

**Internationalization of Higher Education**

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**Internationalization of higher education: implementation experience in Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives ..... 3**

The article presents the experience of implementation of higher education internationalization in Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives, factors influencing higher education internationalization, and directions of its development.

**Key words:** higher education; internationalization; international activity; international project; export of educational services.

**Introduction**

*Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives (BTEU) has been successfully cooperating with Seville University (Spain) over a number of years. This long-term cooperation has enabled us to implement a number of joint international projects:*

*“Upgrading the Management at the Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives to EU Quality Standards” TEMPUS Programme (2008–2010);*

*“Internationalization in Central Asia and the Eastern Neighboring Area” – ICAEN TEMPUS Programme (2012–2015);*

*“Development of approaches to harmonization of a comprehensive internationalization strategies in higher education, research and innovation at EU and Partner Countries” – HARMONY ERASMUS+ Programme (2016–2019).*

*HARMONY project is of a particular importance in the listed projects. It was developed to increase the attractiveness of the higher education space, strengthen the integration of education, science and innovation, as well as strengthen the internationalization of higher education systems in accordance with basic provisions of the Bologna process. The project is currently being implemented.*

International project activity has given a serious impetus to development of internationalization process at BTEU, and this experience is actively disseminated by the university at various levels, including the highest ones. For example, materials on internationalization of higher education in Belarus, highlighting the place of BTEU in this process, were twice submitted for consideration to the Presidium of the Republican Council of Rectors of HEIs of the Republic of Belarus:

- On experience of development and implementation of internationalization strategy for universities in the Republic of Belarus (22.02.2017);
- On activities of higher education institutions for development of service export in context of the Concept of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus for 2018–2020 (28.02.2018).

Problems and ways of implementing the directions of internationalization of higher education at BTEU were reported at the following international research conferences:

- International research and methodological conference «Open Distance Education as a form of manifestation of globalization: experience, problems and prospects» (16 September, 2016), Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebsoyuz, Kazakhstan, 2016 [1];

- International research and practical conference “150 years of Ukrainian Consumer Cooperatives: appreciating the past denoting the future” (13–14 December 2016), dedicated to 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary after establishment of the first consumer society in Ukraine and 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary after founding of Lviv University of Trade and Economics, Lviv University of Trade and Economics, Ukraine, 2016 [2];

- International research conference “Education and Sport in epoch of Potency and Happiness” (9–10 November 2017), Turkmen State Institute of Economics and Management, Turkmenistan, 2017 [3];

- International research and practical conference “Modern Trends in Education and Science: condition and prospects” (16 March 2018), Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebooyuz, Kazakhstan, 2018 [4];

- International research and practical conference “International Cooperation of HEIs as Important Factor in Improving of Education Quality”, (19–20 June 2018), Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics, Tajikistan, 2018;

- International research and practical online conference “Research Days–2018” (4–5 April 2018), Siberian University of Consumer Cooperatives, Russia, 2018.

Internationalization of higher education at the present stage of development of the world community is becoming global and multidimensional in nature. A number of factors influence the formation and development of this process:

1. Significant severization of requirements to the level of professional training and availability of international competencies among specialists.

2. Impact of demographic trends, since due to the decrease in the total number of school graduates, internationalization makes it possible to compensate for reduction in the number of students in universities through the export of educational services.

3. Intensive development of modern technologies, methods and innovations in higher education.

Researchers of the problems of international education give many definitions to the meaning of “internationalization”. The most succinct and frequently cited definition of internationalization of higher education was proposed by Canadian researcher Jane Knight: internationalization in the field of education is defined as the process of integrating of international intercultural and global aspect into goals, functions and methods of providing higher education [5].

Internationalization has acquired a special relevance for higher education in the Republic of Belarus taking into account the country’s inclusion in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Beginning from 2015 the higher education system is gradually reorganized according to the requirements set out in the Roadmap for development of the system of higher education in the Republic of Belarus.

Internationalization of higher education for Belarusian universities is currently an essential resource for improving competitiveness and prestige not only in national but also in international scientific and educational area. The lag in this issue is a threat of non-compliance with modern permanently increasing requirements for a higher education institution. Today universities as well as in many other fields of activity, must assume a part of responsibility not only for internationalization of their activities, but also for internationalization of economy, culture and other areas of state activity. At the same time, the path of each university can be connected with the choice of one of known directions and forms of internationalization, or with a combination of these directions and forms depending on their specifics, an actual assessment of available resources and prioritization.

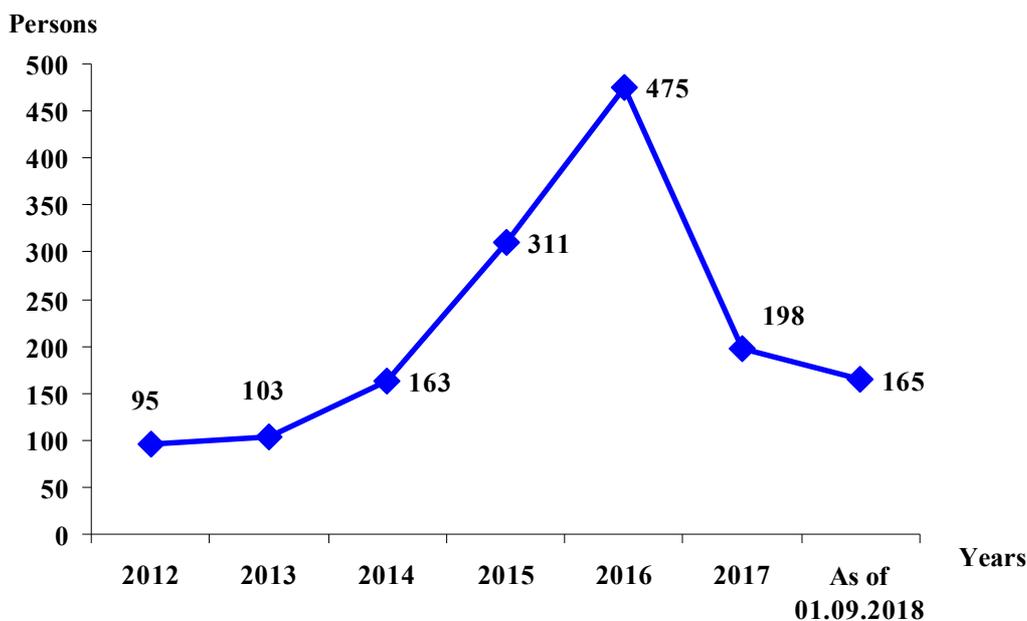
Moreover paying tribute to internationalization, each higher education institution should preserve its unique character, develop and implement its own approach to internationalization based on clearly defined objectives and expected results, taking into account national, historical, economic and other features.

Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation has been forming and implementing its development strategy for more than 10 years taking into account a comprehensive approach to internationalization as one of the most important components of the effectiveness and prestige of a higher education institution in the educational services market.

The main forms of higher education internationalization inherent with the features of educational space of the Republic of Belarus were reflected in the educational and research activities of BTEU.

### ***1. Export of educational services.***

Geographical expansion as well as increase in export volume of educational services is one of the directions of international activities. The largest number of foreign citizens (475 persons) studied in 2016 (Picture 1).



Picture 1 – Export of educational services at BTEU for 2012–2017 years and as of 01.09.2018

Later there was a slight decrease in the number of foreign citizens in the number of students at BTEU mainly due to the strengthening of a regulatory impact of the Ministries of Education of foreign countries towards increasing the number of students in higher educational institutions of their states. In addition the following factors had a negative impact on export of educational services at BTEU in 2017–2018:

- In some cases unapproved study invitations for foreign citizens from countries with increased migration activity by Citizenship and Migration Office of the Republic of Belarus (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Iraq);
- Refusal of entry to Belarus during a boarder control at the International Airport “Minsk” (presence of an invitation does not guarantee possibility of arriving in the Republic of Belarus and getting education for a foreign citizen), and visa denial for foreign citizens to enter the Republic of Belarus by the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus;
- Absence of bilateral agreements with individual countries on the mutual recognition of higher education documents;
- Prohibition on entry to the Russian Federation for further travel to the Republic of Belarus (the problem is relevant for citizens of Tajikistan), etc.

Geography of educational services exports of BTEU is currently represented by such countries as Azerbaijan, Israel, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

## 2. *International academic mobility.*

International cooperation of the University is a mutually beneficial and purposeful interaction with educational and research institutions of different countries, aimed at the exchange of intellectual resources (ideas, new developments, teaching materials, technologies); at development of educational mobility of students, undergraduates and postgraduate students, as well as academic mobility of faculty members; at strengthen of intercultural and business ties. Academic mobility at BTEU is implemented in the framework of inter-institutional agreements and on a parity basis.

Students of Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives take the training course with obtaining a relevant certificate at foreign universities of the Russian Federation.

As of today there are academic mobility agreements with Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law (BUCEL), Russian University of Cooperation (RUC), Plekhanov Russian University of Economics (RUE), Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University (SpbPU), Tajik State University of Commerce (TSUC), Tajik State Finance and Economics University (TSFEU). Table 1 shows academics mobility in the framework of concluded agreements at BTEU for the period from 2015 to 2017 and as of 01.09.2018 (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Students exchange in the framework of concluded agreements at Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives y/y 2012–2017, persons**

Universities	2015	2016	2017	As of 01.09.2018
BUCEL	8/8	9/9	5/5	6/6
RUC	5/5	5/5	5/5	6/6
RUE	x	x	x	5/5
SpbPU	–	7/7	5/5	–
TSUC	0/1	–	–	–
TSFEU	X	X	X	0/1
Total	13/14	21/21	15/15	17/18

Academic mobility in the framework of international project and programmes is very important for BTEU (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Academic mobility at BTEU within international project y/y 2014–2017, persons**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	As of 01.09.2018
Students	2	3	7	1	3
Graduate students	2	2	2	–	–
Postgraduate students	1	1	–	–	–
Teaching staff	1	–	4	3	2
Total:	6	6	13	4	5

Over the past five years, university's students have stepped up grant applications to German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) DAAD for obtaining scholarships under the programme of International Summer University Courses. According to the selection results 3 scholarships were obtained in the amount of from 680 to 850 Euros.

### **3. Institutional partnership.**

In general, year on year we can notice increase in international contracts and cooperation agreements concluded by Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation with various foreign universities (Table 3). Their geography is rather wide and covers European and Asian countries: Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Switzerland and Sweden.

**Table 3 – Contracts and agreements of Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation y/y 2012–2017 and as of 01.09.2018**

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	As of 01.09.2018
38	40	47	44	60	78	77

Educational Institution “Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation” is an active member of such international organizations as German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), European Retail Academy; International public organization “Council of the Heads of Cooperative Educational Institutions”, Academic Methodological Association of Russian HEIs on education in the field of management.

Network University “Cooperation” was founded and is functioning involving Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation. It should be noted that it is a promising project for integration of higher education cooperative institutions aimed at pooling of potentials of participating universities, and it could be an important factor in rapprochement and integration of higher education systems, increasing their competitiveness in the international market of educational services. Consortium for foundation of Network University “Cooperation” united nine cooperative institutions from seven CIS countries: Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives (Republic of Belarus), Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebsoyuz (Kazakhstan); Trade cooperative University of Moldova (Moldova); Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law, Russian University of Cooperation, and Siberian University of Consumer Cooperatives (Russian Federation); Lviv University

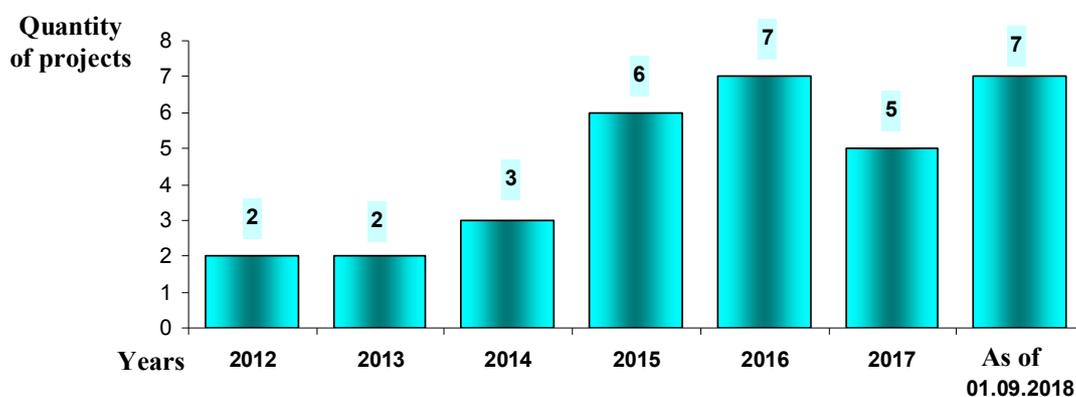
of Trade and Economics, and Poltava University of Economics and Trade (Ukraine); Tajik State University of Commerce (Tajikistan).

Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation develops such basic cooperative values and principles as “education, enlightenment”, “cooperation”; implements the principles of the European policy of higher education “strengthening of cooperation based on partnership”; pursues the policy of formation a “system of looking forward training”, which is represented as a source of its innovative development under objectively changing circumstances of an external environment. Therewith the University actively promotes further development of a unique form of internationalization – “comprehensive internationalization”, i.e. international cooperation on formation of an effective educational space for educational institutions of consumer cooperation system, primarily CIS countries.

At the end of 2017 an agreement on founding at the University a network department of UNESCO as a subdivision of the UNESCO Department “Education for sustainable development of cooperatives” at Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law was signed.

#### 4. International research activity.

For more than a decade BTEU staff has implemented 16 International projects funded by foreign foundations, organizations, programs (Eurasia Foundation, VISBY programme by the Swedish Institute, programmes of the European Commission such as TEMPUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS, and ERASMUS+ etc) (Picture 2).



Picture 2 – Quantity of International projects implemented at Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation in 2012–2018 years

At the present time 7 International projects including 5 projects within ERASMUS+ programme are being implemented at BTEU (Table 4).

Table 4 – Running International project in 2018 in which Educational Institution “Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation” is a participant

No	Title of the project
1	“Development of approaches to harmonization of a comprehensive internationalization strategies in higher education, research and innovation at EU and Partner Countries” – HARMONY 2015–2019 ERASMUS+
2	Academic mobility project within Erasmus + programme with Varna Management University (Varna, Bulgaria) 2015–2021
3	Academic mobility project within Erasmus + programme with Vidzeme University of Applied Science (Valmiera, Latvia) 2015–2021
4	SME activation in the cross-border regions of Ukraine-Belarus (Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programme Belarus–Ukraine)
5	Fostering university-enterprise cooperation and entrepreneurship of students via SMART Caffes ERASMUS+
6	Higher Education Institutions for youth entrepreneurship – HEIFYE ERASMUS+
7	Scholarship programme of German Academic Exchange “International Summer University Courses”

Much attention is paid to a foreign publication activity of BTEU academic staff (Table 5). Increase in number of publications of several departments is noticeable for the last three years. Decrease in the total number of publications by 2017 compared to 2016 is due to the optimization of the organizational structure of the university.

Table 5 – Publication activity of BTEU academic staff in foreign publications y/y 2015–2017

Department	Quantity of publications		
	2015	2016	2017
Banking, Analysis and Audit	22	47	34
Merchandising	34	43	43
World and National Economics	29	32	21
Foreign languages	20	32	26
Marketing	26	30	33
Law and Economic Theory	13	28	14
Trade Economics	16	23	24
Commerce and Logistics	15	20	18
Information and Computer System	5	16	8
Accounting	20	15	26
Economics in Agro-Industrial Complex, Service Industry and Statistics	10	14	x*
Economic and Law Disciplines	12	14	12
Physical Culture and Sports	3	2	3
Accounting and Financial Management	–	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>264</b>
* Department was disestablished in the case optimization of the organizational structure.			

The University also implements other best practices that Belarusian HEIs use in the field of organization of International activity.

Foreign lecturers are actively involved in lecturing. For example, over the past three years, the following academics attended the University and delivered lectures for students and teaching staff:

- Kerstin Muller, Head of Information Bureau of German Academic Exchange DAAD in Belarus, and Lyudmila Yurkevich, member of the Bureau (April 2016);
- Prof. David Glass, Associate professor of School of Computing and Mathematics of the Ulster University (Ireland, Great Britain) (March 2017);
- Kozlova Natallia, PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Deputy Director for International Activities of Higher School of Internal and Foreign Trade (April 2017);
- Aigars Andersons, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, Vidzeme University of Applied Science (December 2017);
- Mohamed Fakiri, president of the Association of graduates of universities of the former Soviet Union and Hassan El Mardi, Vice-President of the Association (April 2018);
- John Frederick Davis, Professor of Birmingham City University Business School (Great Britain). Prof. Davis is a regular guest lecturer for a number of years.

Active work is being carried out to stimulate teaching in foreign language, primarily in English. For example, at the beginning of 2018/2019 academic the following disciplines for study in English were offered: “Competitive strategies”, “Money, credit, banks”, “History and theory of the cooperative movement”, “International Economics”, “Macroeconomics”, “Marketing”, “Marketing and Price Formation”. Also a Master’s program in specialty 1-25 80 02 “Global Economics” is fully taught in English.

In the framework of inter-institutional agreements on various international programs BTEU academic staff visiting professorships and deliver lectures at foreign universities For example, for the period of 2016–2018 the following lecturers has professorship and deliver lectures: at Central School of Marseille (Marseille, France) – PhD in Economics, Associate Professor Shablouskaya Tatsiana, and PhD in Techniques, Associate Professor Kravchenko Sviatlana; at Tomas Bati University (Zlin, Czech Republic) –

PhD in Economics, Associate Professor Shablouskaya Tatsiana, and PhD in Pedagogic Dubovtsova Tatsiana; at Alexander Technological Educational Institute (Thessaloniki, Greece) – PhD in Economics, Associate Professor Yatsevich Natallia; at Vidzeme University of Applied Science – senior lecturer of the Department of World and National Economics Maksimchikava Volha.

Increasing competition has prompted higher education institutions in Belarus to advanced planning of their activities, focused on achieving long-term success; to intensification of work related to internationalization. At BTEU the prospects for development of international activities are reflected in the Strategic Development Plan of Educational Institution “Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives” for 2011–2020 as one of the most important strategic directions of development highlighting targets for international activities. When developing BTEU Development Strategy a State’s comprehensive strategy set out in the National Strategy of Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030 and State programme “Education and Youth Policy” for 2016–2020 were taken into consideration.

Internationalization of higher education should be focused not only on introducing (implementing) of international, intercultural mechanisms into the education area of the Republic of Belarus, but also on expansion of Belarusian vector to other countries: experience, ideas, culture, but also when working with foreign nationals coming for study.

### Conclusion

In general it may be noted that at present time a stable system of international activity management has been formed in Belarusian system of higher education, which is able to provide effective control over the processes of internationalization, and BTEU is not an exception.

At the same time there are aspects of work that require a certain improvement both at the Republican level and in the educational institution “Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperation”. The following can be referred to the directions for activity development for implementation of internationalization strategies of higher education:

- Development of a Comprehensive Internationalization Strategy of higher education system based on recommendations of ERASMUS+ HARMONY and TEMPUS PICASA projects, as well as legal mechanism of its implementation;
- Setting the strategic tone to public funding for international mobility of teaching staff;
- Development and founding of Belarusian programme of academic mobility ensuring funding mobility of foreign students and lecturers;
- Formation of a national system for assessing university’s achievements in accordance with international criteria;
- Development of the strategy for internationalization of higher education institutions;
- To make an accessible and open strategy of internationalization of HEIs as well as in foreign languages in order to increase recognition of higher education of the Republic of Belarus at the international level and to enhance the image for foreign partners.

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## **Experience of development and implementation of double/joint diploma programmes of Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives..... 10**

The article briefly describes the experience of implementation of double/joint diploma programmes in Europe; describes the practice of development and implementation of “Two-Three Diplomas” programme at Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives (BTEU).

**Key words:** Bologna process; double diploma; joint diploma.

### **Introduction**

*Participation in numerous international projects resulted in development of double diploma programmes by Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives.*

*A special role in this issue was played by the meeting in frames of project “Development of approaches to harmonization of a comprehensive internationalization strategies in higher education, research and innovation at EU and Partner Countries” – HARMONY in Tomar (Portugal) in April 2018 where faculty members of BTEU learned the experience of double diploma programmes implementation in European partner-universities of the HARMONY project.*

*Integration of Belarusian higher education institutions in the world educational space is one of the most important priorities for the system of higher education. In this regard, a set of measures is being taken to promote internationalization of higher education in our country both at the state level and at the level of individual universities. Thus, recently a number of normative documents has been introduced with the purpose of increasing educational services export, among them the Concept for Development of Educational Services Export, developed and submitted by the Ministry of Education in December 2017 [1], Presidential Decree No. 232 as of June 12, 2018 “On scholarships” [2]. Internationalization of higher education institutions in the world educational space is carried out through a whole range of activities, among which separate place is occupied by implementation of double/joint diploma programmes. The term “double diploma” is considered by authors to be conditional, since this concept has already been established and is widely used in academic circles. It should be noted that, as a rule, students don’t obtain a “double diploma” unless it is an issue of some specific documents stipulated in the agreement in frames of consent between higher education institutions. Graduating students obtain two different standard diplomas: State-recognized diploma of Belarusian institution of higher education and diploma of foreign university where they passed their studies.*

The idea of implementation of double/joint diploma programmes in Europe was developed at the end of the last century. “The main reason for development of such programmes was the relevance for mutual recognition of diplomas obtained in European universities in the conditions of emerging European labor market. Erasmus programme was established in the late 80’s, which appeared to be an additional incentive for development of double diploma programmes” [3]. Over the past period the issue of double/joint diploma was repeatedly discussed at the meetings of European Ministers of Higher Education. Eventually, at the regular Conference of Ministers of European Higher Education Area (Bucharest, Romania, April 26–27, 2012), it was proposed to develop common European approaches to assessing the quality of double diploma programmes, as a result this document was submitted for approval at the Conference of Ministers of European Higher Education Area which was held on May 14–15, 2015 in Yerevan (Armenia).

Introduction of double/joint diploma programmes is gaining increasing recognition in higher education institutions of our country. Moreover, higher education system of the Republic of Belarus has more than 20 years of experience in implementation of joint educational programmes, formation and development of which is the result of work in frames of international projects, interstate and interuniversity agreements. Through the implementation of such programmes in cooperation with foreign universities, the task of increasing convertability of Belarusian diplomas of higher education, their recognition at international level, involvement of domestic universities in international ratings, and improving competitiveness of national education is being completed. However, it is quite difficult to evaluate actual extent and scope of distribution of double/joint diploma programmes. Systematization and data collection turned out to be a quite labor-consuming issue, as the information provided by institutions of higher education on websites doesn’t always give an idea of extent and nature of cooperation, since the existence of agreements with foreign universities doesn’t signify a real interaction. Besides that, the concept of joint programmes or double diploma programmes is interpreted in a fairly diverse manner. Thus, for example, in recommendations of Council of Europe on recognition of joint diploma it is indicated that a joint diploma should be understood as a diploma issued jointly by at least two institutions of higher education or jointly by a university and other institution on the basis of educational programme developed and/or implemented jointly by universities or with the assistance of other institutions.

Study of experience on implementation of double/joint diploma programmes at European universities makes it possible to distinguish three main models of this kind of academic training:

- a joint diploma of two or more institutions of higher education, presented as a single document recognized in the partner countries;
- a model of double, triple, etc. diploma, when each partner university assigns its own degree to a student and issues its own diploma;
- the third model is a combination of the first two ones with multiple variations.

In accordance with Bologna Declaration [4], higher education programmes, including double/joint diploma programmes, consist of training programmes of bachelors, masters and doctors. In current practice double/joint diploma programmes are more common for master’s and doctoral, rather than bachelor’s programme. In some countries joint programmes are not applied to training of bachelors at all.

Currently there is neither a unified algorithm for development and implementation of such programmes, nor national legislation that recognizes such types of diplomas in the Republic of Belarus.

Analysis of European practice, carried out during study of economic literature, makes it possible to distinguish the following main stages of the process of development and implementation of double/joint diploma programme:

- selection of partner-university (-ies) and specialty (-ies);
- conclusion of an agreement with partner-university (-ies);
- coordination of curriculum and educational programmes, actual development of double/joint diploma programme;
- definition of forms, periods and tuition fee at the partner-university (-ies);
- dissemination of information about the possibility of participation in the programme and selection of students;
- implementation of double/joint diploma programme;
- quality control of double/joint diploma programme.

In compliance with the above-mentioned stages Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives developed “Two-Three Diplomas” programme, which provides students with an excellent opportunity to study their specialty in greater detail and obtain two (three) diplomas with European Diploma Supplement.

Varna University of Management (VUM) (Bulgaria) and Cardiff Metropolitan University CMU (United Kingdom) are the partner-universities in frames of the above-mentioned programme. The appropriate agreement was signed on May 20, 2015 in Dobrich (Bulgaria).

The programme provides two possible participation schemes (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Schemes of participation in “Two-Three Diplomas” programme of Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives**

Scheme 1	Scheme 2
2 diplomas (Belarus – Bulgaria)	3 diplomas (Belarus – Bulgaria – United Kingdom)
3 years of study at BTEU + 1 year of study in English at VUM (Bulgaria)	2 years of study at BTEU + 1 year of study in English at VUM (Bulgaria) + 1 year of study in English at CMU (United Kingdom)
Obtaining qualification of specialist and bachelor's degree	Obtaining qualification of specialist and bachelor's degree
Fees: 90 € – admission fee at VUM (single-time); 200 € – once a semester during the period of study at VUM (franchise); 1900 € – tuition fee at VUM for 1 (last) year (single-time)	Fees: 90 € – admission fee at VUM (single-time); 200 € – once a semester during the period of study at VUM (franchise); 3100 € – tuition fee at CMU for 1 (last) year (single-time)
Preparation and defense of graduation thesis in English (at one of the universities at students' choice). Passing of state examination in the major specialty – at BTEU	
Living costs (60 € per month), visa processing (210 €). meals and transportation costs are borne by students themselves	
Tuition fee is paid in full extent in accordance with the concluded agreement	
Study at BTEU can be completed by distance-learning in the final year. Pre-graduation practice is to be completed in Bulgaria with provision of all necessary documents and report to BTEU	

One of the problems Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives has encountered while implementing the above-mentioned “Two-Three Diplomas” programme is the financial problem. Due to the fact that all financial costs of participation in the programme are borne by students, the availability of participation in this programme depends on students' financial state. This problem can be solved through creation of specialized funds to finance preparation of students in the most perspective fields of study at state level.

In general, existence of such a programme at institutions of higher education provides a number of advantages: upgrading the university's rating, development of international cooperation, educational, scientific potential, etc.

Students participating in the programme gain additional competitive advantages in the labor market, improve language proficiency, etc.

We have conducted a selective research on the availability of double/joint diploma programmes at 8 Belarusian HEIs using information on official websites of institutions of higher education of the Republic of Belarus:

- Polotsk State University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with WSB University (Poland) [5] and Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (Portugal) [6];
- Belarus State Economic University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (Portugal) [7], University of Applied Sciences (Germany) [8], Baltic International Academy (Latvia) [9], Poznan School of Logistics (Poland) [10], Russian University of Transport (Russian Federation) [11];
- School of Business of Belarusian State University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Finland) [12];
- Francisk Skorina Gomel State University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with Academy of State and Municipal Service in Kursk (Russian Federation) [13];
- Belarusian State Technological University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with Bialystok University of Technology (Poland) [14];
- Belarusian-Russian University has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with University of Clermont Auvergne (France) [15];
- Belarussian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with a number of universities and colleges of the Sultanate of Oman [16];
- Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno has agreement on implementation of double diploma programme with University of Bialystok (Poland) [17].

This study showed that universities which pursue an active policy in terms of international cooperation have not only formally concluded agreements for implementation of double/joint diploma programmes, but, as well, have actual results in this field. Unfortunately, there are no quantitative indicators of the effectiveness of this work on websites, as a rule, and only certain facts are presented, such as awarding diplomas, lecturing, visits of delegations, negotiations in the framework of existing agreements, etc.

Along with this, current problem in the field of double/joint diplomas in the Republic of Belarus is development of normative and legal acts, which will make it possible not only to develop processes of internationalization of education, but will also contribute to protection of educational market of the Republic of Belarus.

## Conclusion

As practice shows, Belarusian institutions of higher education, which closely cooperate with foreign universities, organizations, funds and programmes, are actively reforming their activity: management, system of training of specialists (especially in the field of economics, law, humanities, social sciences), create quality management systems for education, introduce modern teaching technologies. In addition to it, double diploma programmes serve as a means of increasing effectiveness of their own development programmes, obtaining foreign/international accreditation, and assigning qualifications that can't be provided by national education system. Joint educational programmes can provide the means due to which students would have the opportunity to learn foreign academic and cultural experience, while HEIs would have the opportunity to develop closer institutional cooperation. Such cooperation, obviously, leads to significant expansion of funds and resources involved in educational process, rather than those available to individual educational institutions.

According to the former Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus Sergei Maskevich: "Double diploma programme in Belarus will help to solve the problem of recognition of Belarusian higher education at international level, increasing convertability and recognition of Belarusian diplomas of higher education" [18].

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## **Experience of cooperation between Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives and German Academic Exchange Service ..... 14**

The article generalizes the experience of cooperation between the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives and German Academic Exchange Service, gives practical recommendations to the applicants for international scholarship programs.

**Key words:** German Academic Exchange Service; international cooperation in the field of education and science; international scholarship programs; support for talented youth.

### **Introduction**

*Among the main directions of internationalization of Belarusian higher education we can mention the development of international academic relations in the field of education and scientific cooperation of universities [1]. A special role in the organization of international mobility of students and scholars belongs to German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD – German), that has had its representatives on the territory of Belarus since 1993 and information center in Minsk since 2003. Since this period the history of fruitful cooperation between DAAD and the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives (further BTEU) has begun, the results of which will be presented in this article.*

**The main part.** German Academic Exchange Service is an international self-governing organization. DAAD was founded in Heidelberg in 1925 to support student mobility. For 93 years of its existence DAAD united more than 230 universities and 130 student unions and supported more than 2 million German and foreign students and scientists.

The main objectives of DAAD are: awarding grants for foreigners and Germans, internationalization of universities, promotion of German studies and the German language abroad, cooperation with developing countries in the field of education and science.

The listed objectives are implemented in more than 250 DAAD programs that include study tours of student groups to Germany, summer university courses, traineeships of teachers and young scientists,

training in magistracy and doctoral studies, dissertation defense, invitation to universities of foreign professors for teaching academic disciplines, etc.

DAAD programs are funded by German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, The European Union and others.

The structure of DAAD includes the head office in Bonn, 15 regional offices and 57 information centers in 60 countries, including the Republic of Belarus.

The tasks of the Information Center in Minsk are: informing everyone interested about DAAD scholarship programs, about opportunities for training and research in Germany; advising about financing; support of Belarusian and German universities in establishing contacts; assisting applicants in preparing documents for DAAD scholarship programs or for studying in Germany; holding information events in the capital and regions; conducting language tests and a test to determine the ability to learn at the university [2].

The Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives has been cooperating with DAAD Information Center for more than 10 years. This cooperation is realized in various forms, including the holding of information and country geographic seminars on the base of BTEU; attracting university students to participate in cultural and educational activities, conducted with the support of DAAD lecturers; testing the students to determine the level of proficiency in German; granting scholarships to students and teachers of the university. In particular, for the years 2016-2017 at the university Head of the Information Center and DAAD lecturers held 4 thematic seminars that gathered about 140 teachers and students (Table 1).

**Table 1 – DAAD seminars held at the base of BTEU in 2016–2017**

Date of seminar	Seminar topic	Amount of participants
06.04.2016	Training and research opportunities in Germany	12
09.11.2016	Scholarship programs for students, undergraduates, teachers and scientists	88
29.03.2017	Experience in reforming the higher education system in the framework of the Bologna process	38
29.03.2017	Exchange brings changes	38
Note – The table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.		

During this period, 33 students of BTEU have presented 24 projects to participate in the competition “Relay.de – Stafette.by”, held with the support of DAAD lecturers at German Weeks for German lovers. At the same time, 29 students participating from the BTEU studied German as the second foreign language, 4 – as the first. Participation in such events allows students to realize their creative potential and practice German in the circle of native speakers (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Participation of students of BTEU in the competition “Relay.de – Stafette.by”**

Year	Stage name	Amount of participants from BTEU	Amount of submitted projects	Result (place) among Belarusian participants
2016	History and photos	9	7	3, 5
2016	Domino “Germany”	2	2	3, 5
2016	Translation Competition	3	3	5
2017	History and Selfies “Cultural Heritage”	18	11	5
2017	Photo Contest	1	1	5
Note – the table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.				

To create a German speaking environment and to expand the horizons of students, DAAD information center and lecturers annually conduct Republican German-speaking regional geography seminar “Deutschland entdecken” (“Discover Germany”), providing an opportunity to get acquainted with the current trends in the social, cultural and economic life of Germany through participation in trainings, interactive events and discussions (Table 3).

**Table 3 – Participation of the students of BTEU in the Republican seminar “Deutschland entdecken”**

The name of the seminar	Date and location	Amount of participants from BTEU
VIII seminar dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the unification of Germany	15–18.10.2015, Mogilev	2
IX seminar	27–30.10.2016, Vitebsk	2
X anniversary seminar dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation	26–29.10.2017, Gomel	5
XI seminar	25–28.10.2019, Polotsk	2

Note – The table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.

X anniversary seminar was held on the basis of BTEU with the participation of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Peter Dettmar, DAAD lecturers, 85 students from 18 universities of Belarus.

The gained experience the students studying German reflect in the reports at international scientific student conferences in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan (Table 4).

**Table 4 – Publication activity of BTEU students studying German**

Year	Amount of publications	Geography of publications
2014	3	Gomel – 1, Dushanbe – 2
2015	4	Gomel – 1, Dushanbe – 3
2016	6	Gomel – 2, Donetsk – 2, Poltava – 1, Moscow – 1
2017	14	Gomel – 3, Vitebsk – 1, Donetsk – 4, Poltava – 3, Moscow – 2, Cheboksary – 1

Note – The table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.

Despite the decrease in the number of BTEU students studying German, for the last five years the granting for applications to the DAAD information center has been activated by students to receive scholarships under the program “Summer university courses”. The decision to award scholarships is made on a competitive basis by independent selection committees from among the professors of universities in Germany. During 2013–2017 BTEU students submitted 9 applications and received 3 scholarships (Table 5).

**Table 5 – Participation of BTEU students in DAAD scholarship programs**

Academic year	Amount of grant applications	Amount of scholarships received	Place of study
2013/2014	1	1	August 2014, University of Freiburg named after Albert Ludwig
2015/2016	2	0	–
2016/2017	4	1	August 2017, University of Trier
2017/2018	2	1	August 2018, Hamburg Technical University

Note – The table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.

According to the results of participation in the summer university courses students organize informational seminars to expand the audience of potential candidates for scholarship programs and increase students’ motivation for international project activities. The results of the participation are reflected on the website of the university and in the media (local newspapers).

An important step in the preparation of documents for scholarship programs is onDaF computer testing to determine the level of proficiency in German. During 2015–2017 15 students of BTEU of the following specialties “Commercial Activity”, “Economics and Management”, “World Economy”, “Marketing”, “Logistics”, “Accounting, Analysis, Audit” passed the test (Table 6).

Table 6 – Results of BTEU students on testing on DaF

Date	Amount of tested of students	German proficiency levels
30.10.2015	3	A2 – 2; B1 – 1
09.11.2016	10	A1 – 2; A2 – 6; B1 – 2
17.11.2017	2	B1 – 2
Note – The table is compiled by the authors on the basis of data of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives.		

The students of the second year and the students of the penultimate year of study can apply for scholarship programs if they speak German at least A2.

Analysis of requirements for candidates for DAAD Scholarships, presented on the website [www.daad.by/ru](http://www.daad.by/ru), survey of the foundationers (BTEU students), have become the basis for the following practical recommendations for the potential applicants for scholarship programs:

1) to obtain a certificate of German language proficiency you should pass a trial test, for example, on the site [www.onset.de/](http://www.onset.de/), identifying your weaknesses. If the language proficiency is below the required level you should make and implement a plan to improve your language competence (visiting electives, additional lessons, language courses, independent work with native speakers on-line or with a tutor);

2) when choosing on the site [www.daad.de/hsk-kursliste](http://www.daad.de/hsk-kursliste) two-year language courses in Germany, choose those that are marked with a green asterisk, the price of which includes accommodation. Fill in a special form with their names, dates, place, indicating first the one you give the most preference;

3) when preparing a resume, reflect your personal data, information about school / college / university studies, practical experience, professional and language skills, competencies and abilities, personal qualities and interests, achievements and awards, publications;

4) make a motivation letter; explain why you are applying for a DAAD scholarship and how it will help you achieve your academic, professional and personal goals; why you want to study at the chosen courses; why the chosen university attracted your attention; what you expect (personally, professionally, for a career) from the participation in the courses;

5) collect a letter of recommendation in German / English from a specialized teacher (preferably a PhD), after downloading the form from the above site;

6) prepare a photocopy of the student’s record book and its translation into German;

7) fill in the online application form for the scholarship program carefully; upload your resume, a motivation letter, translated into German student’s record book, language certificate to the portal, pre-scan them and save in pdf;

8) print the document and send it to the DAAD Information Center by mail, enclosing a teacher’s letter of recommendation with a certified signature, forms with information about chosen courses and with the data of the applicant, photocopy of the student’s record book in Russian.

### Conclusion

Thus, the cooperation of the Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives and the German Academic Exchange Service has a long history and is characterized by openness, variety of forms, focusing on promoting the internationalization of the university, informational and educational support, that motivate students to learn German, participate in scholarship programs, implemented creatively in educational and cultural DAAD projects, and all of these correspond to the motto of the Service: “Exchange brings changes”.

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**Youth and entrepreneurship: basis of creation of University 3.0 ..... 18**

The article is devoted to actual issues of support of the youth entrepreneurial movement in the framework of entrepreneurial University 3.0 creating.

**Key words:** entrepreneurship; youth; ranking “Doing Business”; Erasmus+; University 3.0.

**Introduction**

*Nowadays it is important for many universities to adopt the concept of development using the model University 3.0, which means that during their study time, students may not only gain deep knowledge in the field of their chosen specialty, but also acquire entrepreneur skills. In this case, special entrepreneur ecosystem forms at the university, which may become the support for development of youth business-initiatives and the creation of students’ start-ups. The activation of youth entrepreneurship in modern times is a long-term source of economic growth and social and economic development of the country not only from the perspective of increasing of employment of the youth, but also from the point of improving the quality of training of specialists and their competitiveness on labor market.*

Entrepreneurship heavily affects the extension of national economy and if economic and law environment is created just right, it can act as a main reason of economic growth of the nation. In the economies of well-developed countries small enterprises take a reasonable percentage amount of country’s GDP (up to a 60%) and employment (up to 90% of the employed in the economy). For Republic of Belarus the development of this sector of national economy doesn’t go actively enough and has certain difficulties. At the same time it provides a significant reserve for the economic growth of Belarus.

Today in Republic of Belarus, the question of support of small entrepreneurship and acceleration of business initiative of entrepreneurship subject is rather relevant [1]. So a row of regulatory legal acts and state programs, aimed at stimulating of economic activity of small and medium entrepreneurs in nation and the improvement of business environment, are adopted: Decree of the President of Republic of Belarus from 23.11.2017 № 7 “About development of entrepreneurship”, Law of Republic of Belarus from 01.07.2010 № 148-3 “About support of small and medium entrepreneurs”, Directive of the President of Republic of Belarus from 31.12.2010 № 4 “About development of business initiative and stimulating of business activity in Republic of Belarus”, Governmental Programme “Small and Medium entrepreneurs in Republic of Belarus” for 2016–2020 years, approved with decree of Council of Ministers from 23.02.2016 № 149, Decree of the President of Republic of Belarus from 07.05.2012 № 6 “About stimulating of entrepreneurship activity on the territory of medium, small urban settlements, rural area” and others.

Nowadays, one of the most informative instruments, that allow to evaluate effectiveness of the environment, created for development of entrepreneurship, is studying of rating positions of the country in international study of “Doing Business”, which is held by the World Bank. Rating rather objectively reflects the state of business climate in the country, because it bases on evaluation of regulatory documents, which regulate entrepreneurship activities, and a number of quality indicators, which make possible estimation of changes, taking place in the country.

The Republic of Belarus has participated in rating of “Doing Business” since 2005. In the last report “Doing Business-2018”, Belarus took 38 place out of 190 nations as result of 2017. It’s necessary to mention, that the government of Belarus continues the realization of complex of actions, aimed at improving the conditions of development of entrepreneurship in the country.

The infrastructure to support the entrepreneurship was created in the country that includes centers of business support and incubators. In 2018 there are 99 centers and 26 incubators that provide informational, consultant services, assistance in acquiring of financial resources, participation in exhibitions, fairs, establishing of business connections, creating of other conditions for growth and innovative development of small entrepreneurship subjects.

The state also provides financial support for small entrepreneurship subjects, using the funds of programs of support of small entrepreneurship. Belarusian Fund of Financial Support of Entrepreneurs funded 34 projects for 3 224,8 thousand rubles in 2017.

Let’s analyze the dynamic of quantity of small and medium entrepreneurship enterprises in the Republic of Belarus for 2009–2017 years’ period (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Quantity of small and medium entrepreneurship enterprises in the Republic of Belarus for 2009–2017 years period, units**

Indicator	2009	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017
Quantity of individual entrepreneurs	219 605	231 834	232 851	248 952	240 781	235 995	236 138
Quantity of microorganizations (under 15 people)	65 204	72 490	85 682	99 368	92 684	93 288	95 854
Quantity of small enterprises (16–100 people)	12 198	11 674	11 762	12 424	12 363	11 779	11 872
Quantity of subjects of medium entrepreneurship (101–250 people)	2 773	2 753	2 542	2 416	2 394	2 315	2 245
Total quantity of microorganizations, small and medium organizations	80 175	86 917	99 986	114 208	107 441	107 382	109 971
Population (average annual value), thousand people	9 506,8	9 490,6	9 464,5	9 474,5	9 489,6	9 501,5	9 498,3
Micro-, small and medium organizations for 1000 people	8,4	9,2	10,6	12,1	11,3	11,3	11,6

Note – Source: based on the data of publication of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus [www.belstat.gov.by](http://www.belstat.gov.by).

Thus, according to the data of the table 1, the decrease of small and medium organizations during this period can be noted. At the same time the quantity of microorganizations and individual entrepreneurs in 2017, compared to 2009 has increased, what states, that they are much more flexible, mobile and most likely to adapt to the changing conditions.

Let’s analyze employment of population of small and medium entrepreneurship in the Republic of Belarus for 2011–2017 years’ period (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Employment of population of small and medium entrepreneurship in the Republic of Belarus for 2011–2017 years’ period, thousand people**

Indicator	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Quantity of individual entrepreneurs and individuals employed by them under labor and civil-labor contracts	236,1	250,5	267,1	304,6	281,5	282,9	290,4
Average number of workers in microorganizations	347,2	354,2	385,0	348,0	319,7	362,5	353,9
Average number of workers in small organizations	447,6	452,4	461,7	470,5	443,1	422,8	434,1
Average number of workers in medium organizations	428,8	403,3	391,2	382,1	373,3	363,3	363,6
Total average number of employed population in small and medium entrepreneurship	1 459,7	1 460,4	1 505,0	1 505,2	1 417,6	1 431,5	1 442,0
Average number of employed population in the country	4 691,2	4 612,1	4 578,4	4 550,5	4 496,0	4 405,7	4 353,6
Share of population employed in small and medium entrepreneurship out of the total value of employed population, %	31,1	31,7	32,9	33,1	31,5	32,5	33,1
Level of registered unemployment in % to quantity of labor	0,5	0,5	0,5	1,0	0,8	0,5	0,5
Share of small and medium entrepreneurship subjects in GDP, %	23,2	26,2	25,1	24,5	23,4	23,6	24,7

Note – Source: based on the data of publication of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus [www.belstat.gov.by](http://www.belstat.gov.by).

Thus, the largest number of people working in small organizations was 30.1% in 2017 out of the total number of people employed in small and medium entrepreneurship and 10.0% of the total number of people employed in the country. In general, it should be noted that the share of the employed population in small and medium entrepreneurship in 2017 was 33.1% and slightly changed during the study period. At the same time, the share of small and medium enterprises in GDP is significantly lower in 2017, it was 24.7%. Thus, we can agree with the statement of some researchers that despite the increase in the position of Belarus in the international “Doing Business” ranking and the creation of certain conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the country, there is no significant increase in the number of people employed in small and medium entrepreneurship. The insignificant level of registered unemployment in the country (0.5% in 2017) does not make it possible to identify significant reserves for increasing employment in this field.

Creation of necessary conditions for the possibility of professional and labor self-realization of young people is one of the most prioritized objectives of state’s social-economic policy [2].

On the labor market youth aged between 15 and 24 occupied 9.4% out of all employed population in 2017. In 2016 this indicator was 9.2%, so we can see gradual increase in employment of the youth, first of all at the age between 20 and 24. Level of employment of the youth in 2017 aged between 15 and 24 was 43.9% out of total population of that age group. The value of this indicator in 2016 was 42.7%. Thus, the share of working youth is increasing.

By the types of economic activities in 2017, the structure of employment of the youth is spread the way, that the biggest shares have the following types of activities: 20.9% – services of temporary accommodation and catering; 11.5% – information and communication; 11.1% – wholesale and retail trade, repair of cars and motorcycles; 10.3% – entertainment, sport, art, recreation; 8.9% – finance and insurance services by the data of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus.

With that, 7.3% out of total population aged between 15 and 24 in 2017 didn’t work or study. The value of this indicator was 8.2% in 2016.

Unemployment is one of most significant problems, threatening economic security of the country. Youth unemployment is a special threat, because young people are preparing to enter adult life and unemployment is leading to significant problems, that negatively impact on social development of young generation (the growth of criminality, alcoholism, drug addiction).

As a rule, despite certain advantages of the youth on the labor market (high mobility, educability, high potential of future development), employers are not always interested in hiring graduates of universities and colleges, who need the job, because of the lack of work-experience and low qualification.

With this in mind, orienting of youth onto entrepreneurship, creating and promoting their own business is possible solution to the problem of youth unemployment.

In modern world, significance of education as a major factor of forming of new economy, based on knowledge is rising. Education for the youth is the basis of their development according to the demands of modern society.

The Belarusian Trade and Economy University of Consumer Cooperatives successively implements basic ideas of University 3.0 concept with the aim of development of youth entrepreneurship in Belarus and Gomel Region. Thus, there are Centre of business education, that has been functioning and developing for 15 years, uniting active students, ready to take risks that entrepreneurship brings. Annual international championship “Youth and Entrepreneurship”, international contest “Start-up Cooperation” are taking place at the university with functioning of start-up school. Participation in these contests enables students not only try their strength and present their business projects, but also inspire themselves through communicating with entrepreneurs and mentors, who have already reached success in realization of their business and ready to share the experience.

At the same time, students, who are ready to develop their own business, need the additional education on basics of entrepreneurship, consulting on different questions, for example, accounting and legal, possibility of using co-working and office equipment and so on.

Nowadays, at the Belarusian Trade and Economy University of Consumer Cooperatives international projects, that are financed by the European Union as a matter of Erasmus+ program, are being realized, which helps to solve many problems, connected with the development of youth entrepreneurship at the university.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

Thus, international project “Higher education institutions for youth entrepreneurship” – HEIFYE, that is financed by Erasmus+ program, is aimed at the development of transnational cooperation and experience exchange regarding the specifics of running business in the countries of Eastern partnership. Project covers not only conducting the series of studies on state and perspectives of youth entrepreneurship development in the countries, such as Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Latvia, but also creation of tutorial for young entrepreneurs, which will explain the specifics of business in the partner-nations of the project. In the framework of the project, there is also implementation of academic subject of entrepreneurship teaching that will be designed with international educational aspect in mind.



International project “Fostering university-enterprise cooperation and entrepreneurship of students via SMART Caffes / SMART” is also financed by Erasmus+ program and is aimed at the encouraging of students’ entrepreneurship through cooperation of companies and universities in conditions, called SMART Caffé. The objective of creating of SMART Caffé is stimulating of students to create the innovative business ideas. The aim of the project is the creation of SMART Caffé, as an atmosphere for generation, development and commercialization of students’ innovative ideas, through conducting of the theme trainings. Project is also aimed at the development of cooperation between Eastern partnership and Europe countries: Belarus, Armenia, Spain, Greece, Germany, Bulgaria and Belgium.



Thus, the projects are aimed at solving the following problems of students’ entrepreneurship, revealed as a result of conducted polls:

- many students are willing to start their own business during study period or right after that, but few of them are willing to implement those plans, because of the number of existing barriers;
- education and teaching of entrepreneurship are held academically at the universities and lack practical approach;
- entrepreneurship is not treated as an opportunity of implementation of students’ initiative in the society;
- non-sufficient level of cooperation between enterprises and universities that leads to students’ lack of practical experience during their studies.

### Conclusion

Thus, the infrastructure of support of youth entrepreneurship is created and developed, institutional environment for development of small business in Republic of Belarus is being formed. In our opinion, it is possible to perform the series of actions, aimed at improving this activity through the following directions: reforming of institutional environment, with objective of dynamic development of small business and increase of its impact on national economy of Belarus; forming an effective competitive environment for increasing the activity of small organizations, growth of their competitiveness; support of development of cooperation of entrepreneurs and subjects of small business on the basis of inter-firm cooperation principles (creating of entrepreneurship clusters, networks, alliances); prioritizing of development support for businesses in the field of new technologies and innovations; development of innovative potential and entrepreneurship initiatives of the youth. An education shall play an important role, in particular, those high education establishments, which are gradually implementing University 3.0 concept. Those initiatives are being supported not only by the government of the Republic of Belarus, but also by European Union in terms of realization of international projects and programs.

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## **Role of academic mobility in increasing effectiveness of training of specialists on economic specialties** .....

22

The article briefly analyzes the development of academic mobility in the framework of the modernization of higher education of the Republic of Belarus, its role in the harmonization of processes of the country's accession to the Bologna process, the experience of academic programmes mobility in Belarusian Trade and Economic University of Consumer Cooperatives is presented as well.

**Key words:** Bologna process; European Higher Educational Area; academic mobility; credit mobility; institutional agreement.

### **Introduction**

*Nowadays the training of highly qualified competitive specialists remains one of the main strategic objectives of the higher education system of the Republic of Belarus. International academic mobility is one of the most effective ways of modern education developing. The necessity of developing academic mobility as a basic condition for the formation of the European higher education area is constantly underlined in the basic documents of the Bologna process, and the Berlin communiqué (2003) recognizes "mobility of students, academic and administrative staff as the basis for creation of the European higher education area".*

The trend of modernization of higher school in Belarus in the framework of the Bologna process [1] was supported in 2002 by joining the Lisbon Convention of 1997, adoption of Provisions on the levels of higher education and the Concept of introducing a two-level system of training specialists with higher education of 2004. Article 121 devoted to academic mobility was included in the Education Code of 2011. Credit education technology, competence approach approved in 2006, and recent changes in the concept of export educational services development came into force [2]. In 2012 elective courses on socio-humanitarian disciplines were introduced. Universities were allowed to approve new courses for students, and students got the right to choose courses from the suggested disciplines and to increase up to 50% the proportion of independent work. These measures are aimed at ensuring the competitiveness of the national higher education, based on improving the quality and increasing urgency of education, harmonization of applied University programmes on the bilateral level, development of the processes of training programs integrating with scientific research [3; 4]. Academic mobility as an integral element of the Bologna process and the process of forming a single European space of higher education play a key role here. Belarus joined the EHEA on May 14–15, 2015 and became the 48 participating country.

The Rector of the Republican Institute of Higher Schooling, V. Gaisenok, notes that, since the later decades of the 20th century the number of those studying at any one time has increased from around 13 million to 82 million. Belarus currently boasts about 400,000 students (400 per 1000 of the population). This places us at the fourth place globally, after the South Koreans, Americans and Russians. In addition, every third student studies without paying tuition fees. Meanwhile, more funding is needed, since only 5 percent of GDP is spent on the educational system (including 0.65 percent on higher education). The World Bank has discovered that about 70 percent of companies in Belarus admit to being hampered in their development by lack of sufficiently skilled workers. It appears that our universities have some way to go to 'catch up' with the needs of the labour market [5].

Mobile activities such as academic (teaching on higher education programmes, internship), research (scientific research), qualification improvement (design of new curricula, development individual development programmes in internship, exchange of experience) are being realized through the programmes of physical (fixed) International, interregional and regional mobility. Today it can be accessed remotely, this

resulted in a distance form of credit mobility. EHEA has the possibility of optimal interaction of different programs at the expense of comparability, mutual recognition, effective interaction between universities and research centers, as well as individualization of educational trajectories. Comparability is reached by common tools for assessing knowledge and skills, convergence training models of processes using common characteristics to describe training courses, as well as their modular structure [6].

According to the results of monitoring analysis of student contingent in the Republic of Belarus, on methodology of the Eurostudent project V (2014–2016, 3.000 students from 17 institutions of higher education of the Republic of Belarus) not more than 1% of students in the Republic of Belarus (Russia – 5%) participates in academic mobility, however, 26.7% of students are planning to participate in academic mobility (in Russia – 31%). Students choose Poland, Germany, Russia, Britain and the United States as the principal countries for academic mobility. The percentage of students who participated in the academic mobility is quite high in some universities of the Republic of Belarus. According to the analysis in 2016 the percentage of students sent within the framework of academic mobility for training abroad (from the total number of students) accounted for: Minsk State Linguistic University – 4.0; IILSR – 3.7; Belarusian State University – 2.7; Mogilev State University named after A. Kulyashou – 2.5; Belarusian State Academy of Arts – 2.4; Grodno State University named after Yanka Kupala – 2.0; Minsk Innovative University – 1.8; Belarusian State Economic University – 1.7; Vitebsk State University named after P. Masherov – 1.7; Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics – 1.7 [7].

Development of academic exchanges solves not only educational tasks, but also creates socio-cultural, value-orientation basis of integration processes between partner universities. Today more than 2.5 thousand interinstitutional agreements on students exchange are signed. Joint educational programs are the result of interinstitutional agreements. These are bilateral agreements in the sphere of Economics, Engineering, Law, Management, Languages. The development of international cooperation enables to study national and mental characteristics of the country of temporary staying, learn its language, to enrich culturally during excursions, leisure activities, visiting the museums, theatres, to get an idea about everyday life through academic mobility. Both students and teachers participating in international academic mobility programs have access to other educational programs and research opportunities. They return to their home country with new knowledge, academic and cultural experience. Credit mobility is aimed at helping a student with access to diverse “European” education on the chosen training profile to the recognized knowledge centers, where traditionally the leading scientific schools were formed, and to enhance knowledge of a student in all the spheres of the European culture, to infuse with a sense of citizen of Europe [8].

Choosing postgraduate employment graduates having mobility experience can adequately evaluate prospects of living and working in other countries. The reverse side of academic mobility, the so-called “brain drain” when more developed countries of the world have a wide range of possibilities for the selection of promising scientists, specialists from poor countries should be stressed here. That is why the EU countries, Canada, the United States, Scandinavia finance independent educational programs. This is VISBY in Sweden, the FIRST in Finland, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst in Germany, the QUOTA PROGRAM in Norway and other alongside with pan-European programmes TEMPUS, ERASMUS+, ERASMUS MUNDUS [9].

In Belarus academic mobility is implemented mainly through the international educational programs (IAESTE, DAAD, COPERNICUS, ERASMUS+, LINGUA, etc.) based on interstate and interuniversity agreements. On the programme of IAESTE with the supported by the Governments of various countries 50 Belarusian students annually have practice in foreign countries (England, Germany, Belgium, Spain). In 2015/2016 academic year the number of students taking part in the Erasmus+ mobility programme accounted for: from Belarus to European countries – 153 students; from European countries to Belarus – 22 students [7]. Facilitating and promoting international academic mobility contributes to the formation of qualitatively new labour resources, able to occupy its worthy place both in the global labour market and significantly affect the quality of labour resources of national economy [6]. Academic mobility in the education system has a significant impact on the formation of an international network of business elites, the academic elite relying first of all on individual contacts and cooperation opportunities between professionals.

In the Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives the new approaches for education taking into account traditions in training specialists in economics are being actively introduced. Academic mobility of professors, lecturers, students and staff of BTEU is organized for studying, internships, researching, delivering lectures, participating in conferences, seminars, cultural, educational and other events. It is in the framework of such international programmes as: European Commission (Erasmus+, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus); Eurasia Foundation project (Washington DC United States, fi-

nanced by USAID); BRIDGE project; VISBY programme; The German Academic Exchange Service DAAD; territorial cooperation programmes of Eastern partnership countries Belarus–Ukraine; interuniversity agreements.

Particular attention is paid to the development of interinstitutional relationships. BTEU is strategically oriented on the continuous expansion of international cooperation geography [10]. Academic mobility is based on normative, methodical and organisational accompaniment of University education internationalization services, using sufficient material and high academic capacities of universities, active interaction with the business community. While realizing educational programs of student mobility, the training programmes, plans on organizing outside leisure, cultural and recreational activities are being developed by the parties. These are city of residence excursions, country tours, etc. Students take an active part in scientific students' projects, conferences, forums and championships. Students can be free-movers (on terms of self-tuition and accommodation) or reside in the country under the programme (grant covers the cost on tuition and accommodation). The host party creates all the necessary conditions for comfortable host partner University. The company in which the future graduate is to work few years after graduation sometimes covers costs of academic mobility. For this purpose the contract is being made beforehand. It includes the deadlines, the funds and the penalties [11; 12]. Annually more than 1,500 Belarusian students are trained (up to one year). It includes practice, internship on programmes of academic mobility in Germany, Russia, Great Britain, Poland, Ukraine, France, Sweden, China, Italy, the Netherlands.

Cooperation of our University with Russian University of Cooperation, Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law, Bryansk District branch REU named by G. Plehanov and Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University named by Peter the Great is one of the successful examples of organization of academic mobility of students within the framework of bilateral agreements on cooperation in the sphere of education. The main idea of this project is interuniversity mobility of students in Russian-speaking environment for studying the specific educational programs. 18 joint programmes have already been implemented since 2014. 120 students of the partner universities participate in them on an equal footing. Most of the students participating in academic exchange programmes called periods of mobility as one of the best in their life. In general, the process of international cooperation BTEU works on two forms of horizontal programmes of short-term academic mobility:

- the period of staying at the University-partner is about 2–3 weeks. As a result, program participants receive certificates with the number of classroom hours for the disciplines;
- the period of staying at the University-partner is the whole semester. The student is given the document about the current certification (exams or tests) on the disciplines studied.

Criteria for the selection of students for international mobility in foreign countries are tougher, namely: publicity and transparency of the selection procedure with the announcement of the rankings; finishing one or two University courses; average mark, desirable, not below than 7; high social activity; language proficiency at level B1–B2 confirmed on the on-line interview; achievements in the form of scientific publications, developments, premium sheets etc. All abroad ECTS (European credit transfer system) credits are reccredited by Belarusian universities using a 10-point scale assessment.

One of the largest educational and research programmes funded by the European Commission is ERASMUS+. Financing instruments are available for the universities of the Republic of Belarus, as a member of the “Eastern partnership” [13]. Within the framework of this programme there are the following directions of academic mobility:

1. Joint Master Degrees. The duration of the program on any discipline is 1–2 years. The joint diplomas are given.
2. Credit mobility. Students and lecturers of BTEU will intern at the European Union universities. This financing instrument of academic mobility has replaced the Erasmus Mundus programme.
3. Capacity building in higher education. Continuation of the TEMPUS project. Its goals are to support modernization, accessibility and internationalization of higher education. The program provides students mobility. The internship will be available within any level of higher education: Bachelor, Master and Post-graduate student.
4. Jean Monnet. It does not provide for academic mobility and is aimed at promoting the development of educational programs and research, specializing in the role of the European Union on the issue of European integration.

Erasmus+ focuses on education, vocational training, youth and sport. The budget accounted for \$14.7 billion euro for 2014–2020, 40% more than the previous budget.

Since October, 2015 BTEU has started implementing the three projects of academic mobility on ERASMUS+ programme in International Business and Management (BA IBM) within the framework

of the Interinstitutional agreements with Management University (Bulgaria), the University named by Tomáš Baťa (Czech Republic), and since October, 2016 – with University of Applied Sciences Vidzeme (Valmiera, Latvia). Projects envisage the mobility of students and teachers until 2021. Nine lecturers, staff and nineteen Bachelors, Masters, Postgraduates participated in these projects during the whole semester, with the amount of the grant being €3,275. Mobility of University staff is available for teaching or refresher courses ranging from 5 days to 2 months without taking into account the route. Mobility for teaching is to include 8 classroom hours a week [13].

All the students who have passed the competitive selection were offered participating in the vertical academic mobility program “double diploma” in the framework of the agreement with the Varna University of Management (VUM). Graduate receives Diploma of Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives (Republic of Belarus); Bachelor's Diploma with a Bachelor degree in Management from the University of Varna (Bulgaria). If at the beginning of the projects about 10 people came to the interview, later more than 30 wished to be interviewed. Many of them were recommended to take English courses, organized after the first year of the projects implementation.

Analysing forming and developing academic mobility of students of Belarus and accompanying process of internationalization of national education, one should take into account the realities of globalization processes, as well as to draw attention to the problems being an obstacle in realizing the mobility of students and lecturers. The most significant of them nowadays are: weak internal mobility with increasing the flow of participants of international mobility, insufficient knowledge of foreign languages, problems with recognition of credits on studied disciplines abroad because of the lack of development of the Belarusian system of recrediting ECTS, essential differences in the curricula of the Belarusian and foreign universities, lack of financial competence of most of the students, especially students of the regional universities, in lack of English-speaking educational programmes for foreigners, dominating language courses programs. These complex problems require participating not only universities, but a number of ministries and departments and can be solved by joint efforts as it directly affects the rate of passing the Road Map of the Bologna reforms by Belarus.

## Conclusion

For further improving activity on the development of academic mobility variants at the University it is proposed:

- to consolidate the practice of by-turn informing about the proposed mobility and obligatory reports of the participants after completing the mobility in addition, to supplement it with mobility week, when various programs coordinators can characterize all the peculiarities;
- start taking students within the framework of internal mobility from other universities, for example, the Belarusian State Economics University, the Academy of Management under the President of the Republic of Belarus, IILSR, etc. at Master, Postgraduate and Bachelor levels;
- to improve marketing tools of promoting academic mobility for dual degree programmes;
- to intensify the activity on organizing polylingual (Anglo-German-Belarusian-Russian variants of education), underlying the positive qualities of multilingualism; deepening the process of assimilation of the linguistic wealth of mother tongue based on linguistic and cultural comparison in the context of intercultural dialogue;
- to organize the work of the summer semester for obtaining additional education, the so-called summer school in connection with the changes in the Concept of export development services.

Thus, the intensification of academic mobility of students and teachers of universities in Belarus, naturally leads to the intensification of introducing new educational technologies, (which is confirmed by the introduction of distance education as a result of academic staff mobility), growth of effective interaction of partner universities combined with establishing competitive environment in the global market of educational services, expansion of employment opportunities for skilled specialists, increasing commercialization of universities. It will increase the international prestige of BTEU as modern innovation University, training highly qualified specialists for consumer cooperatives, to achieve the world level of education to realize objectives of the innovation development of Belarus.

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## **Synthesis of teaching accounting disciplines in Belarusian and Russian languages – basis of internationalization of educational process ..... 27**

The article describes the 5-year experience of author's teaching accounting and international financial reporting standards in the Belarusian and Russian languages. A methodical approach to the construction of lectures and practical studies in a group where some students didn't study the English language at school and university is presented. Issue of certificates to students confirming receipt of the professional competencies of accounting in the industrial organizations in the English language.

**Key words:** Internationalization of training process; English accounting vocabulary; presentation of key terminology; phonetic transcription; theoretical fundamentals of accounting; accounting in the manufacturing branches; international financial reporting standards; professional competences; certificate.

This paper will clarify the concept of social media, then evaluate and review how businesses uses these social networks to make change at individual's job performance. Lastly, this paper will discuss where the future of Social Media is heading.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the development and effects of corporate use of social media in influencing employees' job performance, focusing mainly on how employees use social media to communicate with family, friends and other coworkers in the workplace was a great incentive for retention—particularly of new hires (Leidner, 2010). A study made by AT&T found that 65 percent of employees believed that using social networking sites in the workplace helped them be more productive (AT&T, 2008).

**Key words:** Social Networking Sites; User Generated Content; Social media.

### Introduction

*Social Media is a revolutionary trend that stems from the concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). Web 2.0 evolved in 2004 from the Web 1.0 model of creating and publishing content online. Whereas Web 1.0 limited the control of creating and publishing content to specific individuals, Web 2.0 expanded the capabilities and granted control to all users of the World Wide Web. This model of participatory and collaborative thinking became the platform behind the ideological and technological foundation of Social Media. In short, Web 2.0 is a place for people to share, cooperate and create [1]. Some examples of social networking sites include Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.*

*Similarly, User Generated Content represents all the ways in which end-users of the web use Social Networking. According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (2007), UGC should:*

- 1. Be publicly accessible to a selected group of people.*
- 2. Show inventive effort.*
- 3. Been built outside of professional routines and practices.*

*Examples of UGC include anything produced by the web user such as text, audio and video. The first condition of UGC requires context to be published on a website and made publicly accessible, this excludes e-mails and instant messaging. The second condition of UGC requires users to upload original content, thus excluding reposted material. The final one requires content to be invented out of the desire to connect and express oneself to others as well as to achieve fame and recognition. Therefore, according to the third condition of OCED (2007), UGC excludes content with a commercial market.*

### Social Networking Site Use

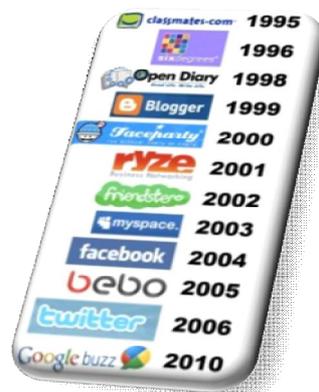
Technological changes happen every day, and technological evolutions change the way we communicate with each other. Social networking sites or SNS are new ways of communication in which people create online profiles and form networks with friends, family, colleagues. Social networking sites are the current trend in this revolution. Social networking sites are defined by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as:

1. Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
2. Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection with.
3. View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

Social networking sites are classified into several categories: work-related (LinkedIn.com), romantic relationship (okcupid.com), connecting people with shared interests such as music or politics (MySpace.com) and the college student population (the original launching of Facebook.com).

Social networking sites are mainly divided in to two types: public social networking sites and internal social networking sites. Public social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, are usually free. Internal social networking sites, like Beehive at IBM, Yammer at Microsoft and OneHP at HP.

The social networking sites phenomena started to become popular in the mid of 1990s. One of the first was Classmates.com, launched in 1995 (Figure). Friendster is another social networking site, it was established in 2002 and focused on dating, LinkedIn was founded in 2003. It allowed



**History of Social Networking Sites**

professionals to make their own profiles and to invite other professionals to join their network. LinkedIn also facilitates business inquiries and expertise requests as well as job posting by recruiters.

Launched in February 2004, Facebook is arguably the most popular social networking site with over 1.3 billion registered users [2]. The typical internet user spends on average six hours per month on Facebook, and more than 60 percent of internet users use Facebook on their mobile phones.

#### *Purely Personal*

Easily the most common use of Social Networking sites, and the main reason for them existing in the first place, is for personal reasons. Most people use Facebook to keep the “social” label. It is used for its original purpose – to keep in touch with friends. One great way of taking advantage of the personal side of Facebook is keeping in touch with people hundreds of kilometers away, maybe with somebody who has moved to the other side of the world. In the past it would have been very difficult to keep in touch, much less keep up to date with what they were doing.

#### *Business – Connecting with Customers*

With the rise of Internet Marketing, social networking is being embraced more and more by businesses. Innovative ways of utilizing these tools by connecting directly with customers are being found. Companies are seeing that the best way to manage themselves online is to speak to their customers directly using these social networking sites, Twitter being especially useful for this. It increases the reputation of the company, gets them positive reviews and shows that they really care about the customer.

#### *Business – Networking*

There is always an opportunity for many types of business to network and expand their business on the social networking platform. To get a deal is all about knowing the right people. And if someone with whom you study at school owns a multimillion dollar business now and your company produce what he is looking for, so Facebook can make you a winner. A random friend request from somebody you haven't spoken to since you were 11 years old could be the key to your company's success. Social networking sites like LinkedIn exist for this purpose; for people to network within a business environment. It does for businesses what Facebook does for students and teenagers, it lets people connect. It could find you a new business deal or could even find you a new job.

#### *Social Networking Sites Pros and Cons*

As any other trend, social networking sites have their pros and cons in their usage. Many people use them positively while others use them in a negative way. In the coming section I will show some of the pros and cons of using social networking sites and their effect on our lives.

#### *Pros*

The main pro of social networking sites is spreading information faster than any media. Over 50% of people learn about breaking news on social media. Social networking sites are the top news source for 27,8% of Americans, ranking close to newspapers (28,8%) and above radio (18,8%) and other print publications (6%). Social networking sites allow people to improve their relationships and make new friends. 70% of adult social networking users visit the sites to connect with friends and family (Solis, 2011), and increased online communication strengthens relationships. According to Jobvite (2012) [3] a social recruiting platform for the social web, social networking sites help employers to find employees and job-seekers to find work. 64% of companies are on two or more social networks for recruiting because of the wider pool of applicants and more efficient searching capabilities. Corporations and small businesses use social media to benefit themselves and consumers. Small businesses benefit greatly from free platforms to connect with customers and increase visibility of their products or services. Almost 90% of big companies using social media have reported “at least one measurable business benefit”. For example, large chain restaurants are using social media to quickly disseminate information among managers, train employees, and receive immediate customer feedback on new items, allowing for quick revision if needed [4].

#### *Cons*

On the other hand, social networking sites have their cons and some might contradict with the pros stated above. Social media enables the spread of unreliable and false information. 49,1 % of people have heard false news via social media. On Sep. 5, 2012 false rumors of fires, shootouts, and caravans of gunmen in a Mexico City suburb spread via Twitter and Facebook caused panic, flooded the local police department with over 3,000 phone calls, and temporarily closed schools. The use of social networking sites lacks privacy and exposes users to government and corporate intrusions. 13 million users said they had not set or did not know about Facebook's privacy settings and 28% shared all or nearly all of their posts publicly [5]. Being a social networking sites user, can leads to stress and offline relationship problems. A study done by Business School of University of Edinburgh found that the more Facebook friends a person has, the more stressful the person finds Facebook to use. 36% of people surveyed listed social net-

working as the “biggest waste of time”, above fantasy sports (25%), watching TV (23%), and shopping (9%) (Rideout, Foehr, Roberts, 2010). When alerted to a new social networking site activity, like a new tweet or Facebook message, users take 20 to 25 minutes on average to return to the original task. Using social media can harm job stability and employment prospects. Job recruiters reported negative reactions to finding profanity (61%), poor spelling or grammar (54%), illegal drugs (78%), sexual content (66%) on potential employees’ social media pages. Social networking sites harm employees’ productivity. 51% of people aged 25–34 accessed social media at work. According to Nucleus Research (2009), even spending just 30 minutes a day on social media at work would cost 50-person company 6,500 hours of productivity a year. 51% of American workers think work productivity suffers because of social media [6].

## Conclusion

### *Business Benefits of Social Networking Sites*

People started to realize that social networking site use can be a great source of strategic benefits to businesses. Not all companies allow to use social networking site in the workplace. In fact, 39 percent of employers actively block the access to social networking sites. However, with the presence of smart phones, it is even more difficult for companies to block access to social networking sites. In fact, banning the use of social networking sites in the workplace can have detrimental business consequences such as stopping workers from discovering business opportunities, intelligence gathering, and working collaboratively.

One of the benefits of social networking site use for businesses is using customer communities for market research to get feedback on products and features, which can be a source of innovation in the product development process. Those customer communities can also be used for recommending, tagging, reviewing, or recognizing products, such as in the case of Facebook where customers click “like”.

Some studies list the business benefits of social networking site use in the workplace. For example, reported that the benefits of social networking site use in the workplace can include morale, reputation, communication, advertising, collaboration, social research, networking, transparency, public relations and skills building.

Social networking sites, like other means of communication such as TV, radio, newspapers, and telephone can be used by companies to communicate their offerings to customers. Social networking tools can be a much faster means of communication, as information can be posted and retrieved quickly through them and feedback can be exchanged instantly between companies and their customers and clients.

Another use of social networking sites is generally in the marketing area and particularly in advertising and branding. For example, advertising can be targeted since social networking sites collect personal information such as gender, age, level of education and job title.

Businesses can use social networking sites to find expertise. Locating an expert on is very important as sharing expertise is important for enabling organizational learning, knowing and judging people’s competencies, making teams to solve time-critical problems, providing better technical assistance, maintaining customer relationships and developing social capital.

Social networking sites are used by several organizations as a means of recruiting and hiring. Some employers say that they use social networking sites as a quick, no-cost source of background information on job candidates, and some social networking site users use their pages as personal “billboards” to market themselves to employers. Some social networking sites allow internet search engines to search the names and profiles of their users which allow some employers to access information about prospective employees. A survey was conducted by CareerBuilder.com in 2012 that asked 2,303 hiring managers and human resource professionals if, how, and why they incorporate social media into their hiring process. They found that 37% of employers use social networks to screen potential job candidates. That means that about two in five companies browse your social media profiles to evaluate your character and personality—and some even base their hiring decision on what they find.

A few companies realized the benefits of social networking site use in the workplace. A European study authorized by AT&T in 2008 found that 65 percent of employees believed that the use of social networking sites helped them be more productive [7].

### *Business Challenges of Social Networking Sites*

Several companies are doubt that the value of social networking sites use can bring to the table, and they are concerned about the risks associated with adoption of social networking site use in the workplace. According to the survey by Robert Half Technology (2009), more than a half of US companies block access to social networking sites to keep employees from wasting time, but it is also in order to reduce risk. The most common concerns of the use of social networking sites in the workplace are: per-

ceived loss in staff productivity; data leakage from staff tweeting freely in an open environment; malware and phishing scams, open access potentially offered to the company servers by outdated passwords.

Several studies show the biggest concern of social networking site use in the workplace is the loss of staff productivity from time wasted at work. Nucleus Research reported that the use of Facebook at work results in 1.5 percent decrease in productivity [6]. This wasted productivity adds up to money lost to wages and economic costs in the forms of decreased efficiency. Accountemps (2010), a staffing service firm specializing in accounting and finance, reported that 59 percent of 1400 interviewed chief financial officers (CFOs) listed employees wasting time as their greatest concern of social networking site use in the workplace. Statistics show the average Internet user spends on average six hours (12 minutes daily) per month on Facebook, which raises managers' concerns that those six hours may be spent in the workplace. Another report, by Robert Half Technology (2009), claims some workers spend around two hours a day on Facebook in the workplace.

Information security is one of the biggest challenges when it comes to the use of social networking sites in the workplace. Employers tend to worry social networking site use in the workplace will expose the organization to phishing attacks which can start with finding a user's work password. Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter are used by hackers to distribute malware and spam by hacking user accounts and then sending spam and malware using trusted accounts because users tend to open links sent by their friends without thinking of possible risks. This breaches an organization's security if employees click on that malicious site link. An example of a malware component is key-logging software which records and reports the keystrokes of users, revealing passwords and other confidential information.

The obvious challenge of social networking site use in the workplace for businesses is the difficulty of differentiating whether the employees are posting personal views or the views of the company they work for. Several companies have established use policies in their social networking site, clear guidelines to reduce such risks and protect the company and employees.

As networking in online social communities is still a relatively young online trend, "social networking is harmful" is still unknown. Like any other type of networking or social club individuals become involved to, it is a good idea to do your homework and make sure that you know what you are getting into. Understand the terms of use, the rules and regulations, and be clear on issues like security and privacy.

Privacy is a major concern in using social networking sites in the workplace. Social networking site use encourages users to provide information about them without giving much consideration to privacy issues. For example, information collected from users' profiles can be potentially misused by social networking sites that can use it for targeted marketing. Users detailed information is likely vulnerable to identity theft, stalking, and abuse. Managing privacy issues pose a challenge for organizations since digital communications can a part of the system.

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*Bondarenko O.*

### **Infrastructure of rural trade of the Republic of Belarus: development and problem of integrated statistical evaluation ..... 38**

The article reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the development of trade infrastructure in rural areas of the Republic of Belarus following the results of analysis of indicators characterizing it. It is concluded that there is no unified statistical information base on trade in rural areas, sufficient to make effective strategic management decisions, measures for its formation are identified.

The material of the article complements, expands and, in certain provisions, confirms the results of our earlier study of the assessment of trade infrastructure of consumer cooperatives in rural areas of Belarus, presented in No. 2 (61) of the journal "Consumer cooperatives" for 2018.

**Key words:** trade sector; infrastructure; statistical data; trends in indicators; rural settlement; Republic of Belarus.

*Matyusevskaya V.*

### **Development of foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus ..... 44**

The article discusses the features of the current stage of development of interstate economic relations. The results of foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus are given. Possible directions of export development are shown.

**Key words:** economic globalization; interstate economic cooperation; liberalization of trade relations; foreign trade; foreign economic policy; structure of export and import of goods; development of export of services; development of export potential.

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### **Identification expertise of jewelry ..... 48**

The article deals with the identification of jewelry, the authentication of a specific good to sample, accordance of information in transportation documentation to regulatory and technical requirements, accessory to a group of similar goods. Results of identification of jewelry rings of production of JSC "Gomel MA "Kristall" – managing company of the holding company "KRISTALL-HOLDING" is carried out.

**Key words:** identification; jewelry; gold; marking; algorithm.

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### **Promotion of innovative foodstuffs: organizational aspect ..... 53**

In the article the results of theoretical and methodological approaches to the promotion of innovative food products are given. Particularly the author's definition "innovative food product" is presented, which allows to reveal its essence, content and also to substantiate the promotion peculiarities of these goods to a consumer market. The destabilizing factors of innovative food products' promotion are identified. The conceptual model of innovative food products' promotion to the consumer market and practical recommendations of its implementation are offered.

**Key words:** information system; innovative food product; organizational aspect; promotion; consumer market; distribution network; factors.

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*Zlotnikov A.*

### **Sociological and criminological aspects of corruption ..... 63**

The main sociological and criminological aspects and trends in the field of combating corruption in the Republic of Belarus are considered. The data of national statistics, the corruption perception index (CPI) of “Transparency International” and the materials of the author’s sociological research on the study of public opinion are used. Analysis of a sociological study on the perception of corruption among young people is given. The rationale that the resolution of the problem of corruption is possible on the basis of an integral approach combining legal, economic and political methods is given.

**Key words:** crime; corruption; corruption perception index; fight against corruption; sociological analysis.

## History and Theory of Consumer Cooperatives

*Kotov I.*

### **Various problems of daily life in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and consumer cooperatives (1944–1948 years) ..... 68**

In the article various daily life problems of citizens of Belarus in the first years after the liberation from Nazi occupation and the activity of state authorities and consumer cooperatives for their overcoming are regarded. Attention is paid at the selective approach to social security measures for different social groups.

**Key words:** Nazi occupation; daily life; social problems; social security; consumer cooperatives; selective approach.

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