Analytical paper: The modernisation and development of Belarusian HEIs based on the entrepreneurial university framework

The Ostrogorski Centre presents a new analytical paper ‘The Modernisation and Development of Belarusian Higher Education Institutions Based on the Entrepreneurial University Framework’, written by Radzivon Marozau.

The paper primarily based on suggestions made during a conference on reform of Belarusian higher education held on 27 December 2018 in Minsk, organised by the Ostrogorski Centre.

Dedicated to the issues of higher education and its reforms in Belarus, the conference allowed academics, practitioners and administrators to discuss the existing problems and possible solutions. The main topics concerned new forms of practice-oriented business education at the masters level, modernization of higher education at entrepreneurial university framework, reforms of Belarusian scientific research, and the issue of plagiarism at Belarusian universities.

The analytical paper suggests that the Belarusian government should address the challenges of a largely unsupportive institutional environment before expecting entrepreneurial outcomes from HEIs. Moving towards entrepreneurial HEIs requires changes in employment structures, including matters of promotion and remuneration, at Belarusian HEIs.
A meeting with entrepreneurs at the School of Business and Management of Technology, part of the Belarusian State University. Source: sbmt.by

In most developed countries that have reached the innovation-driven stage of educational reforms, higher education institutions (HEIs) accept a new mandate to become key drivers for knowledge-based, socioeconomic development, thereby transforming themselves into entrepreneurial HEIs.

The Ministry of Education of Belarus initiated an experimental project on the implementation of a «University 3.0” model, trying to replicate the success of Western HEIs in its development of the entrepreneurial mission.

However, the implementation of this experimental project had to be transparent to the whole HEI community and be conducted in close collaboration among stakeholders. Apart from that, target indicators for HEIs set by the state should be reconsidered and reconciled with the experimental project’s goals.
Recommendations

The research paper proposes several initiatives to be implemented to develop an entrepreneurship-friendly environment at the state and HEI levels. However, it should be acknowledged that success stories of HEI transformation in transition economies are rare and were managed by an HEI itself rather than a government.

-Raise awareness and transparency

Policy initiatives need to be clear in their objectives, tools, benefits and outcomes as well as be evidence-based and open to discussion. The lack of transparency leads to misunderstanding, ignorance, resistance and speculation. Thus, due to wrong assumptions and absence of clear indicators, some Belarusian HEI authorities claim that they have already implemented the “University 4.0” model and are ready for “University 5.0”.

-Establish collaboration among stakeholders

Comprehensive initiatives in this sphere should be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economy that is responsible for entrepreneurship, business environment, entrepreneurial infrastructure as well as the State Committee for Science and Technology. For example, the Ministry of Economy may promote preferential terms for HEI-based enterprises. This may stimulate business creation by students and faculty as well as to bring established businesses to an HEI for spin-off development.
Enable entrepreneurship-oriented educational trajectories

The Ministry of Education should promote entrepreneurship-oriented educational trajectories that enable students and faculty from different departments to work together on real-life projects. Study plans of different specialities should stipulate joint, well-structured and formalised academic courses related to entrepreneurship and innovation whereby mixed teams of future engineers, physicists, biologists, web-designers, managers, PR specialists could develop business project proposals or even prototypes.

Radzivon Marozau at the Ostrogorski Centre’s conference on the reform of higher education. Source: Ostrogorski Centre

Reconsider target indicators for HEIs

The state should reconsider the key target indicators for HEIs such as the growth of labour productivity and export of service, the percentage of graduates who get obligatory first
Instead, within the experimental project, it is worth monitoring such indicators as the number of start-ups/spin-offs founded by graduates/faculty members; the number of patents, licences, trademarks co-owned by an HEI, income from intellectual property; the number of R&D projects funded by enterprises, or number of joint international R&D projects and educational programs.

- **Develop entrepreneurship centres**

The state should stimulate the development of entrepreneurship centres as organisational units at HEIs – “one-stop shops” or “single front doors” for students, faculty, and businesses. The entrepreneurship centres could integrate and coordinate the entrepreneurship-related activities within an HEI in order to increase their impact and the visibility of these activities.

- **Introduce the entrepreneurial agenda into HEIs’ strategic and business plans**

The Ministry of Education should initiate the inclusion of “University 3.0”-agenda in business and strategic plans of HEIs with concomitant funding allocation and indicators. An HEI’s strategic plan should empower entrepreneurial actions, synergies and cooperation among individuals, organisational units as well as HEI business relations.

- Read full paper: [The Modernization and Development of Belarusian HEIs based on the entrepreneurial university framework](#)