

Ukrainian-Bavarian Higher Education Day

October 1st and 2nd, 2018 at Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

SECTION 3: COOPERATION OF ACADEMIA AND BUSINESS

Panel discussion on cooperation of academia and business

(Summary)

Moderation

Nikolas Djukić, BAYHOST

Participants

Stefan Kägebein, Project Manager, German Eastern Business Association

Alexander Markus, Chairman of the Board, German-Ukrainian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

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Minutes

The panel discussion on cooperation of academia and business was organized because Ukrainian-Bavarian academic cooperation should also support cooperation in other fields and those who participated in the academic exchange and in joint projects should profit from it, for example, on the labour market. The speakers gave insights into already existing cooperation of academia and business in the German-Ukrainian context and made suggestions for possible cooperation in the future.

According to the experience of German business the qualification of university graduates in Ukraine is very high, yet practical skills are often missing. There are few domestic companies where students can be trained. Missing practical skills can prevent graduates from finding a job according to their qualification. Employers appreciate both international and practical experience.

Since 2014 the Internship Program of German Business for Ukraine has been inviting students and graduates from Ukraine to German companies for half a year. The chances to be accepted for a job depend very much on the behavior of the candidate during the interview. The experience of the Internship Program is that applicants often do not have a clue what they want to do after finishing their studies. The idea of the program is to bring students closer to the practice and to support them to gain practical experience and orientation for their professional career already during the course of their studies.

From the perspective of German business in Ukraine it is desirable that studies become flexible enough that students are allowed to gain practical experience, for example during a half-year-internship. The challenge is to keep the balance between theoretical and practical education. Presently many students prefer finishing their studies quickly instead of taking time for practical

trainings. There is a need for an institution that supports students in managing the balance between theory and practice. A mutual exchange between Ukraine and Germany would be beneficial. Unfortunately, German students seldom go to Ukraine by now.

The Bavarian program „study & work international” advises students of Bavarian institutes of higher education how to go abroad and gain work experience there. In addition, counseling is offered to foreign students who are interested in doing an internship in Bavaria. “Study & work international” cooperates with German companies that have subsidiaries in other countries. Students can look for internships abroad in an online database. Both employers and students profit from this exchange. Employers can entrust young talents with specific tasks in short-term projects. Students gain both international and practical experience. For Ukrainians studying in Bavaria it might be a good option to do an internship in the subsidiary of a German enterprise in Ukraine.

Due to the quick changes of the demand on the market, for example in the IT industry, university education can never be completely up-to-date. However, the graduates are able to keep pace which can be seen by the high number of start-up-companies. In order to fulfill customers’ needs in time, the (local) government, universities and business should cooperate in accelerators where teams could be formed for finding up-to-date solutions.

Investors in Ukraine are not only looking for graduates with academic qualification, but also for professionals who possess the practical know-how and are able to handle a machine.

While in Kiev there is a surplus of university graduates, in smaller cities there is a lack of them. This is a problem for foreign investors who often go to smaller cities because of lower costs and their rapid development. The mobility of university graduates from big to small cities is low.

Another field of cooperation between academia and business is technology transfer including the commercialization of research results. The V. Lashkaryov Institute of Semiconductor Physics in Kiev belongs to the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The institute specializes in semiconductor materials, photovoltaics and energy efficiency, sensor systems and semiconductor infrared and microwave technology. It cooperates with companies in certain fields, presently rather with small businesses. All departments are interested in cooperation with European companies, especially from Germany. An example for a possible future project with businesses would be the development of an analyser of human blood plasma in order to detect some kinds of viruses. However, for recommending new products to potential clients, the issue of patents needs to be solved.

Technology transfer only works if it is supported by the companies in the country and it is very costly. German companies have conducted several technology transfer projects in Ukraine in the automotive and IT sector, but the political situation and the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine mean a risk that keeps companies from intensifying technology transfer activities in the country. A regular and flexible exchange between academia and business could contribute to the further development of technology transfer.