at home as more advantageous than that acquired abroad (44.8%), or did not see any difference between them (31%).

The improvement of foreign language skills (25%) and learning new forms of work (20.5%) are seen as the most important knowledge and experience that students acquire.



HR workers – international mobility does not constitute added value in employment

Of the HR workers who participated in the survey, the majority (73.7%) were from the private sector and their work largely encompasses co-operation with foreign countries (89.5%). Most of them (89.5%) had not studied or worked abroad.

83.33% believed that the most important quality of a candidate is their capability, followed by a degree from the relevant field and experience in the field (both 61.54%). A placement abroad (69.13%), studying abroad (61.54%) and work experience in general (53.84%) were equally evaluated.

Some of the most appreciated qualities of students are responsibility (84.62%), a proactive attitude (76.92%), a problem-solving capacity and adaptability to changes and in different situations, reliability and the capacity to seek and use information (all 69.3%).

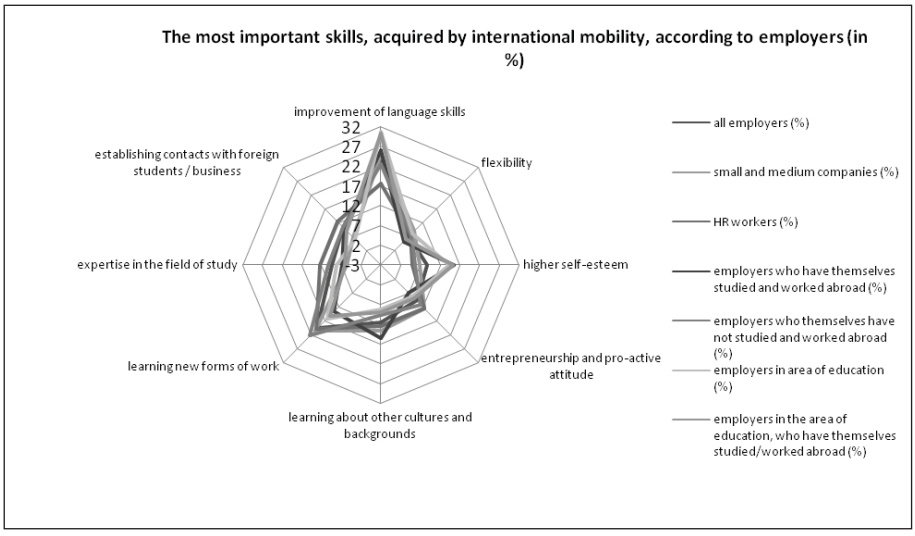
A preference would be given to applicants with international practical experience (69.2%), with equivalent emphasis being given to studying abroad in comparison to achieving a degree with honours (53.8%) and the early completion of schooling (50%). When comparing practical work at home and abroad in general, 38.5% would prioritise foreign experience,

while 61.5% did not see a difference between the experiences. When comparing work in a professional field, 38.5% would give preference to work experience done at home and 30.8% thought that both are equivalent.

The most important gains in knowledge and experience for students are an improvement in foreign language skills (17.5%) and learning new forms of work (20%).

Employers who had themselves participated in international academic mobility – work experience at home is better than studying abroad

More of those employers who had themselves worked or studied abroad come from the public sector (54.2%). As the most important recruiting factor, they valued the capability of the applicant (88.89%), followed by practice in the professional field (55%), work experience in general (50%) and a degree in the relevant field (45%). Studying and a placement abroad are both seen as important but not very essential (both 50%) and a larger number of participants felt that they are less important than the degree of an appropriate level (55%).



Respondents regarded as very important qualities of candidates a problem-solving capacity (78.95%), responsibility (73.68%), a proactive attitude (70%) and the ability to find and use information (70%).

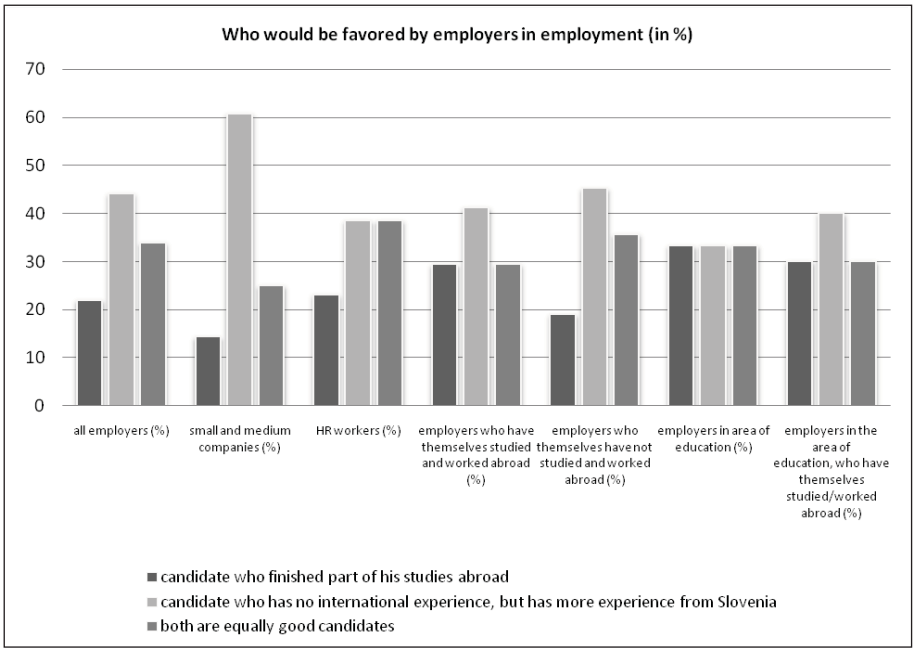
63.2% would favour a student who was on a placement abroad as opposed to a student studying abroad. Also 41.2% preferred work experience at home to that acquired during study abroad (29.4%). At the same time, they would opt for a candidate who has graduated with honours at a home university (36.8%) as opposed to a candidate who was on a student exchange abroad (31.6%); 31.6% did not see any difference between them.
As expected, they would give preference to a placement abroad in the field to experience gained at home (42.1%); 73.7% did not see any difference between a degree achieved at home or abroad.

According to those who themselves had been involved in international mobility, 25.9% believed that it has had the greatest impact on improving foreign language skills, building one's self-esteem and learning about foreign cultures (15.5%) and new forms of work (13.8 %).

Employers without international mobility experience – the importance of practical experience

Most of those who themselves have not been abroad come from the private sector (75.4%). 59.5% of them would prioritise a placement abroad as opposed to studying abroad and to work experience at home as opposed to a foreign experience (45.2%). They did not see any difference between work experience at home and abroad (57.1%), nor between studying abroad and graduating with honours at home (53.7%) or completing one's studies early (51.2%). In addition, they consider as equal candidates with a degree achieved at home or abroad (69%) and candidates with practical experience in their field, whether gained at home or abroad (45.2%).

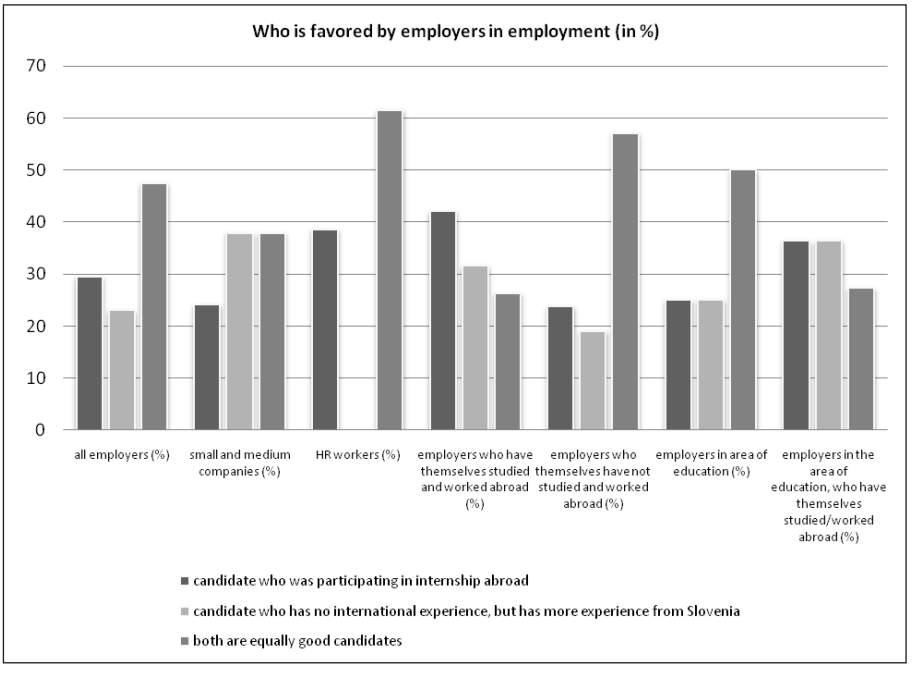
The most important effect of living abroad, in their opinion, is equally divided between learning new forms of work and improving foreign language skills (both 22.4%), and an entrepreneurial and proactive attitude (11.2%).



Employers in the education field – international experience in both forms adds value, especially practical value

The majority of employers in the area of education (80%) come from the public and higher education (56%) sectors. Almost all of them had international co-operation in place in various forms, 60.9% of them had also studied or worked abroad. They regarded as most important the capability of the applicant (87.5%), and work experience or practice from the field (68.75%). Placements abroad are only considered "important" (56.25%); the same goes for studying abroad (50%). Regarding students' competencies, they believed that what are the most important are the ability to use knowledge in new situations (81.25%), and problem-solving capacity, reliability and the ability to seek and use information (all 75%).

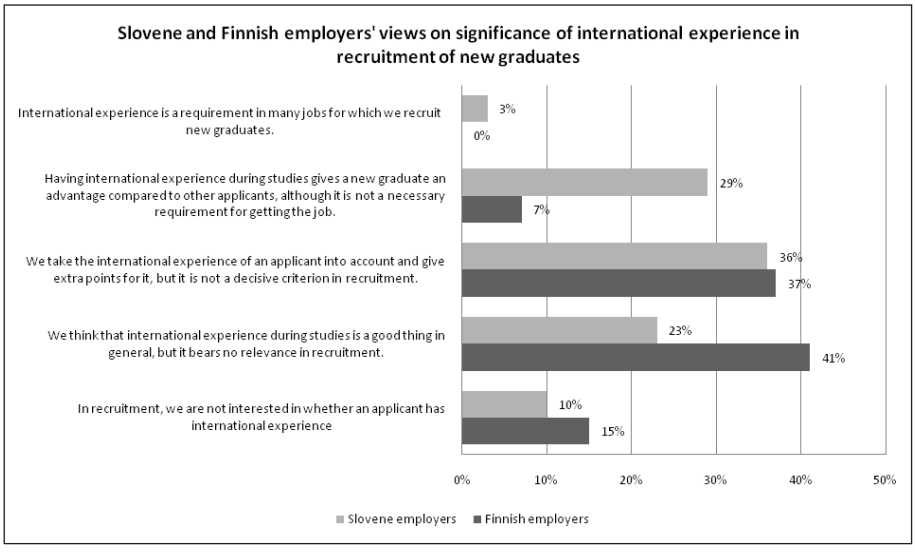
When comparing the two candidates, it is interesting that the majority (56.3%) would prefer students with practical experience abroad; the experience of studying abroad is considered to be equal to work experience in the home environment (all 33.3%). Priority in employment would be given to students with study experience abroad as opposed to those who had graduated with honours (43.8%) and completed their studies early (56.3%).



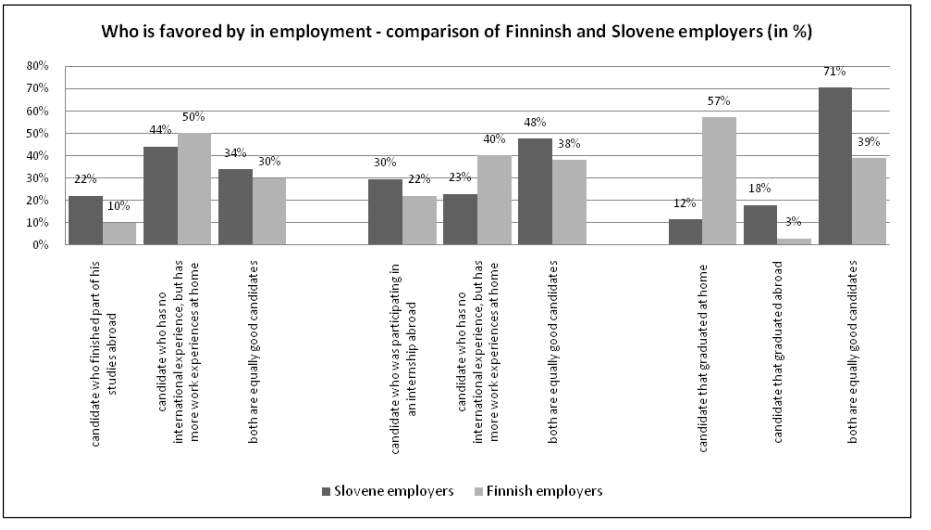
In their view, the most important effects of international experience can be found in the improvement in foreign language skills (30.6%), learning about new forms of work (16.3%) and increasing one's self-confidence (14.3%). It is interesting that although preference was given to practical experience as opposed to a study experience abroad, a significant share of respondents believed that studying abroad is a very important or important part of studies (81.2%). Meanwhile, only 75% believed that this applies to a real-life environment.

Comparison with Finnish survey

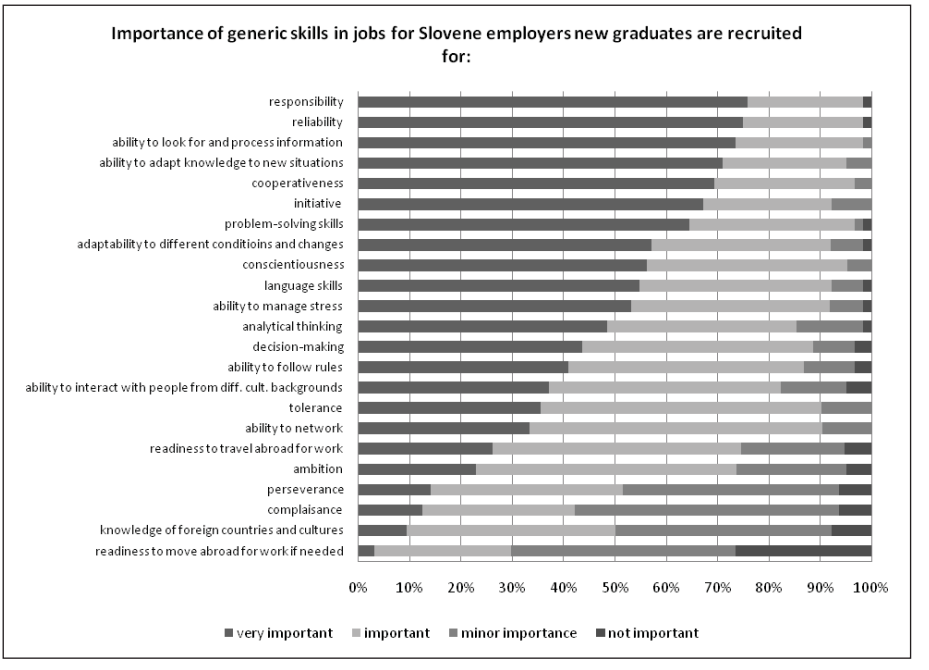
Comparison with similar Finnish survey shows that there are quite some differences between the views of employers in both countries.



About the same percent of Slovene and Finnish employers take the international experiences of an applicant into account and give extra credit for it; however it is not seen as a decisive criterion in recruitment process. About the same ratio of employers is also not interested at all in whether the applicant has international experience at all. But it seems that more Slovene (29%) employers take international experiences as an advantage of the applicant than in Finland (7%) . This is the case even when this is not a prerequisite for getting a job, whereas more Finnish employers think that international experience during studies is good, but has no relevance in their recruitment.



The view on how Slovene and Finnish employers value and take into account the international experiences in recruitment of new candidates differ mostly in terms on how the employers value their national higher educational system. Finnish employers see graduation at Finnish HEI as an absolute advantage (57%) in regards to international diplomas and therefore show their trust in the national educational system. Slovene employers on the other hand consider foreign diploma as equal to Slovene one (71%) or even favour internationally graduated applicants (18%). Similar differences can be found within the question whether a candidate with work or practical experiences at home or from abroad has more chances for employment. Whereas 48% of Slovene employers see both kinds of experiences as equal or would rather employ a person that was on placement abroad (30%) Finnish employers favour working experiences within Finland (40%) or think they are of equal importance to international (38%).



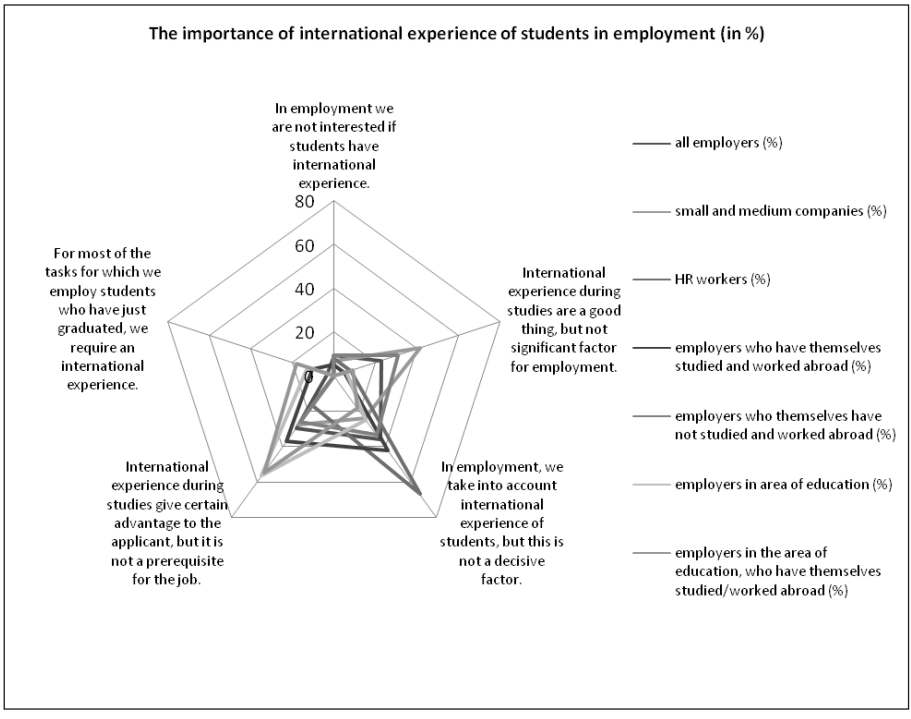
Slovene and Finnish employers however share a common view on what are the most important generic skillss in jobs they recruit new graduates for. The »most important« characteristics that over 60% employers in both countries look for are responsibility, reliability, ability to adapt knowledge to new situations, cooperativeness, initiative and problem-solving skills. Employers in Finnland value highly also the ability to manage stress and Slovenian employers the abilities to look for and process information.

Main findings of the survey

As it seems, the employers believed that international experience may contribute to the development of the knowledge and skills they seek in their employees, but international mobility is not fully appreciated with regard to employment decisions and these experiences are not a decisive factor in the selection process.

Interestingly, what "very important" and "important" qualities to be found in young graduates' means is virtually the same for all types of employers, regardless of the particular group to which they belong. The capability of a candidate, a degree from a relevant field and level and experience in general generally prevail. The employers did not see international experience as too important; however, they considered a placement abroad as being more important than having studied abroad.
The effects attributable to international mobility are quite scattered so it is important that students are familiar with how they should highlight the effects of their international mobility, relevant skills and competencies when searching for a job and that they are able to demonstrate they are the best candidate for the position.

Another interesting point is that all respondents, regardless of the sector or service and irrespective of whether they had their own type of international experience or not, believed that practical experience is more important than a study experience. In all cases, the majority would choose a candidate with practical experience abroad. The same applies for those respondents from the higher education sector, although student placements are an underrepresented form of international mobility. Out of the more than 1,600 students a year who go abroad as part of the Erasmus programme, less than 20% are appointed to placements. Graduates can obtain some practical experience within the Leonardo da Vinci programme "People in the Labour Market (PLM)", but even here the number is only around 150 per year. Due to specifics of the Leonardo programme, young people are also forced to first find a legal entity which would apply for a project on their behalf, for it is only then that they can participate. Altogether, around 450 young people go abroad each year which is, compared to the about 1,300 students involved in international mobility, a fairly small number, especially given the importance of practical experience which employers identify as more important.



The CMEPIUS surveyed 144 Slovenian employers so it is difficult to determine the opinion of the entire population, although the sample is fairly representative. The responses of all participants reflect a generally positive disposition of employers to international academic mobility since the majority considers it useful and prefers such applicants, but it is not a decisive factor in employment. International experience is required by only 10.5% of those who themselves had been involved in international mobility and 12.5% of employers from the field of education.

When deciding between applicants who have completed some of their studies abroad and candidates who have not been abroad but have gained experience at home, all respondents would give preference to the work experience at home, or they believed that it is equivalent to studies abroad. They also felt that international working experience is equal to experience gained at home. The only exceptions are those employers who had been involved in an international mobility placement abroad; more of them (42.1%) would favour the international work experience and 26.3% regarded both experiences as equal.

It is also important to note that everyone who participated in the survey would rather employ a candidate who has been on placement abroad (60.7%) as opposed to a candidate who has studied abroad (11.5%). These findings are quite inconsistent with the funds invested in international mobility at the higher education level, where the majority of funds are allocated to studies and only a small proportion for placements abroad. In the Erasmus programme, this figure represents about 18% per year (for 2009/2010). Since 2000, when we started to participate in EU programmes (Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci), 11,000 students and graduates have been sent abroad to study and on a placement. Around 1,300 of them obtained practical experience in companies abroad, while all the others (i.e. around 8,000) completed part of their studies abroad. Since 2000 only about 1% of all Slovenian students and graduates have been sent to a placement abroad.

Comparison with the Finnish survey shows that Finnish employers trust their national educational system more than employers in Slovenia and that same view is shared when it comes to practical working experiences at home in comparison with Slovene ones. Employers in both countries however share the same view on importance of generic skills they look for when selecting new employees.

Conclusion

Employers are certainly one of the most interested partners in the higher education process. It is therefore important to evaluate whether the current system is achieving desired results so as to match the expectations of the "end" users - i.e. employers. Learning mobility as an investment in the future workforce only makes sense if it achieves the desired effect, namely, greater employability and a more globalised workforce.

In order to convince the labour market, the focus on strengthening the impact of international mobility at higher education institutions should be twofold: oriented towards both employers and students. Higher education institutions must first integrate the goals they wish to achieve by investing in the international mobility of their students, in their strategic objectives in the field of internationalisation and clearly define the quality criteria. Employers could thus become adequately familiar

with the effects and understand international student mobility as a useful tool in shaping their future employees, making students become a better, more prosperous and more innovative workforce.

In contrast, it is also necessary to train students how to incorporate and present what they have learned abroad in their CVs and job applications, and appropriately describe them in their employment interviews. The competencies that are gained through international mobility (such as language skills, knowledge of other forms of work, knowledge of other cultures and environments, adaptability, entrepreneurship etc...) are transferable and universal and most employers actually recognise them as an important requirement in their workforce. Therefore, it is important to know how to properly interpret these effects. The interpretation is easier for a young person if their decision to go abroad is connected with their career goal. They must therefore know the methods and tools which can help them to successfully present their international experiences to employers as an added value of their CVs. It is here that international co-ordinators and career counsellors at universities encounter the challenge to work effectively towards supporting and giving professional advice to students so they make good use of their time abroad.

Comparison with Finnish survey can lead us to a conclusion that Finnish higher educational institutions are better in informing and promoting their achievements in terms of quality of their education. In Finland Finnish graduates have far more chances to get a job than graduates from abroad. However as international experiences during the studies (both, study and internship) are less valued than Finnish diploma or working experiences it means that there is still place for further promotion of international mobility among Finnish employers as an important and useful tool to develop generic skills even further.

It depends on students themselves how their international experience is presented to a prospective employer in a manner that it contributes to a positive outcome when deciding on employment. However, a student's responsibility is made easier if international co-ordinators and advisers together form a career decision process for a student, linking the selection of potential international co-operation and short-term career objectives together. However, this calls for co-ordinated co-operation and integration between the HEI, career advisors and international co-ordinators already

before the student actually goes abroad.

There is still lot's to be done to convince the labour market in Slovenia to agree with our beliefs about the importance of international experience gained during studies and to recognise it as important. So how to turn the financial incentives intended for international mobility into high profit investment? The dimensions that are missing or have so far not been given enough consideration are to position academic mobility as an important element of internationalism and its integration into the international strategy of higher education institutions, as well as help create a way to teach young people with these experiences to evaluate them and highlight them when searching for jobs. It is only in this way that we will, by investing in student mobility, actually achieve what we want and what the labour market wants – competent graduates with the knowledge and skills that enable them to contribute to the development of the knowledge society in Slovenia.

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Universities in process of regional integration and globalisation in the higher education area

Marko Marhl, Danijel Rebolj, Mladen Kraljić

Abstract

On the basis of experience gained by the University of Maribor, we present the process of networking of universities in a regional area and their integration into broader international flows. We present in more detail the integration of universities in the Alps-Adriatic and Danube regions, which has significantly influenced the development of universities in these regions. Regional integration has taken on new dimensions within the framework of EU regional policy. At the moment, the "Danube Region Strategy" is very topical and the University of Maribor actively participates in it. Regional aspects of universities' work in the fields of research, education and, in particular, the formation of study programmes and students' and professors' mobility are increasingly taking on European and worldwide dimensions. The European Union encourages joint research work and joint study programmes and enables, through mobility programmes, the flow of students and academic and non-academic staff. The quality and measuring the quality of scientific, educational and other work of universities is becoming more and more of global importance. We present the involvement of the University of Maribor within the work of international associations and projects in this field. At the end, a vision of future actions of the University of Maribor is presented.

Key words: university, regional integration, Alps-Adriatic region, Danube region, rectors conference, globalisation, mobility, Erasmus programme, quality, university ranking

Introduction

Universities are active entities in cities, countries and regions. Similar to economic and political entities, which tend to integrate and strengthen

their role in their regions, universities also integrate and then utilise their integrated power of joint research, educational and general intellectual potential. This is part of regional integration, a process in which the level of interaction among economic, safety, political, social, cultural and other issues is increasing (van Ginkel, 2003).

We live in a time in which regional integration and globalisation are changing the world and the underlying system, based on the sovereignty of states, in which fear of losing autonomy and independence in certain fields, as well as basic cultural and traditional values are sometimes excessive and in which small nations and countries in particular are generally concerned about preservation of their language and culture. It seems as if, at the beginning of the 21 century, the processes of regional integration and world globalisation are undermining the stability of the Westphalian Peace system and, after more than three centuries, are fundamentally changing the world and creating a new world order.

The trends of networking, integration and globalisation are distinctly seen in the economy and are of great political interest. Economic integration in a region creates a bigger regional market for trade and investments. This market functions as a stimulus to increased effectiveness, productivity, profit and competitiveness, enabled not only by diminishing the impediments to which borders give rise but also by diminishing other costs and trade and investment risks. Bilateral and sub-regional trade agreements are a tool of development that stimulates a shift towards greater market openness.

The dimensions of integration are wider than merely economic and political interests in a region. The desire for closer integration in a region is usually linked with a greater wish to be open to the outside world. It can therefore be said that regional integration is only part of the global economic and political order and is a trend of the time in which we live, and will doubtlessly also characterise the future.

Regional integration is mostly a result of the need and desire for economic and political combination in order to achieve fast economic development, reduce conflicts and generate common goods and values in unified units. Soon after the end of the Second World War, Winston Churchill called for the creation of the so-called “United States of Europe”

(Churchill, 1946). He particularly called for a partnership between France and Germany, which he held to be the key to a successful post-war vision of Europe. Seventeen years later, De Gaulle and Adenauer indeed signed a Treaty on friendly cooperation between France and Germany. So Churchill was to a certain degree right about European integration in 1946, although he then saw it as the integration of continental Europe, without Great Britain. It was, of course, obvious at the time when Great Britain nevertheless joined European integration, then still the European Community, that Europe would never become a kind of "United States of Europe". An important balance between common European interests and the sovereignty of states was formed in the united Europe, "geteilte Souveränität" as Hermann Lübbe called it (Lübbe, 1994).

Many people are convinced that communities of states are themselves the basic elements of the international order of the future. Economic and political integrations, and regional integration and globalisation in general, certainly do not leave out universities, so the thoughts about the integration of universities of Michael Daxner, an academician and former president of the Magna Charta Observatory of Fundamental University Values and Rights, are interesting. He talks of networks of universities, which will in future exist as large, strong entities, i.e., as university associations in which universities will retain their sovereignty but act in conjunction on the market of research and pedagogical work (Daxner, 2009).

Universities are becoming instruments of national and regional competitiveness, and instruments of peace. They are the base for scientific findings that enable economic progress and the education of youth. Universities are the driving force of progress and economic growth. Since the start of the industrial revolution, technological changes have been the main source of economic growth and of improvement of the standard of living. Nevertheless, most of the inventions that propelled the economy of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the result of the efforts of individuals, who worked independently, without any support from extensive formal programmes of research and development.

After the Second World War, the world became aware of the importance of public investment in the field of university work. Already in the 50s,

the USA efficiently developed an infrastructure for the public support of university research work over the entire spectrum of fundamental sciences, as well as applied research in the fields of health care, agriculture, defence and energy. The integration of universities, the development of basic sciences and their applications, are often complex and blurred, though sometimes highly visible, as in the case of Silicon Valley, the role of Stanford University and the cooperation of spin-off companies with MIT and Harvard University.

Universities do not only work in the fields of basic research and industrial applied research but adjust themselves in all segments to the world trend of globalisation. If we start from the platform of students' employability anywhere in the world, it is reasonable for universities to encourage more and more of their students to spend part of their studies in another country. Every year, around 200,000 students take part in the European Erasmus programme (according to official data for the 2008/09 study year there were 198,523 students), involving more than 2,500 participating institutions (according to official data for the 2008/09 study year there were 2,747 institutions) from around the continent (Erasmus statistics, 2010).

Countries in different parts of the world have rather different strategies on how to use, develop and encourage universities as instruments of national competitiveness in the process of global integration. Europe has laid down the basic principle of open borders. Its primary objective is to minimise obstacles to the flow of knowledge and labour among the EU nations. In spite of numerous successes and progress, there are some critics, such as Richard Lambert and Nick Butler, who say that European governments are weakening the power of universities, allocating too few resources to research and which, in addition, are too dispersed (Lambert in Butler, 2006: "Knowledge is an increasingly critical factor in shaping economic life. But in Europe, the institutions that should be the main sources of knowledge are failing to meet the challenge. Among the world's top ten universities, only two are in the EU. Europe's higher education institutions are slow-moving and under funded. If Europe wants to stop falling behind and stem the 'brain drain' across the Atlantic it must act now. It needs to devote more resources to research, improve its teaching record, build up centres of excellence, strengthen links between education and business, and give its universities more autonomy."). According to the

critics, there is little hope of European universities becoming a powerful source of national competitive advantage if the resources allocated to them are not increased, or if universities are not offered an opportunity to acquire funds by charging tuition fees, as, for example, in the USA. Europe is aware of the need for strong universities, which can be seen from the well-known slogan expressed by José Manuel Barroso "Strong universities for Europe" at the EUA Convention, in April 2005 (Barroso, 2005).

In South America, for example, priority in investment is given to good universities that devote special emphasis to research. Since 2008, universities in Korea have seen great changes due to globalisation trends. Many professors have been hired from abroad, as to a certain extent has often been the case in China. The number of study programmes in English is increasing fast. For example, all programmes at KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) are in English. The number of foreign students, either full-time students or students on short exchanges, has rapidly increased.

More and more universities all over the world offer programmes in the English language. Special courses, summer schools and postgraduate programmes are ever more beginning to be held in English. Exchanges of students and professors with foreign universities are increasingly widespread. The whole area of higher education is thus becoming increasingly global and it is perfectly natural to compare the quality of research, pedagogical and other work done by universities on a global scale. Various kinds of evaluation and quality ranking of particular segments of university work are emerging: national, regional, European, American and, of course, worldwide aspects of evaluation and university ranking. An important role in evaluation is played by EUA, which evaluates universities across Europe. National and world rankings are emerging, of which the Shanghain (ARWU), Times (THE), Webometrics (Webometrics) are certainly among the best known.

The University of Maribor is also aware of integration and globalisation and is therefore actively involved in international flows. There are several links based on an individual level and on the cooperation of researchers, teachers, university staff, who work with their colleagues from other universities in the fields of science, art, and education. We have developed

a cooperation system for joint research, projects, exchanges, visitor lectures and longer study visits.

On the formal inter-university level, the University of Maribor is involved in regional and worldwide integration and globalisation trends. In this article, we present two regional university associations: "AARC – Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference" and "DRC – Danube Rectors' Conference". Both associations were founded in the period of the strong integration flows that facilitated cooperation all over Europe and it could be said that they were organized within integration flows on the way to the formation of the European Union. In the article, we underline the roles of AARC and DRC at the time of their foundation and the need for flexible responses at the present time and within the new context of the European Union, when the operations of regional organisations need to be adjusted to the context of wider European policy. This is particularly reflected in the new strategy, the Danube Region Strategy (EU Strategy for the Danube Region), which was adopted in December 2010 by the European Union and thus established guidelines for the development of the Danube Region. Slovenia is also a part of this region, with its tributaries of the Danube and, in this context, the University of Maribor has responded actively and entered the programme.

We deal with two important global trends, i.e., mobility and a concern for quality and the worldwide comparability of universities. We present the active involvement of the University of Maribor in the mobility of students and professors. Above all, we focus on the Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus programmes. The mobility of students, academic and also to some extent non-academic staff is not just a project of the European Union but also a necessity of increasingly explicit global trends, and is reflected on a global level. The fast flow of information and new possibilities of transporting people and goods have played a key role in shaping world trends.

The University of Maribor actively participates in the international flows of evaluating the quality of universities. We would stress in particular its operations within the IREG Observatory (IREG) and its active involvement in the E3M project (E3M) of designing indicators for measuring the activities of universities in the field of improvement, the so called "third mission" that universities have in addition to their mission and work in the scientific research and educational fields.

In conclusion, we introduce the vision of the University of Maribor within worldwide trends and especially in the context of two fundamental documents of the current national strategy "Bold Slovenia – Knowledge Society": the National Programme of Higher Education 2011-2020 (NPVŠ, 2010) and Research and Innovation Strategies of Slovenia 2011 – 2020 (RISS, 2010).

Alps-Adriatic region

The end of the seventies was marked by the ever closer cooperation and integration of neighbouring countries in the area of the Alps and the Adriatic, which resulted in the creation of the Alps-Adriatic association. This took place in Venice in 1978, and it was initially called »The Working Community of the Countries and Regions of the Eastern Alps Area«. There were nine founding members.

The Rectors' Conference of the Alps-Adriatic region's working community was established in 1979, on the initiative of Prof. Anton Kolb, who was then Rector of Graz University. The Rectors' Conference is an association of rectors and presidents of universities and colleges from the entire Alps-Adriatic region. There are currently 48 universities and colleges participating in the conference, including the University of Maribor.
The regional Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference (AARC) includes all countries, cantons and administrative units within the geographical area of the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, and all adjacent areas with whom they share historical and cultural links and traditions.

The goal and the purpose of the foundation of AARC was to facilitate the regional cooperation of universities and colleges in all areas of their operation, especially in the spheres of teaching, science and art. AARC supports cooperation among teachers and students in a variety of academic areas. Collaborative arrangements range from informal forms of cooperation to joint meetings, symposia and research projects.

The Rectors' Conference is particularly committed to enforcing and raising standards of quality, efficiency, competitiveness, integration, synergies and networking in relation to research, teaching, management, collaboration and the sharing and transfer of positive experiences.

It promotes and coordinates national, regional, international and interdisciplinary cooperation.

It is important to note that, at a time when there were no European mechanisms such as are familiar today, it was AARC who promoted on a regional level the international mobility of students and teachers, who developed the mechanisms to facilitate the mutual recognition of diplomas and habilitation, who concerned itself with the integration, accessibility and improved use of libraries among universities. AARC members also launched a fellowship for students coming from other members states of AARC.

The role of AARC has been invaluable in recent decades. The University of Maribor was and still is, actively involved in the work of AARC. We take care of the entire flow of information and administer the web site »Elisa«, which is the official web site of the Rectors' Conference (AARC, http://elisa.uni-mb.si). The University of Maribor needed and benefitted from the use of the mobility mechanisms, information sharing, inter-library cooperation, shared projects, courses and summer schools. All of this has been very important to us, because it was a time we were unable to benefit from European mechanisms, either because they were generally not available or we were not entitled to them, as in the example of the Erasmus mobility programme. For us and many other universities, the role of AARC has somewhat diminished and changed with the introduction of EU mechanisms. With this in mind, we took on the job of helping to increase the inclusion of universities from countries that still have not got access to EU mechanisms. There is a general consensus, though, that the AARC is gaining a new role and must work within the EU framework; AARC also noted in its latest guidelines that is should actively cooperate with the EU institutions. It is, therefore, important for AARC to adhere to the EU principle of a »Europe of regions« ensuring that cooperation and integration reflects the various cultural aspects that can be found within the European Union and the neighbouring areas of the ever expanding European framework.

Danube Region

Similarly and simultaneously with the initiative of integration in the region of the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, the countries along the River Danube began their own process of integration. This is a large geographic area, covering countries and provinces along the River Danube and its tributaries, from its source to its discharge into the Black Sea. The Danube is the most important west-east waterway in Europe. In the early eighties, when the countries in the Danube basin started to engage in more active integration, so did universities in the region. In 1983, therefore, the rectors of the University of Ulm, University of Linz, University of Vienna and University of Budapest founded the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC). Soon after, the founders were joined by universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. DRC currently has more than fifty members from thirteen countries and is one of the major regional associations in Europe.

The basic purpose of DRC is to integrate and promote cooperation among universities and other entities in the region, in particular to promote joint scientific research work, joint study programmes, mobility and care for the quality of universities. It could be said that the objectives are very similar to those identified by AARC, which is understandable, because it is a similar regional association. The University of Maribor has also had and retains an active role in the DRC. In the years following 2007, when we held the presidency, we undertook to produce a common platform to underpin the more effective promotion of universities in the region and to facilitate the exchange of information. The platform enables the integration of all key areas of cooperation, such as scientific research and study activities, technology transfers and cooperation with businesses, mobility, and the organization of summer schools, symposia, conferences etc.

DRC, just like AARC and other regional organizations, had a very important role before the inception of the European Union and its mechanisms for creating a common European research and higher education area. Today, it can be said that DRC and other regional organizations are in a position in which they must actively participate in current EU regional policy. DRC is not just a regional association, which must work within its specialized

field under an umbrella association such as EUA. The very principle of EUA is that it is "an umbrella" for regional associations of universities.

It is important that DRC operates in accordance to the latest European guidelines, especially the European regional policy. The year 2010 was particularly significant, since DRC took a new direction. On the initiative of the University of Maribor at the annual conference in Novi Sad in February 2010, DRC thus adopted the »Novi Sad Declaration« (Declaration of Novi Sad, 2010). The declaration calls for active participation in the co-creation of EU regional policy and for cooperation in the realization of the previously adopted (December 2010) Danube regional strategy (EU Strategy for the Danube Region, 2010). The Danube strategy sets out the core development policies and priorities in the further development of the region and, as such, is a fundamental document which, in practical terms, means stimulating and financing projects of all entities in the region, including universities.

The Novi Sad Declaration stressed that the role of universities in the creation of EU regional policy must not be overlooked. The mere fact that the region has around 300 universities and more than 3 million students, underlines the decision that universities must become actively involved in shaping life and work in the region.

During work on the Danube Strategy, several meetings and discussions were held on the creation of this basic document with key fundamental directions and priorities. The process finished at the end of 2010 (on 8 December 2010, when the Declaration was adopted). The views, ideas and proposals of DRC for the creation of a Danube Strategy were presented at a conference entitled the »Conference on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region« in Budapest (Marhl, 2010).

DRC and the University of Maribor put forward the two proposals of the Danube Strategy and the implementation of concrete projects in the region that gained the greatest response. The first project envisages the development of a common portal for cooperation among universities and their integration with industry and all other local entities in the region. The portal would basically function as a documentation tool for entering current projects details and the results of finished projects. This was met with very positive feedback from the representatives of the European

Commission, since it allows greater transparency in project funding, particularly transparency in terms of the elimination of uncoordinated funding for similar and related projects. In addition to providing transparency and information about projects in the region, the portal would also enable the active integration of all stakeholders in the region in the planning and implementation of new research projects, projects applicable to the economy, the creation of new study programmes, the organization of joint events and the coordination of all other forms of cooperation in the region.

Proposals and actual projects to be submitted within the framework of the Danube Strategy also included an initiative for the creation of a so-called »e-region« which was submitted under the guidance of Prof. Gričar. The idea is to integrate all »e« activities. The e-region could be understood as the entirety of e-connected organizations in the region. The inter-connectivity of e-regions into a whole would create a Europe-wide information space (Gričar, 2011).

Europe as a unified higher education area

The concept of regional integration in the late 80s, and especially in the 90s, has expanded into the concept of the creation of a common European political, economic and academic space. For universities, Europe has become a common research area and above all a common higher education area.

The mobility of students and professors is a key factor for creating a unified area of higher education. The Erasmus programme was designed in 1987 with this in view. The programme has a multiple focus and it is intended for students who study or do work practice abroad, for academic staff, for teachers who want to teach abroad, and for non-academic staff, who use this programme to seek additional training or to acquire new skills in foreign institutions. In addition, Erasmus also supports project-based forms of cooperation between institutions, through intensive programmes, networks and multi-party projects. The programme encompasses the entire tertiary education sector which, in Slovenia, includes virtually all accredited institutions.

The name Erasmus is an acronym: European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, and the basic idea and mission of the programme are aligned with the principles, life and work of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who studied in different countries and whose name is usually associated with Erasmus.

In 1995, Erasmus became part of the Socrates programme, then in 2007 part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (Council Resolution, 2002; Lifelong Learning Strategy in Slovenia, 2007; EUA Charter, 2008). There are currently 31 countries taking part in the Erasmus programme: all EU member states (27), members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) and Turkey.

The Erasmus programme is the cornerstone of the Common European Higher Education Area. Its aim is to improve quality and increase the mobility of students and teaching staff, so it is expected by 2012 to have at least 3 million students participating in the Erasmus student mobility programme. There is also a call for greater transparency of study programmes in Europe and for facilitation of the transition between similar programmes of different universities. The Erasmus programme takes care of improvement of the quality and the volume of cooperation among higher education institutions and companies, and enables better development of innovative practices in education, and innovation in the subject matter and practices in a lifelong learning process supported by ICT.

The broader concept of a uniform European higher education output process is given by the Sorbonne Declaration (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998), which defines the structure of the harmonization of the European higher education system. More precise definitions were given a year later with the well-known Bologna Declaration (Bologna Declaration, 1999), which more clearly defines the comparability of studies, defines two-cycle study, a system of credits, diploma supplement and it underscores the unequivocal commitment to the mobility of students and academic and non-academic staff at universities and other higher education institutions.

Global trends

EU programmes also support cooperation beyond the borders of the European Union and the geographical boundaries of Europe. Cooperation in research which knows no boundaries and brings together the work of individuals and universities around the world is important. The movement of students and teachers is equally important and cannot be confined to Europe only. Erasmus Mundus, of which the University of Maribor is also a member, thus plays an important role among major EU programmes.

Erasmus Mundus is a programme of collaboration and exchange of students and professors in higher education. Its purpose is cooperation between EU countries and the rest of the world and it is funded by the EU. The programme focuses on extensive cooperation in the field of mobility and aims to improve the quality of European higher education, whilst its activities promote the European Union and, by means of cooperation with countries outside the EU, promotes intercultural dialogue by providing assistance to the development of higher education in those countries.

The University of Maribor in cooperation with Karl-Franzens University of Graz is included in projects of the Erasmus Mundus JoinEU SEE II programme, which enables grants to be obtained for the implementation of the mobility of students and staff. The exchange of individuals, in general, can take place between countries of the European Union and the Western Balkans and some other associated members of the consortium. The JoinEU SEE II consortium is coordinated by the University of Graz and the first mobility will be implemented in the winter semester of 2011/2012.

Students and staff of the University of Maribor can apply for grants for mobility to partner universities in the Western Balkans region that are involved in the project JoinEU SEE. This includes universities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. After completion of the application process in October 2010, the University of Maribor had registered 132 applicants and, on the basis of the strict selection criteria for granting the SEE JoinEU scholarships, 25 candidates were selected.

The University of Maribor has already responded to a new call for applications for participation in the programme JoinEU SEE III, which, just like the existing programme is devoted to mobility in the Western Balkans. This might be perceived as a focus which is too narrowly confined to the region, when the Erasmus Mundus programme actually allows world-wide participation. The University of Maribor, however, is also making plans for cooperation with other continents. It should be noted, however, that in collaboration with Karl-Franzens University in Graz, we specifically identified the aim of cooperation in the wider region and the integration of Western Balkans countries, which do not otherwise have opportunities to participate in the Erasmus programme. We consider it an obligation and goal not only to help those countries but really to build a broad common regional higher education area, which is not limited only to EU member states. This is particularly important for the University of Maribor and the state of Slovenia, which, as a former Yugoslav Republic, still has strong links with the region.

In addition to the mobility of students and teachers, which is increasingly becoming a global trend, the process of globalization raises concerns about the quality of universities. With the development of information technology, the internet and all forms of modern communication, the results of scientific research, the quality of study programmes and all other aspects of quality in relation to universities and individuals, have become widely available and on hand for analyses and comparisons. Based on the developed criteria, in addition to accreditation agencies worldwide, various ideas of evaluating and ranking universities have emerged. EUA, which performs evaluations across Europe, has played a key role in evaluating the European universities. Despite all the positive effects, these evaluations have left a bitter aftertaste because they were and still are carried out predominantly in the universities of eastern and southern Europe. This may have been driven by a real or imaginary need for recognition, which was duly provided by EUA but it came with a relatively high price tag.

Similarly, global rankings have caused controversy and ambivalent reactions, stirring feelings and dividing academic communities. There are several problems but the key one is that rankings often combine several aspects of the work and activities of universities into a single assessment. In doing so, they use different weights for different

segments, but such assessments are in all cases dubious, since they do not say enough about the specific qualities of particular universities. The EU therefore decided to support a project of evaluation and ranking of universities split by individual fields, designated »U-Multirank: a multi-dimensional global university ranking: a feasibility study« (U-Multirank). The basic idea behind this comes from the German Institute »Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung« [1], which is basically already using its own ranking system (CHE Ranking), which is multidimensional in terms of evaluating various dimensions of university performance.

The universities quality assessment systems still have many weaknesses, problems and unresolved issues. Many of the criticisms are directed towards the comparability of natural sciences, engineering, social sciences and other disciplines. There are also problems with taking into account the various awards that are the subject of prestige and quality of universities, whether at individual or university level. This issue was on the agenda at a meeting of experts on the quality of universities, held in Maribor (Maribor Academicus Event, 2010). Particular attention was devoted to new project proposals, which would detail the possibility of taking into account awards to individuals and universities (Sadlak and Marhl, 2010).

Another very important feature is the holistic approach to evaluating universities, which goes beyond successful research and educational work. It involves aspects of broader staff training, applicative project work, technology transfer and cooperation with the economy, cultural organizations, local communities and other entities. All this is defined in the so-called "third mission" of universities. In order to identify more precisely the critical parameters of the third mission of universities, the University of Maribor, in a consortium of eight European project partners, acquired the project E3M - "European Indicators and Methodology for Ranking the University Third Mission". Partial results have been presented at conferences (Marhl and Pausitz, 2010). At the last meeting of the project team on the 5th and 6th of April 2011 in Maribor, we also carried out preparations for the final choice of indicators and the design of the project outcomes.

1 *CHE - Centre for Higher Education*

There is a danger that the global trends in quality assessment of universities may degenerate, either because they remain the domain of a narrow elite or if the assessors become untouchable experts, not receptive to feedback from universities or, worse still, they become pawns in the hands of higher political or commercial interests. At a conference called the "2nd International Conference on World-Class Universities (WCU-2), October 31 - November 3, 2007, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China", we highlighted the problem of an apparent self-sufficiency of the best ranked universities in the world. We presented the importance of assessing the positive impacts of the global ranking of universities on the development of and improvements to the quality of universities. Illustrating the case by means of Slovenian universities and in more detail the University of Maribor, we presented the specific impacts of raising the quality of habilitation procedures and allocation of project funds (Rozman and Marhl, 2007) and elaborated on our views in a published paper (Rozman and Marhl, 2008). Based on these activities at the University of Maribor, we were accepted onto the Executive Board of the IREG Observatory (IREG), which brings together experts in the field of quality assurance and evaluation of universities and connects them with the key global ranking organizations. The fundamental principle of the observatory is to keep a vigilant eye on respect for the basic principles of ranking (Berlin Principles, 2006) and to prevent manipulation on the basis of rankings.

Conclusion and vision

We find that regional trends exist in terms of higher education institutions seeking integration, all of them with a view to gaining greater attention from the European Commission in order to create the conditions for achieving individual goals within the overall objectives of the European Higher Education Area. The same applies to the Danube and Alps-Adriatic regions. These two regions consist of countries that are increasingly »regressing« in comparison with the western and northern countries of Europe in several areas according to the criteria of university quality set by both the European Union and the world. This has been discussed above. The countries of this area are regressing in terms of the average income of university staff, the level of recognition of the researcher's profession in society, the number of projects, the levels of resources allocated to

these projects, the amount and age of the research equipment used, the ratio between the numbers of faculty and students, the proportion of the national budget allocated to higher education and research, and the enumeration could continue.

A university conference in Cyprus for smaller EU member states is planned for June 2011. The conference is aimed at achieving extra funding for the development of universities of small EU countries. Democratic society is governed by the rule of the majority, so it is only logical that institutions from small countries should coordinate and integrate their interests in order jointly to achieve the relevant weight to assert their interests. Very similarly, the Danube Rectors' Conference and the Rectors' Conference of the Alps-Adriatic have started their work but against a background of differences in development among western, central and south-eastern Europe. Development programmes such as PHARE, TEMPUS, Stability Pact and others have obviously not achieved the desired effect of making Europe a more evenly developed region. The universities of the central and south-eastern European countries have become mere sub-contractors of the more developed universities. In the global competition for the best of the knowledge-based society, the first and the most essential condition is the equality of universities. A single European university space must be an evenly developed area, since a Europe of two or three speeds will not be able to provide the same favourable conditions for development as other continents (with the exception of Africa and South America, where the disparity among countries' development is similarly large) and thus will not obtain the best students from around the world. Funds for regional development and cohesion funds are also relatively inaccessible in an area that has not got a coordinated and homogeneous development policy and is thus not recognizable as a region in the sense of region within these funds.

The key to achieving a regional university space is to understand the mission of universities and other higher education institutions in it. It seems that the universities, in a constant race to ensure their existence, i.e., to obtain sufficient funds for their core activities, have lost their orientation as to what their purpose or main goal is: a discovering of knowledge and its transfer to the society in which they operate. Searching for knowledge necessitates curiosity and the ability to follow ideas. Anyone who does not have a stable income cannot plan, moreover, and is not willing to

take risks and explore unknown areas and cannot be innovative (Rebolj, 2011). It could be said that they will not want to investigate something new, since they expend all their energy on basic survival. It is thus easier to carry out work (i.e., only applied projects) on behalf of someone else and limit oneself to reducing costs (minimizing costly human resources, imposing human resource development restrictions, stopping promotions and incentives, limiting working equipment etc.). So while it is possible to survive by doing that, such mode of operation can certainly not be called development. If countries were only to pay their universities to realize their national programmes of higher education, the universities might become simply one of the sub-contractors of the state. A university at the applied level is not a true university. The mission of universities is more than simply implementing specific programmes and documents designed by sources external to the university and set as a condition for receiving funding from the university founders in the first place.

The self-image of a university should go beyond meeting of the needs of the founder (e.g., the government) and funding (customer project). The primary mission of a university is to develop knowledge and to ensure its transfer through study programmes and innovation. In order to address the challenges of modern times, a university must accept a broader mission, which lies in active participation in the development of the whole society. A university should be driving the development of culture at the local, regional and global levels. It must remain autonomous in this - organizationally, financially, academically and scientifically. Autonomy means that the foundation of university must be subject to specific levels in all of these areas in order to become accredited, and there must be confidence that the university will fulfil its mission autonomously and independently. The European Union is based on mutual trust of member states that predetermined rules will be followed. Why cannot the European university area be based on trust that the universities are able to achieve the same level of egalitarian and respectful cooperation? In countries that are consistent in meeting the objectives set in the Bologna Declaration, universities are restricted only by the basic conditions for accreditation. Once established, they are autonomous in all of their work and left to the vagaries of the market and socially oriented society. In some countries of the Danube and the Alps-Adriatic regions, this is not the case. There is in any case always a question of the degree of trust a founder places in the institution which it has founded. If the founder

has confidence that the university is able to complete the national higher education programme, which reflects the European guidelines for development, they should also trust the university to be independent and autonomous in taking all the necessary steps to meet those requirements (accreditation of programmes, marketing of knowledge). If the founder of the university has adopted the principle of lump sum funding, which means that the university can independently manage their funds, it could generally be assumed that the university can be entrusted with the tasks of developing their study and accredit their programmes. Alas, that is not the case! We can only draw the conclusion that universities in the Danube and the Alps-Adriatic regions still need to earn the trust of their founding countries. This can be achieved by agreeing on common standards, by harmonizing quality systems, which is the key to building the missing trust. Universities should be able to achieve real autonomy and quality programmes through application of qualitative criteria but this must be also followed by quality funding. For the sustainable development of the European society of knowledge, prosperity and peace, an awareness of the values that are fundamental to the European university area needs to be cultivated. These values are enshrined in all fundamental documents of the European Commission and Parliament and they are transferred by the member states into their national programmes, some only declaratory, others systemically and truly.

The University of Maribor has adopted a declaration on European policy (European Policy Statement) and by complying with all the conditions and criteria set, the university has received the Erasmus University Charter, which is the basic document and statement of confidence of the European Commission, that the University of Maribor is capable of achieving the objectives of the European Union in higher education. In addition, it is a reliable and successful partner in many European research projects.
The situation is different on the domestic front, though. The University of Maribor cannot independently approve its study programmes nor can it make modifications, e.g., take decisions regarding faculty performance, scheduling of lectures and alike. All this requires procedures to be carried out at the national level, which can take a year or longer to complete. Under such conditions, when 60 km north of Maribor there is a university that operates with full autonomy in relation to its study programmes, it is difficult to see the University of Maribor being able to participate, let alone compete in the European University Area in the long run.

Similarly, its founder - the state - should be aware of their responsibility to its creation - the university. Only then will the university be able to achieve a level of quality that allows it to find its place among the good and best universities in Europe and the world. Universities that are not autonomous and that do not maintain their quality by themselves, cannot expect to be recognized as representatives of the regions and also will not be interested in developing quality criteria that are the basis for ranking lists. The question is: where does the trust begin? In other words, what does society and the state expect from a university in return, in order to earn their trust which, in turn, is necessary for a university to do well what it is supposed to do?

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Concepts of global and local in higher education: the case of the School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica

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Abstract

It is argued for the case of the School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica (FUDŠ/SASS) that intensive internationalisation and embeddedness into local environment do not contradict each other. Instead, they are complementary processes, whose interconnectedness is necessary for the relevance and quality of an academic institution. As one of the key aspects of successful internationalisation of SASS they consider the case of the doctoral study. The international orientation of the school is also underlined by the school's staff selection processes and habilitation criteria, as well as by the international exchange of staff and students, international research cooperation and organisation of international scientific meetings. Based on the qualitative research implemented by the SASS graduate students, the relevance of international exchange for students is emphasised, particularly for the development of their social and cultural capital as well as an important aspect of their socialisation.

Key words: Erasmus exchanges, global, local, glocalisation, doctoral study, European Union, social capital

Introduction

The purpose of this article is twofold. On the one hand, we want to analyse certain trends towards the internationalisation of higher education, based on the case of the School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica

(SASS)[1] and, on the other hand, we want to illustrate the importance of internationalisation through the results of a small comparative quality survey among students who have been on a student exchange and students who have not had such an experience.

We wish in this article, at least on a preliminary basis and insofar as currently available data and the extent of this article allow this, to reflect on the following (hypo)theses:

1. Active internationalisation and being actively embedded in the local environment are not mutually exclusive.
2. New and smaller institutions, such as SASS, enable active development towards internationalisation.
3. Internationalisation reflected through international exchanges does not just contribute to additional knowledge but also includes important socialisation aspects.

To this end, in the first part of this article we introduce the logic behind SASS activities, particularly in connection with the issue of internationalisation. We also draw attention to opportunities and obstacles with which SASS has to deal. Furthermore, we indicate how SASS is embedded in globalisation processes, in terms of its efforts to integrate on a global as well as a local scale. In conclusion, we focus on the results of a survey that was carried out by master's students at SASS (mentored by Tea Golob) through semi-structured interviews among Slovene students who had been on a student exchange and those who had not.

For a better understanding, a higher education institution such as SASS first needs to be placed more distinctively in the Slovene higher education environment. Three typical types of higher education institution can be distinguished within this framework:

[1] *The international variant of Fakulteta za uporabne družbene študije (FUDŠ) is School of Advanced Social Studies (SASS). Faculties that are not part of universities are called "schools" in Anglo-American regions, whereas the term "faculty" is usually used to indicate part of a university. In the case of SASS, the understanding of applied sociology does not correspond completely to the concept of "applied social studies", which mainly stands in practice for a narrower specialisation, but is conceived as an emphasis on the applicability of sociology in solving more demanding social problems on the organisational and macro level; hence the denotation "advanced" and the difference between the local and international denotation of the faculty. School of Advanced Social Studies is also the title of a doctoral programme within SASS, which is also in practice the organisational unit that is most directly integrated into the international environment.*

1. Universities and faculties within universities, which are relatively extensive systems or at least part of extensive systems, for the most part with a long tradition of pedagogical and research work. Faculties may also be fairly heterogeneous within a single university, mainly depending on the study field, some are more firmly based on large student numbers than others.

2. Institutions that deal exclusively with the pedagogical process and have no scientific or research ambitions. Public or private higher vocational schools, within or outside universities, fall within this framework. It should be noted that some other faculties also belong in this category. Due to a distinctive focus on pedagogical work, especially within the 1st cycle of Bologna studies, they are more like higher vocational schools, since they have practically no scientific research activities of their own. Studies at these establishments are generally done in large groups and there are few full-time pedagogical and research personnel in relation to the number of enrolled students.

3. Independent faculties with a strong emphasis on scientific research work carry out programmes and project through ARRS, apply for international research funds, and the study process is directed towards doctoral and master's levels. They normally have fewer students, also because they concentrate on higher study degrees but, at the same time, a relatively high proportion of full-time pedagogical and research staff in relation to the number of students. Establishments such as the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School, Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, the Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, the International School for Social and Business Studies and SASS can be placed in this category.

A characteristic of the institutions in this third group is that, in terms of status, they are not part of universities, although they resemble them in the substantive nature of their work and they are quite different in substance from higher education institutions in the other group. It can thus be concluded that, because they are not part of a university and also have a small number of students, they are forced to pursue special strategies and to find specific niches. A high level of internationalisation is certainly one of the possible strategic choices. In spite of this indicative

classification, there is a need to be careful with generalisations. The study of SASS as an example in the field of internationalisation should therefore be regarded only as a possible illustration of an institution from the aforementioned third group and not as a general case.

Concepts of global and local

SASS chose an orientation towards the international arena as one of its four key guidelines, in addition to interdisciplinarity, quality and applicability. Its Strategic Plans for the period of the next five years (SASS 2009) were approved in 2009, based on these guidelines. The philosophy on which the faculty was founded was largely based on two demands, apparently opposing but, in fact, distinctly complementary: internationalisation in the sense of integration in global processes, on the one hand, and specific localisation in the sense of being embedded in the local environment, the Goriška region, as well as Slovenia as a whole, on the other.

This can, of course, only be understood if it is presumed that the processes of modern time are not taken as a simple homogenous game with a zero sum but as a complex interweaving of various, reciprocally contradictory processes. This is also true for the relation between globalisation and localisation which, according to Ronald Robertson (1995), constantly intertwine as glocalisation; as a simultaneous strengthening of global and local dimensions of individual phenomena. Glocalisation does not produce a simple uniformity and homogeneity but also a growing heterogeneity and unpredictability of results.

Indeed, the logic of science in itself forces higher education institutions into a distinctive globalisation. As a functional sub-system of modern society, science adheres to its own autonomous principles, which differentiate it from other sub-systems, on the one hand, and transnationally integrate it across national and cultural borders, on the other (Luhmann 1995, for example, discusses this). In accordance with the standards of verifying the authenticity and relevance of scientific findings, this verification is nowadays more and more unambiguously demanded in the transnational, deterritorialised “space”.

We can hereby relate to Castells (1996) and his differentiation between "spaces of places" and "spaces of flows" which is particularly important because we are aware that today we are not dealing only with unambiguous globalisation processes but with the multiplicity of reciprocally contradictory processes. Castells (1996) draws attention to the emergence of a polarised world, in which some are part of dynamic deterritorialised flows and others are caught within the limits of the local. The logic of the internationalisation of higher education institutions *a priori* means that faculties must provide space for flows. In an extreme case, it means that they become completely standardised spaces or, with reference to Ritzer (2007), a certain aspect of "nothingness" in the sense of exclusion from every cultural and territorial context. If science adheres only to standard principles, independent of local contexts, then ideally it does not matter at all into which particular local space higher education institutions (first and foremost intended for creative work and to pass on any scientific findings) are placed or they do not need to be placed anywhere specifically.

Nevertheless, this aspect is excessively simplified and overmuch trapped in the logic of the game with a zero sum. Castells' discussion on the spaces of places and spaces of flows as two separate and, in a way, mutually exclusive realities, is dubious (see, for example, Holton 2007). Both dimensions can intertwine and be reciprocally complementary, which is also true in the case of higher education institutions. They can be included in global flows and in the local space at the same time. If, owing to the standards of research and pedagogical work, they are highly integrated in global flows, this does not mean they are less useful to the local communities in which they are located. On the contrary, it is precisely through internationally established excellence that they can be useful to the local community (in strict regional and general national senses) in which they are placed.

The picture of a model faculty would be that of an institution in which an international team of teachers and researchers work with an equally nationally diverse group of students, in the long term most staff remain in the local environment of the faculty, or return to it regularly, they cooperate well with the local economy (which is, of course, also highly internationalised) and local community. At the moment, all Slovene faculties are still far from such ideals, but the extent to which they are

directed towards such goals and the extent to which they take steps in this direction are important.

Just as a particular local environment would not benefit much from a merely globalised higher education institution, it would benefit even less from a merely localised higher education institution. At least in the case of Slovenia, the latter is certainly a more frequent and bigger problem, visible in the recruitment of exclusively academic personnel from the local (Slovene or regional) environment. This self-evident aspect of the local, especially in sociology and humanities, can be illustrated by the fact that, up to now, the largest Slovene university did not have clearly defined procedures for recognising the qualifications of teaching staff from foreign institutions because such cases were so rare.

It can be seen from the strategy of SASS that they are striving to achieve both:

"Involvement in the international space is today in itself the factor needed to achieve academic excellence. This involvement is expressed in co-operation in the research field, as well as in the inclusion of foreign lecturers in the pedagogical process." (SASS, 2009: 3)

"The motto of researchers at SASS is to deal with the problems that are most important for *the environment,* in spite of them being politically or in any other way sensitive." (ibid. italics added)

"A new centre of applied sociological knowledge has been developed in Nova Gorica, which, with its expertise, will insert itself in the local or regional as well as national economy and labour markets, which will make use of numerous as yet unexploited possibilities, niches, in the development of social sciences on the national level and which will successfully integrate into the international environment and development trends of social sciences." (Tomšič, 2009)

We want specifically to refer to the question of issues that are of interest to the environment. Choosing a topic of research is the one thing in which the environment (local or national) can exert a specific influence because, in choosing a research topic (compared to all later research steps) the issue is not actually *scientific* but is explicitly bound to impulses from the

environment, i.e., the scientific sub-system can be open to its environment to the maximum, without in so doing endangering its own autonomy. The topic of research itself is the one thing in which faculties can help their local environments best by choosing topics that are relevant from this point of view. An exemplary case of such a topic for SASS was its decision to do research on the social costs of gambling, since it is a typical locally important topic. Nevertheless, while examining this local topic, the SASS researchers connected through publications and their participation in scientific meetings with the global nucleus of the study of gambling.[2]

Internationalisation in the practice of SASS

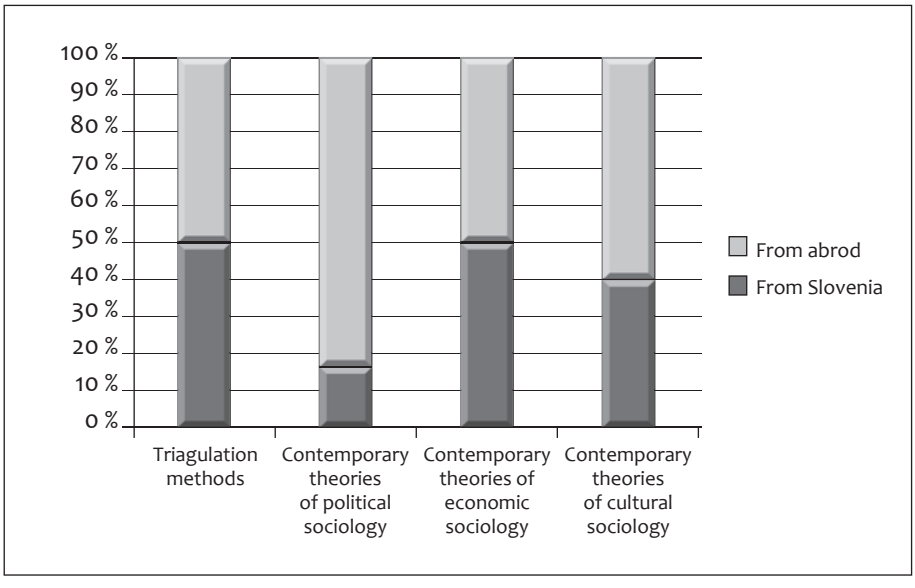
Internationalisation is also not just a declarative strategic trend, because SASS has already laid a sound foundation for further internationalisation. The following dimensions, in particular, are worth special attention in relation to this matter:

- international staffing in doctoral studies
- short-term exchanges of students, higher education teachers, researchers and professional staff, especially within the framework of the Erasmus programme
- organising international conferences
- beginning to employ new pedagogical and research staff only through international calls for applications
- integration into international research projects
- new habilitation criteria, which require a high level of integration into the international scientific community from pedagogical and research staff

[2] *In 2009, SASS participated at the International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA, with six contributions, thus becoming more internationally known in this field. The research done on the topic of gambling is, for example, recently visible in the context of a bilateral project between the Republic of Slovenia and Finland in 2011–2012, in which the frequency of gambling problems, as well as precautionary and curative systems and measures are being compared. In this field, SASS is also participating in an international project of the Seventh Framework Programme of the EU: Collaborative large-scale integrating project, Addictions and Lifestyles, and Contemporary Europe: Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP) in the period from 2011 to 2016. The project is coordinated by Fundacio Privada Clinic Per A La Recerca Biomedica, Neurosciences Institute, Barcelona, in Spain.*

Integration into the international environment is already substantially accomplished by doctoral studies and it represents the space of academic discourse to which the faculty invites internationally established researchers and lecturers. An internationally known sociologist of Slovene descent, Professor Thomas Luckmann, has been working with SASS for many years. Furthermore, there is a rule in doctoral sociology studies at SASS that, in each of the four obligatory subjects, mainly foreign lecturers work with students and present their broad experiences and offer additional possibilities for study and research work. In the academic year 2010/11, six Slovene and nine foreign professors are lecturing within doctoral studies. The latter also deliver most of the lectures, as can be seen from Graph 1.

Graph 1: Schedule of the number of lectures in doctoral sociology studies at SASS from Slovenia and abroad



SASS not only hosts foreign lecturers but actively encourages its staff to participate in international exchanges, study visits, to lecture and to do research work abroad. Guest work at higher education and research institutions abroad, for a period between one week and three months, has become in practice a standard at SASS, for teaching staff and researchers as well as assistants and professional staff. Ireland, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Finland, the Czech Republic and Russia can be mentioned

as some of the typical destinations of SASS employees, to academic institutions at which they have done research, pedagogical and study work. This type of co-operation with abroad is becoming so intense that it also requires the organisation of pedagogical work so as to enable such exchanges. Residences abroad are, for practical reasons, connected with international projects, especially bilateral projects.

International conferences, symposia and meetings, regularly organised by SASS, are also an important contribution to internationalisation. We would highlight the following in particular:

- **Symposium on Economic and Social Implications of Destination Resort Casino Hotels** in September 2007 in Nova Gorica (http://www.fuds.si/si/dejavnosti/organizacija/?v=konf03)
- **Conference on Challenges of Religious Pluralism** in Nova Gorica on 6th and 7th December, 2007 (http://www.fuds.si/si/dejavnosti/organizacija/?v=konf02)
- **Conference on Intercultural Management in Companies** in Nova Gorica on 4th and 5th December, 2008. (http://www.fuds.si/si/dejavnosti/organizacija/?v=konf01)
- **Conference on "Economic, political and societal position and role of the European Union and its member states in the time of global instability"** took place in Piran between 23rd and 25th October, 2009. (http://www.fuds.si/si/dejavnosti/organizacija/?v=konf04)
- **International Conference on Gambling** took place in Nova Gorica on 14th and 15th December, 2009 and hosted the world's top researchers in the field of gambling research.
- September 2010 – international conference **"Contemporary world between security and freedom"** in Piran (http://www.fuds.si/media/pdf/organizacija/call_for_papers_2010.pdf)
- In 2011, three international scientific conferences will take place, for which the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) has already approved co-funding.

Foreign lecturers within the doctoral studies at SASS are not just integrated as contract staff but are increasingly becoming part of the personnel nucleus of the institution itself. Although employing them full-time is complicated, due to the regrettable bureaucracy obstacles to employing foreigners in Slovenia, shifts in this area are clear. Since April 2011, Professor Nikolai Genov, who previously worked at the Freie Universität Berlin, has been a full-time employee at SASS.

Open international calls for applications, which enable the actual notification and integration of applicants from abroad, are becoming a standard at SASS, which the institution will never be allowed to lower. This also applies for future, younger staff. A new young researcher from Ukraine will be employed at SASS in 2011. She was chosen through an international call for applications from among highly quality and competitive applicants. The experience of SASS with such calls for applications proves that a substantially broader recruitment of qualifying applicants is made possible in this way, and thus a fundamentally better final choice.

Commitment to internationalisation is evident from the new measures of conferment of titles adopted by the SASS senate in April 2011. The measures adopted in the area of internationalisation, as well as in other areas, substantially exceed the minimum standards established by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education - NAKVIS[3]. While, for example, a three-month residence abroad is necessary to be granted the title of associate professor within the framework of national measures, SASS set this condition for the first conferment of the title of assistant professor. Assistants will have to spend at least three months at a foreign university or institute during or after their doctoral studies. Experience with previous student and researcher exchanges confirms that meeting these criteria should not be a problem in practice. SASS measures require more international publications of quality from staff, e.g., more than three times as many than is set by SQAA standards to be granted the first title of assistant professor and more than twice as many to be granted the first title of associate professor or the first title of full professor, more than twice as many top-level publications in journals indexed in SSCI, SCI with an impact factor higher than 0 (one of the conditions in part of

[3] *Original name: Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu*

these publications is the impact factor) or A&HCI, than it is set by SQAA standards. The requirements for citations as evidence of recognition in the international environment are in proportion.

It would be ideal if the "internationalisation" of students were to become as natural as the existing internationalisation of staff at the faculty. Unfortunately, Slovenia is still quite far off from the situation in which every student would spend at least one term abroad between their enrolment in the 1st and completion of the 2nd Bologna cycle. SASS in this area, too, is approximately on the same level as the Slovene average for the moment but it seems that the interest of students in exchange has recently been increasing. There are certainly no problems with filling vacant places. SASS students spend one term at establishments such as the Waterford Institution of Technology, Ireland, the University of West Bohemia in Plzen and Savonia University of Applied Sciences - Agricultural, Health Care and Social Services in Finland. Study visits such as this usually last one term. Credit points of the subjects passed are recognised by SASS as credit points for the year in which they are enrolled. Since the Bologna diploma is not just a certificate but also includes a detailed description of subjects passed, it is also a good opportunity and reference for students. Further improvement in student exchanges remains an essential challenge, in spite of positive indications. A more systematic approach towards the recruitment of foreign students is planned for the future, through short-term exchanges as well as enrolment in a study programme as a whole.

Effects of student exchanges

The importance of student exchanges will be further illustrated by a qualitative survey carried out by SASS students. The survey indicates some additional relevant effects of student exchanges.

Within the framework of the practical part of the subject European Values and Identity, SASS students carried out empirical research, which encompassed various layers of the European Union. In addition to the principal emphasis on European identifications as a conceptual basis of the research, numerous political, economic, cultural and entirely ordinary dimensions of living in a joint union became apparent. One of the aims of the research was to compare attitudes towards the European Union among

students who had been on a student exchange abroad and those who had not experienced this. It should be emphasised that most students from the first group went abroad through Erasmus exchange programmes. The research was qualitative and the students tried to explore the complexity of attitudes towards the European Union and the significance of student exchanges especially through the personal experiences of individuals. Using a uniform questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, which enabled a certain level of relaxed conversation, they obtained more than ninety opinions, experiences and interpretations of student exchanges. Certain common narratives are characteristic of several interviews and they are a convenient basis for analysis of the obtained data. If we consider a narrative as a kind of a collective group construction, the collected conversations provide a certain general picture of understanding the significance of student exchanges abroad. It is presumed that all narratives are socially and culturally determined. Each of us experiences all events, anticipates and remembers them, talks about them and criticises them in a particular, as Rapport and Overing say, conventional way (2004: 288). Through a narration, we create and give meaning to events, but always within pre-existing, predefined categories, because we can place ourselves and everything around us only within and in a particular socio-cultural space (Bruner and Weisser 1991, Rapport and Overing 2004: 288).

The analysis of the obtained interviews revealed various layers of student exchanges abroad, which include a range of personal experiences, new skills and a changed attitude towards the European Union. In addition to the direct experiences gained by the students who had spent a considerable part of a year abroad, important pieces of information were obtained through conversations with students who had not been on a student exchange. They provided a very indicative, comparative component in the analysis itself. The most obvious differences between the two groups of students clearly illustrated the significance of student exchanges.

To begin with, it can be stressed that, based on the interviews, the Erasmus student exchange can be regarded as an experience that individuals connect with gathering life experiences and independence. It represents a sort of a maturity exam, because most students experience independent life in a foreign city and among foreign people for the first time. The words

of one student clearly illustrate this: *The Erasmus exchange programme [is] a great experience for life. I gained self-confidence and independence and I am better organised.* Seen in this light, a student exchange abroad is an important component of the socialisation process, in which individuals acquire knowledge and skills that help them become part of social life more successfully. In a society characterised by a high level of individualism, the expected role of an individual as an agent is much bigger than a couple of decades ago. The intensification of globalisation processes and the increasing complexity of contemporary societies condition numerous transitions in everyday life, in the character of social organisation and in the structure of the global system. In this context, the social world is seen as marked with reflexive human acts that occur as a result of change in the social order (Beck, Giddens, Lash 1994). Or, as Beck thinks, "institutional conditions that determine individuals are no longer just events and conditions that happen to them, but also consequences of decisions they themselves have made, which they must view and treat as such" (Beck 2003: 199). Erasmus student programmes offer the chance of organised life abroad, which makes it possible for students to gain completely different experiences from those they get in their home environment. It is easier for them to cope with the challenges of modern life and swiftly take decisions that contribute to a better life. Through an Erasmus student exchange programme, individuals can more effectively integrate into global networks of the contemporary world. Studies abroad are mainly characterised by more actively meeting new people and expanding one's acquaintances across the borders of the home environment. The latter means that students broaden their horizons and accumulate new knowledge, on the one hand, and on the other it brings entirely practical possibilities of new opportunities in students' lives. In the interviewees' opinions, gaining new knowledge and meeting new people offers better chances of employment after the completion of studies. One of the students, for example, said that her current job is the reason she was satisfied with the Erasmus student exchange, since she gained experiences during the exchange that are required for her job. Studies in European countries can facilitate the search for employment abroad but, even more often, gaining new experiences, knowledge and skills enables swifter employment in Slovenia. Furthermore, interviewees highlighted the possibility of learning foreign languages, the advantage of direct communication in a foreign language and overcoming obstacles in starting a conversation as some of the most important components

of student exchanges. Knowledge of foreign languages is certainly an increasingly essential skill that a person needs when applying for a job. Higher self-confidence and better social skills are merely added value.

As already mentioned, Erasmus student exchange programmes broaden horizons and thus shift boundaries for the acceptance of difference and diversity. One of the interviewees, for example, said that *studying abroad signifies a new experience for me, because in this way I can learn something new, different, something that is typical only for a particular country. You can meet a lot of different people and see how it feels to live and study somewhere else.* Somewhat more illustrative are the statements of two other students: *you make* (through an Erasmus student exchange programme) *some international acquaintances, learn about the mentality of a nation, accept a new culture and customs; I considered it to be a great opportunity to meet people from all over the world, to be an opportunity of gaining insight into the educational system abroad and to get to know it in practice, to broaden my horizons and, of course, to see new places and learn about other cultures.* Life abroad, active participation in the social life of a different environment and learning about new cultures stimulates greater interest in understanding new environments. At the same time, it provides the basis for successful integration into a transnational community that surpasses the borders of national states and thus also the differences between individual nations. Students who spent an extended period abroad through an Erasmus exchange were considerably more tolerant or, rather, accepted difference more easily. In the increasing complexity of contemporary societies, respecting difference and being aware of the advantages of the coexistence of different cultures is a much better investment in someone's life than intolerance and fear of difference. It is also a virtue of which everyone should be aware. In this respect, ideas of cosmopolitanism play an important role, being an important aspect of opportunities of integration into the transnational, global space (Delanty and Rumford 2005). The key element in achieving acceptance, openness and cosmopolitanism lies to a large extent in cognitive mobilisation. Erasmus study exchanges are therefore important because they enable integration into the educational system and the acquisition of various experiences during residence abroad. Inglis and Hugson think that knowledge of foreign cultures, languages and literature, and other forms of education, is a significant part of cultural capital or the resources that someone possesses (2003: 172). Student

exchanges abroad enrich and strengthen various forms of cultural as well as social capital, which connect students into a transnational network of acquaintances, knowledge and experiences. Both forms of capital, which can be called symbolic capital, also greatly influence the perception of the European Union. The difference in attitude to the European Union between students who had been on exchange abroad and those who had not, was quite obvious. These differences are reflected on many levels. Firstly, differences appear in the instrumental attitude to the European Union, because daily life abroad, making new friends and acquiring new knowledge strengthen the perception of the advantages created by the common union. The emphasis is on better mobility, migration across borders and the free flow of capital. Students were also aware of their advantages as citizens of the European Union in comparison with foreign students from countries outside the Union. The latter had many more problems with getting a residence permit for long-term residence in a European country.

Moreover, it was shown that individuals who had spent a considerable part of an academic or calendar year in one of the European countries were much more favourably inclined to the common symbols of EU. Although they do not feel a strong emotional affiliation, awareness of the significance of the existence of these symbols was significantly higher. There was also a feeling of closer linkage between particular European nations and the existence of a specific European awareness and culture. One of the students, for example, said: *if I had not gone on an Erasmus exchange then I would certainly not have so many friends from European countries. I find this the best thing about the EU; to enable young people to understand their peers and their cultures, habits and customs. A European consciousness and culture undoubtedly expand in this way.* Students also highlighted the need for common European values, an awareness of the shared past and, at the same time, diversity as an added value of community. They also consider themselves more strongly citizens of the European Union. Developing language skills, gaining knowledge of democratic citizenship and European characteristics was thought to stimulate their identification with the EU and bring it closer to individuals (Machaček, 2004; Pichler, 2008). As one of the students said, *Personally, I identify myself quite well with the common vision of the future in Europe; so I think it is important to say that I am a citizen of the European Union, too.*

In general, it can be summarised that students with experience of life abroad have a more positive attitude to the European Union. Student exchanges link individuals from different European countries and enable a sense of affiliation to a common space. As one of the students said, for example: *I understood the exchange in connection with the European Union because I received a scholarship from the European Union. All Erasmus students felt very European then.* Moreover, they more actively support Slovenia's membership of the European Union and see many more advantages than disadvantages.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that student exchanges, as well as other forms of internationalisation, significantly impact on the cultural as well as social capital of the individuals who take part, and we would highlight the explicitly socialisation dimensions among students, which indicate a connection between participation in student exchanges and a more open, cosmopolitan view of the world. These are also why even more attention should be devoted to internationalisation in future.

Dynamic and flexible academic institutions, which are at the same time firmly and consistently bound to high quality standards, can play a very significant role in this field; especially because they can meet the needs for internationalisation much faster without having to renounce being embedded in the local environment. We consider that SASS is one of these institutions and that it has already been relatively successful in making use of the opportunities provided by more active internationalisation.

The relative smallness and newness of an academic institution is no longer an obstacle but an advantage, because it enables better adaptability to new challenges, among which internationalisation plays a central role. There is also less risk with such institutions of being misled by the illusion of self-sufficiency, to which larger institutions with a longer tradition and reputation that has been established over a very long period but in different circumstances, might be subject.

Irrespective of this, internationalisation is far from being a self-evident or automatic process for any academic institution, because immediate

incentives from the social environment are very modest, insofar as they are created through the legislative and regulatory frameworks provided by the state, i.e., through minimum habilitation and accreditation criteria. Key decisions and moves towards internationalisation thus remain for now in the hands of academic institutions. In this respect, the differences between them are considerable and might even increase. SASS can be judge to be currently on the right path to more active internationalisation. At the same time, the institution must not become satisfied too soon with what has already been accomplished. Achievements to date should be taken only as the beginning of a still very long path.

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Strategy of internationalisation: Knowledge and practices of the University of Primorska

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Abstract

Internationalisation is one of the strongest factors of changes in the contemporary higher education system. This article deals with efforts by the University of Primorska to develop an internationalisation strategy. Consistent with the approach of J. Taylor, who investigated the internationalisation strategy of four foreign universities, the article covers the areas of teaching and learning, research, human resource and institutional management of the university which together represent a complete internationalisation strategy.

Key words: higher education, internationalisation, strategy, management

Introduction

Towards the end of the 20th century, a new emphasis was given to strategic planning in the field of higher education management on the institutional level. Owing to the pressure of limited public resources, the growth of fiscal responsibility and the general process of the marketisation of higher education, the governing bodies of universities were forced to re-evaluate their activities and consider social trends more realistically when establishing their priorities. Within that context, higher education institutions approach strategic planning as a tool for developing an institutional or "corporate" plan, within which research and educational strategies appear most frequently as two fundamental activities of a university. Human resources planning and the formulation of information strategies in connection with information and communications technology also gained prestige. With regard to the latter and within a broader globalisation process (Scott, 2000), especially in the economic

sector, many universities decided to develop institutional strategies of internationalisation.

The emergence of internationalisation in higher education is well documented by contributions from various authors (see, for example, Back, Davis, in Olsen, 1996; de Wit, 2002). Viewed historically, this is not a new phenomenon in higher education because similar processes have taken place since the foundation of the first universities. Through the co-operation of researchers, new knowledge is disseminated into different countries and, at the same time, students are travelling abroad to acquire specific skills. In this respect, the contemporary process of the internationalisation of higher education only represents a continuum of what was already happening in the past, although it is different in its scope, intensity and ultimately in its intention. One can notice that "growing interest has translated into the active development of policies, programmes and infrastructure at institutional and government levels" (Knight, 2001, 228). This is indicated in the shift from co-operation solely within the field of research to co-operation within the field of education (for example, joint and double programmes), from co-operation on the initiative of individuals and individual organisational units to initiatives at the institutional level, from ad hoc and occasional alliances to a proactive search for suitable partners, and from a set of loose activities to integrated and planned activities. Although the emergence of these activities is clearly seen at numerous universities all over the world, the extent to which conventional theories and methodologies of planning are used in internationalisation processes is much less clear. How did institutions go about devising a strategy of internationalisation? What work does an internationalisation strategy actually involve? What can we learn about the influence of internationalisation on institutional management?

Taylor (2004) tried to answer these questions in his article by discussing the internationalisation strategies of four leading universities: the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada, the University of Chicago, the USA, the University of Uppsala, Sweden and the University of Western Australia (UWA), Australia. He started from Knight and de Wit's definition of internationalisation which says that it is "the process of integrating an international perspective into the teaching/learning, research and service functions" of an institution of higher education (de Wit, 1995, 9-14, Knight, 1994, 3; Knight & de Wit, 1997, 8). This definition

emphasises the constant nature of internationalisation "as a process that responds to globalisation (not to be confused with the globalisation process itself) and as including both international and local elements" (de Wit, 1999, 2).

Another definition of internationalisation is offered by Ellingboe (1998, 199) who refers to "the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system" and describes

"an ongoing, future-oriented, multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment."

In order to arrive at this, Ellingboe (1998) identifies several key factors:

- the management of a university;
- the international integration of members of a higher education institution into activities with research institutes and establishments all over the world;
- an international study programme;
- the availability, affordability and transferability of study programmes abroad;
- the presence and integration of international students, scientists and guest professors in campus life; and
- international extracurricular units (student dormitories, conference centres, student associations, career centres, cultural involvement and language schools), student activities and student organisations.

As Taylor (2004) points out, extra caution is needed here because Knight and de Wit (1997) as well as Ellingboe (1998) use the word integrating in their definitions and thereby imply the adoption of an international approach in every area of university activity. It is nevertheless obvious, in fact probably inevitable, that individuals and organisational units will

respond differently to internationalisation within the same institution. Bartell (2003, 46) notes that

"Internationalisation conveys a variety of understandings, interpretations and applications anywhere from a minimalist, instrumental and static view, such as securing doctoral funding for study abroad programmes, through the international exchange of students, conducting research internationally to a view of internationalisation as a complex, all-encompassing and policy-driven process, integral to and permeating the life, culture, curriculum and institution as well as the research activity of universities and their members."

The question that arises here is how these differences in approach are expressed in the development of internationalisation strategies. While looking for an answer to this question, universities should basically be aware of the opportunities and limitations dictated by their organisational culture. Barbara Sporn (1996) very convincingly demonstrated the significance of a culture in the management and strategy formation in the field of higher education. Universities are complex organisations with a range of special attributes. Their objectives are often vague; different and numerous interest groups are present. Traditional values of autonomy and academic freedom are unsuitable for integrated planning, various experts are part of institutions, academic as well as managerial experts have different views, intentions and goals; universities also face the rapidly changing external environment with many opposing interests and most often unclearly agreed priority assignments. Such an environment is inappropriate for a linear planning approach that would be carried out top-down in spite of its possible efficacy. This particularly highlights the significance of management that is able to effectively and successfully develop institutional international strategies. Bartell (2003, 67) deduces that

"The internal culture can be inhibiting or facilitatory and, therefore, to enhance the effectiveness of any substantive and not merely symbolic internationalisation process, management's role is to foster and link a culture congruent with the internationalisation objective and the management of universities, including resource allocation and control techniques."

Therefore, effective management is vital for the development of internationalisation strategies. Marijk van der Wende (1999) enumerates many other key factors of success:

- a strong link with the general mission of universities and with their educational and research objective;
- a trend towards more holistic strategies, encompassing researches and education, and many other areas of activity, including mobility of the employed and study programme development; and
- a systematic evaluation of internationalisation and development of the connection between internationalisation and quality assurance.

It is essential to know that an international strategy cannot exist in isolation. Further, an international strategy needs to not only deal with the external environment but also with the internal organisation of a university. Services and the people responsible for internationalisation have to devise a stronger inner orientation. "This also means they should reconsider their role as international relations managers or administrators of international programmes or schemes, and orient themselves to their role as an innovation manager (a change agent) who focuses on internal processes" (van der Wende, 1999, 13).

Finally, it must be pointed out that, like other areas of a university's activities, the development and realisation of an internationalisation strategy is a continuous process within each university. Dilys Schoorman (1999, 39) wrote:

"The implementation of internationalisation as an ongoing process can also be achieved through strategic planning efforts that identify both short- and long-term goals. Short-term goals should be viewed not only as outcomes, but as important inputs in long-term efforts. Progress towards such goals should be monitored and the process should be modified where necessary. Emphasis should be placed on constantly improving and expanding internationalisation efforts, rather than allowing current efforts to stagnate."

We can thus conclude that there are many ideas, theoretical as well as practical, regarding the approach universities take to internationalisation. This article focuses on the content of the strategy designed by the University

of Primorska. It was recorded in the Internationalisation Programme of the University of Primorska 2010-2013 (hereinafter PI UP 2010-2013) to determine the extent to which these ideas are evident in it. Five key areas linked with internationalisation are examined: motive, learning and teaching, research, recruitment and institutional management.

Motive

The following passage can be found in PI UP 2010-2013, expressing the fundamental notion of the University of Primorska in its role in the border area and in relation to the international higher education there:

"The University of Primorska attributes great importance to the international dimension in all areas of its operation, especially in the areas of study, research and evolutionary project activities, and in the area of quality monitoring and quality assurance in the activities and services of the university. The function of international co-operation for us is in the development of the university and its members as well as the realisation of its mission on the national, local and cross-border level. The University of Primorska sees the need and opportunity for more full-scale international co-operation and liaison especially in the Alpine-Adriatic area, in the regions of Central and SE Europe, and the Mediterranean.

We are convinced that international co-operation develops a quality comparable to European and excellence in research and education, that international projects encourage the integration of research and education, and the usefulness of knowledge and, finally, that the funds from European projects facilitate the development of members and the university. International co-operation helps promote the improvement of studies by launching international study programmes on different levels, the quality of scientific and expertise work by carrying out international research and development projects, the evolution of knowledge and competencies which enable more efficient co-operation between the university and the local economic and social environment, where it can function as a factor for development.

A more important aspect of international co-operation is to contribute to the internationalisation of Slovenian science and its promotion abroad

and to the recognisability of Slovenia at the international level as well. The international mobility of students, researchers, university professors and professional staff plays a prominent role in this; therefore, the UP aims to enhance the number of visits abroad and of guest foreign students, researchers, teachers and professionals in Slovenia.

The University of Primorska pays special regard to its role and activities in the cross-border area. We believe that a state university in the border area undertakes a special mission to co-operate across borders and to actively help shape the common Slovenian cultural and especially scientific space. In the multicultural Istrian region, its special mission is to contribute to the development of the Italian minority in Slovenia."

According to the literature concerning this matter, there are various motives for the internationalisation of universities or higher education institutions (Middlehurst, 2007): social, cultural, political, economic, academic, competitive and developmental. The motives of the University of Primorska can, according to written sources, first and foremost be defined as academic, competitive and evolutionary. Among academic motives, the following stand out: an international dimension of research and education, the expansion of academic horizons, establishing an institution, the status, quality improvement, development, the assumption of international academic standards, and co-operation in the field of research. Among competitive ones, positioning in the international region, strategic connections, and the transfer and development of knowledge prevail. Among evolutionary motives, the development of competencies of students and staff, institutional learning and exchanges of good practice are notable. In comparison to the findings of Taylor (2004), the motives of the UP are parallel to the motives of the four universities he analysed. The only paramount difference lies in the fact that in PI UP 2010-2013 there is no explicit record of an economic motive for internationalisation. Foreign universities see it as the anticipation of financial funding and/or as obtaining additional revenues. We can assume that Slovenian higher education differs from that in Sweden, Canada or Australia in one characteristic; that there is no direct financial funding for the internationalisation of universities on the national level and therefore this is not included in the said document. According to the possibilities of raising any additional revenues, this is probably expected, although mostly conceived as the final consequence of carrying out any planned measures and activities and not as the central motive.

Learning and Teaching

As Taylor (2004) states, strategies of internationalisation in the field of learning and teaching typically include the acquisition of foreign students, the integration of contents with an international focus in study programmes (i.e. teaching of foreign languages, intercultural communication etc.) and the implementation of study programmes abroad. This can either be done by using modern information communication technology, in the form of a franchise or with own education centres abroad. PI UP 2010-2013 states with regard to the area of learning and teaching:

"Education is a fundamental activity of the university; its internationalisation is therefore of the utmost importance for the university. The internationalisation of education comprises the enrolment of foreign citizens in study programmes at the University of Primorska, the involvement of foreign professors and lecturers in educational programmes at the University of Primorska, hosting University of Primorska professors at foreign institutions and ultimately the development of international study programmes and educational projects financed by EU programmes and institutions.

Poor knowledge of the Slovenian language abroad, legal restrictions on the use of English as a teaching language in the Republic of Slovenia (pursuant to the Law on Higher Education, the only teaching language is Slovenian) and a lack of financial support for foreign students from the University of Primorska are the main obstacles to internationalisation of the educational field, followed by the questionable attractiveness of the existing programmes provided by members of the University of Primorska to the international community.

... Existing international programmes for financing studying abroad do not allow the acquisition of funds that would be freely available to the University of Primorska to be later made available to students at their own discretion (this means that the financial resources cannot be used to co-fund our own scholarship fund). This is a matter of granting scholarships to individuals who apply for them by themselves. The Republic of Slovenia awards scholarships to foreign students who apply or commence studies in Slovenia, but there are also some individual scholarships for which students themselves apply.

... Particularly big obstacles are seen in the way of inviting non-EU professors. The complicated entry and other procedures to obtain the appropriate licenses could jeopardise the conduct of guest lectures.

... When trying to get foreign students to enrol in University of Primorska study programmes (regular or part-time), it is a good idea to target the area in which the Slovenian language is known or easily accessible: these are neighbouring countries, the territories of former Yugoslavia and Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Bulgaria. In any case, it is important that the University of Primorska offers lessons in the Slovenian language, which facilitates the integration of foreign students and intercultural communication, and promotes the national language and linguistic diversity in Europe.

To obtain a large number of foreign students, it is necessary to offer courses that can be fully conducted in English, particularly in areas where members of the University of Primorska (individually or together) can offer high quality education and specialist knowledge. The University of Primorska has a special opportunity at the tertiary level since an analysis showed that, in the past, interest in postgraduate studies was in decline. With the development of high quality and internationally comparable programmes and international study programmes at the tertiary level, the University of Primorska may be able to attract the best foreign students in order to achieve the quality of the study process, and equally the quality of research, and in the long run it could start producing world-class experts who would be pillars of the long-term development of the University of Primorska. This is where the Postgraduate School of University of Primorska (POŠ) could play a pivotal role."

From the above we can see that the University of Primorska's internationalisation strategy goes beyond the scope of only attracting foreign students but also focuses on the content of study programmes which include local aspects i.e., Slovenian language, cultural, political and historical background and the international component being primarily reflected in the use of English as a working language and the internationally comparable curricula and study programmes of the University of Primorska with universities abroad. With this in mind, we are about assuring the internationally comparable competencies of independent thinking and creative work in this so-called knowledge-

based society that graduates from all levels should possess, especially graduates at the tertiary level.

Important facets of the internationalisation strategy are mobility programmes for domestic ("outgoing") and foreign ("incoming") students. PI UP 2010-2013 discusses this in the following section:

"The mobility of students is of paramount importance to a student who has an opportunity to spend part of their studies abroad. Such an experience enables a student to get to know a new country, a new culture, to enhance their knowledge of foreign languages, and at the same time also learn about their field of study from a different angle. Mobility must also be seen as an opportunity for the institution since the integration of foreign students in the learning process gives students and professors an opportunity to learn new approaches, new perspectives on solving study problems and to learn about other cultures.

The mobility of students from the Western Balkans in the future represents a unique opportunity but also a challenge for the University of Primorska. With the accession of Croatia to the Erasmus programme, a mobility exchange with a neighbouring country is becoming a reality that the University of Primorska must make good use of. The common history and similarity of languages allow students from the countries of former Yugoslavia to easily adapt in the host country, while understanding the language allows them full inclusion in the study process.

Because of the strategic importance of the said territory for the Slovenian economy, experience from this region represents added value for graduates and may facilitate their integration into the local labour market and economy."

Research

Extensive international co-operation in the research field is a feature that can be found at elite universities all over the world. It is therefore not surprising that the field of research plays an extremely important, if not a central role in the internationalisation strategies. PI UP 2010-2013 says:

"Participation in international research programmes is crucial for achieving excellence in research since the implementation of research programmes allows for the transfer of knowledge and methodologies from abroad and at the same time acts as a basis for the mobility of researchers, for joint research projects, for planning the research development of an individual field and provides young researchers with opportunities for further education and training. International research projects are also a way to achieve quality and international comparability in the field. ...

In 2010 the University of Primorska has a chance to actively participate in the group by preparing a new NRRP, to include its priority areas and through a working group to eliminate the barriers that restrict the University of Primorska's efficient co-operation in international research.

... The University of Primorska and especially its members should clearly define the scientific areas in which they already have or can potentially achieve an international comparative advantage and excellence, and on the basis of which they may become a reference institution in a specific field at the international level. To this end, it may be relevant to consider and consistently re-evaluate, at the international level, the specific characteristics of the environment in which the University of Primorska operates. Special effort should be made to develop research activities in those identified areas. Natural and cultural crossings and frontier areas are such examples of broad areas or themes which the several members of the University of Primorska and the university as a whole may identify with. The University of Primorska holds great (national and international) potential in the field of tourism. Due to the specific location and mission of the University of Primorska in this area it would be sensible to continue with consistent and systematic work on the development of marine science or marine studies (especially of the Adriatic Sea) in different scientific fields (natural to the human sciences) where we have big reserves and promising potential. At the same time, expanding and strengthening research in the field would be functional for the internationalisation process of the University of Primorska (in co-operation with research institutions from abroad). In this context, we should also mention the Karst region, a natural, environmental and landscape phenomenon of global proportions, which should be given more research attention.

Another special opportunity in terms of internationalisation is the promotion of Slovenian science projects, which are awarded each year by the ARRS. With the acquisition of these projects, the University of Primorska can contact new institutions and present its work abroad. Its research work can also be promoted through development projects funded by other EU programmes. Indeed, many programmes have the goal of developing a knowledge-based society and the transfer of knowledge and best practices among EU regions. The University of Primorska can use its experience in this field and develop research projects that will be attractive to a wider area. Particularly interesting are projects which enable the transfer of good practices. The University of Primorska, as a young university, has the possibility to find appropriate solutions through projects and upgrade them into an optimal operating system for the research field."

Expectations of the University of Primorska in terms of the contribution of internationalisation to the development of research can be compared with the findings of Taylor (2004, 162) that the initiatives of universities in the fields of research and education are in particular:

- the development of research-oriented graduate or doctoral schools aimed at providing conditions for quality research to foreign students;
- the simplification of administrative processes of student admission and co-operation;
- providing information on study and research at the university (especially on the Internet) and the preparation of multilingual promotional materials;
- the provision of adequate support services for the accommodation of foreign students, language learning and their social integration;
- providing scholarships for the best foreign (especially doctoral) students and young researchers; and
- providing graduate students with opportunities to participate in international exchange programmes and to gain international experience.

Personnel

Promoting programmes of international co-operation and integration in international research and other processes (e.g. quality assurance) creates new challenges for university employees, which they often cannot manage without additional specific education and training or with direct work on projects or by purposeful education at home or at the foreign partner institution. In the document PI UP 2010-2013, the need for suitably qualified professionals appears in several places:

"... On one hand, if it wants to become more successful in obtaining projects of FP7 (the EU's Seventh Framework Programme), the University of Primorska must invest in and train professional staff who will assist researchers with the administrative and financial arrangements of the project; on the other hand, the said staff would be able to follow the development of the area and quickly identify new opportunities and possibilities. This would particularly benefit members of the University of Primorska where research work is less well developed.

... Individual members have the opportunity to carry out individual courses in a foreign language, but in this case the higher education staff that carry out lectures in a foreign language need to be provided with adequate training."

We can see that the strategy identifies the need for suitably qualified professionals. Compared to a survey by Taylor (2004) we may discover that the University of Primorska does not highlight measures for finding human resources via international calls for applications or staff who have extensive work experience abroad. This might be a comparative weakness in terms of a proper understanding of the international arena, which among others requires an in-depth knowledge of international marketing, financial management and system verification and quality assurance. Another problem also identified by Taylor (2004) is providing a sufficient number of personnel to enable the mechanism of international exchange (e.g. a sabbatical year for higher education teachers) to even be applicable. Otherwise, due to purely practical implementation problems, the institutions may choose not to take advantage of these opportunities.

Institutional Management

The University of Primorska's strategy in the field of international and inter-university co-operation is defined by the Medium-term Development Strategy of the University of Primorska 2009-2013, which sets two strategic objectives for the international arena:

1. To become a reference university for the geographic area of the Mediterranean and South-East Europe: thanks to its specific research and educational orientation towards the content of this area and sovereignty in setting guidelines and research co-operation.
2. To become a renowned university in the Mediterranean and the wider area: by quality, by international orientation and by linking research and educational work.

To achieve those objectives there is an acknowledged need to reorganise the management and implementation of international programmes in addition to measures in various areas of the university's activity. In this respect, the PI UP 2010-2013 states the following:

"The starting point of the reorganisation is the belief that the scope of international co-operation and European projects is strategically important for further development of the University of Primorska, and the conclusion that the existing organisational and staff arrangements do not allow the fulfilment of the strategic development role. The aim of the reorganisation is to facilitate the development of the University of Primorska and its members on the basis of resources and opportunities brought about by international activity, particularly through the acquisition and management of European projects and programmes of international mobility, while optimising the existing personnel potential.

... The fields of activity of the International Relations Office of the University of Primorska will be:

- *management of international mobility at the University of Primorska level;*

- *application for and management of European projects by the University of Primorska; and*
- *information and support to members of the University of Primorska in applications for and the management of European projects.*

The key novelty brought by the International Relations Office of the University of Primorska is the establishment of a unit capable of acquiring and managing European projects and funds for the University of Primorska and its members and able to (at least) partially self-finance their staff. The International Relations Office of the University of Primorska will thus create an opportunity for the greater efficiency and effectiveness of the University of Primorska and its members in the field of European projects.

In addition, the International Relations Office of the University of Primorska will serve as a centre for all services provided by the University of Primorska to all its employees and students in the international area (international mobility of students, researchers, teaching and technical staff, project consultancy)."

The establishment of the International Relations Office shows that one direction the university is taking is to pursue a more proactive and comprehensive approach to internationalisation. Although the PI UP 2010-2013 confirms the achievements of universities in the previous period, it also notes that these were mostly a result of individual initiatives, while many opportunities remained unexploited. Such an approach does not provide for a long-term performance and efficient financial management. The task of the International Relations Office is therefore to centralise a certain part of the university's administrative procedures and initiatives with the goal of promoting the greater involvement of individuals and units from different areas of the university in international activities, raising the importance of internationalisation in the university, and providing an effective and efficient implementation strategy. The need for a certain centralisation in order to promote the international activities of the university was also recognised in the research by Taylor (2004).

To implement the internationalisation strategy it is also important for the university to explicitly state the achievable objectives and set up

appropriate indicators for monitoring the attainment of those objectives. In this way a loopback would be created and thereby control over how successful realisation of the strategy is. The PI UP 2010-2013 defines the following priorities and indicators to monitor the success of their achievement:

Objective no.:	OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS
1	Increasing the volume of lectures and courses in the English language (international study programmes)	Number of courses conducted in the English language Coverage of scientific fields with courses in the English language The number of accredited and conducted courses in the English language
2	Designing and conducting international study programmes	The number of accredited and conducted international study programmes
3	Offering scholarships to foreign students studying at the University of Primorska, with an emphasis on students from South-East Europe	Obtained and awarded funds for scholarships to foreign students The number of awarded scholarships
4	Increasing the number of international research projects involving members of the University of Primorska	The number of awarded international research projects (FP7 etc.)
5	Confirming the achieved medium-term growth rate of international mobility achieved in the 2004/05-2008/9 period, also in the 2007/8-2012/13 period	The average annual growth rate of mobility: the common rate and of different segments of the university population (students, teachers, researchers and technical staff)
6	Establishing a structure for the quality design, operation and management of European programmes and projects at the University of Primorska and its members, which is partly self-financed (the International Relations Office of the University of Primorska)	The number of European development projects annually awarded to the International Relations Office of the University of Primorska for the University of Primorska Increasing the number of awarded European development projects (Interreg etc.) for University of Primorska members that use the services of the International Relations Office The rate of self-financing of the International Relations Office.

7	Obtaining European funding to establish organisational units of the University of Primorska and members of the University of Primorska which integrate partner institutions and experts from abroad, promote the university's international activities and are partly self-financed	The number of established international organisational units of the University of Primorska and members of the University of Primorska The rate of self-financing
8	To become established as a reference university for areas which are in natural and cultural contact	The number of registered and approved international projects in the field of natural and cultural contact
9	Providing infrastructural conditions for developing the international activities of the University of Primorska and its members	The scope of adequate facilities and equipment for the international operations of the University of Primorska and its members

Conclusion

The document PI UP 2010-2013 expresses a clear direction for the University of Primorska with regard to the further internationalisation of its activities and, from the perspective of strategic management of the university, it represents an important document for the further planning and implementation of operational measures. Accordingly to Knight's (1994) definition of six stages in the process of internationalising universities, the first four can be clearly identified in the case of the University of Primorska: the awareness, commitment, planning and operationalisation of activities. For the following two phases, namely the verification of results and enhancement of the functioning, the necessary basis has been established.

The structure and content of PI UP 2010-2013 can be compared to related documents from foreign universities which reveal a unified approach to internationalisation. While this may contribute to a faster and more efficient process of internationalisation in environments where in the past this has not been given greater importance, there is a concern that universities would not become sufficiently differentiated. Thus, universities would become more similar to each other while not achieving greater added value for students and the wider social environment.

On top of this, we should not forget the importance of carrying out the internationalisation strategy. This is the key to achieving the set goals.

We have already indicated in the introductory section that this may be a contentious issue due to the conflicting interests coming from within and outside the academic community. This problem was partially avoided in preparation of the document PI UP 2010-2013 by paying equal consideration to a top-down and a bottom-up approach. This has ensured a greater degree of participation of the wider academic community, while maintaining a degree of integration that still ensures there are no duplications of measures and activities and thereby losses of valuable material resources and time. However, at this stage the support of the highest bodies of the university (Rector, Senate, Board and Student Council) is crucial because without it would be virtually impossible to carry out the mentioned activities. At the same time, it is necessary to establish a system of control through the set of indicators and support it by using ICT. A properly implemented monitoring system at the level of the university as a whole as well as for individual members would ensure the monitoring of activities, an assessment of their effectiveness and an information basis for possible corrective measures. Together, this can provide the required efficiency and effectiveness of the university's internationalisation.

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Contributors

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Mag. Alenka Flander is Deputy Director and Head of the European Lifelong Learning Programme at the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS). Her research focuses on monitoring and measuring the effects of European programmes in the area of education and training. She is currently completing her doctoral studies, where she is focussing on competence development through international student mobility. The study mobility and international placements she herself had the possibility to participate in have also influenced her career path, shifting it from electrical engineering, where she initially graduated, to education, training and international co-operation. In 1998 she started to work at the EU programme Agency (CPI - Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training), co-ordinating the Leonardo da Vinci programme in Slovenia and since then she has been working in the field of the internationalisation of education and training as well as promoting study mobility in Slovenia. She was invited by prof. dr. Ulrich Brückner, EU Jean Monnet Professor at Stanford University to give lectures at Stanford University in California and their Overseas Studies Centre in Berlin, and was a guest speaker on Intercenter Conference of International Education of Students (IES) Vienna and Humboldt University Berlin.

Mag. Tea Golob was born in Ljubljana (1983). She graduated from University of Ljubljana, the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in 2007, with the thesis theme: "Day of Republic and National Day: A comparison of two political rites denoting two different political systems". In 2009, she finished the post-graduate programme of cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana with the thesis theme: "Slovene and Irish Returned Migrants and their Descendants ". She is a doctoral student at the School of Advanced Social Studies in Nova Gorica and also works there as a teaching assistant. Her research interest is linked to cultural, European and migration studies.

Mladen Kraljić is head of the international relations office of University of Maribor. From 2006 to 2010 he was secretary of Faculty of Arts of University of Maribor. Between 2000 and 2006, he was head of the international relations office of University of Maribor. He was in charge of the secretariat of Danube Rectors' Conference in 2000 and 2006, of Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference in 2003 and from 2006. His field of work are university's associations, international cooperation and project work. He was and is partner in several EU projects within TEMPUS, Erasmus, CEEPUS, Leonardo da Vinci programmes.

Doc. Dr. Mirna Macur received her doctorate in sociology from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FDV) of the University of Ljubljana. In terms of her scientific profile, she is a methodologist, and is also trained in the field of research evaluation, predominantly at seminars abroad and at the Tavistock Institute in London. She has cooperated as a methodologist in a series of domestic and international projects, and her pedagogical work has involved teaching statistics, the methodology of social science research and methods of quantitative analysis at several faculties (FDV, FM Koper, SASS). She has been employed at the Centre for Evaluation and Strategic Studies at FDV – Institute of Social Sciences, first as a young researcher and then as an independent researcher (1993- 2001). Since October 2007 she has been employed at SASS as Vice Dean for Education and Student Affairs.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matej Makarovič, born in 1970, is an associate professor at the School of Advanced Social Studies of Nova Gorica and at the Faculty of Information Studies of Novo mesto. He completed his graduate study at the Central European University and in 1995 received his masters degree

in the field of political sociology from the University of Lancaster. In 1999, he received his PhD from the University of Ljubljana, where he was also employed from 1995 till 2008, first as a junior research fellow and then as an assistant professor. Today, he heads the Institute of Social Risks Research at SASS, while his major research interests include political sociology, sociological theory and societal modernisation.

Prof. Dr. Marko Marhl, professor of physics at the University of Maribor. His research concerns fields of biophysics, particularly intra- and intercellular signalling, previously also the topics of computer graphics and the didactics of physics. From 2007 to 2011, he was Vice Rector for International Affairs at the University of Maribor. In 2010, he was head of the group for international relations of the DRC ("Danube Rectors' Conference") and the DRC special envoy for the EU Danube strategy. He is a Member of the Board of the UNeECC ("University Network of the European Capitals of Culture") and member of the Executive Committee of the IREG-International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence«.

Mag. Klemen Miklavič is an assistant researcher at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Ljubljana. He obtained both his university diploma, followed by a research degree in social sciences, at the University of Ljubljana. His work has been devoted to the field of higher education policy for more than a decade, dating back to student activism. After graduation, he continued to work as a consultant, expert or free lance researcher for a number of NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and research centres, such as Spark, Council of Europe, Centre for Education Policy in Belgrade etc. During 2008 – 2009 he was employed at the OSCE Mission in Kosovo as a senior adviser responsible for higher education and ethnic minority issues. He has continued since then to nurture his interests in the role of higher education in society, especially in (post) conflict settings.

Prof. Dr. Per Nyborg graduated from the University of Oslo in 1962 and was awarded his PhD in 1970. Until 1977, he taught at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, also serving as departmental head and member of the board. He has been President of the Norwegian Association of Scientists, and is now an Honorary Member. In 1977, he started an administrative career, working with the Research Council and the Ministry of Education,

for the last five years as Director General. In 1991, he was appointed Secretary General for the Norwegian Council for Higher Education. He has also served as Secretary General for the Nordic University Association. From 1991 until 2003, Nyborg was Norwegian delegate to the Council of Europe's Committee for Higher Education, serving terms as Vice-chair and Chair. He has been a CoE expert in countries in East and Southeast Europe. Nyborg has been a member of the Bologna Follow-up Group and was head of the Bologna Secretariat from Berlin to Bergen. He retired in 2005 but occasionally serves as a senior expert to international organisations.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksander Panjek graduated in history at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Trieste (1994) and received his doctorate in economic history at the University of Bari (1999). Since 2003, he has been employed at the University of Primorska, where he is a senior scientific associate at the Scientific Research Centre and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Humanities. From 2008 to September 2010, he was advisor to the rector of the University of Primorska for international cooperation and since 2010 he has been Vice Rector of the University of Primorska for International Cooperation and European Development Projects. His main fields of research cover primarily Primorska, or the border regions of Slovenia, Italy and Austria, which he treats as an interface between Central Europoe and the Mediterranean. In the context of his research work, he has spent extended periods of time in Austria, in particular at the Universities of Graz and Klagenfurt, with two «Alps-Adriatic« research scholarships, in 1995 and 1996. He has done research in the archives of Gorizia, Trieste, Udine, Koper, Venice, Pazin, Graz, Klagenfurt, Vienna, Rome, Geneva and Paris.

Prof. Dr. Danijel Rebolj, professor of construction and transportation informatics at the University of Maribor. In 2009 he was visiting professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University, coordinator of the international postgraduate program in construction informatics. His research interests involve issues on system integration, product and process modeling, automated building, mobile and ubiquitous computing, web based collaboration and communication, virtual design and construction, as well as other high potential IT for architecture, engineering and construction. Since 5.5.2011, he has been Rector of the University of Maribor.

Jelena Štrbac is a higher education advisor at the Slovenian Student Union, in which she was active for several years before her current employment. Her field of work encompasses monitoring and analysis of higher education policies, monitoring implementation of the Bologna Process and higher education quality assurance. As a member of SQAA, formerly the Expert Council for Higher Education, she has in-depth knowledge of the subject. By organizing and participating in numerous national and international events, she promotes discussion among various stakeholders in higher education. She is also a co-author of several documents in the field of higher education system reform, adopted by the Slovenian Student Union. Independently, she is engaged in research on market mechanisms in higher education.

Prof.Dr. Hans (J.A.) van Ginkel is a Dutch citizen, born in Indonesia (Acheh, 1940). He received his MSc degree in geography, with history and anthropology, in 1965, and his PhD in social sciences in 1979 from Utrecht University, the Netherlands; both (summa) cum laude. He was Dean of the Faculty Geo-sciences, 1980-85, and Rector Magnificus of Utrecht, 1986-97. From 1997-2007 he was an Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo. He has always been very active in the internationalization of higher education; for instance he was one of the authors of the Magna Charta Universitatum (Bologna 1988) and one of the initiators of the CRE-Copernicus Program and CRE's Institutional Evaluation Program and has been vice-president of the European University Association (CRE/EUA, 1994-98), president of the International Association of Universities (IAU, 2000-04) and the West European member of the Organizational Committee of Unesco's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, Paris 1998). He is a member of Academia Europea, as well as a fellow of TWAS (Academy of Sciences for the Developing Countries). He has received 5 honorary doctorates (Cluj, Romania; Sacramento, California; Accra, Ghana; Zvolen, Slovakia and McMasters, Canada). He is also a Knight in the Order of the Netherlands' Lion (1994) and was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Grand Cordon (Japan, 2007).

Index

Useful links:

CMEPIUS http://www.cmepius.si/

ENIC-NARIC http://enic-naric.net/

Euraxess http://www.euraxess.si/en/

European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc62_en.htm

European Union http://europa.eu/index_en.htm

Eurydice http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology http://www.mvzt.gov.si/en/

Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011–2020 http://www.mvzt.gov.si/fileadmin/mvzt.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/odnosi_z_javnostmi/12.4.11_NPVS_ANG_nova_verzija.pdf

Resolution on the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020 http://www.mvzt.gov.si/fileadmin/mvzt.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/odnosi_z_javnostmi/12.4.11_RISS_ANG_nova_verzija.pdf

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency For Higher Education http://www.nakvis.si/indexang.html

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index_en.php

The official Bologna Process website 2010-2012 http://www.ehea.info/

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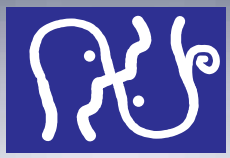

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