

Long Program Description

The network “Ethics and Politics in the European Context” wants to enhance mobility activities (undergraduate and graduate students, PhD students and teachers) and thus stimulate research by partner institutions from different disciplines in the field of political science and ethics and further university cooperation in the region. For this reason, we aim to widen our network continuously gaining more partners. In accordance with the goal, in 2017/ 2018 two new partner institutions joined the network – The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, Faculty of Philosophy (Poland) and University “Sts Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, Faculty of Law “Justinijan Prvi” (Macedonia); in 2018/ 2019 further two new partner institutions joined the network – Corvinus University of Budapest in Hungary (Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations) and Catholic University Our Lady of Good Counsel in Tirana/ Albania (Faculty of Economics, Political and Social Science).

The network’s thematic focus remains the political culture of Europe and its value basis (human rights, democracy, solidarity as well as civil society) and the importance for the integration of Europe. In the field of humanities a backlog dating from Communist times can still be felt, which makes further activities in this field particularly important for the region. There is also a growing sensitivity for ethical issues in the political realm. During the next year we will continue the particular focus on nationalism/ populism and its relation with human rights as well as on the problem of Europe’s integration.

The network gives students as well as teachers the opportunity of high level interdisciplinary exchange. A special focus of the network during the past a few years has been the training of highly qualified PhD students of the region through thematic summer schools (2012 Croatia, 2013 Romania, 2014 Slovakia, 2015 Poland, 2019 Romania). This program can also serve as a basis of a Joint PhD program.

1. Socio-political Context and Academic Activities as the Basis of Network Mobility

The fall of communism led to long term transformations in Europe. There was and is a backlog in the field of humanities after Communism with ongoing demands to enhance exchange and academic training through networking among faculties within the CEEPUS-region. Therefore academic research about the interrelationship between politics and ethics under the inclusion of the religious dimension are of paramount importance in Central Europe. These questions have been at the center of intensive academic research activities at the Institutes belonging the network for decades. For example, the Institute of Social Ethics was always one of the leaders of the research activities. Thus the “Network of Social Ethicists in Central Europe” (SECE) was founded in 1987. Conferences were organized in different countries with proceedings published to discuss a wide range of political, social and ethical questions. These research activities are realized successfully by the Faculty of Social Science at Catholic University of Lublin, too which is the current coordinator of the network. One of the examples of these activities is the annual conference “Human Rights” which attract representatives of different disciplines such as sociology, law, political science, ethics to discuss different aspects of human rights. These academic activities constitute an excellent basis for the CEEPUS network activities to strengthen student exchange, support young researchers and teaching staff and to deepen existing cooperation. The high profile of the participating institutions from the theological faculties of different Christian

denominations (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant), from the humanities, philosophy, law, political and social science makes this most fruitful. The success of the network shows that the opportunity to study in another discipline is eagerly accepted.

The important point has been the promotion of PhD candidates through mobility grants as well as summer schools, to enable young scientists to have interdisciplinary and interconfessional exposure.

2. Development of Theoretical Strategies and Focus of Mobility

During the past a few academic years the focus was on human rights (including social rights), civil society, the development of democracy and solidarity in the transformational processes of Central Europe including the academic potential of religious communities (mainly the Christian churches) as large civil society actors. Nowadays the topic of Europe's integration and future of the European Union with the focus on the south-east European countries has also proven to be important. Interdisciplinarity will continue to be a central of the network. To this end the network is to be enlarged by new partner institutions from Kraków (Poland), Skopje (Macedonia), Budapest (Hungary), and Tirana (Albania). Thus the network would consist of 18 partner institutions in 10 countries of the region.

3. Strategies for Teaching and Fostering of Research in the Region – Practical Examples

3.1. Summer Schools

The Summer Schools for PhD students proved to be most fruitful integrating successfully research activities, networking and teaching. The first summer school took place in Croatia (Zagreb/ Lovran; 31st August - 10th September 2012) on the topic "Social-ethical and political questions in Europe". The second one took place in Romania (Bucharest/ Sibiu; 2nd - 12th September 2013) on the topic "What keep us together? Solidarity and diversity in Europe". The third took place in Slovakia (Košice/Trnava; 15 - 24th September) under the theme: "Where is Civil Society in Central Europe Heading to?". The 4th Summer School was organized in September 2015 in Poland in Wroclaw, in cooperation with our local partner institution on the topic "Nationalism and Populism as Challenges for European Unity". The latest edition of the Summer School was conducted in July 2019 in Bucharest/ Brasov, the participants coped with the main topic "European Union at the crossroads. New perspectives, current threats" including more detailed issues such as "Populism as challenge to democracy", "Robert Schuman and forgotten vision of Europe integration", "Accession of Western Balkan countries to the EU", "Social policies in the EU", "Political culture heritage in eastern European post-communist societies", "Europe between liberalism and conservatism", "Denizens – the troublesome incomers".

The program of the summer schools includes lectures and discussions (including discussions on PhD thesis') as well as meetings with representatives of different institutions and a cultural program. The participants of summer schools receive ECTS credits from their respective institutions. They are an excellent tool to further long term interdisciplinary research exchange in the region. They also serve as a basis for a future Joint PhD program.

For the summer school in 2015 in Wroclaw/ Poland sponsors for gifted young scientists from non-CEEPUS countries (Russia and Ukraine, Zambia) have been found, too.

3.2. Innovative Models of Teaching

- workshops and research seminars for specific student groups with guest lecturers, such as workshop with Prof. Marek Lis "Recent wars (Africa, Balkans) in European movies", that based on analysis of the war representation in movie.
- guest lectures in the frame of ordinary lectures on the university (if possible) such as lecture of Prof. Stanislaw Fel (Catholic University of Lublin) in the frame of the lectures of Prof. Gabriel in 2018 or lectures of Prof. Radu Carp (University of Bucharest) at the Catholic University of Lublin in 2019.
- the biggest achievement of our network we see precisely in the successful combination of teaching, research and networking for students and teachers which we were able to put into practice also through summer schools (Croatia 2012, Romania 2013, Slovakia 2014, Poland 2015, Romania 2019).

These innovative models of teaching are of great use for the development of future Joint PhD program "Political Science, Ethics and Religion" (PER). We are planning to apply our best teaching and research experiences (especially interdisciplinary seminars) to the Joint PhD program and in this way to develop further our interdisciplinary methodological approach as well as our thematic focus on political culture of Europe and its value basis and their implications for the integration of Europe. The experience has shown that precisely our annual summer schools as well as Alumni Network represent an important source how to reach talented young PhD students and candidates who could be interested for our Joint PhD program.

3.3. Alumni Network

We have established an Alumni Network for former students, PhD students and teachers in order to put the contacts on long term basis and to help the distribution of research information. The Alumni Network remains an important source for the selection of talented PhD candidates for a Joint PhD program. One of the important elements of the strategy is the contact with the Alumni thanks to the empirical study about experiences of Alumni with the CEEPUS mobilities programs, assessment of the programs, about their needs and interests, their professional life.

3.4 Journal of the network

We established a specialized journal which should be an excellent platform of scientific cooperation and exchange of ideas within the network. The journal was brought into being in autumn 2019 under the title: "Studies in Social Theory and Practice". The editorial board includes the representatives of the institutions belonging to the network "Ethics and Politics in the European Context". First issue of the journal is planned in June 2020.