

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

**PhD THESIS  
SUMMARY**

**THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**Scientific supervisor  
Professor Liviu ILIEȘ PhD**

**PhD student  
Adriana Corina MICU (FEKETE)**

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## KEY WORDS

higher education institutions, organisational culture, leadership, human resource, organisational management, strategic management, quality, world universities ranking, the Bologna Process

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a broad and generous concept which, extremely often, has been regarded by society from the viewpoint of its *concrete results*. Such an attitude is justified, given that, in all domains, the major interest refers to results rather than processes.

The interest that the society shows in education is extremely inconstant: it culminates in times of final evaluations, which results in issuing documents that certify the completion of a certain academic route. Theoretically, such documents provide better chances in finding a better paid place of work. Such an instrumental approach is acceptable (if undesirable) when coming from the beneficiaries; however, it is not acceptable when coming from the “providers”, who are to be perceived as educators.

The field that the present thesis approaches is *higher education*. Over time, along with the development of the human society as a result of the progress and discoveries in all the domains of human activity, the goal of education has shifted from a general education to a more specialised one, more focused on a certain domain of activity. Consequently, the central mission of higher education institutions has shifted from transmitting the cultural heritage to developing skills that can enable the individual to be effective and useful to the society. This tendency has been enhanced by the informational boom, the competition between the states of the entire world, and it does not seem to cease. In our opinion, this competition has never involved equal competitors, so that economically powerful countries have always been the winners. Moreover, due to a higher living standard, these countries have succeeded in attracting the valuable human resource from all over the world. The rich countries have not only invested in education and in the human resource, but also known how to cultivate such values as *patriotism*.

It is obvious, one might argue, that it is easy to cultivate patriotism in a country that can offer its citizens a high living standard. We can but agree with such an argument. However, we might wonder whether the wealth we are admiring is not the result of patriotism or of a deep sense of belonging to a community, going deeper than the immediate profit. The starting point in cultivating such a value is not to be found in the material, but in the cultural and

spiritual heritage, in the perpetual sense of belonging to a community sharing the same central values. In the absence of the respect for such values, the identity of a nation is difficult to define and the setting of common goals impossible to achieve.

The fact that in the Romanian context the moral and civic profile is insufficiently considered an important goal of education in general, and of the higher education in particular, determined us to analyse the European context, trying to establish a relationship between the wealth of a nation and the complexity of that nation's education.

In the aftermath of the birth of the European Union it is necessary to define the European identity. Such an endeavour is much more complicated than it appears to be. We cannot speak of summing up the national and the European identity; neither can we speak of subduing one by the other. What is needed is the "fine tuning" of the two identities by acknowledging and accepting cultural diversity. In our opinion, in the absence of clear and stable values, such an endeavour will fail. Globalisation and internationalisation cannot be achieved by mechanically applying imported standards without understanding and adapting them realistically to the context in question and without gaining the adherence of the entire community. We consider that education is the main actor that can support such objectives by responsibly engaging in not just the training of the young generations but also their education in the spirit of respect for authentic values and of tolerance (not indifference) for diversity. It is difficult to believe that human beings can commit themselves to values that are unknown to them. We urge the young European generations to respect Europe, to abide by the standards that the powerful European states have defined over centuries. What we do NOT do sufficiently is cultivate the values that have eventually formulated those standards.

We have to admit that Romania is not an exception. Worldwide the interest in cultivating the respect for authentic values has diminished. The priority is training the students for competition, a competition which is extremely tough because of the huge economic gaps.

The shift of the interest from the quality of the human being to the quality of products and services so as to maximise the profit can only determine alienation, irrespective of the living standard.

Creativity and excellence have ceased to be regarded as gifts, they are now requirements to be met in order to enjoy a comfortable life. They are no longer cultivated, but imposed and, where the context demands, reality is squeezed into standard patterns to correspond to the politically correct picture.

Life itself is no longer considered a miracle but a huge mall where everybody can find what they want, following the slogan “born to shop”. Who can buy the most is envied and becomes the standard for greatness. If you possess, you exist. The slogan “do your best, find the place that best fits your talents” has been replaced by the generalising “if you really want, you can do it”. Such a slogan is not dangerous as such, but it can fuel false self-representations, eventually resulting in the depreciation of the idea of authentic value.

Civilisation progress has come to be understood as more comfort, which, of course, is desirable. However, we consider that more comfort does not come alone, but accompanied by a major disadvantage: the individual becomes less and less reflective and tends to “swallow” whatever they are fed. Objectives focus on short and extremely short terms. In our opinion, such a tendency is extremely dangerous in the long term and does not serve such ideals as liberty, equality, and fraternity; neither does it help to solve the extremely complicated problems of our time.

Higher education has come to be considered a commodity and is traded as such. We consider that being competitive and encouraging competitiveness is good up to a point; beyond that point we might forget who we are and what we want and we might engage in a ruthless battle against the others. We consider that encouraging creativity is good up to a point; beyond that point we might become overenthusiastic and forget who the titans are. We consider that being productive and effective is good up to a point; beyond that point we might become robots programmed to produce money. It is not enough to teach the young generations how to make more money; we must also teach them what is worth buying. They should not buy what someone else tells them to buy, but they should formulate their choices acknowledging authentic values.

The present thesis aims to investigate the European context of which Romania wishes to be part, and to identify those aspects that require remedial action so that the integration should be effective, not just declarative.

The empirical research does not aim to diagnose a particular Romanian higher education institution, but rather to give an overall view of the major issues in the field in the opinion of the main actors: students and teachers.

### **Current development of the field**

Organisational management has always been a field of interest. Many titles have become best-sellers because, in fact, management is part of every individual’s life, so that the need for knowledge in the field has been increasing. It has become increasingly important to know

how to motivate people, how to encourage them to set ambitious objectives and teach them to consistently follow these objectives. Competition has become extremely complex and it requires well-trained staff.

The most relevant titles to our purpose are those referring to human resources and organisational culture since the management of higher education institutions mainly refers to human interaction. In this context, we would like to mention Kets de Vries' (2003) opinion that the leader of our times should be characterised by the four H's: hope, humanity, munity and humour.

Academic management has also attracted many authors. Firstly, because managers themselves are the "products" of an academic route; secondly, because education is a domain where the need for standardization is extremely difficult to combine with the uniqueness of the human beings and with the specificity of the culture they belong to. The importance of this particular issue has been reflected by the keen interest of the European institutions and of the European higher education institutions for harmonizing higher education in such a manner as to allow unity in diversity.

Beyond the theoretical aspects of academic management, there are numerous statistical data which assess the progress of the implementation of common goals, stipulated by European documents (the Lisbon Convention – 1997; the Bologna Declaration – 1999; the Communiques of Prague – 2001, Berlin – 2003, Bergen – 2005, London – 2007, Leuven – 2009, and Bucharest – 2012). The TRENDS reports offer, yearly, statistical analyses of the progress towards the unification of procedures, teaching content and teaching outcomes. These reports are mainly the result of the work of Eurostat, Eurostudent and Eurydice. The statistical data that we have used come from these sources. Moreover, the existence of European quality assurance agencies proves the general interest in harmonizing higher education in Europe, the ultimate goal being EHEA (*European Higher Education Area*) and ERA (*European Research Area*).

The main goal of our research is to give a predominantly humanistic (but not unrealistic) interpretation of the situation synthetically described by statistical data to investigate to what extent Romania fulfils the obligations it has assumed not only in theory, but also in practice. To this purpose, we have analysed the opinions of the main actors in the field – students and teachers.



## PART ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first two chapters focus on the main theoretical coordinates of change management in organisations, as reflected in literature. The next two chapters are an application of the general theoretical aspects presented in the first three chapters to the specific field of higher education. The next chapter analyses the European and the Romanian context as reflected by economic indicators and tries to establish a connection between the value of such indicators, on the one hand, and the trends registered in the field of higher education, on the other hand. The last chapter presents the results of the empirical research, based on the administration of questionnaires to students and teachers, from the viewpoint of the strategic objectives set by the reform of higher education in Romania.

The first chapter, entitled *The concepts of change, reform and innovation*, tries to define the concept of change alongside reform and innovation and points to the increasing importance of change management in our world. Organisational culture is presented in more detail due to the importance it has in the change process. Organisational culture is closely linked to national culture which strongly influences the decisions taken in organisations.

The second chapter, entitled *The role of strategy in approaching change*, presents strategic management as the best choice for implementing change. Careful, competent and realistic analysis of the starting point is extremely important in formulating the desired goals. Defining the objectives also needs to be realistic; it should consider the context but it should also envisage the future context. The strategy, i.e. the way in which an organisation reaches the final destination, needs to be accompanied by careful attention paid to the impact that the stages of the process can have on the context.

Chapter three, *Organisational change in higher education institutions*, applies the theoretical concepts presented in the previous chapters to the field of higher education, insisting on the specific traits of the organisational culture, strategic management and, especially, of the human resource. It presents, succinctly, the functions that HR management has, focusing on the motivation of the human resource and of work groups. In our opinion, the human resource is not something that an organisation has; it is the organisation itself. Consequently, we consider that the psychological contract should be carefully considered.

Chapter four, *Quality management in higher education institutions*, approaches quality, giving various definitions to the term. The chapter presents briefly the quality standards that represented the starting point in defining quality assurance in the field of academic

management. Emphasis is placed on the importance that quality has in education, and on the relativity of establishing world rankings as drivers of change in higher education institutions

## **PART TWO: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Chapter five, *The role of change in reforming higher education. Case study – Analysis of organisational change in higher education institutions*. analyses the European context and the effect that massification, internationalisation, globalisation and marketisation have on the philosophy of higher education institutions in defining their mission and vision. Statistical data referring to the European context is shown in correlation with the Romanian context. The analysis of the Romanian context leads to some research hypotheses.

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the reasearch has been the development of a model for analysing and identifying good practices in change management in higher education institutions.

To this purpose, the following specific objectives have been pursued:

- defining the main theoretical concepts of change management in higher education institutions;
- identifying and analysing the change trends in Romanian higher education institutions and the ways in which managers manage change;
- identifying the potential effects of the changes required by the implementation of reform in higher education institutions;
- analysing the Romanian context by means of questionnaires administered to students and teachers in Romanian higher education institutions, focusing on change strategies;
- identifying good practices in managing change in higher education institutions;
- identifying the specific characteristics of planning, organising and implementing change in Romanian higher education institutions with a view to improving organisational performance;

### **Research hypotheses**

The paper approaches a specific issue in the domain of academic management, i.e. change management. The following objectives have been pursued:

1. Theoretical study of change management in higher education institutions

- defining the main characteristics of change in higher education institutions, as reflected in literature;
  - establishing the role of change management in gaining competitive advantage and the impact of change strategies on competitiveness in Romanian higher education institutions;
2. Development of a theoretical model for evaluation in Romanian higher education institutions
- the strategic decision-making process in higher education institutions;
  - evaluation of the satisfaction of the main actors with regard the processes involved in the activity of higher education institutions;
3. Empirical study of change analysis in higher education institutions with regard to the implementation of strategies orientated towards quality and performance improvement
- analysis of the evolution and of the complexity of change processes in higher education institutions;
  - identification of solutions meant to enhance effectiveness and efficacy of change processes in higher education institutions.

## **Hypotheses**

*General hypothesis* – the models for analysing and assessing change management in higher education institutions should be adapted both to the complexity of the process, and to the specific characteristics of the processes that are the ultimate goal.

Hypothesis 1 – Defining and implementing change strategies determine the effectiveness and the efficacy of the operational processes and their functionality in higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 2 – Higher education institutions which apply change strategies orientated towards the improvement of educational services will better adapt to the changes in the educational market.

Hypothesis 3 – The effectiveness of the change processes and of change management determine, largely, the performance of higher education institutions.

Hypothesis 4 – The higher education institutions which accept change pay more attention to the quality of teaching and research.

### ***Theoretical research***

The theoretical research is based on extensive literature: books and articles, alongside statistics. Most titles refer to academic management, strategic management, human resource management, and change management. Romanian titles are fewer than foreign titles since we have found few relevant and profound studies in the field, a situation which reflects the lack of a coherent national strategy regarding the importance of change management in promoting and sustaining higher education. As a consequence, foreign higher education institutions have entered the Romanian educational market.

The main goal of the theoretical research has been not just collecting relevant information on change management, but also analysing and developing possible models to approach change management. To this purpose we have used a rich bibliography, relevant to the domain, which allowed for the definition of the theoretical background of change management, taking into account the complexity of the processes in higher education institutions. The conceptual component of the research has been centred around an analysis model for the management of higher education institutions, more precisely of change management.

The scientific research is based on the analysis of the operational performance in the change process of the activities and processes involved in higher education institutions and on the analysis of the strategic dimensions of change. We have also aimed to analyse how useful such information is for the managers with regard to developing an effective and efficacious relationship with the main actors – students and teachers.

### ***Empirical research***

The empirical research is based on:

- the results of studies aimed at identifying and analysing the tendencies in the change process;
- the analysis of the context, based on questionnaires administered to 200 students and 160 teachers, aimed at assessing the stage of change.

The empirical research is based on the quantitative method and uses questionnaires administered to managers, teachers and students. Even though initially our intention was to use the interview as well, we decided to eliminate this investigation method since we have noticed that people are not equally sincere when the answers are not anonymous.

The objective of the empirical research was to identify the characteristics and the variables

which determine the change process in higher education institutions, with significant impact on quality and, implicitly, on competitiveness.

We have also tried to draw the attention of the decision-making factors in higher education institutions to the necessity of identifying good practices and of applying them reasonably to gain competitive advantage.

We have not aimed to study one institution in particular, so that the 160 teachers who answered the questions come from various Romanian higher education institutions (Babeş-Bolyai University – Cluj-Napoca; The Western University – Timișoara; Alexandru Ioan Cuza University – Iași).

The characteristics of the investigated group are:

Position		Experience	
assistant lecturer	6.87%	less than five years	7.5%
lecturer	32.50%	6-10 years	38.13%
assistant professor	39.38%	11-20 years	27.50%
senior professor	19.38%	20+ years	18.12%
no answer	1.87%	no answer	8.75%

Data was collected predominantly by electronic mail. Data was processed using the SPSS programme and the graphs illustrating the results were drawn in Excel.

The 200 responding students come from The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The average age is 21.31, 57.50% are women and 42.5% men. The questionnaires were administered frontally.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

*The theoretical research* aimed to identify those aspects of the science of management that can be applied to the domain of higher education, as well as those that should not be applied mechanically, without thoroughly analysing the context. The main area that requires attention from this viewpoint is quality.

- *Quality in education cannot follow the model applied in the economy, where the main objective is obtaining profit and adapting to the desires of the client is a lot easier and far less risky.*

Moreover, change in higher education institutions is more difficult to implement than in other domains because:

- the main result of the activity is the *becoming* of the client, not just meeting the requirements formulate dat a certain moment; this result takes a rather long time;
  - the active participation of the beneficiary, i.e. the student, is essential;
  - higher education institutions are granted autonomy, by law; consequently, decisions should be taken in a democratic way, after consulting the group; such a procedure is not always easy to apply and the decisions taken do not always reflect the opinions of those in charge of seeing them applied;
  - establishing a change strategy is difficult because it should, first of all, take into account the benefit of the student and of the society, whereas the benefit of the institution is of secondary importance; consequently, the higher education institution is morally forced to make tremendous efforts to cope with the lack of favourable material conditions without giving up the main objectives.
- *Establishing a change strategy and implementing it is hindered by the specific characteristics of the activity in higher education institutions, mainly by the moral responsibility that such institutions have to society at large.*

*The empirical research* aimed to analyse the European context from two different perspectives:

- the living standard, using statistical data available (EUROSTAT);
- the choices that people make with regard to their educational route in higher education (statistical data – EUROSTAT).

As we tried to establish a relationship between the two perspectives, we noticed that in most European countries with a high living standard the population manifests a keener interest in humanities when choosing their academic route. Even though the choice for this domain is not predominant, we consider that it is worth noticing that Romania is the only country where the gap between the interest in *social sciences, business and law* and *humanities and arts* (percent) exceeds the economic indicator GDP per capita. We cannot demonstrate that there is a direct connection between the two aspects, but we can observe that Romania is the only country that breaks the mould. We consider that a certain balance of the domains of human activity is necessary. The lack of interest in the human being results in the lack of interest in morality and civility. We do not consider that Romania needs more poets or philosophers, but we consider that waiters, too, should be moral and able to take part, responsibly and critically, in the decision-making process in the Romanian society.

- *The excessive separation of the human knowledge spheres influences in a negative way the entire society, not only in Romania, but especially in Romania.*

The second part of the research analyses the results of the questionnaires administered to teachers and students. The conclusions are as follows:

- *In Romania, there is a serious gap between the official register, stated by documents, and the reality that the main actors have to face. This situation is fueled by the too numerous and not always coherent legislation changes.*

This gap refers to major aspects:

- relevance of the curriculum;
  - the real quality standards that can be applied to the teaching-learning processes;
  - student and teacher motivation;
  - research.
- *There is a serious gap between the financial resources that education is granted and the assessment criteria, increasingly demanding. This situation encourages people to hide the truth so that higher education institutions can function according to the European standards.*

Improving the quality standards in education in general and those in higher education in particular is an extremely positive initiative. However, we consider that such objectives cannot be achieved in the absence of financial support. We do not mean higher salaries for teachers (even though they are rather low), but better conditions for the activity in higher education institutions so that the improvement of quality should become a reality, not just statements in official documents. The teacher/student ratio should come closer to the European average and students should benefit from the attention that they deserve. Consequently, we should either have fewer students, or more teachers. Hiding the truth that we do not like can, perhaps, save the moment, but in the long term the impact will be negative. There still are excellent teachers (not necessarily old teachers). There still are excellent students (especially export students). Why do they not meet?

There is a direct connection between the two aforementioned gaps. Solving the second gap can lead to the disappearance of the first. But not any kind of solution is to be adopted. Reducing the number of students but still financing higher education institutions depending on the number of students is not a viable solution if what we wish is higher quality. Since

financing from the state budget decreases, we understand that higher education institutions will disregard any subject that does not strictly refer to the narrow specialisation, thus neglecting the balanced development of the human being, and the moral and civic profile of the student will cease to be of any interest beyond the mission statement.

As a result of the analysis of those areas that require remedial action, we have made several suggestions and observed that most of them require financial resources.

<b>Strategic objective</b>	<b>Remedial action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Financial resources</b>
<b>For the student:</b>			
1. Creating learning opportunities			
- clear formulation of the desired competencies	realism in defining the competence and perseverance in achieving the goal	teachers	not required
- supporting students to adapt to the academic environment in their first academic year	diminishing the teacher/student ratio	the management of the institution (central level)	increasing financing per student
- diagnostic tests administered to students to identify the areas that require improvement	administering diagnostic tests followed by feedback	teachers	not required
- regular tutorials	- diminishing the teacher/student ratio - establishing a regular tutorial programme	the management of the institution (central level)	increasing financing per student
- creating opportunities for the students to learn foreign languages	foreign language courses throughout the bachelor level	the management of the institution (central level)	increasing financing per student
2. Offering stimulating curricula, accompanied by adequate teaching methods	- adapting the curricula - teacher training	- teachers - management of the institution	explicit budget chapter
3. Ensuring the necessary learning resources in libraries and offering wide acces to the modern information systems (ICT)	- permanent update of library resources - endowment with modern equipment and qualified maintenance staff	management of the institution	explicit budget chapter
4. Transparent learning outcomes assessment procedures that should eliminate the threat of plagiarism	- relevant assessment tests - fair application of quality standards - diminishing the teacher/student ratio	- teachers - teachers - management of the institution (local and central)	- not required - not required - increasing financing per student
<b>For the academic staff:</b>			
acknowledging, supporting and rewarding teachers	- more attention paid to the opinions expressed by teachers in the decision-making process - reduction of bureaucracy - giving positive feedback	management of the department/ institution	not required
ensuring the necessary teaching resources (libraries and ICT)	- permanent update of library resources - endowment with modern equipment and qualified	management of the instituton	explicit budget chapter



	maintenance staff		
highlighting good practices	improving communication between departments	management of the department/ institution	not required
clear and transparent promotion procedures, based on realistic criteria	establishing promotion criteria that should take into account both the teaching and the research activity	management of the department/ institution	not required

Even though, apparently, there are many areas in which remedial action does not require financial resources, our opinion is that not even those can be improved without financial support since the basic requirement is the reduction of the teacher/student ratio. The decision-making factor at the level of the ministry are higher education institution graduates. With a better moral and civic profile, we consider that they could make better decisions in favour of reforming the higher education system.

### **PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Our research started from the idea that no change in the field of higher education can be successful unless truth is accepted with lucidity. This statement is equally valid for any domain, certainly, but education is of utmost importance to the wealth of any nation and the responsibility that higher education institutions have is great.

The main personal contributions of the research can be summarised as follows:

- a semantic analysis of the concept of change management with regard to the activities and processes involved, highlighting the programmatic connections between these concepts and the academic management;
- the analysis of change management in Romanian higher education institutions and the evaluation of the opportunities for developing and implementing change strategies, their advantages and the barriers that hinder the effective management of the change process, based on the administration of questionnaires and on the processing of the data collected;
- the identification of the potential benefits of change management orientated towards the improvement of quality in higher education institutions.

The results obtained by researching change management orientated towards the improvement of quality can be capitalised on by:

- instrumental utilisation – direct application of the results to practical issues;
- conceptual utilisation – collecting information from the main actors in the domain of higher education;

- symbolic utilisation – the results of the research can be used to verify, support and legitimise previously adopted positions by experts (both from a theoretical and a practical viewpoint) and to establish and implement change management models in higher education institutions.

### **Methodological and practical limitations**

#### *Methodological limitations*

The research method applied is the investigation based on questionnaires. This method is subjective to a certain extent, but, given the characteristics of the change processes in higher education institutions and the opportunity of collecting relevant information, we consider that the method is adequate.

The disadvantage of the research is that it refers to a small number of institutions. However, given its profundity, it can represent an important benchmark for other institutions in establishing and implementing change strategies and policies.

#### *Practical limitations*

We cannot guarantee the accuracy of some data and information collected; however, by comparison, we have managed to eliminate to a great extent the questionnaires which were superficially filled in.

Since the management in higher education institutions differs to a certain extent from institution to institution, slight differences may exist, but they are not so relevant as to affect the results of the research. To eliminate this inconvenience, we have tried to collect information from responsible and reliable persons.

### **Research ethics**

The respondents' anonymity has been guaranteed, both for teachers and students. All data collected has served the sole purpose of the present research and will not be further used otherwise..

## **RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**

We have analysed, starting from the available statistical data, the context in which higher education institutions function and we have come to the conclusion that the objectives take into account the tendencies at work internationally. Such an attitude is justified by the creation of EHEA and ERA. Performance criteria have been defined at the level of European bodies whose aim is to encourage and enhance cooperation between higher education

institutions in Europe and, consequently, these criteria have become a framework within which European higher education institution function and to which they compare. Our research has shown that even though it is necessary for Romanian higher education institutions to meet the objectives initially set by European documents, realism is also required when establishing the measures that can lead to the achievement of the goals.

We consider that the periodic administration of similar questionnaires can give a fairly realistic image of the current context and of the progress made so that, consequently, further measures be taken. The results of our study do not refer to a particular higher education institution or to a particular field of study. Our study offers an overall picture of the context. However, it is worth mentioning that all the students who participated in the survey come from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. We consider that the results may differ from institution to institution, so that the remedial actions may refer to different areas.

We consider that our study is useful as a diagnostic instrument for the current situation. According to the results obtained by applying it, short and medium term objectives can be set and monitored by a repeated application of the questionnaire. However, there is an essential prerequisite for the successful utilisation of this instrument – readiness to accept the truth and acceptance of the need for involving the main actors in the decision-making process.

We would like to conclude by expressing our hope that, at some point, the reform in higher education will become a real priority for the Romanian government and that the university will, eventually, convince the society that it needs financial resources. Not granting the necessary financial resources to education is, in our opinion, an expression of the lack of patriotism and of interest in the welfare of the nation. Certainly, in our globalised world, any Romanian citizen is free to look for wealth anywhere, even though *anywhere* does not seem to welcome *anybody*. We know from Cicero that *Ubi bene ibi patria*, but we also know from Octavian Paler that every human being has one fatherland; the others are just countries. Even though competition is good, motivating and leads to progress, we consider that the desire for quality higher education should not primarily spring from competitiveness but from the wish to offer to Romanians a place in a Romania that they should feel the need to care for and of which they should be able to look after with expertise and morality. This is why, in our opinion, we should not hide away from reality, however much effort we be supposed to make in order to change reality according to our dreams or to change ourselves so as to be able to change reality in the direction that we deserve as a nation.

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