

Human Relationships and International Relations: “Danubius University” of Galati and Its Credo

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Abstract: In this article I will make a synthetic presentation of my conception regarding the mission and objectives of the university which I manage, namely the “Danubius” University of Galati. This conception, representing our credo, has been constructed in accordance with the classic ethical norms, already verified and confirmed, by placing man and his relationships with the other human beings at the core of our interest. Thus, taking into account our traditions and the context in which we live, we promote good relations with the European Union countries, but also with the other partner countries from all over the world.

Keywords: international relations; “Danubius” University of Galati; principles; values; dialogue

An old but still valid *ethical* theory urges us to choose the “golden middle way”. *Virtue* – as Aristotle teaches us – *is the mean between extremes*. For example, generosity lies between stinginess and the mania of scattering. Likewise, the courageous one opposes the coward (who hides from danger), but also opposes the brave (the one who throws himself into dangerous situations). The courageous one does not avoid danger, but he is cautious (see Aristotle, 1999).

As you can see, *virtue* implies *balance* and, at the same time, *wisdom* (*cf.* Rachels, 2003). A private university cannot afford to be wasteful; hence, it manages its resources rigorously. Similarly, it faces openly and courageously the challenges of the present, trying to anticipate those of the future. It is what the “Danubius” University of Galati strives to do, as a higher education institution concerned about achieving *balance* and *harmony* for oneself and for the others.

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This is easy to prove. On *the spatial axis*, as a regional university, we are (physically) located between Galati and Braila, because our desire (my father's and mine) was, from the very beginning, to develop a university campus meant to serve the Galati-Braila area. The union of the two cities into one is an old project of ours. (I should mention that, following some workshops on this topic, we have also published a volume highly appreciated by the local community; see (Pușcă *et alii*, 2017)

Our activity – through fruitful collaborations and trustworthy partnerships – has extended to the *East* – in the immediate vicinity (The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) to the Near East (Turkey), the Middle East (Israel) and the Far East (Thailand, Philippines, China etc.), as well as to the *West* – in the European West (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria, Greece etc. through the Erasmus+ program), but also in the Transatlantic *West* (USA). We are part of the European Union, but we also have friendly, collaborative relations with other non-U.E. countries; actually, they are, geographically, European countries: Russia (the largest country in Eurasia), Albania, Macedonia etc. Together, I believe we can build an even better European future.

We are permanently on the move and the international environment is the water we swim into and where we feel at ease, since our essence is both *fluid* (appropriate to adaptation) and *crystallized* (indicating stability and reliability). Our name is *Danubius*, the Latin name of the *Danube* River. It is well known that the Danube is moving, but it is also stable and constant. Its water flows, always new, always young (as the vitality of our students), but the course itself remains the same (or almost the same) for a long time, although its bed can deepen, its shores can be widened (*cf.* Pușcă & Pîrju, 2013).

We try to practise a performance management. That is why the educational and research areas we want to be the best at are not many: *Law, Economics, Communication and International Relations, Psychology*. And here we find the same tendency towards balance. By pursuing an educational ideal, we take into account the humanistic, social dimension. We place *Man* at the centre of our preoccupations, with his *inner* life (his soul), but also with his *exterior*, communicative life, open to others. We teach about *Man* and study *Man* in his inter-human relations (his “internal” and “external affairs”) as they are (or should be) regulated.

Virtually, we are everywhere and we put the *virtual* at work for the benefit of the *real*. We are a university not only *open* but also *online* (see Bumbaru, Pușcă & Postolache, 2010). We are *international*. While travelling anywhere in the world, we carry some landmarks with us, a compass where the cardinal points are the values we believe in: *truth, excellence, respect, responsibility*.

While navigating, we also keep in mind *the temporal axis*, but mainly in terms of *value*: we constantly search for the Polar Star, that is, *Innovation*, but we never forget our home. Our Ithaca is *Tradition*. Culture itself cannot be conceived without tradition; in fact, it is the historical objectification of the spirit in forms that become traditions. The respect for tradition also explains the excellent relationship we had and still have with the founder of our University, Professor Benone Pușcă, PhD. In addition, irrespective of the place where we are and irrespective of the universality of the issues we study or teach, our voice is – without ostentation – truly Romanian.

Achieving *excellence* is the requirement that keeps us on top and helps us self-improve, not just on the line of education, but also of *research* (see Pușcă & Fălticeanu, 2011). We have research centres more and more visible through their products. We have scientific journals (for each of our domains) increasingly ranked, indexed in numerous international databases. We organise international conferences (such as this one, about *European integration*) of high academic prestige.

We have dreams, as it is natural, but we are still in touch with *reality*: we are *entrepreneurs* (see Pușcă, 2014). We try to meet, through our study programs, the needs and worries of the community we are part of. We have partnerships with the *business environment*. It is not only about pragmatism here. It is also about assuming *social responsibilities*, wishing to contribute to the public or common good. In this regard, I would like to mention that we have implemented many *projects with European funding*, all in support of the community we are part of. All these prove the principle of *balance* mentioned earlier.

We are *open* and we know that this can only be done through efficient *communication*, a communication that seeks *harmony* and *agreement*. For this reason, we have always considered ourselves in complementarity (and not in conflict) with the neighbouring university, “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galati, cultivating an exemplary relationship based on mutual respect. It is a lesson we have learned and applied in our own academic community. Teachers and students

are considered members of a single family: *the Danubius family*. For our students, we show concern, a “parental” care, and to their needs we show flexibility (cf. Nuță & Pușcă, 2017). We encourage freedom of speech.

Plato teaches us that discussions can be *eristical* or *dialectical*. Those who practise the eristical discussion (and the destructive eristical way of life) try to prove that only they are right and that their interlocutors are wrong (and that they must be destroyed, if possible). Those who practise dialectical discussion (and the dialectical way of life) are those who seek agreement, communion with others through dialogue (cf. Munteanu, 2019, pp. 215-219). This is the way we chose and recommend, for it is *the civilized way*, as the philosopher R.G. Collingwood said: “*Being civilized means living, so far as possible, dialectically, that is, in constant endeavour to convert every occasion of non-agreement into an occasion of agreement.*” (Collingwood, 1971, p. 326).

Actually, a *healthy political life* (which we are interested in, since we are also members of this state) is possible only when the (important) parties of a state find themselves in a dialectical (relation of) opposition, and not in an eristical one; in other words, only when leaders or representatives of political groups discuss dialectically, despite their possible doctrinal differences. Otherwise, the result may be catastrophic. As the same philosopher remarks: “*A community whose rulers quarrel, especially if they are so childish as to let their quarrels lead to violence, is an ill-governed community, unable to provide a life of peace and plenty for its members at home and unable to make itself respected abroad.*” (Collingwood, 1971, p. 337).

We are proud and glad to have organised this international conference on European matters, EIRP 2019 (the 14th edition), precisely in the year when Romania held and exerted the Presidency of the Council of the European Union¹. It is a difficult time in which Europe faces various internal, political and social challenges. In some environments, there is, unfortunately, a state of confusion and instability. But people need *certainty* and *security*. They need *balance*. “Danubius” University of Galati has understood this aspect very well. It knows its mission. Just as our country, Romania, our university will continue to be European not only

¹ Broadly, the first version of this text served as a welcome discourse at *The 14th International Conference on European Integration – Realities and Perspectives* (EIRP 2019), organized by “Danubius” University of Galati on the 17th – 18th of May, 2019.

geographically, not just formally, but sincerely, by conviction, by sharing and cultivating *the fundamental European values*.

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