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Contract POSDRU/155/1.2/S/141894



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## REPORT of the foreign evaluator for the University of “Eftimie Murgu” Resita

### INTRODUCTION

Having been appointed as Foreign Expert by ARACIS, I wrote this report on the basis of the self-evaluation visit at University of “Eftimie Murgu” Resita from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, discussions with members of the university during that evaluation visit and the received supporting documentation (in English only).

I also put into consideration European rules and criteria: the “European Credits transfer and Accumulation System ECTS”, the “European Qualification Framework, EQF”, the “Dublin Descriptors, DD” and the “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.

Additional basis were documents from the European Commission

- “Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems”, COM(2011) 567 final
- “European higher education in the world”, COM(2013) 499 final
- “Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes”, COM(2012) 669 final

External evaluation procedures are performed regularly once in five years for all higher education institutions working in Romania. The Panel of Evaluators is appointed by ARACIS, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer review based evaluation of the institution and some of its study programmes.

The last evaluation visit of the University took place from 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2010,

The evaluation team for University of “Eftimie Murgu” Resita consisted of the following members:

- Mission Director: Prof. Simona Lache, University of Brasov
- Coordinator of the Experts Evaluator Team: Prof. Silviu Alexandru Usamv, University of Cluj-Napoca
- Technical Secretary: Carmen Mirian, ARACIS
- Advisory Commission Expert: Prof. Mihai Octavian Popescu
- Institutional Commission Expert: Prof. Dumitru Matis, University of Cluj-Napoca
- Study Program Expert (Accounting): Prof. Mariana Man, University of Petrosani
- Study Program Expert (Marketing): Prof. Ilie Rotariu, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
- Study Program Expert (Marketing, distance learning): Prof. Florian Mihai, Bucharets University of Economic Studies
- Study Program Expert (Marketing, distance learning): Prof. Liviu Craciun, University of Craiova
- Study Program Expert (Electromechanics): Prof. Cristian-Ioan Fosolau, University of Iasi
- Student Evaluator: Alexandra, Bucharest University of Economic Studies
- Student Evaluator: Stefan Spiridon, National University of Music, Bucharest
- Foreign Expert: Prof. Norbert Gruenwald, Wismar University, Germany

No restrictions were placed on my activities during my visit and I was able to observe all aspects of the evaluation process, to ask questions of clarification, and to make comments if appropriate.

I like to thanks the University of “Eftimie Murgu” Resita for their hospitality throughout the visit, and for their helpful and constructive replies to queries.

My visit was facilitated by the assistance provided by Associate Prof. Marius Christian Milos and his wife. I like to express my gratitude to him for their kindness, availability, and unflinching efficiency.

## GENERAL

During the institutional visit, I had the opportunity to meet with the management of the University (including the Rector, Prof. Doina Frunzaverde), a number of academic members of staff, and had meetings with current students, graduates, and employers of graduates

from University of "Eftimie Murgu" Resita. The expert evaluators team also visited the premises of the University (including laboratories and library), the new building of student hostel, the sports hall and the Rectorate. In addition I had the opportunity for two longer discussions, one with the rector Prof. Doina Frunzaverde and one with the president of the Senat Prof. Marian Mihaila.

The purpose of the plenary meetings with the management of the university is to identify the development of the university in the last 5 years.

The meetings that the expert evaluator team had with employers, recent graduates and current students all produced positive statements about the quality and relevance of the programmes, as well as life and study at the university.

The university has a very good Quality Management in place, which is currently equipped with all the instruments and procedures necessary for the achievement of the complete cycle „Plan - Do - Check - Act” in order to assure the quality of education, research and support services for students and teaching staff.

Based on a mission as “a university in the region and for the region” with focus on initial and lifelong professional learning and training, creativity and entrepreneurship, civic spirit and social responsibility, applied research and knowledge transfer the presented a clear vision for the goals and developments of the next 5 years.

Since the last evaluation visit the University of “Eftimie Murgu” Resita has reorganized the faculty and research centres structure. With the 1<sup>st</sup> of October the university has 3 faculties,

- Faculty of Engineering and Management
- Faculty of Economics
- Faculty of Social Sciences.

The universities offers programmes at Bachelor level (3 or 4 years), Master programmes (2 years) as well as PhD programmes (3 years).

With about 100 teaching staff members and about 70 staff members in the administrative sector the university can very effectively educate about 2.000 students.

The number of student was dramatically decreasing in the last years, from former 5.000 students to 3.000 students in the academic year 2013/2014 to currently 2.000 students.

The university get insufficient institutional and complementary financing from the state budget. All the more is to value the very positive development of the university.

## COMMENTS

### *Teaching and Learning, Lifelong Learning*

Investment in education and training for skills development is essential to boost growth and competitiveness. In the next five years, the University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reșita definitely intends to:

- Using active teaching / learning methods, meant to provide the graduates the acquisition of through theoretical knowledge, supported by practical skills and solid cross competencies
- Ensuring the personal development of graduates by subjects encouraging the building of cross competences and by a diversified offer of extracurricular activities
- Promoting work based learning
- Dual learning models to help the transition from learning to work
- Promoting partnerships between public and private institutions (to ensure appropriate curricula and skills provision)
- Supporting particularly entrepreneurial skills, creativity and social responsibility
- To scale-up use of ICT in learning and teaching

This has to be continuously further developed.

I would like to recommend:

- More interdisciplinary, cross-faculty, real life project in the curricula
- Extending the practical phases
- A much clearer commitment by the university to lifelong learning/distance learning opportunities, also on Master or even on PhD level. Students increasingly expect to choose what they learn, how they learn and when they learn, according to their individual needs and interests. They are ready to do it in their country of origin, abroad, via courses offered online or via blended forms of learning combining all of these possibilities.

### *Research and Development, Innovation*

In the University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reșita, scientific research is preponderantly applied and constitutes an activity which supports the didactic process and constitutes an important means of involvement and commitment for the university in the local, regional and national developments. The promotion of scientific research consolidates the institutions’ prestige,

whereas the revenues earned from research support the modernisation of lab endowment and research infrastructure of the university. Furthermore, the involvement of bachelor, master and PhD students in the research projects assures the acquisition of practical competences and skills necessary for the graduates, as well as their contact with potential employers, facilitating thus their transition to the labor market.

For the 2012-2016 period, the university aims at „consolidating its position of university conducting applied research, oriented toward immediate results in industry and society, as well as knowledge and know-how transfer to the business environment and the local public institutional milieu”.

I would like to recommend

- Keep on going that way, place the university as an engine of the regional development
- Focus the research, development and innovation on regional problems in cooperation with the regional Government and industry; Think Global – Act Local
- It also requires to overcome the fragmentation into faculties, departments, laboratories and administrative units and to target their efforts collectively on institutional priorities for research, teaching and services.
- Focusing less on scientific disciplines and more on research domains (e.g. green energy, hydraulics, automation and heat processes), associating them more closely with related or complementary fields (including humanities, social sciences, entrepreneurial and management skills) and fostering interaction between students, researchers and research teams through greater mobility between disciplines, sectors and research settings.

### *Teaching staff*

High quality and well trained teachers can help learners develop the competences they need in a global labor market based on ever higher skill levels, and evidence<sup>19</sup> shows that a primary influence on learners' performance is the quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers need a strong commitment to training: in the use of new technologies; to improve learning to learn competencies; how to cater for diversity and inclusion; and to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners, such as Roma, children with disabilities or those from a migrant background. This require a new set of competences for teachers, teacher educators



and education leaders. The University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reşita meet this challenges with the Establishment of the Department for the Teaching Staff Training.

Within the staff policies, a particular focus is laid on the personnel recruitment, as the quality of the didactic process is decisively determined by the professional competencies and pedagogical skills of teachers. In order to fill the vacant teaching positions, the university requires the candidates' meeting of certain specific standards, corresponding to each didactic position. Professionally competent teachers, with pedagogic vocation, permanently preoccupied by the enhancement of attractiveness and effectiveness of the teaching/learning activities is the target of the university

I would like to recommend:

- The stimulation of an entrepreneurial mindset also amongst all teaching staff and researchers.
- It is essential that the teaching staff are well equipped to embrace the potential of the new technologies in the way they teach, in order to stimulate and engage learners. Students increasingly expect to choose what they learn, how they learn and when they learn, according to their individual needs and interests. They are ready to do it in their country of origin, abroad, via courses offered online or via blended forms of learning combining all of these possibilities.

### *Quality Management*

The University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reşita made great efforts to consolidate and develop the quality management system, which is currently equipped with all the instruments and procedures necessary for the achievement of the complete cycle „Plan - Do - Check - Act” in order to assure the quality of education, research and support services for students and teaching staff. Now the university have of a true culture of quality management.

The specific objectives related to the assurance and improvement of institutional academic quality are detailed in the strategic and operational plans of the university. The degree of these objectives' reaching is annually assessed.

The assessments related to the institutional academic quality refer to the following aspects:

- Organisational culture
- Students' satisfaction degree in relation with the educational services and the facilities provided by the university
- The UEMR customers' satisfaction degree, related to the quality of graduates and

activities of research-development and consulting offered

- Quality of the programmes of study offered
- Students' assessment
- Teaching staff quality.

I would like to commend:

- The University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reşita has a very good Quality Management System and a true culture of quality management.
- Keep on going that way.

### *International Cooperation*

The internationalisation of higher education will help prepare our learners, whether going abroad or staying at home, to live in a global world, increasing their experience and knowledge, employability, productivity and earning power.

A comprehensive internationalisation strategy should cover key areas grouped into the following three categories: international student and staff mobility; the internationalization and improvement of curricula and digital learning; and strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building. These categories should not be seen as isolated but as integrated elements of a comprehensive strategy.

The internationalisation strategies University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reşita is centred mainly on student mobility (ERASMUS, Summer Schools, etc.). International academic cooperation is often still fragmented, based on the initiative of individual academics.

I would like to recommend:

- The University „Eftimie Murgu” of Reşita must increase their international attractiveness; actively promote international mobility of students and staff; provide innovative curricula and enter into cooperation and strategic partnerships with other HEIs around the world
- The internationalization strategy should also include the development of international curricula, strategic partnerships, finding new ways of delivering content (maybe distance education), and ensuring employment, regional development, research and innovation.

## FINAL REMARKS

The employers of the region as well as students and graduates are very satisfied with the University of "Eftimie Murgu" Resita. For the region this University has a great importance. This university is an engine of the regional development. The mission and vision of the University conforms to the rules, the spirit and the further development of the European Bologna Process.

The University has got to solve many demanding tasks and challenges. Unfortunately, the combined effect of the global economic crisis and the reduction of the students' populations have led, in the past five years, to the simultaneous drop of both budgetary and extra-budgetary revenues. Under these circumstances, the university took decisive actions for enhancing the efficiency of the use of all available funds.

Universities should be funded more for what they do than for what they are, by focusing funding on relevant outputs rather than on inputs, and by adapting funding to the diversity of institutional profiles.

Beside this the university is still overregulated from state and regulatory bodies. Universities will not become innovative and responsive to change unless they are given real autonomy and accountability. States should guide the university sector as a whole through a framework of general rules, policy objectives, funding mechanisms and incentives for education, research and innovation activities.

But there is a very dynamic spirit within the University. The management of the university has a clear vision of the future of the university, has innovative ideas and a strong commitment for the regional development. Furthermore the combination of experienced staff and a young and dynamic staff team is an extremely good fundamental part for a successful future. It is important to support the young team to gain international experiences and further (digital) education.

However the University has in the last 5 years continuously made a very good development (despite the nation-wide student decrease) with new internal governance systems based on strategic priorities and on professional management of human resources, investment and administrative procedures. Such as this the recognition that their relationship with the business community of the region is of strategic importance for the development of the university and forms part of their commitment to serving the public interest.





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

Date: 07.06.2015

**ETS – FOREIGN EVALUATOR EXPERT**

Name... Prf. Dr. Norbert Gruenwald.....

Signature: 