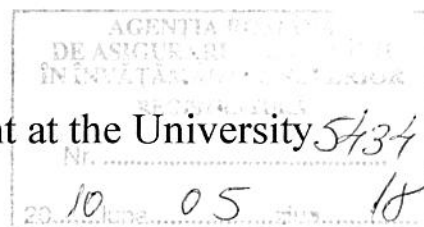


Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Peter Schulte

Report about the institutional external assessment at the University "Eftimie Murgu" of Resita



The report of Institutional Self-Assessment of the University of Resita and the discussions with several member groups of the University during the visit of the University 4. – 7. 05. 2010 are the basis of my report. Criteria of my review are European rules and criteria: the European Credits transfer and Accumulation System ECTS, the European Qualification Framework EQF, the Dublin Descriptors DD and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area, but also the Evaluation rules of the Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ARACIS. In addition I consider also my knowledge and experience of Universities in Germany, in Romania, in Europe, especially in South-East Europe but also in Universities outside Europe.

I couldn't consider and assess the internal formal and legal regulations of the University of Resita.

1. General Remarks:

I will at first describe my general impression about the University of Resita: I received a lot of information within several discussions in addition to the Report of the Institutional Self-Assessment. The information was partly corresponding, partly contrary.

I am convinced the region needs the University. The Region needs a University with a high level quality of education and training as well as research and the ability for supporting innovations.

I am convinced the University of Resita is very well suitable to carry out these obligations. The visions and also the missions of the University of Resita conform to the European rules and criteria of the Bologna Process, especially the ECTS, the European Qualification Framework, the Dublin Descriptors and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area. But the Bologna Process means more than only credits, workload, modules and so on. In addition to these aspects thinking and acting within the University of Resita conform to the spirit of the Bologna Process: The study programs have a student-centred approach. The programs are oriented towards learning outcomes considering the labour market and its development. This is very important, a remarkable advantage, and a good condition for a successful future.

But at present there is still a gap between the vision and its realisation. However the University is on the right track.

The University has appropriate premises, a good, partly a excellent equipment, suitable services for the students and as special advantage a young, dynamic and committed team of professors and lecturers. The employers, the graduates and the students are very satisfied with the work of the University of Resita. But it requires hard work and every effort to realise completely the vision and the mission. The University Resita should and could improve the quality of education and training, oriented by student-centred approach and the aspects of employability considering the priorities of the Bologna Process of the EU for the next decade.

For example I suggest including within the Study Program more activities which make it possible for the students to get more practical experience, to train solving real problems by means of theoretical knowledge and methodical skills.

It is my impression, that there is a difference between the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Economics and Administration sciences. I think at present the Faculty of Engineering is a little better than the other Faculty. The reason could be the different situation of the teaching staff, which is younger within the economic Faculty. But the development within the Faculty of Economics and Administration Sciences is very promising.

There are good examples of research within the University of Resita, especially within the Faculty of Engineering. Mentioned should be the project "Metallographic analyses and measurements of performance effected on hydro units in accordance with the international standards". In my opinion it is an advantage that there are projects paid by companies. In this way research is directly related to innovations. This is in a special way worthy of support. Innovations require research as the basis for new ideas, but innovations need also education and training for implementation of new ideas and results of research.

I agree with the University of Resita developing and establishing some Centres of Research. Very good examples are the "Centre of research in Hydraulics, Automation and Heat processes" as well as the "Centre of Entrepreneurship and Intercultural Management". This centre – I suggest including also the subject "Innovation" – could be a good solution to improve the possibilities of innovations as well as to link the technical and the economic Faculty.

Let me make the remark that the links between Education, Research and Innovation are one of the priorities of the European Union regarding the Bologna Process for the next decade. I suggest enhancing the research activities. Establishing of some centres of research is the appropriate way of organisation.

Let me speak to two points which are often discussed within the policy and are sometimes the basis for political decisions: the size of a University and the position within a ranking.

There is no correlation between the size of a University and its quality of education and/or research. There is no reason to support big Universities with priority. Criterion should be only the quality of education and research. Ranking consider only quantitative measurable criteria, if necessary weighted by the importance of the scientific journal, in which an article is published. But important is also the impact of research for innovations as well as a patent as result of research. (This one is considered to assess quality of research in Germany.) The position in one of the international ranking isn't suitable at all to describe or assess completely the quality of education or research of a University.

I could give detailed reasons for my opinion if wanted.

2. Some Details:

Following I will describe and assess some detailed aspects of the University of Resita, especially strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the University.

2.1 Strengths:

Considering the description of the University of Resita the following points are especially strengths of the University:

- The University of Resita is a reference Institution in the local community, has a special importance for the development of the region and has a high national and international recognition. This is proved by the numerous collaborations with universities of tradition in Romania and abroad. The University of Resita is one of the partners within the RESITA NETWORK, this is a cooperation between universities in South-East-Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Universities in Germany and Austria. The University of Resita is responsible for the web-platform, the information- and communication-platform within the network.

Recommendation: Guest-lecturers of other universities of the network could bring new subjects and modern didactic methods to the University of Resita; this could improve the abilities of the lecterers of the University of Resita and the quality of education and training.

- Quality education, focused on the student, and educational offer adapted to the evolution of the labour market (student-centred approach,

considering employability). The quality of education and training is recognised by the student, the graduates and the employers.

But the quality of education is also demonstrated by success of students as results of competitions with students from other Romanian Universities.

One Example:

In the period 7 - 9th of May 2010 the students of the University of Resita obtain outstanding results for the National Olympiad hold in Resita.

The Olympiad was entitled "Public Administration and Regional Development".

There were students participating from 11 universities in Romania. There were also students coming from large universities like ASE Bucuresti, University of Bucuresti or University Alexandru Ioan Cuza Iasi. All students were from faculties of Economics and Business Administration. There were 55 students participating. There were 36 papers presented. From 36 papers, 20 were in competition at bachelor level while 16 were competing at master level. There were 4 prizes for bachelor and 4 prizes for master.

The University Eftimie Murgu Resita has obtained the following results:

° Bachelor:

First place (first prize) for the paper entitled "Optimizing public expenditures; a comparative study for the European Union member states". (Assistant Marius Milos was coordinator, students who are Manciu Ana-Maria and Bosanceanu Alina)

Second Place (second prize)

° Master

Second Place (second prize)

The organizer is The Association of Economics Faculties in Romania (AFER).

As mentioned above students recognised the quality of the education and training. But nevertheless students would like to obtain more opportunities to get practical experience.

Recommendation: I suggest including within the Study Programs more activities which make it possible for the students to get more practical experience, to train solving real problems by means of theoretical knowledge and methodical skills. I suggest including within the study programs projects and exercisers.

- Development of entrepreneurial education through the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Intercultural Management. Recommendation: The "Centre of Entrepreneurship and Intercultural Management" – I suggest

including also the subject “Innovation” – could be a good solution to improve the possibilities of innovations as well as to link the technical and the economic Faculty.

- Modern infrastructure for learning and research.
- Positive organisational culture, manifested through the commitment of all the members of the academic community towards the university and its vision, mission and needs.
- The existence of a modern quality management system certified in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard, operating with specific instruments of continual assessment of the quality of all the services provided, considering also the standard and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area.
- The very dynamic development during the last four/five years.
- The Distance Learning Program with the good organisation and with presence phases as well as examinations within the University.
- Some excellent examples of applied research related to innovations. Recommendation: The links between Education, Research and Innovation are one of the priorities of the European Union regarding the Bologna Process for the next decade. I suggest enhancing the research activities. It should be activities of applied research in order to solve real problems related to innovations. Establishing of some centres of research is the appropriate way of organisation. I suggest concentrating on some few centres which could be centres of excellence. The University of Resita isn't big enough for many centres. In this case concentrating on few centres is an advantage.

2.2 Weaknesses

Considering the description of the University of Resita the following points are especially weaknesses of the University:

- As mentioned above students, graduates and employers recognised the quality of the education and training. But nevertheless students would like to obtain more opportunities to get practical experience. Graduates and employers agree to this aspect of the study programs. Recommendation: As mentioned above I suggest including within the study programs more activities which make it possible for the students to get more practical experience, to train solving real problems by means of theoretical knowledge and methodical skills. I suggest including within the study

programs projects and exercisers. The University of Resita could use the cooperation with other universities, especially the collaboration within the RESITA NETWORK organising guest-lecturer-ships.

But it is important to differentiate between the conception “ready for working” and the alternative “ready for solving problems by means of scientific knowledge and methodical skills”. It isn’t impossible and suitable for a University to organise education and training with the aim “ready for working” considering the tempo of changes.

- The University of Resita could possibly win all good graduates of the regional schools. In this case I recommend intensifying the activities of public relations demonstrating the specific profile and quality of education and training.
- The University of Resita should enhance the activities of research. I suggest including increasingly the students of the Master programs in research activities. I suggest also establishing further doctorate study programs (third Bologna phase).
- Human Recourses: In a long-term view the University needs more professors with scientific excellence and practical experience. Because the young academic staff the further education of the lecturers should be an important task of the University. This is also an important condition of enhancing the doctorate study programs.

2.3 Opportunities:

Considering the description of the University of Resita the following points are especially opportunities of the University:

- The recognition of the University in the local community and a permanent logistic and financial support from the part of the local community.
Recommendation: I suggest enhancing the activities to give support for realising of innovations. Networking for innovations between the university and both companies and other institutions of business environment within the region could be an appropriate instrument.
- The close connection, maintained along the entire existence of the university, with the business environment and local public institutions, for whom it trains very good well-educated graduates and performs applied research.
- Centres of applied research as basis for innovations within the region.

- The exceptional endowment, unique in the country, of some of the centres of research, as starting basis for creating further excellence centres of research, oriented especially with priority towards the support of the local development. But – as mentioned above – the university should limit the number of centres of research.
- Due to its location, the university may benefit from important funds from the cross border cooperation programs.
- The University should use the advantages of the membership within the South-East-European RESITA NETWORK Entrepreneurship and Innovation, especially the knowledge, experience and results of research of the other universities within the network as well as the possibilities of student mobility and guest-professor-ships.

2.4 Threats:

Considering the description of the University of Resita the following points are especially threats of the University:

- The insufficient institutional and complementary financing from the state budget.
- Migration of young and high-value teachers towards activities in the country and abroad offering advantageous possibilities. Recommendation: I suggest establishing more centres of research and realising more research projects paid by private partners, for example companies. I suggest to the address of the national government, to support effectively such research project. I suggest concretely paying the university for each Leu, which it obtained from a private partner for research, 0.5 Leu in order to make it possible for the university to improve the equipment for research activities. This could be also an instrument for the further development of regions.
- Reduction of the number of candidates because of the orientation of the national government towards greater academic centres located in cities more attractive for the youth. Recommendation: As mentioned above there is no correlation between the size of a University and its quality.
- Adaptability to the changes occurred in the labour market (qualitative and quantitative). Recommendation: Scientific knowledge, methodical skills and the competence to use these abilities for solving real problems should be the objectives of education and training.

3. Final remarks

The region and the students are very satisfied with the University of Resita. The region needs this University. The vision of the University conforms to the rules, the spirit and the further development of the European Bologna Process. But the University needs hard work and every effort to implement completely the spirit of the Bologna Process. The University has got to solve many demanding tasks and challenges.

But there is a dynamic spirit within the University. The young team is a very good condition for a successful future. But the young team requires support and further education.

There are a lot of excellent and good examples of a high level quality of education, training, research and activities of realising innovations within the University. But there are also a lot of challenges for improving the quality. However the University is on the right track. I am convinced that the management of the University, working absolutely aim-oriented, and the spirit of lecturers and students within the University in connection with the organisational culture are very good conditions to manage the challenges, to advance the strengths and use the opportunities.

I suggest the institutional accreditation of the University Eftimie Murgu of Resita with a valuation as high as possible.

Seter S. M.

11.5.2010