



## Serbian-Bavarian Higher Education Day

September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the University of Bamberg

### Concept

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#### *Academic cooperation between Serbia and Bavaria*

At present, Serbian and Bavarian institutes of higher education maintain 14 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.

## **The Organizers**

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### **University of Bamberg**

The University of Bamberg is both the newest and one of the oldest universities in Bavaria. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Prince Bishop Melchior Otto Voit von Salzburg and Prince Bishop Friedrich Karl von Schönborn transformed the town's former Jesuit College into a fully fledged university. In honor of these two main supporters, the university still bears their names. After a tumultuous period of secularization and closure during the era of National Socialism, the university was re-opened in 1972. Over 13.000 students are currently enrolled, taught by 160 professors. The University of Bamberg is known for its focus on the humanities and the social sciences, economics and business administration. The corresponding two faculties are the largest on campus. They are complemented by the Faculty of Human Sciences and Education and the Faculty of Information Systems and Applied Computer Sciences.

From 2013 to 2016 the TEMPUS project FUSE „Fostering University Support Services and Procedures for Full Participation in the European Higher Education Area“ took place the goal of which was to fully integrate Serbia into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The project was coordinated by the University of Niš in Southern Serbia. It served for adapting the services and procedures at Serbian universities related to international cooperation and mobility to EU standards.

On the Serbian side, 5 universities (University of Niš, University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Kragujevac, State University of Novi Pazar) and the College of Tourism in Belgrade were involved in the project.

Together with 4 universities from Great Britain, Poland, Spain and the Czech Republic the University of Bamberg belonged to the EU partners of the project. The University of Bamberg advised the participating Serbian institutions on administrative and legal framework conditions and various mobility support services. The range of topics included application procedures for foreign exchange students, mobility of lecturers and researchers, recognition of exams passed abroad, advice on accommodation and getting acquainted, funding programs for outgoings, internships abroad etc.

Following the project, the University of Bamberg successfully applied for ERASMUS+ funding and invited more than 80 Serbian students from the 6 involved Serbian institutes of higher education for a study sojourn in Bamberg. Furthermore, lecturers and staff from Serbia came to Bamberg for teaching and training. Staff Weeks took place in 2017 and 2018.

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## **BAYHOST (Bavarian Academic Center for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe)**

The Bavarian Academic Center for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe (BAYHOST) promotes academic exchange between Bavaria and countries in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. BAYHOST supports Bavarian universities and universities of applied science through its specific competencies; by supporting their collaboration with academic organizations in its partner countries and by establishing new partnerships.

The promotion of cooperation in research and teaching as well as the distribution of knowledge about the higher education system in the Western Balkan Countries form a focus of BAYHOST's work.

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