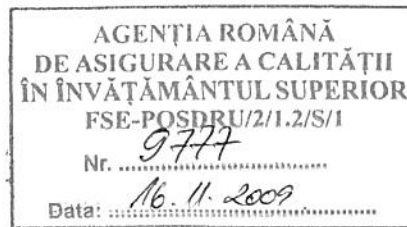


Prof. Dr. Sc. Petar Kolev
Technical University – Varna
Naval Architecture department
"Studentska" 1
9010 Varna, Bulgaria
Foreign Short-Term Expert-Institutional Evaluator



**EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT FOR ARACIS
OF THE MIRCEA CEL BATRAN NAVAL ACADEMY,
CONSTANTA, ROMANIA
November 2009**

Introduction

I was appointed as a Foreign External Evaluator for the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) and I was consequently invited to join the evaluation team for the institutional accreditation process of "MIRCEA CEL BATRAN NAVAL ACADEMY" (MBNA) in Constanta, Romania. I received from ARACIS in advance by Internet the "Report on Institutional Self-Assessment" prepared by MBNA (in English) which contained 33 pages and which gave me necessary preliminary information for institution. I arrived in Constanta 3rd November 2009 where the Vice-Rector MBNA Prof. University Dr. Captain Vergil CHITAC met me.

The audit took place between Wednesday 4th November and Friday 6th November 2009. The evaluation team consisted of the following members:

- Prof. PhD Stefan Szamoskozi – Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca – Mission Director
- Prof. PhD Anton Hadar – Polytechnic University of Bucharest – Evaluators' Coordinator
- Lecturer PhD Oana Stănilă – Economic Sciences Academy Bucharest – Scientific Secretary
- Prof. PhD Petar Kolev – Technical University of Varna, Bulgaria – Foreign Expert
- Prof. PhD Alexandru Popovici – Petroleum and Natural Gas University of Ploiesti – Consulting Commission Expert
- Prof. PhD Victor Munteanu – Romanian-American University of Bucharest – Institutional Commission Expert
- Prof. PhD Benone Sfarlog – Land forces Academy of Sibiu – Military Expert
- Prof. PhD Florentin Moraru – Military Technical Academy of Bucharest – Expert for the Programme of Studies: Navigation, Hydrography and Naval Equipment
- Prof. PhD Leonard Domnisoru – „Lower Danube” University of Galati - Expert for the Programme of Studies: Navigation and Maritime&River Transportation
- Diana Iabrașu – Evaluator Student – “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași
- Valentin Oros - Evaluator Student - Polytechnic University of Timisoara
- Lecturer PhD Oana Stănilă – Scientific secretary, ARACIS representative - Economic Sciences Academy Bucharest

The "MIRCEA CEL BATRAN NAVAL ACADEMY" (MBNA) was represented by the Rector Rear Admiral (LH) Dan HAULICA. The Vice-Rector Prof. University Dr. Captain Vergil CHITAC was the local coordinator and the contact person to the team of evaluators.

Except the main "Report on Institutional Self-Assessment" the MIRCEA CEL BATRAN NAVAL ACADEMY has prepared 174 annexes which could be used by Commission.

The evaluation process began on Wednesday the 4th November at 9 AM in the Senate room of the Naval Academy in participation of the mission members and leaders of MBNA. The meeting started with introductory statements of the mission from Prof. PhD Anton Hadar who also asked the members of the evaluation team to introduce themselves. Then Rear Admiral (LH) Dan HAULICA the Rector of Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy welcomed the evaluation team and asked the colleagues of the university management to introduce themselves too. Between 10,00 AM and 1,00 PM. 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. I was allowed to move freely, talking to members of staff and students of the university.

The same day between 2,30 PM and 5,30 PM a tour of the Academy and its facilities followed. We could see the main teaching facilities, laboratories and library and discussed with the corresponding leading lecturers. At 5.30 PM we had a meeting with a group of about 150 former students graduated of the Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy. My main impression was that the former students had a good realisation in Navy and Maritime industry and they were satisfied by there employments. Between 18,30 and 21,00 we had next meeting with about 30 leading navy officers and managers from maritime industry graduated also by MBNA. I am impressed by the existing close contacts between them and academic body of the Naval Academy. They activity discussed the problems and the future development of MBNA.

The evaluator team continued the evaluation process on Thursday the 5th November starting at 09,00 until 13,00 with meeting with more then 300 students from Navy faculty and Merchant Marine faculty. The students discussed the education process in MBNA and answered to questions of mission members. I could ask my questions in English and the students demonstrated good knowledge of the language. The same day afternoon I continue my work with discussion on curriculum and study programs with the professors of Naval Academy. Additionally I received essential help from responsible vice rectors discussing many items described in the "Report on Institutional Self-assessment" of MBNA.

The evaluation process continued on Friday the 6th November with a visit of the frigate "King Ferdinand", navy submarine and training vessel "Mircea" specialized for training of Naval Academy cadets. We received detail information for interaction between Navy and Academy. At last the team of experts prepared the draft report of the institutional evaluation. The entire evaluation process was supported in collegial manner and open and friendly help from MBNA staff.

General Statements

Mircea cel Bătrân Naval Academy is an accredited state institution of higher education and scientific research which undertakes the mission to train specialists within the fundamental domains of engineering sciences mainly connected with navy and maritime industry. The MBNA operates according to the Romanian Constitution and the laws that govern the higher education system in Romania and Ministry of Defence requirements.

MBNA originates in the Flotilla School, founded in Galați following the Resolution No.11 issued by the Ministry of War in November 17, 1872. The last documents for legalization the name and activities of Mircea cel Bătrân Naval Academy are H.G. 406/23.04.1990 and H.G. 551/17.05.1990.

Within BMNA there are 2 faculties and 2 departments (DFL and DPTE) as follows:

NAVY FACULTY

Chairs/ Departments	Domains	Specializations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics, Informatics and Basic Technical Sciences • Electrotechnics, Naval Weaponry and Communication • Nautical Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime Engineering and Navigation • Naval Engineering and Navigation • Electrical Engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigation, Hydrograph and Naval Equipment • Naval Electro-Mechanics • Electro-Mechanics

MERCHANT MARINE FACULTY

Chairs/ Departments	Domains	Specializations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naval Architecture, Naval and Port Architecture • Naval Installations and Equipment • Humanities and Behavioral Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime Engineering and Navigation • Electrical Engineering • Engineering and Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigation and Marine & River Transportation • Naval Electro-Mechanics • Electro-Mechanics • Engineering and Naval & Port Management • Port Management

DEPARTAMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES (DFL)

DEPARTAMENT FOR PART TIME EDUCATION PROGRAMS (DPTE)

Management and Administration

The management system of the Mircea cel Bătrân Naval Academy is organised in accordance with Romanian laws, Ministry of Defence requirements and with the University Charter. MBNA is lead by the Academy Senate elected on the basis of the Rules of Internal Order. The students' association elects their representatives (which are 25% of the Senate members) by casting votes. The decisions of the Naval Academy Senate are published in the Academic Informative Bulletin INFONAV available on the Naval Academy's website. The candidates for the position of dean have to publicly present and defend a management plan by stating their strategic objectives.

Management system is based on the information systems that provide data records trough intranet. MBNA has a strategic program of institutional development till 2013 and annual operational programs. Both of them could be updated in accordance with the context and development of the higher education system.

MBNA is permanently examined by the Internal Audit Department of the Ministry of Defense and this activity is in accordance with audit regulations and with some specific procedures of the internal audit. The internal audit is based on an annual audit plan. As far

as the academic integrity, teaching, assessment and research are concerned, the audit is done by the Assessment and Quality Assurance Board in accordance with its regulations and the annual plan.

Teaching Staff

The lecturers and scientific potential at Naval Academy seems to be on a good level. The teaching staff involves 80 members employed full-time - 10 professors, 15 associate professors, 30 lecturers, 17 junior lecturers, 8 assistants and additionally 42 associated lectures.

Beside the teaching activities, the scientific research involves all departments or accredited research centers. By tackling fundamental and applied research topics, the teaching staff of MBNA takes part in the scientific research related to the specific features of the departments and the available teaching and research laboratories.

For the academic year 2009-2010, within MBNA, the ratio teaching positions/number of students is of 1/14,53 and the ratio tenure teachers/ number of students is of 1/25,4. The staff statistics shows that there are job vacancies in the faculties, hence in the next period MBNA have to see that these vacancies are filled.

The ongoing training programs shall vary as part of the Romanian-Norwegian grant "Romanian – Norwegian Maritime Project", due in May 2011.

Facilities

MBNA has at its disposal the adequate equipments for carrying out a successful teaching process. The Academy owns 100% of the teaching facilities with all the necessary equipment in accordance with Law No. 84/2005.

The library has 29 reading rooms with enough seats for all the students. One of the main objectives of the Academy is to provide free access to the electronic learning resources available in the library of the Academy. The library contains more than 90,000 titles, representing 300,100 volumes; out of these 10 Romanian and 11 foreign magazines, 227 are CD-ROMs, and 628 STAS volumes.

The accommodation areas, the mess hall and leisure areas of "Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy include 5 student hostels, a mess hall, a chapel for students, two gymnasiums, one Sick Call, and an Olympic-size swimming pool within the university campus.

The investment programs started in the last couple of years by the Academy has brought up the accommodation to European standards. There are 888 accommodation places. The mess hall has a capacity of 1400 seats. The Sick Call provides students with professional medical services through its specialized personnel and equipment. There is also a chapel functioning within the Academy. All cadets from the Navy Faculty are accommodated according to their status of military students. The Academy also has areas for social, cultural or sports activities for students. In the last 3 years the majority of the teaching areas and accommodation have been rehabilitated. The student hostels accommodate reading rooms, fitness halls and spaces equipped with washing machines, Internet connection and TV cable (all these services are available free of charge for the

Navy students while for the students in the Merchant Marine Faculty these services are provided in exchange of a small fee set by the service providers).

MBNA has an investment plan which also includes the modernization of laboratories. An important part of the financial resources coming from MBNA scientific research agreements are used for the laboratories equipment of the Academy, for the development of fundamental and applied research through which MBNA consolidates its reputation and scientific prestige at the academic level. Purchases for equipments used with scientific research purposes are also used for teaching and learning activities, especially for the elaboration of theses and dissertations.

The educational spaces fulfil the European standards (conference whiteboards, air conditioning, smoke sensors, modern quality furniture, projecting systems, internet access etc.).

Financial resources

MBNA budget is composed from budget credits, own incomes and payment for research agreements. The Naval Academy receives budgets credits mainly for Navy Faculty only. The 2008 budget is more than 28 million lei. The personal costs and goods and service costs are about 88 %. The research costs are 5,24 % but practically without money from the budget credits. On base of its own incomes MBNA provides a financial policy and development plans of facilities. The following table presents the distribution of the financial resources in 2008 for investments and equipment.

Financial sources	Value	Percentage of total sources
Budgetary credits	101 000	0,5%
Own income	894 000	14,0%
Research agreements	309 000	17,83%
Total	1 484 000	

The extension of MBNA activities is foreseen in the projects of RoNoMar (Romanian – Norwegian Maritime Project), due in May 2011.

Comment: *At the meeting with navy officers and managers from maritime industry they seemed pleased with those students who graduated from MBNA, but they found that state budget credits are very limited for effective and modern education.*

Students

Student's admission is based exclusively on the candidate's academic competences and there are no discriminating criteria. The 2 faculties within MBNA are attended by 1286 cadets and students (218 cadets and 1068 students) in the full time education program and 586 students in the part-time education programs. Mircea cel Bătrân Naval Academy organizes through its two faculties the following study programs:

- Undergraduate studies in three domains and eight study programs respectively;
- Postgraduate studies (Master's degree) - one closing down study program and three according to Bologna process.

MBNA organizes bachelors and masters education:

- 4-year study program that has 240 credits and leads to a bachelor's degree
- 1,5 - year study program (after the 4-year study) that has 90 credits and leads to a master's degree.

This year 134 students have registered for the master's degree studies - this figure compared with the total 529 bachelors graduates in 2009 is 25.33%. Small number of students who attend the master's degree studies are not MBNA graduates

MBNA also organizes postgraduate courses at continuing education and job retraining.

The activity within BMNA is student centered. BMNA provides accommodation for 888 students, in the 5 hostels of the academy. BMNA students benefit from scholarships granted in accordance with the status of higher education military institution. BMNA is working to be an integral part of the international academic community. The international exchange program of BMNA contributes to its development in accordance with the European and world practices and competences in the academic field. The Academy students participate in European programs, such as ERASMUS or EXCHANGE THE MILITARY YOUNG OFFICERS (INSPIRED BY ERASMUS). Similarly, BMNA takes part in international projects such as Lifelong Learning under the European Union, Phare, Erasmus, Norwegian Cooperation Programs for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Romania, etc.

During the meeting with the students and my discussions with them, I found them very open, minded and intelligent. They seem to be very loyal to their university. I was facilitated because the students could speak English at good level.

My impression is that for cadets there are enough opportunities for international contacts but for merchant fleet students a few bilateral agreements only within the framework of SOCRATES - ERASMUS programs.

Comment: *It is recommended to enter into more bilateral contracts and increase the number of students taking part in mobility activities. It is necessary to inspire the students to study one semester abroad in accordance with EU recommendations.*

Research activities

Research activities are one of the main component part of the activity which give the Naval Academy its national and international recognition. The research – development – innovation activities of the Academy are subordinated to national thematic priorities and target ammunition systems engineering. “Mircea cel Bătrân” Naval Academy of Constanta disseminates the results of its research activity by ISI magazines, international database magazines, CNCSIS magazines as well as by scientific conferences within the country or abroad. The scientific research is turned to account by achieving projects financed by European or national funds.

The student's scientific research activity is part of the entire educational process which takes place within MBNA with the help of the teaching staff. They attract students by participating in scientific workshops related to scientific research agreements and by disseminating the results within students' scientific conferences.

Research activities within MBNA have at its disposal human resources with the teaching staff of 80 members (within the 7 Chairs and the 2 certified CNCSIS research centers) and corresponding students. They have notable progress growing resources acquired through research activities, amounting to 1.733.000 in 2008 and estimating a 15,5% growth in 2009 through financing obtained within the RoNoMar International contract (Romanian – Norwegian Maritime Project).

The annual reports presented in MBNA Senate shows the participation in research activities such as: the number and value of grants and projects developed, the number of papers published in ISI certified magazines, participations in joint programs, scientific activities. The research analysis based on these quality indicators had motivating effects.

Comment: *The main financial resources in 2008 for investments and equipment in the Naval Academy are coming as percentage from the amounts for research agreements. Very encouraging is the signed international contract RoNoMar.*

Quality Management

The implementation and development of an MBNA Quality Management System (QMS) has started with 2003, when the QMS certificate has been implemented according to the ISO 9001/2000 standard and adapted in 2007. It is established a committee to ensure quality based on comparison with other universities in Romania (Polytechnics University of Bucharest, the Military Technical Academy of Bucharest, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, „Ovidius” University of Constanța) and abroad (L'Ecole Navale din Brest, Alesund University) in order to evaluate and monitor quality. The periodical assessment of the study program is done by the Faculty Board, at least once every 4 years for the first level of study (graduation examination) and every two years for the 2nd level of study (master's degree).

Periodical meetings of the teaching staff have been organized together with specialists, beneficiaries of the syllabus, in order to implement the QMS, having as a result the elaboration and re-examination of the documents required by the standards for the system to function well. A number of ten teachers have been also trained from the Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee, as well as the Committees to insure syllabus quality, as well as a number of three representatives of MBNA management for the ISO 9001/2000 Standard (QMS) and ISO 19011/2002 Standard (Main principles for the QMS audit) by Constanța Goofers Training.

Among the most important documents that found the QMS in MBNA are MBNA Regulation to insure educational quality services and the Quality Manual together with the associated procedures.

The Permanent Education and Technologic Transfer Department will be accredited by the Permanent Training and Distance Learning Department (PTDLD) of the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation. This department will manage the permanent training courses usually initiated on request of some economic actors, agencies or ministries with a great flexibility to meet the immediate needs of the beneficiaries

Comment: *The quality management and Quality Management System in MBNA are controlled by Academy specialized department, Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Defence, Bureau Veritas (for ISO standards).*

Conclusion

I strongly recommend the institutional re-accreditation of Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy based on what I have seen, read and heard. I hope that some of the comments which I made will help the Academy management in the process of continual improvement.

I emphasize the following:

- Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy is acting in accordance with Bologna process requirements and European standards in high education.
- The Academy successfully combines education of cadets for navy and students for merchant fleet. The collaboration with leading officers and managers from maritime industry supports essentially educational process.
- Despite the limited budget credits the Academy successfully renovate its facilities and builds new laboratory for the modern training simulator.
- Future improvement of educational process could be directed in reducing the overloading of the cadets and increasing the navigation training practices of the students for merchant fleet, introducing for them some elements of military education.
- The staff statistics shows that there are some job vacancies in the faculties, hence in the next period MBNA could see that these vacancies are filled.
- International links and collaborations support effectively the international activities of the cadets but it could be suggested and encourage the students from Merchant Marine Faculty to activate their participation in exchange and mobility programs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special thanks to ARACIS for the trust and the opportunity to participate in this institutional evaluation process in Romania. Personally for me it was very fruitful to compare Mircea cel Bartran Naval Academy activities with those of Bulgarian Naval Academy in Varna in which institutional evaluation I participated also.

I would like also to express my thanks to the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans and the entire staff of Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy for the pleasant and open atmosphere and the kind support during my visit in Constanta.

Also much gratitude to my colleagues from the evaluation team for their professional, open and gentle way in which the audit was conducted.

Varna, 10 November 2009



Foreign Short -Term Expert - Institutional Evaluator:
Prof. Dr. Sc. Petar Kolev
Technical University of Varna, Bulgaria