

The EU Higher Education Quality pass through the world of work : EU maritime experiences in Mediterranean area.

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European Union has been going under continuous changes, since the implementation of the EMS (European Monetary System), which was followed by numerous further steps, such as the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the intergovernmental Treaty of Amsterdam, or the agreement of Nice (December 2000). Ever since, the European integration has entered into a new political and economical period. A part of this process is embodied by the achievement, among other policies, of a Common Transport Policy (CTP). The Treaty of Rome, that established the European Economical Community in 1957, had foreseen the implementation of a CTP, but it remained merely ineffective in the maritime field until 1973.

The EU first enlargement in 1973, had significant impact on the CTP, and particularly in the maritime transports area, since three countries turned to the sea had just joined the Union, namely Denmark, Ireland and Great Britain, and EU recently include other members and finally to arrive to 25 members, with some new Mediterranean countries, but in reality the economic and cultural growth and the ability of renewal are the fundamental objectives of every Country and they should be also for countries in development and transition. An important contribution to the attainment of such an objective can be brought by a suitable higher education quality that aims for the development of creativity and individual initiative, as well as to the acquisition of competences that improve the professional qualification of the teaching staff. Therefore it becomes essential to establish a quality higher education path that, exclusively overcoming the technical-operational dimension, offers interesting instruments to develop communication and the ability to work in groups, with the purpose of improving the relationships between different functions inside the student-teacher bond.

This is the situation in all EU and it is so difficult to evaluate the Higher Education quality, in which field and in which Area.

In contrast to the past, today the competitive advantage of a Country is founds more and more on the wealth of human resources and less on the value of materials,

capitals and technologies.

Such challenges the quality of the higher education has to answer in order to satisfy the individual cultural needs, and the needs of insertion in the world of the work. Moreover the market is polluted by parallel higher educational initiatives to the university institution, for example proposal by organizations of recent origin to know its substantial reliability. The excess of offers in comparison to the question produces confusion among the students and among the possible users of these courses (like enterprises, public corporate body, private) that are some times are disorientated and which often change directions or they prefer to abdicate.

In this picture it is possible to pursue excellence objectives also in higher education is not a fashion but is an authentic necessity to be competitive on the market and to have the concrete opportunities of work. Therefore the culture of quality has positive aspects in comparison to the development of a philosophy more directed to the users that in pure market logic he can be defined simply "customer". This idea it is possible to apply in every field and also in maritime area.

For example for the students, and particularly for university students, it is not only important to attain a good cultural level from both a qualitative point of view with respect to content, but also to acquire one "higher education with a strongly practical character".

If we investigate in maritime area however, in the 1980es, the policy of the Union regarding the harbour field was merely non-interventional, the European ports being regarded at the time as independent from the CTP. The European Commission, aligning itself on the Community of Groups Operational Harbours' position, carried out a policy of non-intervention. For several years, the progresses in the process of definition and implementation of the CTP were slow, especially considering the growing importance of the transports area for the EU. But a significant trend aiming to its achievement came to light after 1991.

During the 90es, several initiatives and agreements (Treaty of Maastricht in 1993, Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, Treaty of Nice in 2000) marked the progresses of a common harbour matter policy, still ongoing at this day. One of the first consequences of this sustained effort was the implementation of a system of connection between all the maritime areas of the Union, by the so-called TEN (Trans European Network).

Such a situation represents a valuable opportunity especially for the South Mediterranean countries, by allowing them to take part in the achievement of a new

Mediterranean maritime area. In this perspective, it is extremely important to develop and adjust the local standards of organisation and administration in order to align them on the European standards especially with high quality standard. Some educational idea thus aims at promoting European and maritime Mediterranean (but why no to open to Black Sea Area) partnership aimed at establishing certified training centres for technical and vocational training in maritime field at maritime world market in Mediterranean Sea. The idea to open centres in Mediterranean Area with Higher Education top quality level and strong connection with job market is a simply idea and it will pick up the experiences matured in some maritime area especially inside some Mediterranean Maritime Institute. It is very important to create some Maritime centres in Mediterranean Area in partnership with the local maritime Higher Education Institutions, where the Centres will be convergence centres of European Mediterranean maritime culture where different methodological system (for example European and African - but if we involve the Black Sea countries with new former Soviet Union countries) will be melted. We will be reached unexpected objectives and we will achieve as resulted the transfer of the European port and European educational institutions essential competence for the progressive change in maritime field.

To start this idea we need Maritime Higher Education Institutions worldwide in Mediterranean Area, and in particular Maritime Higher Education Institutions of Excellence and enhance the safety of international ocean traffic and it has established also the College of Maritime Transport and Technology was necessary to encompass all educational and training programs in the area of maritime studies, everything following the European quality standards and in correspondence with Bologna process. Institutions differentiates for its European and Mediterranean vision of maritime field both for the harbours as well logistics and intermodal system. In this case fundamental will be the contribution by the young EU Mediterranean Higher Education Maritime Institutions where the maritime problems for a long time has been studied in a historian logic and it involve the maritime society than the work market.

The Mediterranean realities interact in some new Maricentres regards training. The centres will be the centre of connection between society and educational life. The space where academic world will meet the world market. From the centres will depart the subject will have gotten the best requisites for the completion through the apprenticeship at the European Port Authorities and Institutions (Stage) involved and from some area of

the different Mediterranean Sea. The Maricentre will have the stated objectives to facilitate contact for members around the Euro – Med region, to provide the appropriate forum discussion and the exchange of views on work market; to provide a medium for members to access government departments and other specialised agencies; to encourage European and Mediterranean corporates to identify niche markets in which to operate; finally to promote closer relation between civil societies in Mediterranean Area.

The idea is focused on the creation of some European and Mediterranean Maritime Training Centre at some Mediterranean Higher Education Institutions, dedicated to training and consultation in the field of maritime activities for the promotion of Higher Education Institutions with top level of Higher Education quality, and it is involving industry and society in partnerships.

This realisation will be oriented on educational and professional training, with the support of, the Higher Educational Authorities of Mediterranean Area and involved some port authorities, maritime association and industry. The Centres will be set to train future managers, in the and maritime activities (also intermodal), such as port management, shipping activities, logistic transport services. For example the courses are conceived in correspondence of European quality standard and in correspondence of Bologna process and finalise to train the people who will work in the port authorities and the public and private institutions, but in reality the main idea is to extend an already existing offering.

Also in this case the analysis of this last one has, in fact, shown the necessity of human resources with well defined characteristics. In short there are :

1. good training cultural general and specific;
2. spirit of initiative;
3. quickness of decision;
4. availability to accept responsibilities;
5. communication ability;
6. work group ability;
7. professional competences that improve the higher education quality also in relation to the world of work.
8. Originality

In particular the originality of such a Centres would be the participation of some educational authorities and maritime institutions, in order to deliver a technical and vocational teaching. The necessity for such a Centres appears to be high in a context of growing exchanges in the Mediterranean zone; most of the maritime operators notice that the south Mediterranean infrastructure and management cannot be considered as fully effective in comparison to the European achievements in that field. Thus, creating a Centres allowing constructive exchanges between the concerned actors seems likely to promote a move towards the European standards in this part of the Mediterranean.

It is essential that this idea will receive full support from the EU, which will make it more credible and efficient. In reality the topic of the Maritime Centres is to deliver a multidisciplinary-focused teaching, with a particular attention to the economics and management ; its main goal will be to prepare aspiring managers to senior responsibility in maritime organizations with a permanent contact with the maritime work market and in respect of EU quality standard..

The policy of European internships is designed to bring further exchanges between the two zones, so that the south Mediterranean harbours may improve their offering and management techniques. The Centres will be formed by the clear partnership between the Universities and the operating enterprises ; it will thus have a legal certification allowing it to operate as an actor of the maritime system. Finally will be important the establishment of a fruitful Mediterranean dialogue around the issues of modern maritime and harbour activities, which dialogue will permit these activities to be improved in their technical and managerial aspects in the South Mediterranean countries, so that their standards may fit into the European rules regarding maritime activities.

As the Euro-Mediterranean partnership lies on a process of exchange, in the full extent of the term, it seems all the more important to encourage and promote this dialogue via the establishment of the EMMC.

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