

INTEGRATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WITH THE EDUCATION IN THE ALBANIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

In the framework of the trends of development of Higher Education in Europe and all over the world, especially with the Bologna Process, The National Strategy of Higher Education, N S H E 2008 – 2013, has put forward the main problems of the system of higher education so that Albania may have its own place in the European Higher Education Area.

One of the main problems has been the reformation of higher education, the improvement of the teaching system and scientific research which until now have been completely separated from each other, the scientific research was carried out in the research institutes outside of the higher education, which were mainly subject to the Science Academy. The reforms undertaken in the area of higher education and of the base research aim at the integration of these two systems in the system of higher education having as the primary goal the increase of quality in universities especially in the second and third cycle of study.

Through this article we want to present an innovation in the system of public higher education, the integration of the scientific research with the process of teaching in the higher education, to expose the priorities, the performance, the weaknesses which are observed, the reasons and the future perspectives.

UDC & KEYWORDS

■ UDC: 378 ■ RESEARCH ■ SCIENCE ■ UNIVERSITY ■ QUALITY

INTRODUCTION

In the beginnings of this century, in the countries with qualitative educational system, the debates and the challenges for the future of the universities and scientific research, are focusing on their impact in the four "great forces for change" of the modern world: stimulation of the new technologies, facing and benefiting from the effects of globalism, formation of the "social capital" and improvement of the "well governing" [1].

The completion of the structural reform in 2008, by integrating the institutes of research of the Academy of Sciences in the Universities, brings the system of research in a line with the majority of the European countries, where the higher education is integrated with the scientific research, which is a basic principle of the modern systems of science. The realization of the process of reorganization of the system of scientific research has created only a modern institutional cadre, who creates premises for a fast development of the scientific research and transfer of the technologies and knowledge. The institutions of the higher education and the new centers of research and transfer of the technologies and knowledge have began to frame the strategies of the scientific research and innovation, in the framework of the long term plan of the development of the institution.

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Scientific research and its development in the university

The university represents a compound and integrated structure, which realizes the higher education, development of knowledge, science and professions and transmits knowledge in scientific and professional fields and disciplines.

The university ensures the education based on contemporary scientific and technological research and knowledge; it ensures the continuous education, qualifications and specializations; prepares new specialists and scientists.

The scientific research consists of a right of the academic personnel which is practiced in the conditions of academic freedom, which guarantees the independence of teaching and scientific research. The university offers appropriate conditions and supports with all the ways the production of the new knowledge, basic and based, but concentrating the attention in the quality and the originality of the research work.

All the research-scientific activities which are being held in the Universities are characterized by the full transparency and their results, in written or electronic form, are at the disposal of all the employees of the University and the social community and are being placed in the Library of the university. The research – scientific activities of the university are in function of:

- The continuous development and increase of quality of the process of education.
- The presentation of the scientific research to the students and their equipment with methodological capabilities for research.
- The continuance of the scientific – professional development of the juniors.
- Founding of the international network of researchers.
- Preparation and presentation of the study interdisciplinary competing projects.
- Improvement of the qualification of the academic personnel.
- The creation of the material tools in the benefit of the work in the university.

The scientific researches in the universities are made by the educational – research groups and they can be: Basic scientific research without immediate practical use and Applied scientific research which is closely tied with the needs and public interests. Similar structures to the department have the centers of research and development, the research fields of which are harmonized with interests of the faculty departments.

The duty of the University academic personnel is to perform scientific research and creative and research work in accordance with their professional abilities and their obligation that emerge from the strategic directives of the

Academic Senate as well as the Councils of the Faculties and respective departments. The authentic scientific research, in reverse of what mentioned above, will be performed by a limited part of the academic personnel; it does not mean that all the personnel should be involved in this kind of research. The authentic scientific research will be undertaken by the part of the academic personnel which has been successful in competition for the acquirement of finances for the research projects, or from that part which works in a field determined by Institution of Higher Education for the development of capacities for authentic scientific research. In this case, covers the expenses with its interior funds. For the remaining part of the academic personnel, the whole of the work time should be put at the disposal of teaching, services that Institution of Higher Education AL offers, administrative duties and applied scientific research.

The programs of studies

The programs of studies of the third cycle and, in a small rate, the study programs of the second cycle, are considered as research work and are also submitted to planning [6].

The studies of the second cycle:

The programs of studies "Master of sciences" or "Master of Beautiful Arts": The programs of studies of the second cycle equip the graduates who master the university diploma "Bachelor" with profound knowledge, theoretical and practical, as well as training for scientific research in a field, within a specialty. The integrated programs of studies of the second cycle: The institutions of the higher education in the fields of medicine, stomatology, pharmacy, veterinary and architecture offer integrated programs of studies of the first and second cycle altogether. The programs of studies "Master professional": The programs of studies "Master professional" offer the graduates with a university diploma at least a "Bachelor", the education and authentic professional training.

The studies of the third cycle:

The programs of studies for doctorate: The programs of studies for doctorate are programs of studies of the third cycle, of a fully academic character, which have as their basis the scientific research and creative activity. In the studies for the doctorate are accepted candidates who have won a university degree "Master of Sciences" or "Master of beautiful Arts". These programs of studies last at least 3 academic years and involve 60 credits for organized theoretical studies. The institutions of the higher education, on the basis of the results achieved in the organized theoretical studies, establish criteria of classification for the candidates who have the right to develop the research project and prepare the thesis of PHD. In the end of the programs of studies of the doctorate diploma for the scientific grade "Doctor" is delivered.

The academic personnel

The academic personnel in the institutions of the higher education, according to the role and the activity it performs, is categorized in: [8]

"Professors" are the members of the academic personnel, officials of the subjects or modules and leaders of the activity of scientific research. Members of the academic personnel of this category have the scientific grade "Doctor" and academic titles: "Associated Professor", "Professor", "Professor emeritus", "Associated Academic", and "Academic". The officials of the subjects/ modules which are being held in the second and the third cycle of the university studies should have acquired the scientific grade "Doctor".

"Docents" are the members of the academic personnel, who hold mainly educational activities. Members of the academic personnel of this category have the academic title "Docent" or the scientific grade "Doctor".

"Lecturers" are the members of the academic personnel who hold educational – scientific activity. The lecturers should have at least the degree "Master of sciences" or "Master of Beautiful Arts" or equivalent.

The title "Associated Professor", "Professor emeritus" and "Docent" are given by the institutions of the higher education. The title "Professor" is given by the Council of the Evaluation of the Academic Titles.

Innovation in institution of higher education

Regarding the institutional cadre of the Higher Education the following classified deficiencies, are observed: [6]

First, the Higher Education system has not yet answered adequately to the needs of the future of the society and the economy of the country. Many aspects and in particular the level of teaching and research in the institutions of the higher education has not responded to dynamics of the changes in Albanian society and European dispositions. Teaching and scientific research have been separated from each other. With the reform of the system of the scientific research, undertaken in the beginning of the year 2006, the research institutions of the Academy of Sciences and the research network out of the university are being integrated in the universities of Tirana. The integration of the scientific research with the higher education is expected to influence positively in the increase of the quality of university education in all the cycles, mainly in the second and third one of the university studies.

The lack of capability to respond to the needs and challenges is not entirely the responsibility, because they have not enjoyed the necessary autonomy to function effectively as institutions of the 21st century. The Ministry of Science and Education has still the limited analytic capacity to develop the strategic policies for the higher education and the scientific research.

The integration of the research ex-institutions of the Academy of Sciences in the university sector and the development of a research strategy in every institution will undoubtedly demand time.

Presently, "the policy of research" is administered by the Directory of Scientific Research at Ministry of Education and Science. The financing of the research development is performed through the institutional fund by the government. The Fund for the Science as a special voice in the head of the budget, part higher education and science, the financing of the program in the framework of the bilateral programs and through international collaboration. The later, a practice used presently, is widely financed by the donors, and it is not very much spread and can be still considered as a pilotage criteria, this policy is not still generalized.

Ministry of Education and Science has not developed capacities in order to fulfill the role for an economy oriented towards knowledge. Until the year 2015 the government will try to ensure that, in a number of chosen fields, in order that the Albanian scientists to be evaluated for the undertaking of the research of an international quality. The achievement of this vision requests:

- Improvements in the basic infrastructure of research, sufficient to support the university shaping in its three levels: bachelor, master and doctorate.

- Creation of scientific excellence in the most important research fields for the country.
- Shaping and keeping / attraction of the qualified people in the Albanian research system.
- A better public understanding of science and a better realization over the role of innovation and new technologies for the society.

This can happen only through greater and well-oriented financing, through the modern and proper management of the policies, as well as the gradual integration of the research system in the European Research Area.

- The system of science involves the institutions of higher education and the institutions development of knowledge and technologies. As such, it does not involve only the fundamental non-public and public institutions of the higher education and scientific research, but also the undertakings which act in the field of research, development and innovation.
- In Albania, from the year 2011, operating 30 public higher education institutions (HEI) with a total number of 570 programs of study.

13 - Public HEIs, 5 - HEI in Tirana, 6 regional HEIs, 1 - Military Academy, 1 Academy albanological, 5 - district faculties [2].

- Institutions of the higher education, based on the article "National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation.", are educational-research institutions that, have as their mission the higher education, the scientific research, the development and the transfer of knowledge and technology. Institutions of the higher education are: the universities, the academies, professional colleges, higher schools and inter-university centers. The width and level of the scientific research in the different universities will be different. Presently Albania has 11 public institutions of higher education and 28 private institutions of higher education [7]. The Universities: University of Tirana-Tirana, polytechnic University-Tirana, Agricultrual University, "Aleksandër Xhuvani" University – Elbasan, "Luigj Gurakuqi" University – Shkodër, "Eqerem Çabej" University - Gjirokaštër, "Fan S. Noli" University – Korçë, "Ismail Qemali" University – Vlorë "Aleksandër Moisiu" University – Durrës, University of Arts – Tirana, Tirana Sports University.
- National Research Centers are research, educational institutions which have as their mission the scientific research, deep university education in the second and third cycle of studies, development and transfer of knowledge and technology. Up to the present has been created the Center of Albanian Studies on the basis of the reorganization of the Albanian institutions of the Academy of Science.
- Public Centers/Agencies for the development and transfer of technology have as their mission the performance of studies and projects for development as well as the transfer of knowledge in the practice of production of products and offering of services. Under the dependence of the Ministries of the line exist the following centers/agencies:
- Centers/agencies/institutes and other private undertakings which act in research, development and transfer of technologies and knowledge. This link of the system is still in its first steps of development in Albania.

Performance of the scientific research

The European research area program

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Albania and European Commission on the association of our country in the seventh program Cadre for Research and Technologic Development, has paved the way to the financing of the scientific research projects. Since from January 2008, Albania has been participating in the European Research Area having the same rights and obligations as other member countries of the European Union [3]. The research and scientific work in Albania are coordinated with European research organisms by removing the last barriers which separated the community of the Albanian researchers and scholars from their European colleagues. Those which benefit directly from the European Program are the Albanian universities, scientific research centers, private companies, public institutions, different central agencies, as well as different individuals. In September of the year 2008 [5], the Council of Ministers approved the status of the associated country, in the Community Program "Seventh Program Cadre for Research and Technologic Development", for the period of time 2008-2013.

The membership of our country in the European Research Area Program is realized by financing from the budget nearly \$ 200 thousand, which are 1/4 of the Albania's contribution, whereas the other part will be gathered from the funds of the European Union. It is also necessary to be invested with priority for the increasing of the level of the qualification of the scientific researchers and their number to be raised. The Excellence Fund, which began to be observed before a few years by Ministry of Education and Science, in order to support the young to make their studies of doctorate in Western universities, should be raised, in order to precipitate the improvement of the level of qualification of the academic personnel which is involved in the science system. Meanwhile, the institutions should themselves alter deeply the policy of recruiting of the young, by raising the demands for the academic merits, as well as to intensify the support to enable the qualification of the young researchers in the framework of the bi- and multilateral international programs. The program "Brain Gain", which is undertaken by the government in cooperation with UNDP, has supported and should support in continuance the public and private institutions of the science system, not only the universities and public administration, to recruit educated young in the foreign universities or to benefit by the contribution of the Albanian scientists who work at the foreign academic centers.

Erasmus Mundus program

From the year 2009 common programs are being held between Institution of Higher Education in the European Union and other countries of the world [4]. There are 131 Master programs and 34 Doctorates supported financially by the European Union, which offer scholarships for the students and the researchers. Up to the present no consortium partner from Albania is involved among the selected.

Individual student and academic programs. From the 2004, 109 Albanian students are being selected through a special fund for the Western Balkans and three researchers from Albania are being selected to study or to make research. From the year 2008-2011 only 4 public Institutions for Higher Education in Albania have managed to build the consortium with counterpart institutions in the framework of the Erasmus Mundus Program: Tirana University with the University of Ghent (Belgium), of Graz (Austria), City University London

(Great Britain), University of Rotterdam (Netherlands), The university Luigj Gurakuqi, Shkoder: with the university of Ghent (Belgium), Graz (Austria), University Fan Noli, Korce with the University of Ghent, Alexander Xhuvani University, Elbasan with the Mälardalen University (Sweden), These consortiums have enabled the studies for Bachelor (77 people), Master (61), Doctorate (18), post doctorate (9) and staff movements 61 people.

The Jean Monnet program

Aiming at increasing the knowledge related with the European integration by stimulating the teaching, research, and the debate on the history, politics, economy and the right [4]. In the year 2011 were received 5 applications from Albania. 3 of them did not fulfill the criteria and none of them was selected.

People program, Marie Curie

The support of human resources through special initiatives of the international and inter-departmental exchange. In particular aims at the training and support of the researchers in the development of the career. The participants are selected on the basis of their academic excellence. None of the Albanian universities participates in Marie Curien, whereas are financed 8 researchers by the program as individuals [4].

Tempus

Tempus is a European Union program which supports the modernizing of the Higher Education in the area surrounding the European Union -Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Western Balkans, Mediterranean region [4]. In the Western Balkans this program contributes in the preparing of the countries to participate in learning during the whole life - Lifelong learning Program. Albania from the year 2008-20011 has 20 successful participations in the program Tempus. Institution of Higher Education has applied in 5 other different international projects, for which are expected the answers of the evaluation commissions (TEMPUS EU, Jean Monet EU, SCOPES Switzerland, RRPP- Switzerland, Erasmus Mundus EU).

Another important direction has also been the research in the framework of the preparing of the micro – dissertations by the students. The center for the Research-Development and Innovations gives an obvious contribution in the development of the post university academic programs, especially in the preparing of seminars, scientific references and the research for the preparing of the micro – dissertations in accordance with the fields of study and the newest international standards.

The scientific research at the University of Gjirokastra

Cycles of study [8]

The University of Gjirokastra consists of two Faculties: Faculty of Education and Social Sciences and Faculty of Natural Sciences.

Regarding the second cycle of studies, based on the Bologna card is divided into Master Professional and Master Scientific. The last one belongs to the cycle of post university studies of a scientific research character. Presently in the University of Gjirokastra we mention three programs of study "Master of sciences", which with the order of the Minister of Education and Science begin their mission in the academic year 2010-2011: "Master of sciences" in "Linguistics", "Master of sciences" in "Literature", "Master of sciences" in "Archeology and administration of the archaeological resources".

Participation in international organizations [10]

In the University of Gjirokastra, in support of its mission for the development of knowledge, of scientific research, integration and globalization of values are created two new structures: The Board "For the Information System and organizing of information" and The Board "For foreign relations".

The Balkan Association for Pedagogy and Education, Thessaloniki, Greece in cooperation with the National Institute of Education – Sofia, Bulgaria: Membership in the Directing Board of the Association as well as participation in other international conferences.

The University of Gjirokastra is a participant in the "Balkan Universities Network"; a Protocol which was signed in Thessaloniki, in February 10, 2006 which aims at the harmonization of the curricula, exchange of students and pedagogic staff as well as the promoting of culture and dialogue between member countries.

The priority of the University of Gjirokastra is the involvement in the European Research Area Program FP7 and TEMPUS IV as a further step towards embracing the European standards. The University of Gjirokastra is a member of "Community of Mediterranean Universities". This broad network of Universities aims at establishing and developing the role and function of culture and scientific and technological research as the appropriate instrument for stimulating the progress in the Mediterranean countries. It also aims at promoting the scientific cooperation among the Universities of the Mediterranean region by fully respecting their origin as the only way for the exchange of the experiences, methodologies and the results of the research projects.

The University of Gjirokastra is also at the verge of signing the agreement with International Association of Universities, one of the greatest international organisms, which will help our university to be included with full rights in the international programs of the higher education.

Inter-university collaboration [9]

The University of Gjirokastra is always active in its foreign policy, by cooperating closely with all the Albanian universities, but also with other foreign universities by signing bilateral agreements of cooperation with them, but also cooperation in the framework of different projects won by rUniversity in cooperation with foreign partners. The University of Gjirokastra has good contacts of cooperation with the University of Patras (Greece), Aristotle University (Thessaloniki, Greece), University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece), The Technological Center for Research (Kozani, Greece), University of Basilicata (Potenza, Italy), University of Calabria, Department of Albanology (Italia).

April 11, 2006 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the University of Poznan, Poland. The parties promote the movement of the non graduated and graduated students by encouraging them to participate in academic summer courses, and in other programs.

December 11, 2006 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the Macerata University, Italy aiming at strengthening and broadening of mutual exchanges and cooperation in the research projects in their respective fields. A year later, in March 1, 2007, also between the Macerata University and the University of Gjirokastra, was signed the Agreement for the project: Didactic system for the graduation of the Master level in "Archeology and

Administration of Archeological resources". In the framework of this project – cooperation the Macerata University will establish a scholarship for study, for an Albanian student, finalized by a research entitled: "Bibliographic and Archiving repertoire implemented in the arch of GIS for the archeological map of the Drino Valley". The University of Gjirokastra will raise a well equipped archeological laboratory, beginning with the installment of a software point for the beginning of the same research with the same title.

June 12, 2007 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the University of Oradea, Romania. This Agreement aims at strengthening of the direct contacts and research cooperation among the members of the respective faculties. This Agreement aims also at the cooperation for administrative issues, co-organization of lectures, seminars, conferences etc.

October 18, 2007 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the University of Cyprus. This agreement aims at: Common research activities. Exchange of academic materials, academic publications and information. Exchange of members of faculties for research, lectures, and discussions.

Our University is also at the verge of signing of the Protocols of Cooperation with the University of Eastern Michigan (U.S.A) and The University of Montenegro.

In July 4 2008 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the Tetovo State University of Macedonia.

In July 27 2008 was signed the Agreement of Cooperation with the University of Montenegro. This agreement aims at: the exchange of visits of the members of the didactic and research staff, which intend the promotion of the seminars, courses, conferences, preparing of research projects in the framework of different programs and exchange of experiences in the fields of common interest. To be put to function common study courses, graduation courses, teaching courses, master, doctorates of the first and second level with the chance of the release of common titles.

The University is also at the verge of signing the Protocols of Cooperation with the University of Eastern Michigan, U.S.A and TEI of Epirus, Greece.

Conclusion

The integration of the research with teaching in IAL constitutes an innovation for the development of science in favor of teaching and demands of the market. This provides academic freedom to the universities to develop the scientific research and the creation on the basis of the demands of the university itself or the institutions with which it collaborates.

This innovation is a part of the agreement of Albania to enter into the European Area of Research. This provides the opportunity to become a part of the European Research projects, to share the transfer of knowledge and the opportunities created by the new markets. The cooperation in research brings in itself benefits, but is also an important experience and an instrument for the economic development in the field of the entrance in Europe.

The width and level of the scientific research in the different universities are and should be different. In this point of view, with the exception of the University of Tirana, for example, the regional public universities generally have a more limited research activity, which does not mean that for specific fields or sub – fields, where they have a tradition and acknowledged competence, to not shine and to not be quoted at the indicator of the scientific reputation.

Using the economic terminology, we can say that we have a "scientific offer" very much segmented and not periodic, which is an offer that reflects more the formal obligations or individual passions to produce "scientific work" than an organized offer and with clear objectives. But, also the "demand" for products of scientific research has not managed to be synthesized, to be evident and orient the offer.

In essence this means the nonexistence of an authentic "scientific market" and the affected is the efficiency and value of the scientific work, which in proportion with the dynamics and demands of the economic – social development of the country remains totally marginalized.

And the mediate institutions or the mechanisms of transmission, those which relate the request with the offer are almost non existent. If a sector of the economy or a branch of business has emergent needs for specific categories of specialists or scientific research, is difficult to contract specialized structures in search of the development to ensure the requested product. In the end of a scientific conference and the publishing of its works, in the end of a scientific research of a department or a faculty, in the end of a scientific experiment etc., many of the results remain unimplemented without any real impact.

The institutions or businesses which need qualified scientific assistance more often find the solution through the contact and cooperation with not governmental organization or different institutions of the civil society, than directly with the universities. Few are the cases when a department or a faculty has offered a scientific product demanded by the third party and contracted by them. And this is not because of the absence of the qualified professors, because the majority of the successful not governmental organization consist of these professors, but because of the conception, ways of financing or absent institutional organization of universities for this component.

This innovative process should be based on deep knowledge and qualitative education and above all on the ability of their spreading and acquiring in broad scale for many groups and social categories by so making "the economy and administration of knowledge and information" an essential factor of economic and social development for every country.

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