

Making a Doctorate European

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10 years' Anniversary – Eisenstadt, Rathaus

Making a Doctorate European, was the **basic idea** here in Eisenstadt – ten years ago for the Economy, and from 2017 also for Education and Communication.

Not only in Eisenstadt, but also throughout **Europe** has come up from the beginning of this century the desire for a close cooperation between universities with regard to creating research programmes. Therefore the European Community has set an initiative of supporting such joint programmes.

Let me quote an essential passage out of the **strategy document** „Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society“, published 2005 by the European University Association, which reads as follows: *„Joint doctoral programmes tend to be formed as a result of one of two approaches: a) the bottom-up approach, which leads to the establishment of a research network on the basis of cooperation of individual partners or research groups; and b) the top-down approach, which is the initiative of university leaders as a part of institutional strategies often as a response to external opportunities.“*

In October 2018, the European Commission launched the first call on **European Universities**. At present, 64 alliances of higher education institutions are working in putting together their scientific know how at highest academic level, including common doctoral programmes. Also some universities of the countries represented here in this ceremony have become members of an alliance.

Generally speaking, the **added values** of joint doctoral programmes are mainly the pooling of excellent research between the partner institutions and the academic qualifications of the doctoral graduates in all countries involved. In order to guarantee these added values, a detailed and intensive preparatory work has to be done, taking into account the institutional structures and the legal frameworks for higher education and research in the countries involved.

These developments at European level have been complemented by many initiatives at **regional level**. One of them has been the establishment of the Paneuropean Joint PhD programmes, which are operating in the Pannonean and in other regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

Having in mind the two alternatives cited before – bottom-up and top-down approach –, the two Joint PhD programmes which had their starting point in Eisenstadt (although they are not Austrian programmes!) followed without any doubt a **bottom-up** approach: Some professors of leading universities in the region had been cooperating on a long-term basis in specific fields of Economy or, respectively, of Education and Communication. Most of them have, after the

launching of the programmes, been nominated as members of the Scientific Committies. I cannot mention all of them; however, one name has to be mentioned expressively, and this is University Professor Dr. Irena Zavrl, formally speaking head of the Consortia of the two PhD programmes, informally speaking the motor and the heartbeat of the whole initiative.

Today we can state that the bottom-up initiative has become a **successful** one. Some applicants had already held high-levelled jobs before seeking admission to the PhD programme, some others were offered leading positions after having been graduated. May many other generations of PhD students – and of course the participating universities – profit from the programmes.

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