

## **CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SYSTEMS**

Remarkably right after the opening ceremony of the new Delta Building of the University of Tartu (Photo 1 p. 97 and Photo 2 p. 99) on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 started the 8<sup>th</sup> Dialogue on Social Market Economy hosted by the School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA).

The Dialogue series on Social Market Economy which has been initiated in cooperation of German and Estonian economists, led by Professor Dr Ralph Michael Wrobel (West Saxon University of Applied Science of Zwickau) and Professor Jüri Sepp (University of Tartu), was this year dedicated on the role of higher education in different economic systems.

The topic about the role of higher education for the Conference was chosen because of several following reasons, which have been mentioned in the introductory call for papers. There is written that in the conditions of austerity-driven budgets, it has become more necessary to explain the general public why investments into research and development are relevant in order to sustain the social, economic and cultural development of different countries. In the world of fake news and misinformation, being a center creating the evidence-based or theory-based knowledge, the role of universities widens besides the traditional missions of teaching, research and societal service. To cope with all the above aims, but also more practical challenges of rising costs, speeding up knowledge transfer, but also declining completion rates, the universities need to embrace new, more integrated technological and management models. Universities in different countries face challenges for exercising their autonomy and academic freedom. These are the some topics, which do not constitute a complete list of topics the conference was trying to address.

35 participants represented six German and two Estonian universities as well the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in Germany and the Estonian Research Council. Welcome words were said by Professor Ralph Michael Wrobel and the Head of hosting SEBA Professor Kadri Ukrainski.

In the opening session chaired by professor Rolf Hasse, German colleagues raised discussions on The Production of Knowledge in Academic Institutions (Professor Wolf Schäfer, Helmut Schmidt University, Hamburg), Innovation Policy in the Social Market Economy (Professor Armin Rohde, University of Greifswald and Dr. Ole Janssen, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in Germany) and Independence of Science: Different Models in Comparison (Professor Ralph Michael Wrobel). The topics started lively discussions especially about independence of science, its measurement and science funding issues.

In the second session chaired by Professor Wolf Schäfer two topics were under observation. Professor Rolf Hasse from University of Leipzig presented on Economics and Educational Sciences, raising the question: Are the Targets Really So Different?

Professor Helge Löbner's (University of Leipzig) topic was 'The Future of Entrepreneurship-Education'.

The following session chaired by professor Ralph Michael Wrobel contained topics presented by Estonian participant from University of Tartu, SEBA. The quantitative research results on Factors Affecting Scientific Impact: Comparison of European Countries were presented by PhD student Tanel Hirv. Mariia Chebotareva presented on her PhD thesis topic: FOCJ as an Opportunity of Municipalities to Cooperate in the Russian School Education Sector. Professor Peter Friedrich presented on the topic: How to Use Social Accounting to Measure Social Capital of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the University of Tartu, based on paper which co-author is Diana Eerma.

The second day of the Conference started with lecture from Professor Herbert Woratschek (University of Bayreuth) on the topic: Essentials are Invisible! – Why Does the Logic of Value Co-creation in the Sport Value Framework Represent a Logic of Success? This lecture was especially focused for PhD students.

Following session led by Professor Toomas Haldma was focusing on several topics connected to higher education and universities' role in society. Professor Kadri Männasoo from the Tallinn University of Technology presented research on Individuals' Digital Capacity and Labour Market Outcomes: Comparative Evidence from Europe (paper in cooperation with PhD student Artjom Saia from the same university). Wide range of issues were looked at in the presentation 'Participation in the Programs of the European Space Agency – Effects and Additionality from the Viewpoint of a Small Open Economy' by the PhD candidate Tõnis Eerme (University of Tartu, SEBA). The questions of Estonian higher education and research were approached by Professor Kadri Ukrainski in her presentation 'Attempting to Develop Research Organizations with the Project-funding Instruments: the Case of Estonia' and by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor Raul Eamets in his presentation about Estonian Higher Education Vision.

Concluding session of the Conference which was chaired by Professor Kadri Ukrainski continued on the issues related with Estonian universities and research funding system. Professor Jüri Sepp concentrated on Performance-based Financing in Universities: Case study of the School of Economics and Business Administration, where the analysis was framed by the new public management theory. The same context was applied by Professor Toomas Haldma (SEBA, University of Tartu) in his presentation about Performance Measurement at the Universities within the Sustainability Management Framework. Executive Director of the Estonian Research Council Karin Jaanson gave an overview about Research Funding System in Estonia and raised the questions how to find a good balance between factors and instruments in the Estonian research funding system. The closing talk 'Innovator in Higher Education and Leadership' by Diana Eerma was dedicated to Professor Jüri Sepp work in teaching, economic research and leading higher education in Estonia, particularly activities at the University of Tartu during last 100 semesters. His wide and successful international cooperation is

demonstrated also via fact that all German participants in the Conference came and made contribution in honor of Professor Jüri Sepp for his scientific activities and fellowship.

All participants gained from the broad range of topics on the higher education issues presented and discussed during the two Conference days. Fruitful discussions continued during the social program of the Conference as well, for example during the visits to Museum of University of Tartu and the Estonian National Museum at Raadi. Notably benefited PhD students who received valuable feedback how to improve their research. Recreated contacts during the Conference lunches and dinners as well opportunities of new Delta building will open new international cooperation possibilities.

## **References**

1. 8<sup>th</sup> Dialogue on Social Market Economy, The Role of Higher Education in Different Economic Systems, Call for papers, University of Tartu, School of Economics and Business Administration.

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