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## **THE NECESSITY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES**

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Economic stability and development strongly depend upon many factors, higher education in particular. Says Alfred Nobel, “To spread knowledge is to spread well-being”. When education fails, everything else follows. Those who doubt it should take a closer look at Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Pakistan and other developing countries of the third world. There is a reason they are called “developing”, because they are not developed. (In Pakistan, for example, less than 10% of women can read and write) Any development in business and economy starts with education, and that is when colleges and universities come in. The latter have a tremendous impact on society as a whole – they set the benchmark of creative, critical, strategic and logical thinking without which no thriving economy or business become possible. However, it is arrogant of the authorities of any country to think, that a certain university can be fully developing on its own and remain competitive on the global scale. Sooner or later the university would become complacent, the standards of education would drop, and it would not have a level playing field compared to the universities of the leading nations. Therefore, at least some degree of cooperation between different colleges and universities is, by all means, necessary.

The Bologna Process is a good example of this. It represents an agreement between European countries to foster cooperation of universities with the aim of keeping up the competitiveness in the sphere of higher education. And it goes without saying, that a country such as Belarus (since it became a member) should fully exploit all the opportunities presented.

The basis for cooperation normally assumes reciprocal and beneficial projects, arrangements and agreements. Other aspects of cooperation include: research and development, introduction of new courses and seminars, student

and teacher exchange programs, the sharing of new knowledge and methods of teaching, setting up of international conferences on a wide range of topics (no matter how controversial they might appear), the sharing of cultural and historical heritage, mastering language skills, English especially (no one would argue that English is the most important language in the world business, economics, politics, science and communication).

Apart from the abovementioned, English has a major role in education (since we are talking about global education which is carried out mostly in English). The importance of other languages is not being demoted here, but the thing is, if you rely only on your native language (which does not happen to be English), you are limiting your choices, career opportunities, research possibilities and professional field to only those countries who speak your language. English is, on the other hand, the official first or second language in 82 countries. That number speaks for itself. Also think of the vast volumes of information, practically on any topic, recorded in English. Therefore, it is absolutely important for university teachers in non-English speaking countries to take English courses which are connected to their professional field. Would it not be nice for a physics teacher in Belarus or Russia to have a meaningful conversation and exchange experience and ideas with a physics teacher from the US or Great Britain? If you have quite a few teachers who can speak and understand English, you can invite a wider range of teachers and professors from English speaking countries. The learning and education on the whole would only benefit from that. So why are we not doing that?

Another important thing to discuss is political correctness. Unfortunately, some universities today decline certain speakers because of a fear that a speaker might hurt the feelings of some people. What a betrayal to the freedom of speech that is! A fundamental principle of what a university should stand for is not only free speech but also freedom of thought, ability to be challenged, ability to be engaged in an intellectual discourse, ability to defend your point of view coherently, eloquently and succinctly, ability to be exposed to views that you might find distasteful, so you can evaluate them, not to be protected from them! In the case of university cooperation and university education no topics should be banned for discussion on the university campus. Students and teachers should not be indoctrinated! They should apply the scientific method (experiment or research plus evaluation of results), logical thinking and the art of an intellectual debate. We should arrive at a conclusion by ourselves, but not to be simply given ready-made answers. That is how you get a society of problem solvers capable of critical thinking and assessment. In the opposite case (when we take everything for granted) the thinking process stops, and the need for further questioning and research

becomes unnecessary. Skepticism should always be encouraged not discouraged!

Another crucial criterion that should be taken into consideration, when we talk about cooperation of universities, is that (in the case of teachers/lecturers) it is absolutely futile and unnecessary to invite those individuals who have nothing to do with the real scientific community, lack professional skills, knowledge and competency and, simply, being utterly mediocre and biased in their beliefs, just feel like taking a trip to a foreign country, without any decent information to contribute to the university they are invited to. What a waste of time, energy and resources! People who do participate in the teacher/lecturer exchange programs should be carefully selected on the basis of their professional skills and achievements and should stand up to the high standards of university education. Thus, they will be able to speak the truth, share genuine knowledge and, hopefully, provide something meaningful for other people to ponder upon, ultimately changing their lives for the better. Cooperation between universities is one way to attain that result.

Francisco Goya knew very well what he was doing, when he named one of his famous etchings “The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters”.

## **ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПУТИ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА ПРОФОРИЕНТАЦИОННОЙ РАБОТЫ В УЧРЕЖДЕНИЯХ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО ПРОФИЛЯ**

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В последнее десятилетие происходят серьезные изменения в практике взаимодействия между учреждением высшего образования и работодателями. Компании все активнее участвуют в образовательном процессе, в том числе при организации учебных и производственных практик, составлении учебных планов по специальностям и др. Особую значимость взаимодействие учреждений высшего образования и бизнеса приобретает в контексте профориентационной работы со студентами, обучающимися на специальностях экономического профиля.

В советский период трудоустройство выпускников осуществлялось директивно через процедуру распределения. Выпускник получал место для трудоустройства и обязан был отработать в течение определенного