# INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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#### Abstract:

The citizenship of the European Union was introduced with Treaty of Maastricht that was established in 1992. That political action moved European integration process from trading to civil and cultural dimension. The question do the European citizens really feel "European" is also combined in identity, which is a very important factor for enhancing European integration and democratisation. The creation of a European identity and a European citizenship had a major impact on the political initiatives in higher education and its internationalisation. In accordance to that, our basic aim is to get the answer to the question "What is today's role of internationalisation of higher education in creating European identity and consequently, in active citizenship"? We used the descriptive method; variety of data was obtained from content analysis of different kind of domestic and foreign literature. Conceptualisation of key concepts was made to present the development of internationalisation in the perspective of promoting and creating a European identity. In the beginning of 1980's basic role of higher education in creating European identity was in the context of mobility of students and academic staff. The core stone was promoting intra-European mobility, for creating common higher education era, to gain the mutual understanding focused on European identity and European citizenship. Nevertheless, these focuses were soon supplemented by the wider one that can promote diversity of identities: to feel national, European or global/international.

Keywords: European identity, Internationalisation of higher education, European citizenship

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND IDENTITY

The Treaty of Maastricht established in 1992 introduced the citizenship of the European Union and propelled citizenship into the higher sphere of symbolic politics (Smismans, 2009, pp. 60). As a consequence the European integration process changed its perspective from trading to civil and to cultural dimension. From that time on, a clear set of rights is available for all European Union (thereinafter EU) members. It is important to emphasise that the citizenship of a state is not replaced by the European citizenship, on the contrary "it confers additional rights to those already granted via national citizenship" (European Commission, 2013). It presents a supranational concept with its main goal to increase engagement of citizens in the integration process and also to strengthen and consolidate the European identity (Santoc & Monica, 2011, pp. 23). "Citizenship is built on three elements; a set of rights and duties, participation, and identity" (Smismans, 2009, pp. 60). Therefore, identity which can be described as a feeling among its members to belong together is a very important factor for enhancing "legitimacy to the European integration process and making the European Union institutions more democratic" (Johansson, 2007, pp. 6).

European Commission (2012) identifies: "identity has an individual component of active choice coupled with a collective component where individuals orient themselves to one or more aggregate groups or collectivities". Identity as a feeling of belonging within the community or a specific group is somehow determined by common characteristics and recognized by other members. European identity is collective identity and can be a part of various identities (Obroune, 2013, pp. 185). Regarding this, many different arguments and discussions were made in the literature about what the European identity is, does it exists, what should it be, or is the European identity above national identity, etc. To underline, because of various nationalities inside the EU, it is crucial that "democratic process at European level must provide a range of participatory structures in which all citizens, with their different identities and in accordance with their different identity criteria, can be represented, and which reflect the heterogeneous nature of the European identity" (Smismans, 2009, p. 65). Therefore, it is essential to know if European citizens "actually feel citizens of the Union and wish to be involved in that process" (Santoc & Monica, 2011, pp. 23). Results of the Eurobarometer (2012, pp. 21-22) survey concluded that the citizens of the member states feel very differently about the citizenship of European Union. Vast majority of people in Luxemburg (88%), Denmark (75%), Slovakia (79%) and Finland (77%) think they are European citizens, while in other states like Great Britain (42%), Italy (45%), Bulgaria and Estonia (both 50%) a minority of population can identify themselves as EU citizens.

Therefore, there is a growing awareness in the EU that for the European integration process, economic as well as social and cultural dimensions are needed between the members. Higher education, science and research are playing an important role within that process, and for the creation of the European identity (Johansson, 2007, pp. 95-99). Author De With (2011a, p. 89) says that "the creation of a European identity, European citizenship, and the development of competitiveness with the rest of the world are the key catalysts for the political initiatives in education by the European Commission". In the beginning 1980s, the key role of higher education in creating European identity was in the context of mobility of students, academic staff and programmes. The basic purpose was to promote intra-European mobility, to create European Higher Education Area (hereinafter EHEA), common European identity and to gain the mutual understanding. Nevertheless, those goals were soon supplemented by new ones; to attract talented students, professors, researchers, etc., all over the world and to build knowledge based society and economy. In accordance to that, our basic aim is to answer the following research question "What is today's role of internationalisation in higher education to create European identity and consequently, active citizenship"?

## 2. HIGHER EDUCATION AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY

"Europe only recently has become some kind of an identity in its own as a consequence of the development and gradual expansion of the European Union" (De With, 2011a, p. 79). In the literature, we often find a statement; that internationalisation of higher education institutions is not a new phenomenon as students and teachers were crossing borders for centuries. Although, higher education institutions have been mostly operated at the national level for a long time, "in the later part of the twentieth century one can observe a loosening of ties between state and university, as a result of the globalization of our economies and the process of economic and political integration in the European Union" (De With, 2011a, p. 79). Around the year 1970, higher education as a field of study began to receive more scholarly attention in EU, while from the late 1980s, research has attracted

great interest about the knowledge based society, new ways of governance, management and internationalisation (Brennan & Teichler, 2008, p. 261). Internationalisation is becoming particularly in the advanced industrial countries' increasingly prominent theme in higher education, which underwent a major trend around 1990 (Kehm and Teichler, 2007, p. 261).

Initiatives to promote mobility and cooperation in higher education between the "closed" national systems in Europe can be traced back to countries of the European Economic Community, in the middle of 1970. Promoting actions at the level of individual academics and students led to the emergence of the first Erasmus in 1987 (Van der Wende, 2009, p. 319). Mobility programmes like (Erasmus and later Socrates) were the first major initiatives for internationalisation with a rationale to create a European citizenship feeling within youth. Student's mobility was an instrument for increasing mutual understanding, knowledge about different cultures, learning languages and to develop a feeling of belonging to Europe (OECD, 2004, p. 222). The next major step was Bologna Declaration (1999) with the common aim to create EHEA "in order to enhance the employability and mobility of citizens and to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education" (Bologna Declaration, 1999, p.4). The objective is to be achieved with the; encouraging the creation of linkages, networks, alliances and partnerships, curriculum development, research and innovation. At the forefront there is a plan to maximize mobility, which acts as a developer for creation of a European identity necessary for the legitimacy of the institutions and European integration. Therefore, Bologna process<sup>1</sup> is one of the main promoters of internationalisation, in particular, so-called internal internationalisation.

In the first conference in Prague (Prague Communiqué, 2001) members recognised the importance of removing all of obstacles for free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative. It was also highlighted that in accordance to achieve the European dimensions and employability, the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with "European" content and orientation should be increased. At the next meeting in Berlin (Berlin Communique, 2003, p. 6) Member States defined that students can achieve full potential for development of European identity, citizenship and employability with joint degree programmes. It was also determined that for the attractiveness and openness of the EHEA the development of scholarship programmes for students from third countries, should be reinforced (Berlin communique, 2003, p. 6). At Bergen meeting (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, p.4) mobility was once again recognised as a key objective of the Bologna Process. The main instruments to overcome the obstacles of mobility were to facilitate the portability of grants and loans through joint action. Moreover, major emphasis was put on to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA through the cooperation beyond the Europe in accordance with the on-going international work on developing guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education<sup>2</sup>. EHEA is perceived to be a partner of higher education systems in other regions around the world (Bergen Communiqué, 2005, pp.4-5). Moreover, the London Communiqué specified mobility as fundamental element for creating the opportunities for personal growth, developing international cooperation between individuals and institutions, improving the quality of higher education and research, and for the rise of European dimension (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 2). There was additionally announced the adoption of the strategy of the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting<sup>3</sup> (London Communiqué, 2007, p. 5).

Mobility in the Leuven Communiqué (2009, p. 4) is defined as the hallmark of the EHEA, since its diverse positive results. It strengthens the academic and cultural internationalisation, it is important for personal development and employability; it fosters respect for diversity and a capacity to deal with other cultures, it encourages linguistic pluralism, it increases cooperation and competition between

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The signatures are obliged to meet every two years at conferences where they adopt communiqué proposals for the further development. The Bologna Declaration (1999) aim was to create a common European space for higher education till 2010. As the goal was not achieved in 2010, the signatories have decided to make their commitment at European, national and institutional levels after 2010 (Leuven Communiqué 2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> UNESCO/OECD document "Guidelines for quality provision of cross-border higher education", is perceived as a timely document that addresses key higher education issues in a more globalized society that are equally relevant for developed and developing countries. Objectives are to propose tools and synthesis of best practices that can assist Member States in assessing the quality and relevance of higher education provided across borders. The Guidelines were conceived as being voluntary and non-binding in character (UNESCO, 2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The objective is to enhance the external dimension of EHEA on the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education. The strategy is based on of five core policy areas: improving information, enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of EHEA, strengthening cooperation, intensifying policy dialogue, and furthering the recognition of qualifications (European Commission, 2007, pp. 3).

higher education institutions, etc. Communiqué also emphasised the importance of international openness of higher education institutions and cooperation based on partnership with other regions around the world (Leuven Communiqué, 2009, p. 4). Bucharest Communiqué (2012, p.3) announced adoption of the strategy "Mobility for Better Learning, which is necessary to ensure the quality of higher education, enhance students' employability and expand cross-border collaboration within the EHEA and beyond (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012, p.3). Communiqué furthermore, stated that for development of the EHEA, the cooperation beyond the Europe and international openness are essential factors (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012, p.4).

As noted above the latest developments in Bologna process the perception of internationalisation of hiaher education, initially the 1999-2003 periods focused mainly on intra-European internationalisation. Since 2005, there is increasing emphasis toward extra-European internationalisation approach: "cooperation and policy dialogue with higher education systems around the world" (Crosier & Parveva, 2013, p. 72). A major impact on that correspondingly was the Lisbon strategy. Internationalisation can be defined in this context as a means for higher education in creation of a knowledge society and knowledge-based economy, since they are often "part of the continuous flow of people, knowledge, information, technologies, products, and financial capital" (Marginson, 2006 in Välimaa & Hoffman, 2008, pp. 266). Mobility is mostly seen as a tool for living and working in knowledge based society and economy and meeting its demand. We can say that the mobility rationale has become more diverse, and also it is addressed by different stakeholders. In one hand, it refers to mobility of students, staff and institutions, etc., inside Europe and on the other hand, from all over the world. Furthermore, documents presented throughout this chapter also imply different and sometimes conflicting objectives for higher education: a) be more local/more European/more global, b) increase the mobility in Europe/attract more students and teachers from non-European countries, c) provide compatible curricula across Europe/preserve cultural diversity.

#### 3. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR EUROPEAN IDENTITY?

When we are analysing the internationalisation in the European context, it is very important that we are aware, "which Europe do we have in mind". The fact is that the EHEA is constituted of a variety of states, which are not necessarily members of the European Union (covering 27 states from 2007). It consists of 47 signature members of the Bologna declaration. The definition of internationalization in our research paper is based according to the definition from author Jane Knight (2008, p. 21): "internationalisation at national/sector/institutional levels is the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education". Internationalisation is a process combined with two main parts<sup>4</sup>, internationalisation at home or campus oriented internationalisation and cross-border education. Each of the internationalisation parts has set of activities that we can use in accordance to achieve specific international goals.

Looking from identity perspective the most "used" internationalisation activity in the Bologna process is the mobility of students, academic staff and programmes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, basic aim of mobility, mainly in 1980s was to develop common European identity and citizenship. There was also a key notion of development and promotion of joint programmes in EHEA, development of courses with European content and lectures in different European languages with the aim to "contribute to the establishment of a European identity, as they combine international experience, enhanced linguistic, cultural and social competence" (Bologna Seminar, 2006, p.1). Gradually, mobility has become the core tool for achieving many diverse goals. From the 2005 on, we can outline the emphasis on the development of internationalisation activities of higher education to achieving collaboration, attractiveness and openness of EHEA (Leuven Communiqué, 2009, p. 4).

International activities are perceived as very important in creating EHAE and European identity, nevertheless, the mobility has the special place in the Bologna Process, and it embraces several different dimensions - political, social, economic, as well as academic and cultural (Eurydice, 2012, p. 151). However, what impact does mobility have on creating or fostering identity of Europeans? "Few studies have so far been able to demonstrate empirically whether European citizenship identity develops during Erasmus as its planners had hoped it would when the program began in 1987"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Two pillars of internationalization are 1. Internationalisation at home: a) curriculum/teaching/learning, b) open access education, c) domestic students/faculty, d) international students/scholars, e) research, and 2. Crossborder education: mobility of: people, programmes, providers, project/services, policy (Knight, 2012, p. 2).

(Streitwieser, 2011, p. 3). Some researchers have shown that contrary to popular expectations, there is no clear evidence that the experience in mobility programmes like Erasmus, leads students to adopt a European identity. Basically, it became evident that "Erasmus students are more likely to see themselves as primarily European, that is, European only or first European and then nationals of their country, than non-mobile students, but not because of the study abroad experience itself" (Sigalas, 2009, pp. 14). Similar results were presented by author Kuhn (2012) who is arguing that "international exchange programmes in higher education are preaching to the converted, as students are already likely to feel European, no matter whether they go abroad or not". Hence if we would like to foster European identity, we should focus on another target population, which is lower educated individuals, since for low educated people is very unlikely to have a European identity. The author proposes, on the one hand, that mobility programmes ought to be timed earlier, that programs can capture the population of people who leave school before entering into the higher education and on the other hand, mobility programs should also take place outside of education systems (Kuhn 2012). Differences, in accordance with the level of education also show Euro-barometer data. Answers to the question, do the people identify themselves as European citizens, indicated that the feeling is shared by a large majority of Europeans who have studied up to the age of 20 or beyond (72%). Therefore, only a minority of those who left school before the age of 16, feel that they are EU citizens (48% versus 50%) (Eurobarometer, 2012, p. 22).

Furthermore, authors Streitwieser and Light (2011, p. 5) showed in their research that the majority of the Erasmus students' primary identify themselves as national or European citizens. Thus, 36% students primarily identity themselves as national citizens and 38% of them indicated that European citizenship was their first decision. The remaining students split between choosing a global citizenship identity as their first idea (14%) while, all the others chose option 'Other' (13%) as their first identification. Although, authors believe "that this research has begun to uncover that the Erasmus experience and being part of the Erasmus generation lets one go beyond being a good national or even a good European citizen. At certain levels of understanding it engages students in committing to an on-going, unsettled and changing idea of citizenship, which transfers them into another sphere of thought, value and action" (Streitwieser & Light, 2011, p. 11). We somehow share the thought, that those students who are more European at the first place with the mobility program may be also creating or fostering global dimension or global identity. Main reasons that Erasmus students choose the primary citizenship identity as a global identity are: a) heritage identification; global citizen profile from parents, b) borderless identification; citizenship within borders is wrong definition and also rejection of borders, c) global value identification; global posture toward others, d) travel Identification; travelled around the world, e) liberation identification; my future is beyond Europe or I have gone too far not to be Global Citizen now (Streitwieser & Light, 2011, p. 6-7). And likewise, when we are talking about European identity we must ask ourselves a question what "Europe" do we mean? Do we mean Erasmus Europe, Europe Union or maybe Bologna Europe or geographic Europe? We do not have one Europe; but can we have a common European identity? Yes, we stressed out before that European identity is a supranational identity and is somehow a set of separate national identities. Nevertheless, we think that this variability of "Europe" maybe have an impact on creating a global identity among students.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In European context, internationalisation of higher education is a top down process which started around 1980s with Erasmus and Socrates programmes. The process of creating the common Higher Education Area continued with the Bologna declaration and also with Lisbon strategy. We can see the shift from the social/multicultural rationale to the economic rationale. Universities are crossing the national boundaries not just in the Europe but in the entire World. The primary goal is not just to "mix" the European students and academics to gain the mutual understanding but, as well to attract talented student, professors, researchers, etc., all over the world and to build knowledge based society and economy. Nowadays, we are facing new foreign programmes, institutions, providers, e-learning, etc., and this is not just European action; it is international.

In our opinion, paper about internationalisation in a context of creating a European identity stresses out few important points, which could be key points for further discussion and research. Firstly, debate articulates question which Europe? It is crucial that we understand that European students can identify themselves in a very different level. First is a national level, second is European, with its different dimensions depending on which Europe we have in mind. Do we mean Erasmus Europe, Europe Union or maybe Bologna Europe or geographic Europe? The third level is the rest of the world, global or international level. In that diversity, it can be very hard to answer "how do you feel". The second is that in European context internationalisation of higher education is strongly top down process; "European citizenship has become an issue in the policies for internationalisation of higher education, but more from the side of the European commission than from the citizens themselves" (De Wit, 2011, p. 79). The core stone was promoting intra-European mobility, for creating common higher education era, to gain the mutual understanding, European identity and European citizenship. Bologna process with the Lisbon strategy has as well stressed out the many different purposes for the implementation of mobility and importance of external internationalisation. Nevertheless, these primary goals were soon supplemented by new ones that in our opinion may also have an important impact on creating the identity. Specifically, emphasis on external internationalisation can promote diversity of identities: to feel national, European or global/international. And the last one is not just that researches indicated that mobility maybe really is preaching to the converted, but perhaps this action is not fostering the European identity but global identity. We know that further analyses are needed to confirm our assumptions, but like we said we see this as the basic stand point for further research. As we stated in the introduction, our basic aim was to answer the question "What is today's role of internationalisation of higher education in creating European identity and consequently, in active citizenship"? Our main finding is that we may be asking a wrong guestion. In our opinion, the right guestion is not anymore: whether or not internationalisation of higher education is creating or fostering the European identity, but if it creates or fosters so called global identity?

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