The Development Priorities of European Higher Education within the Framework of Socio-Cultural Globalisation

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Abstract

Being a fundamental tool for the social, political and economic development of the country and for the preservation and reproduction of socio-cultural values, education promotes the formation of a civic society. The authors used a combination of research approaches (the system, axiological and culturological) and methods to consider the developmental priorities of higher education in Russia and Cyprus, as a socio-cultural tool for training professionals for various segments of social life. Specific features of socio-cultural modernisation in education in European countries were reviewed within the context of the Bologna process. Particular attention was given to the developmental strategy of educational districts in contemporary Russia as the basis for the vertical integration of public administration in education. The formation of educational districts serves as the basis for the development of a multicultural educational space in the Russian Federation and a tool for the building of a new hierarchy of administration at federal and regional levels and for the formation of a new vector in educational policy that is intended to retain and develop a consolidated, although internally differentiated, educational space in the country.

Keywords: educational policy, socio-cultural modernisation, consolidated educational space, innovations in education, network university

Introduction

Given the current trend towards globalisation and the intensification of socio-cultural processes, nowadays, the global and European communities are making an effort to search for technological, economic and teaching innovations capable of providing the necessary conditions for education to perform its traditional function

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of preserving and reproducing national culture. Furthermore, to also be efficient in assisting the development of an innovative economy based on advanced knowledge and state-of-the-art technologies.[2]

The relevance of various countries' efforts to reform or modernise education is supported by several fundamental tendencies in the development of contemporary civilisation, including the hereunder:

Globalisation, which, despite any differences in opinions, is an objective reality and sets new targets for national education systems based on the need for international solidarity focused on universal human values;

The need to act smarter. Intellectual work has an increased and diversified role in most existing activity systems and more so in the development of new ones. Given that the volume of new technology information doubles every two years, the system of professional education should adapt as fully as possible to the prevailing conditions in the labour and technology markets;

IT implementation across society is leading to social changes and making the possession of information and knowledge the top priority. Information technologies are one of the most important tools for the formation of the needs, interests, views and values of an individual and the society as a whole, a factor influencing human mentality and a mechanism being used in educational practices;

The acceleration of social changes requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability in the implementation of variable approaches and the preparation of 'individual development pathways' for each student;

The current crisis can be overcome through integrating national education systems, which suggests the alignment and synchronisation of learning programmes of various levels and focuses, while retaining the particular historical and socio-cultural features intrinsic to each. Basically, the Bologna process has seen this task as its top priority; however, its implementation should be supported by more flexible and up-to-date technological approaches, which are considered in this article.

Over the recent decades, we have been witnesses to the evolution of the Bologna process intended to integrate the national education systems of the European states, and we have been evaluating its positive results and negative consequences. When evaluating the results of this process, we conclude, importantly, that it is

[2] A. Yu. Belogurov, *The genesis and evolution of ethno-regional educational systems in Russia in the late 20th and early 21st centuries* (Moscow, 2003), 355 [in Russian].

necessary to integrate three key components – education, scientific research and innovations.

Today, like never before, we need large-scale investment in human resources, the development of job skills and scientific research. We also need support for the modernisation of the educational system so that it can be more consistent with the needs of a global knowledge-based economy.

A knowledge-based society needs an innovative education economy,[3] whose efficiency will be measured by the extent to which education can influence the social, economic and historical development of the society. This constitutes the fundamental difference between the contemporary requirements for education as a tool for a nation's social and economic advancement and those theories which were widespread just a few decades ago and which treated education as a field of adaptive culture only.

It is in combination with research and innovations that fundamental education will become an important factor of socio-cultural transformations, which will, in turn, result in the fulfilment of a set of education-related tasks with respect to the progress of the state structure and the formation of a consolidated educational space for European countries.

Creating an education policy, intended to enhance the educational space of particular states (through centralisation or decentralisation, depending upon the needs of a specific country) and the administration of education, is under discussion in a number of countries, including Russia, Greece, Turkey, Taiwan, the UK, Malta, Nepal, the US, France and Norway.[4] The problem has become especially rel-

[3] I. Gladilina, A. Belogurov, A. Zavrazhin, et al., 'Modern Approaches to Assessing the Learners' Achievements in Training Programs in Economics', *European Research Studies Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 4A (2017), 531; T. Avdeeva, A. Kulik, L. Kosareva, et al., 'Problems and Prospects of Higher Education System Development in Modern Society', *European Research Studies Journal*, Vol. 20, Issue 4B (2017), 112.

[4] G. Ye. Zborovsky and P. A. Ambarova, 'The conceptual basis for transition to a non-linear model of higher education in a region', *Ekonomika Regiona* [Regional Economics], Vol. 12, No. 4 (2016) [in Russian], DOI.org: 10.17059/2016-4-17; H. Akar and D. Şen, 'Impact of internal population movements on the schooling process in Turkey: Supervisors' views', *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol. 25, No. 13 (2017), 4-6, DOI.org:10.14507/epaa.25.2693; T. Huang and Y.-Sh. Ou, 'Reflexivity, position, and the ambivalent public space: the politics of educational policy in Taiwan's local governments', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 37. No. 1 (2017), 15 and 21, DOI.org:10.1080/02188791.2016.1142422; M. Cutajar, Ch. Bezzina and Ch James, 'Educational reforms in Malta: A missed opportunity to establish distributed governance', *Management in Education*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2013), 119-121, DOI:

evant due to the formation of consolidated educational areas (the Bologna system, the respective educational spaces of the CIS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the BRICS and the Barents region). The uniform requirements within each area should not contradict the traditional ethno-cultural features of each country:[5] 'national values, while defining the vector of social development, determine, at the same time, the ideology behind the selection of education contents'.[6]

In addition, global migration processes, as well as in-country migration, require the formation of an education system taking into account the specific ethno-cultural features of not only the educational environment but also the business environment where university graduates are to work.[7] Therefore, this combination of current tasks, related to the social and economic development of various countries, has made it necessary to consider priorities in education policy and to determine resources for reforming and modernising higher education within the framework of the Bologna process.[8] In particular, emphasis has been given to the opportunities for developing network universities as a way to integrate organisational and substantive resources to build a university education system responsive to the needs of particular territories and nations as a whole.

10.1177/0892020613490872; P. Khanal, 'Community participation in schooling in Nepal: a disjunction between policy intention and policy implementation?', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, Vol. 33. No. 3. (2013), 236-244, DOI.org:10.1080/02188791.2012.756390; S. Pogrow, 'The failure of the U.S. education research establishment to identify effective practices: Beware Effective practices policies'. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (2017), 4, DOI.org: 10.14507/epaa.25.2517; P. Devleeshouwer, 'Managing schools in Brussels: Selection and local independencies'. *ECPS Journal*, Vol. 11 (2015), 120-124, DOI.org: 10.7358/ecps-2015-011-devl; I. Bleiklie, N. Frølich, R. Sweetman et al., 'Academic institutions, ambiguity and learning outcomes as management tools', *European Journal of Education,* Vol. 52 (2017), 69-71, DOI: 10.1111/ejed.12200.

[5] Y. Guo and Sh. Guo, 'Internationalization of Canadian higher education: discrepancies between policies and international student experiences', *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 42, No. 5 (2017), 852, DOI.org: 10.1080/03075079.2017.1293874

[6] A. M. Kondakov, 'It is important to preserve spiritual national values', *Obrazovatel'naya Politika* (Educational Policy). 2010. No. 1-2 (2010), 17 [in Russian].

[7] J.L.E. Bücker and H. Korzilius, 'Developing cultural intelligence: assessing the effect of the Ecotonos cultural simulation game for international business students', *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* Vol. 26. No. 15 (2015), DOI.org http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1041759; T. Yoshida, K. Yashiro, Y. Suzuki, 'Intercultural communication skills: What Japanese businesses today need', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* Vol. 37 (2013), 73-75, DOI.org: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.04.013.

[8] P. I. Kasatkin and M. V. Kharkevich, 'M.V. Reforming postgraduate education in Russia: MGIMO's experience', *Vestnik MGIMO Universiteta* [MGIMO Review of International Relations], Vol. 2, No. (29, (2013)). P. 274-276., p., 274 [in Russian].

Materials and Methods

This article is based on a series of methods and approaches. For studying the establishment and development of educational districts in their historical aspect, the method of historical retrospection, the system approach and the comparative historical method have been used to analyse educational systems. Using the culturological approach, teaching-related social processes have been modelled. The selection of the axiological approach was based on the need to rely upon the value component of education as one of its most important functions. In aggregate, these approaches have allowed us to justify our view on the ways to build higher education, to define priorities in educational policy and to generate the technological approaches, which would ensure the attainment of the principal objectives in the implementation of the Bologna process, including the development of networked universities as part of a solution for the socio-cultural challenges facing the various countries.

The Trends in the Development of Higher Education in Russia, in Modern Social and Cultural Realities

In modern Russia, education is associated with the current objectives of consolidating society, preserving a united socio-cultural space in the country and developing a value system, which is to be open, diverse, culturally saturated, dialogue-oriented and supportive of the evolution of citizenship. This is due to the federal structure of the country and its ramified network of educational institutions of various levels and focuses. Thus, it is required to create a system in which universities within each particular Russian region or district will be integrated into a single network intended to solve regional social and economic problems that will, in turn, place special requirements on the activities of federal universities.

Therefore, each region should develop its own model of teaching organisation with regard to its specific social, economic, regional and demographic features, its labour market's demand, its facilities, etc. However, one can identify a number of principal guidelines for the establishment of university districts and educational complexes:

1. The establishment of mini-complexes, including various educational institutions and organisations, and supporting the necessary teaching environment for implementing continuous education. The 'educational route' should encompass

all levels of learning, from the preparatory groups of pre-school institutions to the system of postgraduate professional education.

2. The establishment of branches, teaching/consulting outlets and research/educational centres of a university, mainly within the relevant regions, but also outside it.
3. Expanding the range of training courses offered by a university; the opening of new departments should depend upon the region's need for appropriately skilled personnel.
4. The development of the necessary facilities in order to conduct scientific research along various lines of the region's social and economic development. Any research institutions acting as subdivisions of a university are intended to conduct a study at the forefront of contemporary science and to satisfy the needs of the developing industries in the region. In this regard, the university must act as an education, research and innovation complex (ERIC), and it should focus on the development of science and the commercialisation of research results that are needed for the transition to an innovative economy and for the establishment of a 'national innovation system'.

Advanced research activities should help the university to achieve new qualitative and quantitative characteristics confirming its status and its high academic and teaching potential. It is important to concentrate on high-priority research subjects in accordance with the key objectives of national policy, with respect to the development of science and technologies.

Ethno-cultural and socio-economic diversity within the Russian Federation further places requirements upon the development of a new model for educational centres capable of consolidating the efforts of research and educational organisations around a leading institution. Of course, today's ramified network of educational institutions in each region will not allow us to reproduce the university district model, which existed in the 19th century. However, it is the federal university in a Russian Federation region that is intended to address the most important challenges of current educational policy and to act as the technique -forming element of the whole educational system.

Similar current tasks to develop the university education system are characteristic of all European countries and their political units. In particular, we are interested in the higher education system existing in Cyprus.

Cyprus Universities: The Integration of Science and Education

Cyprus' higher education sector provides for the demands of the country's economy and industry, as well as the demands of society and cares for the educational needs of foreign students from all over the world. The University of Nicosia, Cyprus (UNIC), for instance, is the largest one, both in Cyprus and Southern Europe. It enrolls more than 11,500 students from more than 70 countries who study in various Bachelor's and Master's programmes. It is also the largest university in Cyprus that teaches in English. The majority of these programmes are offered distantly (via online technologies), and it is the first Greek or Cyprus university that has received a five-star award from the European Foundation for Quality Management.

UNIC has a full professional accreditation from the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber. In addition, UNIC is a Platinum Service Provider in Global Training – the status that was awarded to the university by Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), and this educational facility holds an 'Excellence Award' from the Cyprus Workers' Confederation.

Participating in a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), UNIC is aimed at international cooperation and adheres to the academic mobility principle in a number of projects with the world's leading universities, including Russian higher education facilities. In 2016, a landmark agreement in the field of education and science was signed by the Russian Minister of Education and Science, Olga Vasilieva, and Cyprus Minister of Education and Culture, Costas Kadis. The agreement aims to develop effective cooperation between the two countries, as well as to increase academic mobility and to carry out research in various spheres.

Due to the recent development of Cyprus' higher education sector, it has now become possible to implement a number of international projects in research and development technologies, social sphere, economy and industry. Before the beginning of the 1990s, Cyprus' youth had to receive higher education abroad, mainly in UK, Russian and the US universities. However, in the late 1980s to early 1990s, an array of higher education facilities opened in Cyprus, including the University of Cyprus, the University of Nicosia, Neapolis University, Cyprus European University, Open University of Cyprus, Frederick University and Cyprus University of Technology.

The University of Cyprus is a public facility that enrolls students in its four schools – economy and governance, humanitarian and social sciences, applied

sciences and philology. Education is carried out in Greek, Turkish and English languages. Open University of Cyprus allows for distance learning, with the focus on advanced technologies and methodology development. Cyprus University of Technology boasts a wide range of educational programmes in Greek and Turkish, while Frederick University has six schools that provide for technical, humanitarian and liberal studies.

Thus, the system of higher education in Cyprus meets the demands of the country in professional staff for various fields. Interestingly, colleges in Cyprus also make up a part of this system. After a four-year study in a college, it is possible to get a bachelor's degree. There are many colleges in the tourism and hospitality industry. Some of them even offer double-diploma programmes. For example, Intercollege has a double-diploma programme with Indianapolis University. In Russia, such facilities also exist and are rapidly developing, however, they are not a part of the higher education system and rather provide for specialised secondary education. At the same time, Russia can make use of Cyprus' experience in implementing applied bachelor's programmes within the framework of multi-level education which integrates secondary and higher education.

What Russia and Cyprus also have in common in terms of higher education is their multicultural nature, as they both seek to create a multicultural environment that puts a strong emphasis on foreign language learning for future professionals. Cyprus has a number of language centres (such as the Language Centre at the University of Cyprus) which have courses in Russian, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Turkish. These centres provide classes in language learning for adults, thus linking higher education with Cyprus' society, developing multilanguage culture, and enriching cross-cultural communication.

Cyprus European University offers a course in English Philology and Linguistics, while the University of Nicosia offers a course in English Language and Literature.

Undoubtedly, language training is an important instrument in developing cross-cultural professional communication in the modern globalised world. It also helps to develop networks of universities nationally and internationally. The possibilities this combination of professional effort provides can bring about better developed social and economic results that are directly linked with higher education.

The modernisation of higher education, based on the integration of science, education and industry, and the current system of continuing higher education, have

resulted in the universitisation of higher education. Universities now have a new role as centres for continuous professional education and the increased requirements for both prospective students and quality teaching. The development of academic mobility and remote learning and the use of competency-based approaches in the process of teaching have also facilitated the establishment of university networks.

Remote learning is the most readily accessible approach, because, on the one hand, it allows a reduction in the teaching cost, and, on the other hand, a student does not have to spend money to live in a different, often more economically developed, country. In addition, remote education, being in no way limited by the size of classrooms, allows a higher number of students to be covered and an increased learning efficiency due to the use of up-to-date technologies, online libraries and other resources that contribute to the development of a single educational environment.

The competency-based approach, relying on the rules, standards and criteria of education, makes the learning process more clearly focused on its ultimate results. Depending upon specific requests in a given segment of the labour market, the approach makes it possible to model the results of education as a standard of its quality and to ensure the mobility of graduates in the ever-changing conditions of the labour market.

The spread of information technologies is another factor contributing to the development of university networks. The principal requirement of a contemporary information society is the rapid acquisition of knowledge, as well as its continuous updating. The IT breakthrough in the 1990s made new remote technologies one of the efficient modes of learning. As I. Prigogine aptly notes, in a network society, 'Information technologies create ties affecting many non-linearities and producing a lot of new opportunities in the form of bifurcations'.[9]

Information Technologies and Networking

The use of modern information technologies in the field of education not only increases the efficiency of the educational process but also helps to develop network-based forms of education and to create various education environments.

[9] I. R. Prigogine, 'Network Society', *Sotsis*, No. 1 (2008), 25.

Networking promotes the achievement of certain objectives, which lie outside the interests of particular universities and are of considerable interest for the relevant region. These objectives include:

- the reasonable use of human, natural and financial resources in the region;
- a high economic return on investments in network projects, drawing the attention of the region's governmental bodies and influential actors to higher education;
- the formation of universal basic values of education and culture;
- the involvement of internal resources, sources and mechanisms in the development of higher education;
- the transfer and transmission of advanced educational, research and management experience, tailored to the specific requirements of the macro-region
- and the transformation of network interaction among universities into an innovative space.[10]

Network cooperation enhances the efficiency and competitiveness of universities by combining the partners' complementary competencies and resources, and establishes the basis for long-term trustful relations. In turn, networking accelerates the process of negotiating and making multilateral decisions and enables a fast response to any changes in the educational environment. The network organisation of universities' activities contributes to their interaction at the regional, national and international levels.

To date, two forms of network organisation of universities' activities exist: networked universities and networks of universities.

Currently, there is not a generally accepted concept of a university network. Despite the use of the world 'university' in this term, a network university is irrelevant to the classic concept of university. Instead of being a higher institution of education as such, it is rather an equal cooperation of tertiary schools and an organisation of an educational programme, which involves special strategies for its development and promotion. In the opinion of O. Belenov, 'In the definition of the network university, the central element is that it includes multiple and diverse participants, being either individual classical universities or other specialised higher

[10] G. Ye. Zborovsky and P. A. Ambarova, 'Network interaction of higher educational institutions in the system of higher education of the Urals macro-region', *Ekonomika Regiona* [Regional Economics], Vol. 13. No. 2 (2017), 446 [in Russian].

schools'.[11] Network structures expand the social interaction systems of universities and enhance not only their cooperation but also their interaction with research institutions, public organisations and business entities at the international, national and regional levels.

Network universities have a number of attributes. First, the participants in the process voluntarily make connections, as they have mutual desires to develop cooperation and to reach compromise solutions that ensure the flexibility of any network structure. Second, it is the existence of a long-term goal, which, while being attractive to all, cannot be achieved by participants acting individually. Third, the participants in the networking activities are independent and can implement certain objectives to address their national or regional needs when participating in joint projects. Moreover, multiple levels of interaction and multiple leaders make the network structure stable.

Both associated and full members may participate in a network university. The associated members of any network university may include universities acting as educational institutions, research entities, high-tech companies and other interested parties, such as governmental agencies or business entities. The associated members are involved in the development and implementation of specific projects, programmes and activities as part of network interaction. The full members of a network university are entities offering educational services, namely universities in those countries, which are involved in the implementation of network-based educational programmes.

The network university model is the most typical model for the ex-USSR countries. To date, a SCO network university, a CIS network university and an Arctic network university have been established. Concerning a BRICS network university and an EAEU network university, the preparation and negotiation of the key forms of their future operation are underway.

At the macro level, the key objectives of network universities are to increase the quality of education in order to provide high-skilled human resources for the economies of the participating countries; the formation of a single educational space; the enhancement of economic mobility and the consolidation of resources for research activities.

[11] O. N. Belenov and M. V. Kirchan, (2016) 'Network universities as a form of development of higher education: forms, organisational features and prospects'. http://www.vestnik.vsu.ru/pdf/educ/2016/01/2016-01-24.pdf [in Russian].

At the middle level, group interaction enables a network university to become a tool for the relevant region's economic development, to secure the training of high-skilled specialists for those industries, which will be contributing to the economy, to establish strong ties with business entities, to attract investments into the region and to preserve the cultural identity of the region.

Universities that are full members of the network university also benefit by increasing their rating levels due to several factors. The internationalisation of their educational services attract foreign students, they develop new important research fields, while their international image is improved. In addition, students and instructors have the chance to participate in exchange programmes with their partner universities, and there are wider publication opportunities in connection with contributing to the scientific publications of their partner universities, as an outcome, the internationalisation of research results. Network university members also have the potential to obtain additional federal funding with respect to their participation in special-purpose educational programmes with their partner universities.

However, the establishment and subsequent operation of network universities encounter a number of barriers, which require huge efforts to overcome. Ye. Voyevoda identifies four types of communication barriers: lingua-socio-cultural, institutional, information technology and financial[12] It is very common that certain parts of the region covered by a network university are different in terms of their historical past and present and are very different in terms of culture, that makes it considerably more difficult for students who study abroad to adapt . Language barriers are a serious problem that requires a well-balanced comprehensive solution. As regards the CIS network university, Russian remains to be a widespread language throughout the post-Soviet area and can be used as the language of learning and communication. However, the SCO network university, where Chinese universities are full members, is faced with some problems related both to the adaptation of students to a different cultural environment and to the need to learn Chinese in order to study in those universities. The lingua-social situation in the BRICS network university would still be more difficult, because there would be no common historical or cultural points.

[12] Ye. V. Voyevoda, 'Communication barriers in the BRICS educational space'. *Mezhdunarodnye Protsessy* (International Processes), Vol. 13, No. 4 (2015), 108.

Another relevant issue is the prospective language of learning and communication, since the BRICS countries have no common language space. English is one of the official languages in South Africa and India, whereas students from Russia, Brazil or China need to have sufficient fluency in it to understand the university curriculum. In addition to English, foreign students also have to learn the local language of the country in which they will be studying for basic everyday communication purposes. The need to pass a mandatory entrance exam in Portuguese to get into a Brazilian university would be another obstacle. Establishing a preparatory department as part of the network university in order to improve language skills and communicative competencies can be a solution to this problem, but that, in turn, may increase tuition fees.

Institutional barriers encompass a number of problems related to the ethno-cultural differences that complicate studying in a country with different cultural traditions, as well as searching for employment. This group also includes certain academic organisation barriers related to the integration of educational systems in the form of recognising academic degrees, reporting forms and credits, as well as recognising periods of study in partner universities. Certain regulatory barriers arise from differences in the levels of higher education in the participating countries. These differences impede the development of uniform educational standards in network universities.

As O. Volenko correctly puts it, 'The evolution of information and telecommunication technologies results in a radically new professional education system'.[13] The use of state-of-the-art information and telecommunication technologies allows us to bring the learning process to a new level by providing students and instructors with access to information. On the one hand, this solves the problem of rapid 'outdating' of knowledge, where on the other hand, this encourages students to search for information on their own and to learn continuously, as it contributes to the development of remote learning.

To date, many universities cannot boast sufficient assets and facilities for making online educational and information resources available to their students. The lack of modern computer hardware and Internet access creates information tech-

[13] G. S. Zhukova and O. I. Volenko, 'The theoretical and methodological basis for remote learning in the field of social education', *Proceedings of the Russian State Social University* (Moscow: Russian State Social University, 2010), No. 5, 30.

nology barriers that prevent students from studying academic subjects in various areas independently.

Financial barriers considerably slow down the development of network universities and affect the equipment of research centres and laboratories. The participants in the network universities initially have different financial potentials, and this fact can jeopardise from the beginning the implementation of some objectives included in a network university development project. Moreover, given that eliminating inequality in the field of educational services is one of the fundamental goals of educational integration, the lack of funding in some universities originally places them in an unfavourable position. A talented student, capable of paying for his or her education, would select a university that would allow that student to unleash his or her potential, provide a higher level of knowledge and develop the competencies necessary for subsequent successful employment.

International networks of universities, which began to appear actively in the late 1990s, represent the second type of network cooperation, which is a characteristic of western universities. These network partnerships include three or more tertiary institutions to develop long-term cooperation among various lines. They can be called associations, unions, consortia or networks. In addition to institutes of higher education, partners may include business entities, governmental or non-profit organisations, research centres or other entities.

This form of cooperation through university networks is attractive because its participants operate on the basis of 'bilateral intergovernmental treaties, their own national laws, their charters and local rules applicable in the course of educational, administrative or other activities'.[14] Referring to the Consortium Agreement for the Establishment of the Network University of the Commonwealth of Independent States,[15] A. Oganesyan emphasises that the consortium agreement does not impose any property or financial obligations on its parties, nor does it restrict their independence in performing their chartered activities.

International university networks can be established on the initiative of partner universities, as a natural expansion of their long-term and fruitful cooperation. This would create prerequisites for them to interact more efficiently with each other and with other universities, for business entities and non-profit organisations to

[14] A. A. Oganesyan, 'New forms of university cooperation: international university networks', *Vestnik RUDN* [RUDN Bulletin], *Economics Series*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2017), 354.

[15] Education and Distance Learning in the CIS, available at http://cis.rudn.ru/doc/1685.

be involved with their projects and for implementing joint projects. The League of European Research Universities (LERU) engaged in fundamental research in European universities can exemplify cooperation of this kind.

International university networks can also be established on the initiative of governmental authorities. For example, the International Strategic Technology Alliance intended to enhance the global competitiveness of China's leading technology universities was created and operates with significant support from the Ministry of Education of China.

Other initiators of international university networks may include non-educational institutions. In 1999, the UN and UNESCO established the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), which includes 210 institutions, located in 78 countries, where UNESCO departments exist.

In terms of geography, international university networks can be divided into two categories: those which apply no limitations on the location of their partner universities and those consisting of universities located in countries belonging to a specific region. The second group of university networks includes, for instance, the Baltic Sea Region Universities Network.

Similar to network universities, international university networks also use a membership system of participation. However, in addition to full and associated membership, affiliated, institutional and individual memberships also exist. The membership type depends solely upon the type of entity/institution and the territorial criterion. In GUNI, for example, full membership may only be granted to higher educational institutions, research centres, UNESCO departments in higher educational institutions or other networks existing for more than eight years. On the other hand, associated membership may be granted to non-governmental organisations, civic community organisations and foundations connected with higher education, institutions associated with the UN or UNESCO, or institutions acting in the fields of sustainable development, human values and rights, or social changes.

Members in an international university network interact primarily through their joint activities, such as conferences, seminars, forums, and working group meetings, as well as through the establishment of summer or winter language or subject-specific schools in partner universities or brief personnel development courses.

Programmes intended to enhance academic mobility that facilitates the internationalisation of education are the genuine efficiency indicators of interaction

among the partners/participants in a university network. European Union funds such programmes as Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus, are often used to finance student mobility programmes.

Development of the International Network of Universities: The Search for Resources and Ways of Interaction with BusinessAnother important segment of cooperation within a network is implementing joint research projects and performing joint research activities in various fields. To this end, joint laboratories or research centres could be established, joint interdisciplinary research groups could be formed and considerable financial resources could be provided.

As communication technologies actively evolve, international university networks pay much attention to the development of online projects and remote education. They create online platforms for language learning, conduct web seminars and web conferences, develop and implement remote education technologies and virtual mobility programmes.

The development and implementation of joint programmes and dual degree programmes among partner universities at various levels of study is the most complex form of interaction within an international university network. To date, only a few university networks operate such joint educational programmes at the postgraduate and doctoral levels.

In order to ensure successful interaction, international university networks should be built according to a cluster model on the basis of certain centres of excellence represented by leading universities, research institutes or innovative businesses, and they should be managed within the network itself. In order to achieve their common objectives, partners/participants should be ready to make available resources for their further accumulation/redistribution.

Furthermore, one of the most important prerequisites for network interaction is the availability of an information/communication technology platform. In order to maintain the sustainable development and cooperation of universities, it is necessary to overcome communication barriers by joint efforts. Interaction among the participants in the network is driven by their objective need for communication, which results in a wide range and multiple levels of possible interrelations and requires radically new approaches toward solving the problems of leadership and management.[16]

[16] Ye. A. Neretina, 'Networking as the basis for rapid development of universities', *Vyssheye*

The formation of international university networks is beneficial to both universities and non-educational, partner entities. Close cooperation with business entities enables the universities to 'coordinate their curricula with labour market demand and facilitates the employment of graduates and the commercialisation of research and development results. In turn, companies operating in the manufacturing industries acquire the ability to influence the training programme for future specialists and to assist the universities in the development of practical research in any areas that are of interest to such companies'.[17] A. Melikyan emphasises that the involvement of governmental agencies in the activities of international university networks helps promote the ideas of reforming higher education at the governmental level, because in this case such governmental agencies get a more complete understanding of the difficulties universities face when implementing their educational programmes. This may contribute to the development of more efficient measures of governmental support for the universities for the purpose of developing higher education in the relevant country and on a global scale.

In the contemporary world, as a response to the challenges of both globalisation and regionalisation, universities, as F.X. Grau believes, should become 'glocal' (global + local = 'glocal'), i.e., each of them should act as the key local cluster by creating, on the one hand, a structure for the development of the region and, on the other hand, by increasing the investment potential for the development of science and innovation projects.[18]

Taking into account the evolution of cross-border regions, we deem it advisable that, given the growing internationalisation of education, the network cooperation of universities should follow both the model of the network university and the model of the international university network. Network cooperation establishes and enhances the basis for joint activities of the members/participants with respect to the development of the region and its infrastructure, facilitates the augmentation of the human potential, makes a huge contribution to the formation of strong communities, promotes stable economic development within the cross-border region, as well as creates global ties and increases competitiveness on a global scale.

Obrazovaniye v Rossii [Higher Education in Russia], No. 4 (2013), 128 [in Russian].

[17] A.V. Melikyan, 'Key characteristics of international university networks', *Voprosy Obrazovaniya* [Issues of Education], No. 3 (2014), 110 [in Russian].

[18] F. X. Grau, B. Hall and R. Tandon, *Higher Education in the World 6. Towards a Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global with the Local* (Girona: Global University Network for Innovation, 2017), available at https://www.researchgate.net/.

Network cooperation will allow the regional economy to satisfy its demand for specialists, meeting the requirements of a new digital economy in those sectors, which are most beneficial to the development of the region. With network cooperation, universities will be able to better adapt their curricula to the changing conditions of the labour market and to respond more rapidly to any changes in market conditions. A significant reduction in, and a more reasonable structure of, their costs will allow the network participants to focus on their key competencies and to eliminate the duplication of a number of functions.

Academic mobility, being an important component of cross-border education, follows certain laws of migration. In order to make cross-border educational ties operate in a stable manner, time is required to overcome communication barriers and establish personal networks and channels, ensuring safety and psychological comfort when adapting to a different culture.

However, any efforts intended to reflect common values and to promote the interests of any peoples inhabiting a cross-border region contribute to cultural diversity and language, ethnic and gender equality. The development of remote education facilitates the provision of equal access to education for representatives of various social strata, which is an important factor in evaluating the efficiency of educational policy.

Study Results

Education is intended to be an effective tool of government policy. In this regard, it is necessary to keep in mind the following objectives:

- To form a consolidated educational space supporting a highly efficient system of services and conditions that meet the educational needs of all social strata and groups;
- To develop research-proven practices of youth socialisation and upbringing on the basis of universal human values and national values;[19]
- To transform education into a developing and self-developing system capable of supporting both the development of an individual and the develop-

[19] V.S. Lednev, 'Standards of general education: from an idea to implementation', *Bulletin of the Russian Academy of Education*, No. 1.59-68.W. Rokiska (ed., *Education Documentation, Research and Decision-Making: National Case Studies* (Paris: UNESCO-IBE, 1999). Rokiska W. (Ed.). Education Documentation, Research and Decision-Making: National Case Studies. Paris: UNESCO-IBE, 1999.

ment of local communities on the condition of corporate interaction among all social institutions.

The development of the education system is intended to preserve national identity, as well as to create the conditions for free entry into the global information and cultural/educational space, given the globalisation and internationalisation of global processes.

The process of cultural internationalisation has contributed to the transformation of the centuries-old mechanisms for socio-cultural succession and the reinvention of national values in the context of universal human imperatives. It has become necessary for education to perform the universal cultural mission of guaranteeing the preservation and development of the civilisational achievements and rules shaping the real human.[20] In this regard, it is important to note that the educational system of each state, on the one hand, constitutes an integral and independent socio-pedagogical structure with its intrinsic ethno-regional features, socio-cultural differences and functional relations among its components. Nevertheless, they are integrated in the European educational space.

Having reviewed the socio-cultural situation in which education currently develops, we believe that the upgrading of teaching realities can only be successful if any practical reform has a robust basis in pedagogical theory. In this case, any concept will not only be implemented but will also result in a genuine improvement of the education system in the current socio-cultural conditions. The implementation of network universities, which are able to perform the principal mission of integrating the organisational and content-related resources for the development of professional education which is driven by the needs of territories and countries of the modern world, would contribute to the achievement of the existing objectives.

[20] Education for the Twenty-first Century. Report to U N E S C O of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, 1996. Paris: UNESCO Publishin. http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_62.pdf; E. Buchtel, 'Cultural sensitivity or cultural stereotyping? Positive and negative effects of a cultural psychology class', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 39 (2014), DOI.org: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.003. Education for the Twenty-first Century. Issues and Prospects. Contributions to the Work of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, 1998. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. Buchtel, E. Cultural sensitivity or cultural stereotyping? Positive and negative effects of a cultural psychology class. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations. 2014; 39. P. 40-52. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.003.*

Discussion and Conclusions

The goal of the principles set forth in the Bologna process documents is the formation of a consolidated educational, information and communication space for the participating countries. This is considered to be a tool for the achievement of the objective, i.e., to assist the development of a dynamic, knowledge-based economy. The expanded capabilities of a consolidated system of education is connected with addressing a set of tasks, including: the harmonisation of the degree structure (bachelor's, master's); the implementation of up-to-date techniques for assessing education quality; the provision of incentives for the academic mobility of students, administrative staff, professors and instructors in universities; the transparency of curricula, etc.

European countries should by all means facilitate the exercise of academic freedoms and to develop academic mobility.

Academic mobility is intended to solve several problems. Students get access to educational resources,while instructors, researchers and administrative staff ensure their research activities and teaching practices with leading educational and professional retraining institutions. In addition, academic mobility is intended to help the understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity and to promote the development of the sense of unity (identity). It is important to provide stipends in order to enhance academic mobility of instructors and students; to create a website for the exchange of experiences in importing and exporting educational services; and, to establish development programmes for instructors, researchers and administrative staff in the fields of science and education.

The following measures would contribute to the expansion of such mobility:

- To set up a coordination board which would include representatives of governmental authorities, educational and research institutions, employers and other stakeholders;
- To develop programmes that support talented young students, expand research activities and support scientific schools and educational initiatives.

The continuous nature of education should enable any individual to move within the educational space and provide the individual with optimum conditions for such movement and for his or her professional and personal self-fulfilment.

The development of education is inseparable from the expansion of scientific research, along with the priority of social and economic development. Leading uni-

versities, as large research centres, should produce new generations of scientists. The following key *quality criteria of specialist training* can be proposed:

1) An individual's focus on embracing the values of continuous education, self-determination and self-development;
2) An individual's activity and ability to select and adequately use (taking into account his or her own qualities and properties) the methods, forms and means required to implement the objectives and tasks of continuous education;
3) A self-assessment reflecting the individual's attitude toward him- or herself, his or her acts and behaviour, and influencing the process of continuous education;
4) A tendency for reform and reflection as well as for self-control, i.e. the comparison, analysis and correction of the relationship between the goals, means and results of the individual's acts;
5) Scientific and theoretical competence.

The consolidation of joint efforts in building an educational space based on uniform principles and approaches should be aimed at large-scale and promising projects among European countries. The development of network universities intended to consolidate intellectual, technological and physical resources to improve the quality of professional education would contribute to these tasks. Solving of these tasks would be an important component of sustainable regional and global development.

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Declaration

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