

THE PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND SPAIN (ON THE EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOUBLE DIPLOMAS PROGRAM FOR THE PFUR AND THE UIB)*

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Abstract

One of the high-priority tasks for the states in the modern world is the establishment of the higher education system of a new level that will ensure the release of highly qualified and professionally sought-after specialists to the labor market. The solution of this issue is currently related to the internationalization of education.

Russia integrated its education system into the world educational environments by signing the Bologna Convention in 2003 that facilitated acquisition by the Russian students of the intercultural communication experience, increasing the study effectiveness and intensification of the educational process, as well as increasing the professional mobility of the modern Russian population. The participation of Russia in the Bologna process contributed to the activation of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the European states in the field of education, including Spain.

The programs of international academic and student mobility are an integral part of the Bologna system. It is necessary to emphasize the double diplomas programs, included training and international student exchange.

Over the years, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (PFUR) has been cooperating and developing partnership relations with the world's leading universities. Therefore, at present the University has developed a multistage system of international programs, allowing the students, undergraduates and graduate students to visit various countries for internships and training.

The use of Spanish as one of the training tools in the Russian universities, and in particular in the PFUR, allows the students, undergraduates and graduate students to take part in the internship programs in the Spanish leading universities. At present, the PFUR and the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) have signed the agreements relating to the establishment of double diplomas programs: - programs of the double master's program "Cultural heritage: research and management" (since 2009); and the candidate/Ph.D. double diploma program (since 2015).

The graduates from these universities are able to have state diplomas of two countries - the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Spain.

Participation of the students in these programs contributes to the professional mobility of young professionals, whose main goal is the opportunity to receive the multifaceted education in the selected field of study, as well as acquaintance with the cultural values of the European environment. Currently, the PFUR internationalizes education, by cooperating with various foreign universities, improves the quality of study, promotes the introduction of innovative educational technologies in the learning process, provides academic mobility, and thereby enhances the prestige of the university and of the Russian education.

Keywords: the Bologna Convention, the Bologna system, the higher education system, Russia, Spain, international programs.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world, such factors as globalization, liberalization and internationalization influence and determine development of higher education system around the world. Internationalization in the field of higher education at national, sectoral and institutional levels means understanding of the process in which goals, functions, and organization of educational services extend to an international scale [1].

In current conditions, internationalization of higher education is one of the most important factors for increasing the competitiveness of any country in the world. The Bologna Process plays a huge role in the internationalization of higher education, directly influencing the development of European educational space, initiating creation of a common basis for higher education.

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This process aims primarily at efficient operation of national educational systems as an important factor of scientific and technological progress, advanced development of economy and society in general. The absolute advantage of the Bologna Process is the mobility principle. The European Union has always emphasized that mobility is one of the main activities within educational policy.

Programs of international academic and student mobility, among which a number of double master's programs, integrated training and international exchange programs for students can be distinguished, have become an integral part of the 21st century's realities and a characteristic feature of education in the age of globalization [2].

For students and professors, such mobility means the possibility of personal development, improving languages, acquaintance with different cultures and encouraging independent and innovative thinking.

In this regard an appeal to the practical experience in implementing of similar programs in the Russian Federation based on the example of cooperation in this field between Russia and Spain is of a great relevance.

2 METHODOLOGY

A large number of studies have been devoted to the processes of academic and student exchanges, because academic mobility is one of the principal points of a bilateral agreement in the context of modernization of higher education in Russia and Spain in the late 1990s and in the 2000s [3].

The main research sources used were the official documents of the Bologna Process, Spanish and Russian laws in the field of education and academic and student exchange, texts of agreements on the bilateral programs between the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands.

When writing the article, the authors have used the *historical-comparative approach*, which made it possible to analyze the sources and draw up a comprehensive image of inter-humanitarian contacts between Russia and Spain in the context of the double master program «Cultural Heritage: Research and Management» and the double degree PhD program, and trace the influence of cultural interaction between Russia and Spain onto development of educational field of these two countries.

The *systematic approach* based on the study of aggregate political, institutional and sociocultural fields of activity in higher education system is used in this work. This approach assumes a comparative analysis of interests and goals of Russia and Spain as countries participating in inter-humanitarian contacts in the field of education. Using a *sociocultural approach*, the problem analysis is carried out in the context of specific features of cultural and linguistic traditions of Russia and Spain.

3 RESULTS

Currently, the ongoing changes in the system of Russian higher education, the historical and potentially possible positioning of Russia in the international education market cause increased relevance of issues related to international academic cooperation in field of education and science, discussion of the most widespread approaches, and ways for its implementation are.

The Russian Federation has a real potential, allowing it to occupy a proper place in the world educational community. High quality of Russian education and a wide range of educational services are the factor of decisive importance in this regard. Russia is interested in efficient use of its educational potential, which is one of the exportable resources of our country.

At the same time, educational policy of Russia, reflecting national interests in the field of education and presenting them to the world community, takes into account general trends of world development increasing need in material changes in its educational system. Preparation and implementation of targeted programs for participation in international educational projects and programs is one of the priorities of international cooperation [4].

Since its establishment, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia has been an internationally-oriented educational institution. Students from 160 countries are trained in the University. The Peoples' Friendship University of Russia is one of the universities participating in 5-100 Project, which was launched in 2013 and is aimed at promoting and increasing the competitiveness of Russian education. By 2020, a group of leading universities able to match global development trends and respond to global changes will be formed.

Today the University cooperates actively with foreign universities on various educational programs.

Since the mid-2000s, the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia successfully implements double degree programs in cooperation with leading foreign universities. Today, the University has 100 joint programs, including online training, with leading universities in the world [5].

Today our student has a chance to get two academic degrees in 4 years of education: a degree in his or her main profession and another one in a foreign language.

The double degree programs with higher educational institutions of China, France, Germany, Spain, Kazakhstan and others are successfully implemented at the University. Among examples of such programs there are the double master program "Cultural Heritage: Research and Management" [6] and the double degree PhD program [7]. These programs were created in partnership cooperation with the University of the Balearic Islands (Spain) and comprise several types of educational mobility: academic, scientific, student. According to the attaché in the field of education in Russia, Tatyana Drozdova-Díaz, the double master program was the first program of this nature between the universities of Russia and Spain [8].

Such staged structure of the international program gives any student from the very beginning a chance to go to Spain to the University of the Balearic Islands to get international education experience.

It should be noted that academic mobility is also a strategically important field of international activity. The program of academic mobility implemented by the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia for scientific and pedagogical workers contributes into increasing of the efficacy of current scientific research, establishing external relations of the University in the global educational space, and expanding their multicultural competence. Academic mobility is also an important aspect of personal development of employees and formation of their international scientific authority. And in this context, programs of double diplomas create conditions for such activities, because increase of academic mobility and its implementation in context of the inter-university cooperation are among essential points of the bilateral agreement between the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands. Professors actively participate in the international exchange of pedagogical experience, internships, conferences, seminars and workshops at regional and international levels.

It should be noted that the programs for masters and post-graduates correspond to the main scientific field, which is being studied at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. In this regard, students are required to possess a sufficiently high level of language training, which is provided by teachers of the Spanish section. Students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia from the first year receive not only basic knowledge of the program, but also get acquainted with history, culture, and traditions of the country, learn the spoken and professional language of the specialty, and take part in events held by the embassies of Spain and countries of Latin America and the Cervantes Institute in Moscow. This knowledge helps students in making their master's or post-graduate thesis by using Spanish scientific literature and sources.

The existing student mobility allows students to develop sociocultural and communicative skills, to form an understanding of comprehensive cultural exchange processes taking place all over the world and multilevel structure of each culture, to learn the basics of international communication, to unlock intellectual and creative potential, as well as to find a successful job in Russian and international organizations [9].

Partnership between the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands has a strong background. Internationalization is one of the major priorities of Spanish universities, and the University of the Balearic Islands is not an exception. The University of the Balearic Islands is also internationally oriented: it cooperates with universities around the world: the ones of USA, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Taiwan, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, China, Colombia, Morocco, Romania, and Ecuador.

According to available data, during 2016-17 academic year 101 foreign students were enrolled, constituting 12.98 percent out of total 778 students. In post-graduate studies, the percentage of foreign students is 16.17 out of total 1731. General statistic shows that 6.82 percent of students total at the University of the Balearic Islands (984 out of total 14,422 persons) are foreigners [10].

The increase in the number of foreign students is due to the fact that the university enjoys a good reputation. In recent years, the position of the University of the Balearic Islands in various ratings in the field of research and international relations has greatly increased.

As for the terms of the current agreement on the Double Master Program, Russian students are educated within the University of the Balearic Islands during their first year.

At the University of the Balearic Islands, the students have to choose 12 disciplines out of 24 to obtain master's degree, e.g. "Introduction to Cultural Heritage", "Seminars on Cultural Heritage", "Tourism and Cultural Heritage", "Preservation of Archaeological Monuments", "Geological Search for Cultural Heritage", "Historiography of Art and Cultural Heritage", "Medieval Sculpture of Majorca. Historical Research as a Basis for Identification and Study of Monuments", "Study of the State of Cultural Heritage with the Purpose of Impact on Monuments", "Marine Archaeological and Ethnological Heritage", "Monuments and Terrain", "Art and Photography", etc.

During the second year of their education within the "History" program, students attend classes in a number of compulsory disciplines ("Today's Problems of History", "Methodology of History", "Computer Technology in Science and Education", "History of Historical Science", "Professional and Pedagogical Practice", "Preparation and Protection Master's Thesis", "State Examination"), and elec-

tive courses (“Basic Problems of the Russian History: Theory and Historiography”, “Teaching Methods in Higher Education”, “History of Russian Art”, “Modern Russia: Policy and Culture”, etc.)

At the same time students collect information for their master’s thesis. They have to write a text in Spanish and to defend it in the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia before the Higher Attestation Commission, including a professor from the partner Spanish university.

The ultimate goal of studying under the double master program is to obtain the degrees of two universities (the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia and a partner university) at the same time, provided that the curriculum for the credit based modular learning in both universities is successfully implemented, examinations are passed and the graduate work is defended in a foreign language.

According to the terms of a partnership agreement with foreign universities, there is a program of joint double academic advising for post-graduates and a double degree PhD program. In 2015, the Agreement on the double degree PhD program was signed between the University of the Balearic Islands and the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia.

The Program includes 3 years of education for the students of the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia— during the 1st and the 3rd years students are studying in Russia, and during the 2nd year they are studying in Spain. Graduate work is defended in the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia before the Higher Attestation Commission from the University of the Balearic Islands.

During the first year of education a post-graduate has to attend and pass exams in the following disciplines: “Professional discipline”, “Foreign language”, and “History and philosophy of science”. During the second year, while studying at the University of the Balearic Islands, a student attends the following mandatory classes: “Communication skills in English: Written and Oral Expression”, “Methods of bibliographic search”, and “Ethics and integrity of scientific research”. Also, the academic advisor of the University of the Balearic Islands may determine other dedicated academic disciplines from among the ones for post-graduates offered in the appropriate program, taking into account the fact that some disciplines taught in the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia can be credited.

During the third year, a student finishes his or her education and writes the final graduate work. Defense of the thesis is held in the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia in Russian and translated into Catalan, Spanish or English, or in English, Spanish or Catalan, and translated into Russian.

The purpose of these double programs is to expand scope of cooperation between the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands in field of higher education, to provide students with additional internationalization opportunity, and, as a result, to improve quality of education. The Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands encourage participation of their students in these internationalized educative programs by means of financial assistance.

It should be noted that in addition to these double degree programs arranged by the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia and the University of the Balearic Islands, there are also language studies and integrated education programs.

Students from Russia and the ones from Spain, who come to another country, learn not only culture, history, and tradition, but also take part in new cultural and educational programs and projects, allowing them to develop sociocultural and communicative skills, to form an idea of diverse global cultural exchange processes and comprehensive structure of each culture, to master basics of international communication, and to unlock their intellectual and creative potential.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Speaking about the advantages of these programs, it is obvious that they contribute to the development of mutual understanding and trust between partner universities, establish the foundation for long-term cooperation, and are oriented to elaboration of tools for improving quality of education, transparency and comparability of curricula. They increase international labor market competitiveness of university graduates. Mutual recognition of degrees in the context of joint educational programs eventually results in creation of a common framework of qualifications, i.e. in consolidation of integration processes that are inevitable in the context of globalization of economies and associated with the Russia's goal to enter the European educational space.

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