



Investește în oamenii

Proiect cofinanțat din Fondul Social European prin Programul Operațional Sectorial Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007 – 2013

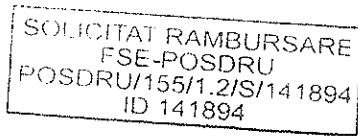
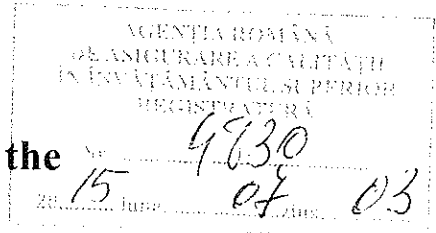
Axa prioritară 1 „Educația și formarea profesională în sprijinul creșterii economice și dezvoltării societății bazate pe cunoaștere”

Domeniul major de intervenție 1.2 „Calitate în învățământul superior”

Titlul proiectului „Dezvoltarea și consolidarea culturii calității la nivelul sistemului de învățământ superior românesc - QUALITAS”

Contract POSDRU/155/1.2/S/141894

REPORT
of the foreign evaluator for the
University of Craiova



Date:

ETS – FOREIGN EVALUATOR EXPERT

Name: Elisabeth SÁNDOR-SZALAY

Signature:

I. Statement

The University of Craiova meets all the requirements and the performance indicators related to all the standards and performance criteria at a high level.

This is my professional conclusion based on my activities performed (see below point II.) before, during and after the evaluation visit to the UC. My comments and recommendations see below points III-V.

I will in my report not repeat dates and evidences about the University of Craiova, I will only point out all those considerations I feel to be important to have a real and progressive evaluation of this university.

II. Activities performed

In my capacity as a short-term foreign expert evaluator in the project entitled: “The development and the consolidation of the quality culture at Romanian Higher Education system – QUALITAS” (POSDRU/155/1.2/S/141894) – having been asked and contracted by The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) I performed the required activities and I have prepared the present evaluation report.



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After studying the self-evaluation report of the UC from March 2015 and checking of data entered into the database of the applicant I also researched the legislation regarding higher education and quality assurance in Romania. In this regard I had only to re-fresh my knowledge about actual HE and QA requirements in Romania – as far as I am involved in some university teaching activities since 2002 at another Rumanian University. Insofar some aspects of the national context I am familiar with – yet it was necessary and unavoidable to get familiar with the actual socio-economic and cultural endowments of Oltenia, the region in which the University of Craiova is located. By doing this preliminary research work I have studied some relevant documents regarding the Romanian higher education in general and some relevant documents of other Romanian universities – with the aim to be able to get a comparable overview and to be able to position the UC in the system of the Romanian higher educational institutions.

Before having stepped forward to the second, in-depth reading of the UC-self-evaluation 2015, I was studying the previous UC-self-evaluation report 2009 as well as the general previous ARACIS-documentation and the evaluation report of the foreign expert evaluator 2009 - this gave me an insight of the dynamics in teaching, research, as well as national and international networking activities of the UC in the past four-five years.

Meanwhile the organisation of my external evaluation visit to Craiova – flight reservations and accommodation – has been successfully finished, so I could participate in the evaluation visit at the UC in the period of 14-16.05.2015.

During the visit I had the possibility to get a look to almost all university buildings: central buildings, faculty buildings (especially the facilities of the Law Faculty), libraries, some of the laboratories (especially the new research centre). Discussing with the leadership of the university, as well as with representatives of the students, graduates and employers of the region I got a more in-depth view of some relevant issues, problems which the UC has to face in recent times. A more detailed discussion and information exchange took place with the vice-rector for foreign affairs of the UC and the leadership of the Faculty of Law as well as with their staff – two subjects in which I have more expertise than other topics relevant to the university.

Gathering all necessary information during the visit from many other representatives of the UC teaching and administrative staff – as well as having had some exchanges of views with the other experts of the ARACIS-team – the main elements of my evaluation report have been set at that time and the elaboration of the report specific to the foreign evaluator started.

III. General comments

The UC re-directed his strategic aims in the past three-four years: trough the implementation of structural measures and trough Romanian and European funds made available the UC is trying to respond to the unfavourable social climate for higher education on account of the economic crisis and the migration of a considerable share of the Romanian national workforce and the lack of a cohesive job offer for graduates in general and in the Oltenia region especially.

The institutional strategy measures of the UC in all possible subjects from redesigning the study programmes at all university levels (BA, MA, PhD) through a steady development in online facilities to the advanced scientific research as a priority of the UC – some elements just implemented, some to be implemented – are most welcomed.

In accordance with the conclusions of the SWOT-analysis it can be stated, that the UC has a solid teaching and research infrastructure in fields covered by most of the faculties having a balanced human resources and human structure in almost all organisational parts of the university which allow for interdisciplinary research programmes. Due to his institutional history the UC is highly integrated to the socio-economic environment of the Oltenia region.

The UC and his leadership recognised many opportunities for the continuation and further development of university activities: as an expert in higher education I can support and invite the UC to take relevant steps in order take the opportunities to accede to European operational programmes for various concerns, to initiate or to take part in regional and cross-border development project (especially including the Danube-region), and other initiatives as listed for example in the self-evaluation report (p. 58).

It is clear, that the teaching and research quality of the UC-activity not only depends on the purpose and the efforts made by the university staff – but also on many other circumstances such as the challenging social environment shaped mostly by demographic trends, migration of the workforce, instable market, ongoing structural economic problems, as well as low financial potential resulting from the small number of students paying tuition fees, etc.

Taking all this into account – the many levels of institutional quality of the University of Craiova can be qualified in general as being of a high grade. It has to be mentioned here, that the UC-self-evaluation report 2015 in itself shows the very accurate and enthusiastic approach to the further development of the institution.

IV. Special comments

My special comments are concerning the international relations system the UC has established mostly over the past few years. Having had detailed and profound discussion with the vice-rector in charge of international relations and her young, devoted and ambitious staff during the visit in May, and having studied all relevant dates and documents, as well as agreements, I was convinced that internationalisation at UC is not only a draft plan to be fulfilled at some point in the future, but it is a present, all-days activity aiming to enhance the quality of teaching and research processes. The establishment of an international French-taught high school as an integrated structure of the UC is a novelty which has to be experienced, and as a rare initiative in the higher education system in general, has to be monitored carefully in the future.

The balance of incoming-outgoing students mobility should be improved – the re-designing of teaching and research activities could possibly lead to that – although it is also clear, that the geographical position of the UC might be an obstacle which could be compensate trough special joint teaching programmes (tandem-seminars in partnership with partner universities, for example). The incoming-outgoing teacher's mobility could be more effective and visible: there has to be some opportunities to search for.

Re-designing and diversification of international cooperation – especially the openness towards non-EU countries and the designing of new joint BA-programmes are in accordance with EU-initiatives and are historically based on French connections. It is to be welcomed, that in the internationalization process the UC wants to enhance the international visibility of the main research activities carried out at the UC mainly by providing translations.



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The commitment of the UC to the further development of internationalisation has become clear to me – and should be encouraged – although dynamics, quality, degree, effectiveness assuredly depends on national barriers as well.

V. Recommendations – conclusion

As stated in point I. – the University of Craiova meets all the requirements and the performance indicators related to all the standards and performance criteria at a high level. It should be noted however, that there is some imbalance between individual sub-institutions of the UC, which assuredly goes back to historical times meaning that in some research fields there was much more done in the past as in others fields or faculties. Nonetheless the will to upgrade structural imbalances is unquestionable and is worth to be highlighted and welcomed.

As a general conclusion I would recommend to the UC and the leadership to devote even more attention to the effective international dissemination of scientific results in all fields covered by the research activities of all faculties in order to put the UC even more visible of the map of European higher educational institutions.

May-June 2015

Prof. H.C. Elisabeth Sándor-Szalay
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