
THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY, USING VIDEOCONFERENCING SYSTEMS

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Globalization in terms of intensification of worldwide social relations, that is linking distant localities in such a way that local events are shaped by events that happen on many kilometers away, and vice versa (1), in conjunction with internationalization and sustainable development, place new demands on the higher education. Prerequisite for quality preparation and successful application of university-educated people today, is not only the transfer of expertise and skills to a high level of quality, but also their multi-cultural and multilingual adaptability. Internationalization of education allows us to apply, at the scientific research and the educational process at the universities, principles that lead to the formation of graduates with a requested profile in the global labor market and also lead to the deepening of international cooperation, the diversification and, ultimately, also to contribute to the balancing of the existing abysmal differences on the development levels of individual countries. (2) Private colleges in various states in the process of internationalization of education proactively involved to aid in achieving the objectives of the Bologna process. University of Central Europe in Skalica, which was founded in 2005 in the Slovak Republic, today provides university education at all three levels of higher education. Progressive growth of international cooperation with foreign universities, with active use of modern technology teleconference equipment, support, accelerate and streamline the process of internationalization of education for this young private university.

Keywords: *internationalization, mobility, international collaboration, video conferencing system, teleconference, Information Technology, Telecommunication Technology, University of Central Europe in Skalica*

Internationalization of the Higher Education

Globalization is characterized by expanding, deepening and speeding up global connections and increasing interdependence and convergence of countries and so affects to the dynamic way of today's college education system in Europe and worldwide. The necessity of the impact of the globalization processes on the area of the higher education institutions has been highlighted in various ways. Not all universities and colleges operate abroad but all of them are a part of the same process of globalization. In our world of network environment, each university institution visible to the other universities and the global dimension weight is increasing, and it is not therefore possible for the countries or individual colleges to avoid the impact of globalization. (2) (3)

Globalization processes are largely out of the control of the higher education institutions and individual governments and exactly the internationalization of education is considered to be the adequate response to the globalization, i.e., method of an effective response of

the higher education to the globalization society, culture, economy and labor market. (3) Globalization has become a kind of driving force in higher education, which is becoming a wider international dimension by increasing the number of higher education institutions receiving students from other countries, changing students, staff, projects and knowledge, and engaging in international academic and research cooperation. The process of internationalization of the education, which is, compared to the globalization processes, easily influenced by national governments, is still necessary to analyze, to scientifically examine and to seek his further development opportunities, particularly in accordance to the requirements of sustainable development, in which plays an irreplaceable role the e - learning education.

New possibilities of the modern e-learning systems offer, also, the videoconference systems – a modern technology, enabling the transmission of video, audio and multimedia content in real time. In conjunction with modern touch- devices, that advanced technology manage - in real time, over a distance of thousands kilometers - to convey a lecture of the academics and experts from the academic world of the universities of different countries of the world, without need to travel, without restrictions on the number of the listeners, without distance gaps, without limits and without high operating costs for the educational institutions.

The importance of the process of internationalization of the education can be analyzed in relation to the country, to the higher education institutions and to the individuals themselves, but the positives of this process may have some noticeable negative impacts. An example is the emigration of graduates, which means the professional and economic development of the individuals and strengthens the image of the universities that raised them, but on the other hand, the country is losing high-quality workforce. It is therefore important to characterize the different motives that lead the country and individuals to participate in and to support the internationalization of education. The objectives, at a country level can be defined as follows: raising the quality of the higher education system in the country, increasing of the competitiveness, improving the relations with other countries, mutual subsidies for the costs of the higher education system, increasing the employment of graduates, creating cosmopolitan graduates, filling the demographic gaps, improving the migration of skilled workers and other. The above options of employability, improvement in foreign languages, learning, knowing intercultural differences, also the acquisition of additional skills, the strengthening of independence, all of them, are motives that lead the individuals to participate in the international education system. (4) Analyzing the motives is important for all three levels of application the internationalization of education with a view to harmonize the efficiencies and also degrade the externalities, i.e. the negative effects on stakeholders with the helping of tools, that are in the hands of the national governments.

The Council of the European Union, invited, at its meeting in 2010, dedicated to the internationalization of the higher education, the Member States, in coordination with the higher education institutions, and whit recognizing their autonomy, to take further action in this area in order to (5):

- promote the international culture within universities by supporting their cooperation, support mobility of academics and providing training and skills, needed for working in an open international environment, by encouraging the higher education institutions to develop international strategies and to provide high quality curricula and application of teaching methods, which account the international dimension.

- increase the international attractiveness of higher education institutions, promoting the academic excellence of European universities and improving their international

visibility, with participation in international cooperation networks, with projects, with joint educational and research programs, promoting the development of joint academic degrees and joint monitoring of diploma theses,

– Promoting the global dimension and awareness of the social responsibility of the higher education by increasing the equity in access to the higher education and international mobility program (incentives and support) and by promoting innovative forms of transnational cooperation within the academic community.

Internationalization of the higher education can be defined as the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension in education, research and other services, provided by higher education institutions in a country. (2) The direction of the internationalization of education is largely influenced by the liberalization of the trade of education (through WTO¹, GATS² and bilateral international agreements on free trade). Low transport and communication costs, increasing migration of people and also the emergence of private financing and provision of the higher education, in a big measure supported the emerging of the international market for higher education and scientific research. (3) Private colleges thus were not isolated from the process of the internationalization of education, but rather, with that process even more they supported its competitiveness and become part of today's international educational process in the light of the principles of the Bologna process.

The international dimension of the education at the University of Central Europe in Skalica (Slovak Republic)

The city of Skalica, which is located in the Slovak Republic, is a modern town with stable and full economic infrastructure and excellent transport links (see Fig. 1). It is one of the most economically powerful cities in Slovakia and a major tourist destination with a rich cultural and social life. Education has a big tradition in Skalica, since 1372, when it was elevated to a royal city and also received the patronage of caring about the town school. From 1542 becomes the first written mention of the high school of the city and on 16th century was founded a University, focused on theology and philosophy. After 1777 education was marked by the development of education in Skalica under the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II.. Was founded a gymnasium (1857), which had as its first teaching language the Slovak one and its graduates could study at the universities. In 2006, again began the famous history of Skalica as a university town, because of the founding of the private University, named University of Central Europe in Skalica.

Figure. 1 Transport availability of Skalica



Source: Author

¹ World Trade Organization

² General Agreement on Trade in Services

In order to the internationalist action, global production of graduates and implementation of research for benefit of the whole world, on that private university were implemented, since its beginning, activities in the field of internationalization of the higher education. The idea of the application of internationalization in the educational and scientific-research process, was regularly brought at the strategic development documents of the university. Strategies and objectives in international dialogue and cooperation were initially designed to build institutional, contractual and project basis for:

- International exchange of students and staff,
- formal and informal cooperation with universities and other major institutions and
- joint scientific research projects with foreign partners.

An important milestone was the year 2007, when the University of Central Europe in Skalica, agreed to join the Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) of the European Community and was awarded to the Erasmus University Charter.

On the field of foreign relations, were created new conditions for further development and cultivation of them. The strategy focused on the formation of the external relations and directed to activities aimed at creating more partnerships abroad, which would create conditions for cooperation in the fields of education, research, mobility of students and staff, to actively participate in the shaping of the professional Network.

The school has signed various partner working documents with the following educational institutions, under which engages proactively in the process of internationalization of the education in Europe and worldwide.

Contractual cooperation of the University of Central Europe in Skalica to implement exchanges under the program of Erasmus

CYPRUS - European University Cyprus, Nicosia, American College, Nicosia, CZECH REPUBLIC - Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, College of European and Regional Studies, Ceske Budejovice, Academia Rerum Civilium, Prague, Estonia - Tallinn University of Technology, Tallinn, International University Audentes, Tallin, FRANCE - Lycée ITEC BOISFLEURY, La Tronche, GREECE - University of Piraeus, Piraeus, GERMANY - Bundeswehr University Munich, Munich, University of Augsburg, Augsburg, SPAIN - University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, University Autonomia, Barcelona, POLAND - The University of Silesia, Katowice, Silesian School of Management, Katowice, ITALY - The University of Milan, Milan, FINLAND - Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, Jyväskylä, TURKEY - Sakarya University, Serdivan

Ankara University, Ankara, Uludag University, Bursa

Contractual cooperation for other internationalization activities of the University of Central Europe in Skalica

FRANCE - ITEC - Boisfleury, Lycée - La Tronche and Corenc, GREAT BRITAIN - Oxford Academy for Education & Development, Oxford, REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA - Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, UKRAINE - Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, National Technical University of Ukraine, Kyiv, Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, RUSSIAN FEDERATION - Academy of labor and social relations, Moscow, CZECH REPUBLIC - Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Zlin, College of International and Public Relations Prague, Prague, College of European and Regional Studies, Ceske Budejovice, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Prague, HUNGARY - University of Miskolc - Faculty of Economics, Miskolc, POLAND - Poznan University of Technology - Faculty of machinery and transport, Poznan,

SWITZERLAND - St Clements Private Swiss University, Lausanne, TUNIS - University of Sousse, ARMENIA - Russian - Armenian (Slovanic) University, Yerevan, Goris State University, MEXICO - Technological University, Oaxaca, GREECE - University of Piraeus in Piraeus, AUSTRALIA - St . Clements University Higher Education School, Niue, LIBERIA - St. Clements University College, Paynesville city, SERBIAN REPUBLIC - University of Novi Sad - Faculty of Technical Sciences, Novi Sad, KAZAKHSTAN - Kazakh National University of Arts in Kazakhstan, Astana, REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA - University of Ljubljana - Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering, Ljubljana, REPUBLIC OF CROATIA - Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek - Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Osijek, CYPRUS - Eastern Mediterranean University, REPUBLIC Nagorno-Karabakh - Artsakh State University, Stepanakert, UNITED KINGDOM - Leaders qualifications, London, INDONESIA - Ganesha University of Education, Bali

For intention of the active influencing of the evolution of internationalization of the higher education, in new strategic plans of internationalization activities were:

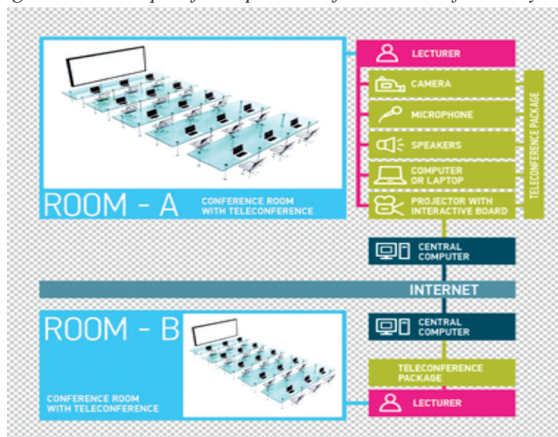
- international joint degree programs with partner universities and
- building infrastructure to support the mobility, joint and double degrees and the application of new educational technologies

Considering that the most new knowledge of global significance arises out of Slovakia, the Central European University in Skalica, tries to actively work with quality professionals and institutions from different world continents. Internationalization activities, can be grouped into several areas:

- The school founder - official meetings with foreign visitors, delegations on foreign trips, projects with partners of higher education institutions and other.
- The international dimension of the education of our students - opportunity to study at partner universities in the LLP / Erasmus program and concluded agreements on academic mobility, implementation of a part of the study program in English, providing high quality education in foreign languages, the implementation of the European credit transfer preparation joint international study programs, the use of foreign study materials theses in foreign languages and so on.
- Conferences, seminars, publications - the participation of academic staff in international scientific professional events, organization of international scientific conferences and workshops, publication of scientific publications in international scientific and professional journals, co- authors in creating teams with partner institutions abroad
- External marketing - information brochures about the university, in different languages, presentation at international education fairs, media promotion abroad.
- Infrastructure for foreign students - spatial distribution security, building modern technological equipment, teaching in a foreign languages, Slovak language courses, joint degrees, administrative management exchange and joint programs

In order to support the effective transfer of knowledge and lecturers, implementation of mobility in the joint and double degrees and increasing the level of language ability of the students, the University, decided to modernize its technology infrastructure and integrate videoconference systems / operating principle videoconference system is shown in Fig. no. 2 / in educational and research activities.

Fig. no. 2 Principle of the operation of the videoconference system



Videoconferencing facilities allow:

- videoconferencing transmission of video and audio in HD quality via internet,
- displaying video conferencing over long distances, without restrictions on the number of participants,
- creating videoconferencing transmissions from device to device, or multi-conference calls of multiple devices, at once,
- Recording and sharing videoconference transmissions,
- publishing, archiving and further processing of recordings on an easy web portal.

The benefits of the use of videoconference systems for the university:

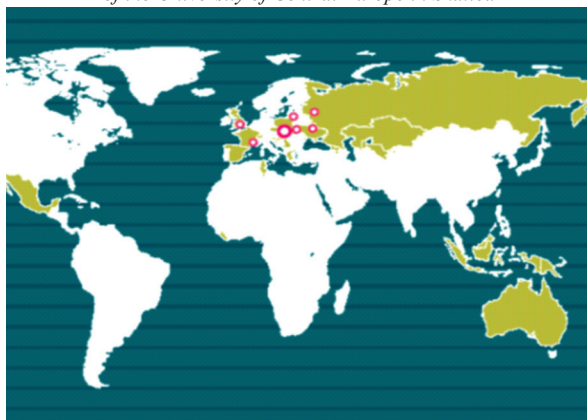
- possibility to make international transfers, international training, meetings, negotiations, internal meetings and negotiations between sites,
- training and testing can take place via videoconference, external lectures, seminars, presentations, training without the physical presence of the teacher in the classroom,
- organizing multi-conferences of several schools at the same time, links with other educational institutions, joint study programs, international cooperation,
- foreign lecturers do not have to travel, they can recite from their local school to thousands of miles away,
- the opportunity to lease space for external candidates

The benefits of the use of videoconference systems for students :

- reduce the cost of accommodation and travel,
- the possibility of consultations with the teacher through video conferencing,
- gain international experience and knowledge in the field of education, increase opportunities for foreign operational,
- improving the quality of teaching, work with the latest technologies, new opportunities in e -learning,
- raising awareness of technical students,
- acquisition of language, and foreign work experience,
- increase the attractiveness of graduates to the employers

University of Central Europe in Skalica, today, through videoconferencing technology connects foreign universities / see. Fig. no. 3 /, which have a significant presence in Europe. Among the most important partners include the University of Oxford, Kiev and Moscow. Currently are being implemented videoconference links with other universities in France, Lithuania and the Russian Federation, and negotiations are ongoing with new universities on different continents for the purpose of making arrangements, scope and purpose of an international cooperation.

Figure. 3 Scope of the current international cooperation of the University of Central Europe in Skalica



If we understand the fact that university study should rather have a self-study character / what is natural for the University of Western Europe and USA /, then the integrating of those forms should be more a commonplace than a need.

Conclusion

Globalization began at the economic and political level and today it extends to all areas, including education and research. The internationalization of the higher education is needed to respond to the global development trends, which affect all areas of the education system, which is facing the demographic changes and decreasing the public funds. The current education system, which also includes private universities should produce qualified graduates - professionals with responsibilities for the use of positive globalization processes and identify the negative effects.

The Slovak Republic became a more opened country after 1990, but an appropriate level of internationalization is still not achieved. Student mobility and lecture tours of researchers dominate, the international dimension is realized mainly in the doctoral level studies. In addition, knowledge at a global significance, are occurred outside of the Slovak Republic, therefore it is necessary to collaborate with leading experts and institutions abroad and to bring new knowledge and skills, by using also e-learning technologies and ICT.

A key technology in the process of building an intensive international cooperation, of the University of Central Europe in Skalica, with global universities, has become the technology of videoconferencing systems. The internationalization of the higher

education at the University of Central Europe in Skalica, which is realized, under the meaning of the Bologna process, by increasing the number and quality of exchanges of teachers and students, by the participation in international scientific research projects, by the preparation of implementation of joint study programs and by other processes and activities, has today an inherently positive contribution in the higher education in the terms of:

- ✓ International transfer of knowledge, practice and experience,
- ✓ Support the students to develop an international cooperation,
- ✓ Development of the communicative competence of the students in foreign languages,
- ✓ Development of the responsibility in order to the continuous sustainable world development.

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