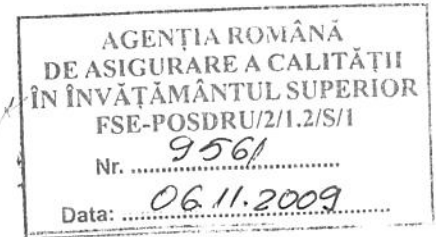


**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT
FOR ARACIS OF THE MIHAIL KOGALNICEANU UNIVERSITY,
IASI, OCTOBER 2009**



Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional re-accreditation process of Mihail Kogalniceanu University in Iasi. The audit took place between Wednesday 21 October and Friday 23 October 2009.

The evaluation team consisted of the following members, in addition to myself:

- Prof. univ. dr. Lazar Vlasceanu – Director of the Evaluation
- Prof. univ. dr. Falvius A. Baias – Coordinator of the Evaluation
- Prof. univ. dr. Nicolae Todea – Institutional Committee Expert
- Prof. univ. dr. Ioan Sabau – Program Expert (Law)
- Prof. univ. dr. Zoltan Rostas – Consultative Committee Expert
- Delia Badoi – Scientific Secretary
- Alina Gavra – Student Evaluator
- Marius Imbrea – Student Evaluator

The evaluation process began on Wednesday, 21st October at 9 a.m. in the Rector's office. Mihail Kogalniceanu University (UMK) was represented by the Rector Prof. univ. dr. Genoveva Vrabie, the Dean of the Law Faculty Prof. univ. dr. Aurora Ciuca and the Vice-Dean of the Law Faculty Lect. PhD. Roxana Prisacariu. The Rector welcomed the evaluation team. Then she talked about the history of the university and its present situation. This was followed by a tour at the university to see the infrastructure of the institution.

Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. the group of experts was working on different aspects of the accreditation. In my role as Foreign Expert Evaluator, I was responsible for establishing an overview of the whole university and was allowed to move freely,

talking to members of staff and students of the university. At 4 p.m. we had an appointment with a group of about 50 undergraduate students and at 5 p.m. there was a meeting with a group of about 15 graduate students of UMK.

The first day ended with a meeting of the evaluators.

The team continued the evaluation process on Thursday, 22nd October starting at 9 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. At 4 p.m. there was a one hour meeting with the representatives of graduates' employers.

The evaluation process was finished on Friday, 23rd October when the team of experts prepared the final report. The evaluation process was conducted in open and collegial manner.

General Statements

Mihail Kogalniceanu University operates according to the Constitution and the laws that govern the higher education system in Romania.

UMK is an accredited private institute of higher education and was founded in 1990. It is functioning on the basis of Law no. 137/2005.

The didactic structure of UMK is very simple as it has one faculty. The Faculty of Law performs its activity in two departments: the Department of Public Law and the Department of Private Law. Two other educational units belong to the Faculty of Law: the Department of History – Geography; the Department of International relations and European Studies.

The organizational structure of UMK is quite large for its size if we compare it with the number of students and teachers.

UMK licensed to offer three complete programs, one Bachelor and two Masters, which are led to degrees. Mihail Kogalniceanu University changed the programs in 2005 according to the European Bologna process.

The University has 731 enrolled students in the academic year of 2009/2010.

The quality of human resources at UMK seems to be on a good level but scientific potential should be strengthened.

Managerial Structure

The management of the university is organised in accordance with its legal obligations, which are stated in the university's charter. In terms of structure, the university is led by a Rector. The Rector's duties include the strategic leadership of the university and representing the university at judicial and public bodies.

Within UMK the managing activity functions on three decision levels:

- The Senate of the University;
- The Council of the Faculty of Law;
- The management offices of departments and units.

Senate is the main decision making body of the university which consists of a mixture of appointed and elected representatives. There are 14 persons in the Senate at UMK: 11 teaching staff and 3 students (21,4%). The Organization Regulations for the Election of the Management is an integrant part of the University Charter.

Management system is based on the integrated information systems in a unified system that provides automated data records, functional departments of the University by communicating through the intranet system. University Management System (UMS) is an instrument dedicated to the administration of activities from the educational process that exists in the academic environments. It seemed to me that UMS operating quite well at UMK which supports the educational administration.

Comment: According to the Romanian regulation a quarter of the Senate should be the representatives of the students. Raising the number of the student's representatives might grow the confidence of the students. I also recommend *involving more students* in the council of the Law Faculty.

The Senate of the Hungarian universities includes besides the teaching staff and the elected representatives of the student community also elected representatives of the technical and nontechnical employee.

Teaching Staff

The number of academic staff at the UMK in the academic year 2009/2010 is 48. There are 28 employees in the academic staff who is employed full-time by the university and 25% of them are professors and associate professors. Almost all academic staff members at UMK are PhD holders (70,8%) or they are working to achieve PhD degree (27,1%). There is only one member of the didactic staff who does not do any PhD activity. UMK has now a well qualified young didactic staff (more than one third is under 40 years old).

Comment: The qualification of the academic staff is on quite good level, *the number of the full-time lectures could be higher*. Although the part-time lectures could be leading practitioners in their field, that may be very beneficial for the students, but usually they do not have enough time for the students. I strongly recommend increasing the number of full-time employees in the academic staff.

Facilities

The University functions in a building in which there are two completely different parts. The old part of the building was not designed for its current purpose so it needs some reconstruction. The new part of the building is quite well designed. There are three huge lecture halls with 536 seats, 13 seminar rooms with 400 seats and laboratories.

The equipments of the educational spaces are under the requirement of the European standards (e.g. lack of sufficient projecting systems, internet access etc.). Also the laboratories need new and modern equipments. The numbers of PCs which can be used by the students are very few.

The library of the University owns more than 10000 volumes (7911 books and 2802 periodicals). Some of them are signed by well known authors but the others should be updated.

The reading room has 80 places with a surface of 148,5 square metres. It functions more as a book depot than as a modern learning resources centre. There is no

access on the computer to the stored bibliographic data and no access to the legal data basis.

There is no students' hostel and sports facilities at the campus.

Comment: It is very important for the university *to invest* in its physical infrastructure. The lack of sufficient number of books in the library was mentioned when we had the appointment with the students.

Students

In the academic year of 2009/2010 there is the following number of students at UMK in each program:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Law | 672
(556 BA / 116 MA) |
| • International Relationships and European Studies | 40 |
| • Geography | 19 |

At the appointment with the students and during my discussions with them, I found them very decent and open minded but critical. I was surprised that the students I met did not speak too much English.

They mentioned that the relationship between students and teachers is very good. The members of the academic staff are very helpful.

The students would take part in European and International exchange programs if there were possibilities.

There is only one LLLP ERASMUS agreement with UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID for teacher mobility. As I recognized most of the international connections are informal so they are not implemented into contracts.

Comment: It is recommended to enter into mutual agreements and involve the students taking part in mobility activities. It will help the language qualification of the students and it is also suits to the EU recommendations which *inspire the students to study one semester abroad*.

At the meeting with the representatives of the employers, they seemed very pleased with those students who graduated from UMK.

I could not get too much information about the Students Union. I am afraid that the student's organization operates very formally.

Research

Research activity is performed by the didactic staff and students. It is mainly organised through the Centre of European Studies and Communitarian Law and the Francophone Centre of Constitutional Law. They are focussed on the following fields: Law, International Relations and European Studies, Geography.

The scientific research appears in presented papers at conferences, in articles published in journals and books mainly at national level. The publication activity of the academic staff is very unbalanced. There are members of the didactic staff who had only very few publications in the period from 2005 to 2009.

UMK organize scientific sessions, symposiums, workshops and other manifestations of scientific character (e.g. 8th International Conference on Law and Language, 2002).

The research activity seems to be growing at UMK but still not satisfactory.

Comment: Most of the members of academic staff should increase their publications and I would also encourage the university to develop its international collaborative links, as there is much to be learned from the experience of colleagues across Europe and elsewhere.

Quality Management

UMK pays a special attention to the quality assurance. A central committee of quality assurance supervises all activities at university level.

UMK has structures, strategies, policies and procedures for quality assurance of the teaching and research process.

UMK regularly reviews its courses and gathers student feedback.

Comment: In my opinion the quality management at UMK is *very formal*. *The description of the procedure is too complicated.*

Conclusion

UMK is in a very difficult situation probably because of the worldwide economic crisis. Most of their innovation and development has to be postponed because lack of appropriate financial means.

In such circumstances, one is tempted not to offer any recommendations, but I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the University Management in the process of continual improvement.

I emphasize the following:

- UMK should invest in physical infrastructure and facilities when funds allow.
- I strongly suggest developing international links and collaborations to support international research activities and encourage students taking part in exchange and mobility programmes.
- I understand that budgetary pressures are such that it is becoming increasingly difficult to employ and retain a highly qualified staff, but it is worth the university's being cognizant of this as an ongoing issue.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to the Rector and all the University staff for the pleasant atmosphere and the support during my stay in Iasi. Also much gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for the professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

At least but not last special thanks to ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process in Romania.

Pécs, 30-10-2009



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