

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education

Responsabilitatea socială și universitățile din Slovenia

Armand Faganel

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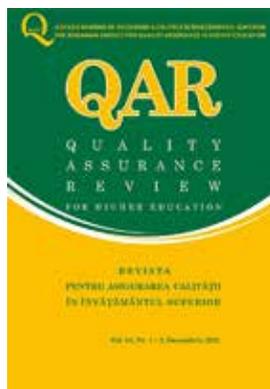
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Social Responsibility and Universities in Slovenia

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Abstract: *Modern universities are expected to act socially responsible, in the public interest, and for the benefit of all interested stakeholders, internal and external. Although understanding and definitions of social responsibility vary, a short literature overview has been offered. Through the content analysis of Slovenian universities' texts in their missions, strategies, last published self-evaluation reports, and quality manuals, the appearance of the term social responsibility has been verified. However, as there are many different definitions of social responsibility, study results do not show a homogeneous assertion of this term in documents. Consequently, it is impossible to find a unified philosophical view of a university's role in society. Nevertheless, findings show some differences in how public and private universities deal with these questions.*

Keywords: *social responsibility, quality assurance, university, Slovenia, higher education, EHEA*

Rezumat: *Este de așteptat ca, din punct de vedere social, universitățile moderne să acționeze responsabil în interesul public și în beneficiul tuturor părților interesate, interne și externe. Deși înțelegerea și definițiile responsabilității sociale variază, în cadrul articolului a fost prezentată o scurtă trecere în revista a literaturii de specialitate. Prin analiza conținutului textelor misiunii, strategiilor, rapoartelor de autoevaluare publicate recent și manualelor calității din cadrul universităților slovene, a fost evaluată apariția termenului de responsabilitate socială. Ca urmare, deoarece există numeroase definiții, diferite, ale responsabilității sociale, rezultatele studiului nu identifică, în cadrul documentelor, o structură omogenă a termenului. În consecință, este imposibil să se identifice o viziune filosofică unică a rolului unei universități în societate. Cu toate acestea, constatările prezintă unele diferențe în ceea ce privește modul în care universitățile publice și private tratează aceste situații.*

Cuvinte cheie: *responsabilitate socială, asigurarea calității, universitate, Slovenia, educație superioară, EHEA*

I. Introduction

Social responsibility is the subject of research as the complexity of relationships and behaviours that affect the lives of future generations and as a basis for social and political action, taking into account the freedom and dignity of people (Bohinc 2016, 15). Socially responsible action takes as its development basis the knowledge, education and creative work, the price of which is formed mainly on the principle of contribution to added value and less on the labour market. Social responsibility is the responsibility of everyone - individuals and groups, to act in their life and social roles so that others have the same quality living conditions and do not interfere with the rights of others by exercising their rights (ibid.). However, some critics of the concept of social responsibility believe that social responsibility is just a fad and warn about the hypocrisy of using the concept, as most organisations see it as a tool to promote and improve their goodwill in society – a phenomenon also called whitewashing (Cherry 2014, 284; Fietze, Matiaske, and Menges 2019, 143; Wexler 2013, 817).

Organisations tend to use it as part of reactive strategies in times of crisis when they suffer a loss of reputation and then incorporate it into proactive strategies to maintain their reputation, while the nature of the business often remains unchanged. Podnar and Golob (2002, 952) emphasise the need for an internal leap in action and thinking; that the initial prevailing understanding of social responsibility as a source of organisation's differentiation is thus transformed into an understanding of social responsibility as a standard of action. Razak (2021, ix) argues that social responsibility cannot be treated as a 'fashionable' term in the education field anymore, even more in the higher education setting. It is already embedded in the reality of the best universities, together with their usual mission. Community and the larger environment of universities are becoming more and more involved and engaged, expanding the traditional roles of higher education institutions. It could also be stated that universities, in particular, make an essential component of co-creating and co-learning knowledge.

II. Literature Review

The sustainable and environmentally oriented development paradigm of Western cultures is increasingly moving toward the social responsibility of an integrated society. An organisation with its elements is no exception, and its responsible conduct is becoming the rule.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is often included in the last decades' organisational discourse, and there were many attempts to identify and define what it means (Okoye 2009, 613). Different understanding of the concept can lead to some misinterpretations. However, it is also true that substantial diversity issues discussed under the CSR term do not ease the efforts to form an all-embracing definition. Gallie (1956, 167) explained that certain concepts are unavoidably contested by their nature. Moreover, like many other concepts in social sciences,

CSR is one of them. Dahlsrud (2006) analysed 37 CSR definitions and proposed five CSR dimensions through content analysis. Analysis showed "that the existing definitions are to a large degree congruent. Thus, it is concluded that the confusion is not so much about how CSR is defined as about how CSR is socially constructed in a specific context." Rahman (2011), for example, proposed 10 CSR dimensions. Furthermore, the European higher education setting context is specific and still "under construction", changing as the entire society does.

If social responsibility is planned to be embedded in the higher education system, it represents an articulation of its dedication to society (Albareda Tiana and Alférez Villarreal 2016, 719). This bond is strongly connected to reaching sustainable development within its social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. It also brings the need of changing the university curriculum. Sterling (2007) recommends choosing the road versus education for sustainability, incorporating social responsibility, to convey the university's mastery successfully and to please social needs. Social responsibility means to have the power for an effective response to the society's changes; it can be done through taking the responsibility of the institution's actions and with the promotion of solidarity, justice, promotion of sustainable development and social equity (Albareda Tiana and Alférez Villarreal 2016, 720).

Suppose we summarise different definitions of social responsibility. In that case, we can conclude that the concept of social responsibility means development taking into account tradition and all stakeholders, or as Bertoneclj et al. (2015, 119) state, it is a "sustainable operation of the company, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders and its interests, including profit-making, and consistently respecting ethical and moral principles". According to Babnik (2020), socially responsible activity in educational institutions is manifested primarily in the commitment to achieving quality education, offering quality content and at the same time in caring for the preservation of tradition and the transfer of knowledge.

Since the primary concern of the universities is not to increase capital but to offer quality services, their implementation and care for all stakeholders, we could say that the institution acts socially responsible only if it acts in the public interest and for the benefit of all stakeholders. Moreover, the way organisations operate today has a significant impact on people's lives because of the supply of products and services and increasingly because of working conditions, human rights, the environment, education, and training (European Commission, n.d.).

Annex II of the EHEA Rome ministerial communique (2020, 4) writes: "The social dimension should be central to higher education strategies at the system and institutional level, as well as at the EHEA and the EU level. Strengthening the social dimension of higher education and fostering equity and inclusion to reflect the diversity of society is the responsibility of a higher education system as a whole and should be regarded as a continuous commitment."

Within the EHEA, there is an essential distinction between "core values" such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff, and

"social values" such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Universities are responsible for both. Education must be more than a process of acquiring practical competencies, skills and knowledge - its task is to shape the personality and character of young people and help them become mature and responsible citizens. This includes conveying values openly and critically. In doing so, we must consider that we are all exposed to many influences, primarily through social media, and that everyone entering universities has already acquired specific values. Therefore, institutions should be aware of the virtual circle - they educate teachers who will one day teach students. Today's kids who will shape the world tomorrow should not teach (only) about yesterday's values but should consider that values can develop. A critical approach to resources is a fundamental competence of research. "Universities must ensure that this approach also becomes a core competence in our societies. If the responsibility towards society is to become a central part of the university mission, the action also should be taken at political level" (ACA and DAAD 2019, 1-2).

As we see it, social responsibility is not a one-time act but a lengthy process. Fras Haslinger et al. (2007) suggest that organisations follow the subsequent steps in introducing social responsibility. Step 1: Formulate organisational values and include the principles of social responsibility among the company's values. Step 2: Incorporate social responsibility into the mission, vision and long-term goals of their activities. Step 3: Develop an independent SR strategy or incorporate SR into the organisation's strategy. Social responsibility should be included according to the individual functions of the organisation and should be based on the relationship with all stakeholders. Step 4: active implementation of the organisation's strategy and thus also indirectly social responsibility and informing employees about possible changes to achieve the goals. Step 5: Monitor the implementation of the strategy and any changes or improvements. Step 6: Encourage other organisations within the field to incorporate the principles of social responsibility into their activities through experience and development and communicate socially responsible activities with the general public.

Besides different funding sources and systems for research and education, the valuation systems and competing in ranking present another critical stumbling block for promoting the university's social responsibility because societal impact does not count as much as the established standards for research performance. Teacher promotion systems at universities are also based on similar criteria (Fredman 2020, lii).

Among diverse HEI's stakeholders, students represent one of the priority groups. The aggravated situation in obtaining a job leads graduates/job seekers to critically consider what they have gained through the study period that fluctuated between formal productivity and actual knowledge. It is the moral core of the social responsibility of higher education, which pursues a balance between earnings and quality. Higher education legislation and policy are crucial in allowing diplomas to

be awarded when high quality is guaranteed. Otherwise, this quality will not exist because it is expensive and reduces earnings. However, students need to know that low-quality knowledge for a low price in the job race after 2020 will not pay off for them (Pivec 2010, 1).

Kvasničková Stanislavska et al. (2014, 98) discussed the concept of social responsibility within public HEI's in the Czech Republic and researched the attitudes and expectations of two stakeholder groups in an HEI regarding the HEI's social responsibility in the Czech Republic. As focus groups' results demonstrate, today's students and potential students do not show sufficient social responsibility's theoretical knowledge. They understand the concept primarily as sports and social events related. Some students consider the concept related to the HEI's ecological undertakings. The study displayed some dissonance regarding the potential individual students' involvement in socially responsible activities. Nevertheless, many students are ready to join in their free time in socially responsible activities if they appear meaningful to them.

III. Empirical Analysis

Slovenia has six universities, three public and three privates. Three public are the University of Ljubljana, the oldest – from 1919 and biggest – with 40,000 students, the University of Maribor and University of Primorska, the youngest – from 2003. They are regionally deployed, with Ljubljana placed centrally. Privates are the University of Nova Gorica, from 2006, the University of Novo Mesto from 2017 and New university from 2017. Content analysis has been used to assess the state of Slovenian universities' attitudes towards social responsibility and the actual situation in their official documents. Documents in consideration were searched for on public websites of universities in four categories: university's mission, university's strategy, their last published self-evaluation report (SER), and quality manual. The phrase we were looking for was 'social responsibility'.

First, we looked at the university's mission; as we learned from literature (ACA and DAAD, 2019; Razak, 2019), social responsibility should represent a central part of the university mission.

university	text
University of Ljubljana	<i>The University of Ljubljana implements and promotes fundamental, applied and developmental research and pursues excellence and the highest quality and ethical criteria in all scientific fields and art. Furthermore, in these areas of national identity, the University of Ljubljana specifically develops and promotes Slovenian scientific and professional terminology. (University of Ljubljana, n.d.)</i>

<p>University of Maribor</p>	<p><i>The mission of the University of Maribor is based on honesty, curiosity, creativity, freedom of spirit, cooperation and knowledge transfer in the field of science, art and education. Concerned with mankind and sustainable development, the University of Maribor expands knowledge, raises awareness, and promotes humanistic values and the culture of dialogue, quality of life and global justice. (University of Maribor, n.d.)</i></p>
<p>University of Primorska</p>	<p><i>UP's mission is to contribute to the global knowledge base through constructive cooperation and courageous competition in the global university space. At the same time, it draws ideas and solutions to develop cooperation with society and industry in which it operates, within Slovenia and throughout Europe. (University of Primorska, n.d.)</i></p>
<p>University of Nova Gorica</p>	<p><i>The University of Nova Gorica believes that its mission is to create new knowledge in a harmonious relationship between students and researchers, pass this knowledge on to younger people generation and in the business environment, and ensure the highest possible employability of their graduates. Regardless of its private character, UNG makes sure that its programs are accessible to all social strata. (University of Nova Gorica, n.d.b)</i></p>
<p>University of Novo Mesto</p>	<p><i>As one of the national science centres, the University will be the central bearer of the region's autonomous, intellectual, moral, cultural, and economic potential and beyond. It will carry out its mission through all employees and students' dedicated and science-supported work. The work's success will be reflected in education, scientific research, and business achievements. Based on the commitment to excellence in education and research, the University will contribute to the development of society, quality of individuals' lives, and the sustainable development of the environment. (University of Novo Mesto, 2020)</i></p>
<p>New university</p>	<p><i>The New university bases its scientific and educational mission on the foundation of state-building constitutional and national sources of the Republic of Slovenia, emphasising legal and welfare state values, sovereign and democratic arrangements of the republic, and respect for human rights fundamental freedoms. (New university, 2020a)</i></p>

There are no mentions of social responsibility in the universities' missions. Then we checked universities' strategies, where it was expected to find at least some traces of the latest "buzz words" that are much more than buzz words. The two most prominent public universities included social responsibility explicitly in their strategies.

university	text
University of Ljubljana	<p><i>The University of Ljubljana exercises social responsibility by transforming knowledge into practice. This is achieved through developmental, research, and professional activities, employment graduates in other organisations, encouraging entrepreneurship, counselling services, and including professional experts in educational activities by lifelong learning programmes. (University of Ljubljana, 2012)</i></p>
University of Maribor	<p><i>One of the strategic goals (University of Maribor, 2021): Compliance with the principles of social responsibility and sustainable development in all activities conducted by the University. One of the indicators (University of Maribor 2020a): Updated and consolidated UM Code of Ethics, which will include issues for whistle-blowers protection - by 2025, to realise the goal: Perform activities for further development of culture quality based on responsibilities, ethics, transparency and involving all stakeholders. To realise another goal - Long-term development of study programs and socially responsible enrolment planning three activities are planned to be realised by 2024 (University of Maribor, 2020a): Development indicators in the field enrolment policy as part of educational indicators activities at UM; Enrolment policy indicators are part of educational indicators activities at UM; Preparation of a comprehensive strategy in the field of promotion of enrolment with focus on the talented candidates for study.</i></p> <p><i>Another goal (University of Maribor, 2020a): Sustainable, socially responsible and high-quality development of scientific sciences and artistic disciplines and research areas and sub-areas developed by UM, taking into account the principles of smart specialisations with emphasis on solving societal challenges, is mainly connected with innovations, research projects and inclusion of students in these activities (by 2024 and 2025).</i></p>

University of Primorska	<i>No mention. (University of Primorska, 2020a; 2020b)</i>
University of Nova Gorica	<i>No document on the website. (University of Nova Gorica, n.d.a)</i>
University of Novo Mesto	<i>One of the strategic goals (University of Novo Mesto): Strengthening socially responsible action and constructive cooperation with the environment: opening up universities to the general public, networking with economic and non-economic actors, organising lectures for the interested public and professional associations; (University of Novo Mesto, 2020)</i>
New university	<i>One of the strategic goals in the Action plan for realising the vision and mission of the new university in the study year 2019/20 (New university 2020): Strengthen socially responsible and constructive cooperation with the broader domestic and foreign environment. The task that will allow the university to realise this goal: Increasing the involvement of the faculty in a scientific and professional environment (organisation of professional events intended for the general public). (New university, 2020a)</i>

Throughout the yearly evaluation’s process, universities have to write down self-evaluation reports (SER); that is why the expectations to find the newly emerged change in the environment, connected with social responsibility, were high. However, to the researchers' surprise, it was found only in one university’s SER, and in another one, it was mentioned briefly and superficially.

university	text
University of Ljubljana	<i>No mention. (University of Ljubljana, 2021)</i>
University of Maribor	<i>The Development Strategy of the University of Maribor 2013–2020 defines socially responsible enrolment planning as a strategic goal of educational activity at the University. Socially responsible enrolment planning includes activities to establish a system of long-term enrolment policy planning</i>

based on the definition of the necessary prior knowledge and skills for successful study and analysis of enrolment conditions in the analysis of study programs at the University of Maribor. [...] Students are equal stakeholders. Together with the University of Maribor and employees, they develop the University under the principles of sustainable and socially responsible institutions and shape the mission, strategic orientations, and self-evaluation of higher education institutions and study programs and their change. [...] With the establishment of the University Press, the University of Maribor follows modern universities, which systematically creates conditions for the realisation of modern trends in scientific communication by promoting the socially responsible paradigm of open science. [...] In recent years, the University of Maribor paid much attention to raising awareness and acquainting the academic community with sustainable and socially responsible behaviour principles. Through the work of the Strategic Council and the Commission of the UM Senate for Sustainable and Socially Responsible University and the organisation of various activities (including participation in the organisation of the conference of the Institute for Social Responsibility), we assess that the academic community responsible behaviour and that the bodies of the University of Maribor, employees and students in their work take into account the principles of sustainable and socially responsible institutions or include them in their operations. The University of Maribor has also written its determination for sustainability and social responsibility in Article 2 of the UM Statute. [...] Following the UM Statute, the fundamental purpose of the UM Senate Commission for Sustainable and Socially Responsible University was to consider proposals for compliance with the principles of social responsibility in all activities of the University: teaching and learning and scientific and artistic work, management and control of all processes and systems and the University's cooperation with the environment at regional, national and international levels. During the Commission's operation, it was found that the Commission had carried out its mission through its work, which included information on sustainable and socially responsible development policies, as the Commission's purpose had been

	<p><i>achieved by informing the university public. With policies of sustainable and socially responsible behaviour. It was assessed that at the institutional level, through various activities, the awareness of the importance of sustainability and social responsibility was internalised, so in 2020 the Commission abolished and its mission was integrated into the work of the remaining commissions of the UM Senate. [...] Aspects of sustainability and social responsibility are also part of the self-evaluation process at the University of Maribor, within which members evaluate other monitoring or care for sustainable development and the environment, promotion and own efforts to establish a green campus for energy efficiency, reduced water consumption and the promotion of sustainable transport.[...]</i></p> <p><i>The University of Maribor also has an educational centre for sustainable development and social responsibility, which provides experiential education for sustainable development (Learning ranges of the International Centre for Ecoremediation ERM at the Faculty of arts). The University of Maribor also participates in the international rankings of universities dealing with the environment, sustainability, and social responsibility (Greenmetric, Times Impact Ranking). The University regularly informs the public about e-news, social networks (Facebook, Twitter) and articles in the university newspaper UMniverzum about activities and innovations related to sustainable and socially responsible development. (University of Maribor, 2020b)</i></p>
<p>University of Primorska</p>	<p><i>No mention. (University of Primorska, 2020c)</i></p>
<p>University of Nova Gorica</p>	<p><i>No mention. (University of Nova Gorica, 2020)</i></p>
<p>University of Novo Mesto</p>	<p><i>No document on the website. (the University of Novo Mesto, n.d.)</i></p>
<p>New university</p>	<p><i>The new university organises scientific conferences, academic forums, in other events intended to strengthen the New university's social responsibility and creative cooperation with the domestic and foreign environment. (New university, 2020b)</i></p>

Another essential tool for universities' quality assurance and management are quality manuals, which usually contain requirements for the Quality management system, describing how the system works, planning, organising, leading, controlling, evaluation and improvement, and responsibilities. Sadly, most of the manuals we checked understand responsibility only as personal responsibility for delivering results on different tasks.

university	text
University of Ljubljana	<i>No mention. (University of Ljubljana, 2020)</i>
University of Maribor	<i>The UM Senate approved the Department for quality and sustainable development work program, which operates in the following areas: - quality monitoring, - development of quality and sustainable and socially responsible operation of the university at all areas, - [...] (University of Maribor 2016, 13)</i>
University of Primorska	<i>With the Code of Ethics adopted by the UP Senate in 2011, UP builds and maintains high professional and ethical standards of all UP employees, strengthens university affiliation, transparency and social responsibility for the operation of the university, freedom of research, teaching and learning, and the social reputation of UP. (University of Primorska 2019, 4)</i>
University of Nova Gorica	<i>No mention. (University of Nova Gorica, 2013)</i>
University of Novo Mesto	<i>No document on the website. (the University of Novo Mesto, n.d.)</i>
New university	<i>No mention. (New university, 2021)</i>

IV. Discussion

Of course, there is no legal obligation as to what certain university documents should contain; this is left to the autonomous regulation of the field of quality assurance. However, the national quality assurance agency requirements prescribe that the documents governing a university's quality assurance must be publicly available and published. Therefore, it is worrying that we have not found these documents on the websites of certain universities. A possible reason for the apology

in some cases is that a few private universities were established relatively recently and may not have been able to edit all the documentation on their websites yet. In the social responsibility issue, we summarised in the following table the inclusion and explanation of the term used in documents examined just for transparency.

university	mission	strategy	SER	manual
University of Ljubljana	N	X	N	N
University of Maribor	N	X	X	?
University of Primorska	N	N	N	X
University of Nova Gorica	N	0	N	N
University of Novo Mesto	N	?	0	0
New university	N	?	?	N

Legend: X – present; ? – present superficially; 0 – no document found; N – not mentioned.

It is pretty visible a clear distinction while addressing this issue at public and private universities. If public universities deal with and incorporate social responsibility in at least one document, private universities documents lack the transparent processing of this term and viewpoint. To understand the situation in Slovenia, it has to be said that private universities establishment followed the country's transition from socialist to the market economy. Typically, privately owned higher education institutions in Slovenia lack full-time staff; they primarily hire professors based on a contract to carry out the pedagogical process. Administrative staff are usually small and overburdened with many of the different tasks they have to perform.

The University of Maribor appears to have the most comprehensive, elaborated and updated quality assurance system; they are checking the compliance of their system through regular internal institutional and programme evaluations, including external evaluators. Internal institutional and program evaluations represent the preparation of the university and its faculties to external evaluations. At the same

time, the university gains an external/independent view of the achievement of the set goals and tests the effectiveness of the internal quality system on its faculties. This is an example of good practice that would be recommendable also for other institutions to follow. The social responsibility of the university and the approaches to its implementation are elaborated and presented in detail in their strategy and SER and mentioned in their quality manual. They understand their university as a socially responsible institution and implement it through: socially responsible enrolment planning; students' involvement in all the planning, evaluating, improving, organising and controlling activities; university's cooperation with the environment at regional, national and international levels; self-evaluation process, within which they evaluate care for sustainable development and the environment, promotion; efforts to establish a green campus for energy efficiency, reduced water consumption and the promotion of sustainable transport; educational centre for sustainable development and social responsibility; informing of public about their activities, and participation in the international rankings of universities dealing with the topics of environment and sustainability and social responsibility.

Other universities declare their involvement with social responsibility primarily as the careful planning and adjusting of the enrolment to the needs of the society and as informing the public about their achievements, which are essential for the sustainable development of the society. Due to the diverse definitions of social responsibility in the university setting, it is not up to us to judge which approach is better; despite this, it is evident that the University of Maribor demonstrates that social responsibility has been internalised and imbedded into their structure, processes and procedures, not only of quality assurance but into their every activity. It is correct to say that the omission of the term does not predict that other universities do not tackle issues connected with social responsibility. They might be worded differently or written in some other documents.

There is still enough room for improvement of Slovenian universities in this regard, if they would like to comply with the first two principles to strengthen their social dimension of the Rome ministerial communiqué – Annex II (EHEA 2020, 4) and make it publicly available: "The social dimension should be central to higher education strategies at the system and institutional level, as well as at the EHEA and the EU level", and "Legal regulations or policy documents should allow and enable higher education institutions to develop their strategies to fulfil their public responsibility towards widening access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies." Goals could be set for complete access, support participation, and allow students to complete their studies. Inclusive university strategies could be designed through a dialogue between all stakeholders to advance diversity and equity, approachable to the broader community needs. Universities are expected to offer both part-time and full-time studies, versatile study styles, distance and blended learning, and recognition of previous learning to fit in with the diverse student population needs.

V. Conclusions

Social responsibility appeared on the EHEA political agenda due to changes in society and the universities' environment. Universities should strive to identify, define and finally implement the needed requirements to fulfil their social responsibility. Social responsibility makes an integral element of excellence in education and research quality. Furthermore, since the European higher education area (EHEA) principles aim to open, competitive and congruent space for students, scholars and other stakeholders, universities have to strive continuously to improve the quality of their teaching and research. However, there is more to that than the usual ranking and comparison of their achievements. Universities are the engines of society's development and moving away from Humboldt's ideal of the university as (Arai et al. 2007, 804) "intimately intertwined research and education under one roof, giving students direct access to the leading researchers and thinkers of the time", could bring unimaginable consequences. The mass enrolment of young people in universities, the reduction of university funding in most countries due to various crises and the prevailing neoliberal worldview raise the question of whether the traditional view of the university role is still relevant. Alternative models that offer distancing from teaching and publicly funded research through links with business to attract funding force universities to secure their research intellectual property; some critics fear, these phenomena might endanger "the intellectual independence of universities" (Oehmke 2005, 3) and their social involvement (Gulbrandsen and Smeby 2005, 932). Apple (2001) criticises neoliberalism's claims about how the harmonisation, marketisation, privatisation, and generally the globalisation of educational systems improve the educational quality, as significant findings demonstrate "that the expansion of higher education happens in tandem with the increase of income inequality and the aggravation of racial, gender and class differences" (Kromydas, 2017).

Universities have to carry out all the necessary activities to monitor and ensure the quality of their operation, following the requirements of accountability and responsibility to different publics and plan and implement the assurance processes of continuous internal improvement. It does not matter whether they are public or private; the quality has no colour and no political sign. Issuing diplomas on the fast track should not be the only university's priority, disregarding other open quality assurance questions. Perceived and recognised quality of the gained diploma and the acquired knowledge opens many doors to graduates looking for work. However, the broader values reflected by the university are also an infallible part of the university's offer and operation. Presenting and informing the public about these values and institutions' activities enables the acquaintance and dissemination of positive opinions and increases the university's reputation at home and around the world. Students and other university stakeholders should be seen as buyers of educational and research services and as essential co-creators of the quality content in diverse university activities. Effective environmental care with climate stability, biodiversity and the restoration of natural resources require examining how institutions organise

social, economic and political activities relevant to their surroundings and ensure the restoration of natural resources for future generations. Because we are aware of how important it is for employees and students to acquire knowledge and information about working according to the principles of a sustainable and socially responsible institution, universities must include these contents in the educational process. The university must remain the core and symbol of social responsibility, open dialogue, academic affiliation, study and research excellence.

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