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COOPERATION OF FRANCE AND GERMANY WITHIN THE ERASMUS PROGRAM

СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО ФРАНЦИИ И ГЕРМАНИИ В РАМКАХ ПРОГРАММЫ ЭРАЗМУС

Summary of the article: The development of French-German educational cooperation in the framework of the European student and teacher exchange program Erasmus - partnership KA 103- is considered. The evolution of European cooperation in higher education in the post-war period is analyzed, its six main stages are identified. The origins of the creation of the Erasmus program in the 1980th and the difficulties faced by the country in its creation are determined. Particular attention is paid to the role of France in the program approval process. The content of the Erasmus program and its three main lines of action are determined. The development of the program is traced through its transformation into the parts of SOCRATES, SOCRATES II programs, Lifelong Learning Programme; Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus + programs; their main features are revealed. The emphasis is on modifying the program in the direction of its expansion and a significant increase in the number of participants. With the help of statistical sources, the participation of France and Germany in the program at its different stages of development was analyzed. The impact of European educational cooperation on bilateral cooperation between France and Germany is evaluated. The change in the attitude of the two countries to the Erasmus program, which evolved from skepticism to its full support, is revealed. It was concluded that France and Germany were the most active participants in the Erasmus program since its inception, and that European educational cooperation contributed to strengthening bilateral partnership between France and Germany and stimulated the exchange of students and teachers between the universities of the two countries.

Keywords: Franco-German cooperation, European integration, higher education, educational policy, academic mobility, exchange programs, Erasmus program.

Belarus had an opportunity to take part in the Erasmus program since 2015 (within partnership KA 107 Eastern Partnership countries). As a result, more than 1000 Belarusian students and teachers could pass training in EU countries; also 420 European representatives visited Belarus since 2015 – 2017 [3].
Erasmus is the students and teachers exchange program between EU universities also Iceland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Norway, Turkey. Today more than 4 thousand educational institutions from 33 countries participate there. The program received the name from the name of the Dutch philosopher and humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam who lived and worked in various countries for the purpose of his outlook broadening. Additionally, Erasmus is an acronym, which can be decoded as European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students.

Erasmus program was created for the purpose of education quality improvement by means of experience exchange and development of cultural relations between its participants [7, p. 7]. Today Erasmus gives opportunity to study, teach or pass a training in another country for the period from 3 months until 1 year (total no more than 2 years). There will be more than 4 million students by 2020, who won this program, and in general, including unacademic participants, this figure will make 9 million people [1].

France and Germany – the two main founding countries of the European Community, were at the origin of the Erasmus program and in general of all educational cooperation in Europe. The European countries went a long way before there effective educational program appeared. It should be noted that need for integration for the sphere of the higher education began to be realized by the European states along with creation of the all-European economic and political institutes during the post-war period.

There are the following stages of the development of European cooperation in the field of higher education:
- 1948-1968 – the pre-history of cooperation, which originates from the first major European Congress in The Hague;
- 1969-1984 – the founding years marked by the first joint educational program;
- 1985-1992 – the launch period of the main educational programs, including the Erasmus program;
- 1993-1999 – the launch of the second generation of programs (SOCRATES) and the formation of a knowledge-based society;
- 2000-2013 – the launch of the third and fourth generation programs (SOCRATES II, Lifelong learning program);
- 2014-present – the current stage, the launch of the Erasmus + program.

Thus, France and Germany began the cooperation in the sphere of the higher education within European frameworks during the post-war period. During this period educational subjects were entrusted to intergovernmental body, to the Council of Europe created in 1949. The spur for development of educational cooperation was given by signing of the Roman contract in 1957, which 128th article concerned professional education [13, p. 45]. However, it should be noted, that the Roman contract did not provide the general competence in the field of education and vocational training.
The second stage of the European cooperation played an important role in the educational sphere. Ministers of Education of nine countries of the European community, including France and Germany, agreed about the principle of cooperation in the field of education since 1971. Then two working groups for consideration of future cooperation in this sphere were created. Education Committee responsible for development of concrete actions was created thanks to groups working in 1976. The same year the EEC Council of ministers of education adopted the joint resolution, which defined priorities and stages of future cooperation. This program included also the motion of the European Commission about creation the transnational networks between the higher institutions of educations “Joint Study Program scheme”, including financed by the European community academic mobility[11]. This program, during the period from 1976 to 1986, included more than 500 higher institutions of education. The Erasmus program appeared further based on Joint Study Program.

France and Germany as EEC impulsive force, strived for achievement of the best comprehension of education systems in Europe and for strengthening of the multiple relations. However, lack of reliable financial and legal base that was necessary for implementation of the effective educational policy at the all-European level, limited activity in this area.

On June 20, 1983, EEC Council of ministers of education defined the new principles of cooperation between institutions of higher education in Europe proceeding from the new form of partnership between the accepting and sending universities. The academic mobility was based on recognition of the studying periods, diplomas, financial support, and simplification of some administrative procedures.

Nevertheless, these progressive actions faced resistance of the leaders of some countries, first, France and Germany. The most controversial subjects concerned the budget and the legislative base of future cooperation. In addition, it should be noted that initially France and Germany have not shown a great interest in the opening of the program, since they already had a number of their own programs, including bilateral French-German ones.

However, J. Delor’s election, the former French finance minister, the European Commission’s header in 1985, marked a new political phase of cooperation development in the higher education. J. Delor supported expansion of the academic mobility, which had to cover 10% of the whole quantity of pupils. Moreover in the mid-1980s, the European Community gained real competence in higher education. This was legally reflected in the Single Act. 1986 (Art. 126) [12].

EEC Council of ministers of education under the name Erasmus finally approved the program after 18 months of difficult negotiations and triple deviation on June 15, 1987. It should be noted a special role in adoption of the program AEGEE (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l’Europe), created in 1985 and united students from all over Europe. Since 1986 AEGEE began to
carry out actively political lobbying of the Erasmus program at the highest level, including the first persons of the states, for example, F. Mitterrand. Branching the president of France to number of supporters of future program played an important role in change the attitude of some other countries towards it.

Thus, the new program Erasmus included three actions’ directions: interuniversity cooperation, financial aid at mobility and the actions directed to recognition of diplomas and the studying periods. Also the system of the academic credits ECTS was introduced.

As a result, despite small at that time grants, the program became successful very quickly. So, 3244 students from 11 countries of the European community could participate there during 1987-1988 academic year [4, p. 58].

With the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the sphere of education becomes an integral part of the common European policy (Art. 130). In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the EU encourages cooperation and coordination in the field of education between member states, whose actions it may supplement if necessary (Art 165, TFEU) [14].

Regarding France and Germany, at the time of the EU (1992/1993) in general there were about 2,130 programs Erasmus and Lingua, of which the French and German partner institutions participated in 700 (which corresponded to approximately 1,500 students per side) [8, p. 116].

Implementation of the program at the beginning of the 1990th gave considerable results, which were expressed, first, at increase in interest of students and teachers by the new program. As a result, Erasmus was prolonged for the period from 1990 - 1994. At the same time its budget increased more than twice [10, p. 118.]

Since 1994 France and Germany continued cooperation within the new created SOCRATES program, which was part of the Erasmus program. This program concerned only EU countries and was designed to answer globalization’s subjects and expansion of the EU. Socrates worked till 1999. At this stage the new instrument, the institutional contract for simplification of management was introduced.

The SOCRATES 2 program was started in 2000 which worked till 2006. Erasmus became one of its components again. The SOCRATES 2 program simplified management even more. The university charter Erasmus was introduced instead of the institutional contract. After the end of Socrates 2 program’s, the new Lifelong Learning Programme program started, which worked during 2007-2013.

Proceeding from the position that many foreign students on the cusp of the new millennium chose USA as the place of study, EU decided to start parallel Erasmus program intended not only for the European countries, Erasmus World, which was renamed further to Erasmus Mundus. The program began in 2003. It was intended for improvement of idea of EU higher education system. Germany, France, also Italy and Great Britain were the most active participants.
of the program from the European party [10, p. 246-247]. Erasmus Mundus was integrated into Lifelong Learning Programme in 2009.

The program Erasmus+, which included all previous educational programs of the EU (Lifelong Learning, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig, Youth in Action and four international cooperation programs: Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, EduLink, as well as cooperation programs with developed countries) was started since January, 2014. Our country as it was already noted above also had an opportunity to take part there since 2015. It is the current program now, which is intended for the period up to 2020. If in the 1990th the program concerned only students, so today it concerns rather various public. Erasmus + brings together all European mobility and collaboration activities in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sport. In structure Erasmus consists of 5 parts: mobility for the studying natural persons, cooperation for innovations and exchange of the best experience, support of system reforms, Jean Monet and Sport. Only citizens and organizations from countries referred to in Erasmus + terminology as “Program countries” can participate in a number of tools. (EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Norway, Turkey). Other tools involve the participation of representatives of partner countries (all other countries). The rules for participation in Erasmus + are different for different partner countries. Belarus is subject to the rules established for the region «Eastern Partnership countries».

France and Germany take the most active part there since the beginning of the program Erasmus+. So, in general Germany and France took the second and third place respectively on admission of students and teachers in 2013-2014 [7]. Germany takes the third place under this indicator after Great Britain and Spain for 2018, and France enters to top-15 [9]. By the number of the sent students, France is the leader, leading Germany, Spain and Italy [1].

Besides, bilateral French-German cooperation within Erasmus also is intensive. Germany takes the third place in popularity for the French students and teachers, conceding only to Great Britain and Spain, and France in turn is the first place in popularity for the German students [2, p. 35].

Nowadays, France and Germany are part of the KA 103 partnership «Program countries», and they are the most ardent supporters of the expansion of the Erasmus program. So in July 2017 Franco-German Council of Ministers was proposed to increase the budget Erasmus+, especially in the field of vocational training [6].

Thus, France and Germany stood at the origins of creation of the program Erasmus and they were some of its most active participants, despite the presence of Franco-German bilateral projects. The attitude of France and Germany to European programs has evolved from skepticism to its full maintenance. In the same time the European educational cooperation promoted strengthening of bilateral partnership of France and Germany and stimulated exchange of students and teachers between the universities of two countries.
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