

# **BSUN PRESIDENT REPORT ON 2002 - 2004 FRAMEWORK PROGRAM - EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

## **1. Background**

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century introduced some major concerns in the field of education and enlarging the picture we may say it in the field of the so-called "learning society". This might be synthesized as followings:

- The mass higher education in developed societies became already a reality and it looks that in the new Century will be the norm.
- Knowledge workers became crucial players in economic performance.
- More and more nearly all worthwhile jobs demand high level skills and qualifications.
- Life long learning became investment in personal learning and growth that is compatible with corporate investment and growth.
- Divisions such as Academic versus Vocational or Further versus Higher Education are dissolving.
- The globalisation of knowledge induced the emergence of a common culture of knowledge with shared aspirations.
- Work related learning became a major concern for many individuals and their employers.
- The information technologies offered the floor to new tele-working opportunities and home based businesses.
- The business orientations of the academic institutions have increased the nation wide and the international competition in the field.

The Black Sea Region obtained in the last 10 years a specific identity, particularity for the activity of the Organisation of Black Sea Economic Cooperation. This identity might be define based on cultural similarities, common history, but also based on some common problems or common threats like:

- De-industrialisation;
- Economic crises and permanent unemployment;
- Law and order breakdowns; Global poverty;
- Race and ethnicity as a source of division, tension, and in some cases armed conflicts and terrorism;
- Global warning and other critic environmental issues

In order to overcome these problems, the society defines many different solutions. Among them the education is oriented towards new innovative approaches, namely:

- The student centred approach to the learning;
- Independent study based on learn negotiated agreements and the development of skills, guidance and assistance assurance systems to support such personal autonomy;

- The use of new learning materials provided through new communication technologies;
- Work- and community- based learning schemes;
- Emphases on developing transferable skills across the curriculum;
- The assessment of learner capability.

The education in general, and the higher education in special, depends also on the managerial structures and knowledge. After centuries of innovation in the management of universities, many managerial solutions are available, like:

- To be concerned with promoting its brand name;
- Seek innovative, particularly in terms of technology;
- Seek to expand into local, regional and some times international markets and to benefit by integrating horizontally, laterally or vertically;
- Use franchising for this expansion either through collecting royalties or selling their pedagogical materials to allow for expansion;
- Deploy successful management with clean lines of authority and clearly defined roles;
- Insure that all resources including space, teachers and technology are used efficiently;
- Seek to employ innovative technology in order to reduce costs.

## **2. The BSUN Concept of Excellence in Education**

In the vision of B SIM, the Concept in Excellence in Education is defined based on the fundamental role of the university to educate the students at the highest possible standards in order to offer them the chance to build their future carrier and to contribute to the sustainable development of the Black Sea Region.

The concept of Excellence in Education has 3 major characteristics:

- The flexibility and the compatibility of curricula and of the Academic programs;
- The fundamental role of the Quality Assurance Systems for the continuous improvement of the activities within the universities;
- The performance orientation of the Scientific Research as the basic tool for creating knowledge.

In order to implement the concept Excellence in Education, the universities should fulfill some basic requirements. These requirements are identified as followings:

- Performance-oriented management systems & teams;
- Effective partnership between the University and the community.

By the implementation of the concept Excellence in Education, it looks like the universities will be faced with 2 major consequences. On one side it is supposed that the academic entities will be more specialized. But, the specialization is the one which is related to the process of reaching the highest

possible standards in teaching and in research. The second immediate consequence is the increased demand for networking. So, a university in order to offer the highest possible satisfaction to its students should use the resources of many others universities through networking. The more a university will struggle for Excellence in Education, the most it will be pushed towards integration in World Wide valuable Academic Networks.

For the Implementation of the Framework Program on Excellence in Education, BSUN will follow some basic implementation principles, like:

- BSUN member universities are a part of the European Academic Community and should be fully involved in the priorities related to the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA) playing an active role in the Bologna Process;
- Emphasis on the priority for the implementation of the quality assurance systems;
- Development of cooperation for performance - oriented scientific research;
- The promotion of a very close cooperation with BSEC and BSEC related bodies and with other regional and international organizations;
- Involvement of Students and Young Professors.

### **3. Activity Report**

#### **➤ Officials Visits.**

- It became a tradition that the 1st Official Visit of the BSUN President is in Romania, At the invitation of the "Ovidius" University of Constantza, I was invited between January 25 - 29, 2003 for an Official Visit to Romania. The program and the results of the visit are included in Appendix 1.

I would like to express my highest gratitude to President Ion ILIESCU, the Ministers and Officials of the Romanian Government, particularly to Prof. Ecaterina ANDRONESCU, former Minister of Education and Research and currently Rector of "Politehnica" University and to minister Cristian DIACONESCU, formerly Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and current Minister of Justice, for their opinions, suggestions and their support for my activity. Also, I had profound discussions with Acad. Mircea MALITZA, Prof, Ioan DUMITRACHE, Prof. Ioan MIHAILESCU, Prof. Napoleon ANTONESCU, Prof. Ion NICOLAE, Prof. Adrian BAVARU, Rectors of the most prestigious Universities of Romania, but also, with Prof. Jan SADLAK, Director of European Center for Higher Education of UNESCO.

Among the most important outcomes of this visit, I would like to underline the Commitment of the Romanian Government to organize a model of National Secretariat, supported from the budget of the Min-

ister of Education and Research and also, the agreement to defined the area of Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies as the priority for our Program.

- It become also a tradition that the 2nd Official Visit of the BSUN President would be to Istanbul to meet the General Secretaries of BSEC Permıs and PABSEC.

So, between January 29-31, 2003 I have visited Istanbul (Appendix 2). The meetings with Mr. Valeri CHECHELASVILI and Mr. Alexey KUDRIAVTSEV gave me the chance to have a better understanding of BSEC and PABSEC Programs and to establish a personal relation that was very useful after words.

I have used the opportunity of the visit to Istanbul to meet the Rectors of 2 prestigious Turkish Universities, namely: Istanbul University and Koc University.

- Between March 24-26, 2004 I have paid a visit to Brussels. The program of the visit and the memos of the discussions are included in Appendix 3.

This visit gave me the confidence that BSUN has the potential to become one of the key partners for European Commission in the field of Science and Education.

This idea issued from all discussions I had in Brussels with Commissioner Phillippe BUSQUIN, European Commission for Scientific Research or the Representatives of European Commission for Education, European Universities Association and NATO Science Program. I was assured that the Black Sea and Caspian Region is of major importance for the European Union Policy and NATO, but we have to work hard in order to become a trustful partner.

### ➤ **Executive Board Meetings**

- The 1<sup>st</sup> tentative to organize an Executive Board Meeting was on June 2003 in Istanbul. Unfortunately this 1st meeting degenerated in a dispute based on the claims coming from a group of professors that wanted to interpret the Status of BSUN according to their interests and to accept in the Executive Board not Rectors of the most prestigious universities of each country, but some advisors or other representatives. The claims came from the followings:
  - Prof. Suha SEVUK, former Rector of Middle-East Technical University, President of BSUN, but today involved in a Foundation to support the IT Education of children.
  - Prof. Ibrahim YILDIRIM, Medical Doctor, formerly Head of International Relation Committee of Istanbul University, Head of the Department of Plastic Surgery, but today retired.
  - Prof. Maria KAILA, formerly the Vice-Rector of the University of

Aegean, but today without any relevant position in her University and within the Universities of Greece.

- Prof. Alexander KARKISHCHENKO, formerly Vice-Rector of the University of Radio Engineering of Taganrog, but today without any relevant position in her University and within the Russian Universities.

I want to underline my position that in order to become a prestigious Institution having the doors open of European Union and other International Organizations, the BSUN President and Executive Board Members have to be outstanding personalities, even if they might be sometimes very busy. I consider that the position of the a both mentioned group had a very bad influence on our activity in last 2 years and this is an example of how easy can be destroyed the achievements of hundreds and thousands of people only for the individual interests of a very small group of persons.

- I would like to congratulate Prof. Barudov for the outstanding organization of the 9<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting of BSUN, held in Varna, between 24-25 November 2003.

The resolution of this meeting is included in Appendix 4.

The most important achievement of this meeting was the participation of the General Secretary of the BSEC, Mr. Chechelasvili that assured us of the support of BSEC.

Unfortunately, later on Mr. Valeri CHECHELASVILI had a very contradictory behavior. Without warning, at the Council of Foreign Affairs Meeting, held in Baku, in April 2004, we have been announced that the valid period of our Sectorial Partners Dialog Status to BSEC has been expired.

In that respect, I think that BSEC General Secretary played up to now a confusing game: stating with one voice the support for BSUN and on the other hand, pushing ICBSS to become the sole organization coordinating the Academic Cooperation in the Black Sea Region.

BSUN is the Academic Dimension of BSEC that was the purpose why it has been conceived, this is the reason of all our activity and we shall continue to struggle to cooperate with BSEC even is some influent persons of this structure don't want it.

BSEC Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers should follow the recommendations of General Assembly of PABSEC and should open the door for BSUN as a BSEC related body.

### ➤ ***The most significant events***

- 1<sup>st</sup> International Workshop on: "*Transport Engineering and Management in the Black Sea Region*", Constantza, 1-3 November, 2002:
  - This was the 1st Regional Workshop organized by BSUN jointly

with BSEC Work Group on Transport, aiming the initiation of a Regional Bachelor + Master Program on Transport Engineering and Management.

- BSUN Summer School on: "*Computational Modeling of Combustion and Multi Phases in Advanced Energy Systems*", held in Constantza, My 2003:
  - This event initiated a series of Summer Schools on this topic.
- International Workshop on: "*Challenges for Integration in Education Science and Technology Transfer in the Black Sea Region in the Context of Globalization*", held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, between October 22-24, 2003
  - This was the 1st event organize jointly with ICBSS. The results of this event are including in Appendix 5.
- The Meeting of the BSUN Consortia of Universities in Economics, organized by Prof. Anatoliy Pavlenko, in Kiev, 7-8 June 2004 in outstanding conditions marked the involvement of BSUN Member Universities in the sustainable development in the Black Sea Region.
- BSUN - NATO Joint Workshop on: "*Security through Science*", held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 15 June 2004.
  - This meeting was an historical event for our country and I am very proud that it has been organized in partnership with BSUN.
- BSUN Seminar on: "*Forecasting, Prevention and Management of Disasters in Oil Industry*", held on June 16th, in Baku.
- BSUN - EUA International Seminar on: "*Quality Management in context of Bologna Process*", held in Constantza, on June 24-25, 2004.
- International Summer School on: "*Computational and Experimental Simulation of Combustion & Multi-Phase Flows in Advanced Energy Systems*", July 12-17, 2004 - Sakarya University, Kirkpinar, Turkey
- Joint NANO Forum on: "*Nanomaterials & Nanotechnologies For Sustainable Development*", held at "Ovidius" University of Constantza, between 3-4 September 2004.

At the end of this mandate I would like to share with you some of my personal opinions:

- The BSUN is an extremely important organization for our region. It is the most suitable frame for cooperation and of my opinion it has a big potential of development. In order to make it effective we have to forget of our individual interests and concentrate on which is important to improve its credibility and to make it much more efficiently.
- The role of a University is to be in the service of its students. So, the role of BSUN should be to assist its members in full feeling their mission. In the future we have to pay much more attention on how the students could benefits of our programs.
- Our network is a part of the European Higher Education Area and of

European Research Area. In that respect, we have to promote constantly the partnership with the European Structures and to promote the Institutional Image of BSUN.

Allow me to end this report by expressing my most gratitude for all the efforts of the colleagues that I worked with and to congratulate the International Permanent Secretariat at the "Ovidius" University of Constantza for their professionalism and dedication.

**Prof. Dr. Abel MAHARRAMOV,  
BSUN President**