Concept

**Academic cooperation between Serbia and Bavaria**

At present, Serbian and Bavarian institutes of higher education maintain 9 partnerships. The number of joint projects (e.g. exchange of students, PhD candidates and staff, summer schools, research) is not too large, but includes basically all academic fields, among them arts, ethnology, philology, history, political sciences, psychology, geography, medicine, pharmacy, mathematics, computer science. Serbian language, literature and culture can be studied at 3 Bavarian universities.

**Recent developments in the Serbian system of higher education and research**

Serbia being an EU accession candidate since 2012 joined the Bologna process already in 2003. The country is working on its integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). From 2019 on Serbia is a programme country within ERASMUS+.

Within its “Strategy of the development of education in Serbia until 2020” and the “Strategy of the scientific and technological development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2020 – research for innovation” internationalization is one of the most important pillars.

In the academic year 2017/18 the number of students amounted to 250,000. Even though 58% of them speak two foreign languages, international mobility is presently limited to summer schools and excursions, while only 1,5 % of the students have really studied abroad. In order to increase mobility in both directions, Serbia wants to offer more courses taught in foreign languages, make studies more flexible through a modular structure and establish joint degrees. Mobility of academic teachers is to be enhanced as well.

In research remarkable progress has been made. In recent years the number of Serbian publications in the Web of Science has doubled. Most publications in excellent international journals relate to physics, advanced materials and nanosciences. As far as participation in international research projects is concerned, information and communication technologies, agricultural sciences and environmental sciences are the most successful areas. Serbia aims at increasing participation in HORIZON 2020. Therefore research infrastructure is modernized and excellence centers are established, e.g. a nanocenter and a center for stem cells.
PhD studies shall be reformed, e.g. by establishing internationally oriented graduate schools and by participating in European Industrial Doctorates. The Serbian scientific diaspora should play an important role in implementing this reform.

In the above mentioned strategies a closer connection of higher education, research, economy and society is of particular importance. In order to achieve this goal, career centers, science and technology parks and technology transfer centers have been opened at Serbian universities. Besides academic studies organized at 8 state and 11 private universities, applied studies are organized at universities or at one of the 47 public and 17 private vocational study colleges. It is intended that the vocational study colleges become members of the European Network of Universities of Applied Sciences. Practical knowledge and professional abilities of students shall be enhanced and applied research is to be conducted on the master level. The study programs shall be adapted to the local and regional economic structure.

*Serbian-Bavarian Higher Education Day*

The Serbian-Bavarian Higher Education Day aims at initiating further academic cooperation in research and teaching, and strengthening already existing partnerships. It will be dedicated to students’ exchange, joint research and cooperation of academia and business both in natural and engineering sciences and humanities and social sciences. The program includes good practice examples of Serbian-Bavarian university partnerships, proposals for cooperation, an introduction to the Serbian and Bavarian system of higher education and research as well as information on funding possibilities.