

65 YEARS OF UNIVERSITY ECONOMICS EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

doc. Ing. Marián Goga, CSc., Ing. Eva Kafková, PhD.

The 65th anniversary of the establishment of the University of Economics in Bratislava was marked by an international conference held at the university on 24-25 November 2005. As the culmination of celebrations for this significant milestone, the conference was attended by many VIP guests and leading figures from higher economics education in Slovakia. Held under the name "Development of Economic Theory – Application and Prospects in Slovakia", its objective was to present the development of economic theory and the education process within the European research and education area, as well as analyses of the processes taking place under the conditions of economic globalisation.

Many interesting papers and contributions were heard over the two days of discussions, and these are summarised in the conference anthology. The conference was opened with an address by Vojtech Kollár, CSc., rector of the University of Economics in Bratislava, who besides giving an introduction to the history of the university, set out the new challenges and underlying

movements in the development of economic theory and practice within the context of economic development in the European Union and the world.

At a festive award ceremony held in the first part of the plenary session, commemorative medals were presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the development of the university.

The plenary session also saw the presentation of notable papers: prof. Ing. Peter Plavčan, CSc., of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, gave an overview of university education in the globalising world; prof. Dr. hab. Aleksander Zeliáš, Dr. h. c., of the Academy of Economics in Krakow, focused on the selection criteria for variables of an econometric



Pictured from left: prof. Ing Vojtech Kollár, CSc. (rector of the University of Economics in Bratislava), doc. Ing. Marián Goga, Csc. (vice rector for science and doctoral studies), prof. Ing. Karol Zalai, CSc. (vice rector for development), doc. JUDr. Zbyněk Švarc, Faculty of International Relations at the University of Economics in Prague.

model for the mass valuation of property; prof. Ing. Kajetána Hontyová, PhD., EUB vice rector for education, spoke on the quality of education and training at the university.

The contribution of prof. Ing. Rudolf Sivák, CSc., dean of the EUB's Faculty of National Economy (FNE), was entitled "The Significance of Economic Science in the Realisation of the Transformation Process and Economic Reforms", and prof. Ing. Jaroslav Husár, CSc., Mgr. ek., gave a presentation on economics in this century, in which he spoke about the need for a new economic model.

During the sessions of this international scientific conference, scientific forums were held on a sectional bases in order to compare and critically evaluate details, opinions and standpoints regarding possible solutions to the open issues of economic reform in EU countries.

The presentation of theoretical knowledge, as well as the outputs of completed research projects, was divided into five sections:

1st Section – Issues in the development of econo-



mic theory and economic systems,

2nd Section – Issues in the education of economists and managers under the conditions of the European Union,

3rd Section – Economic reforms and the development of the economy in trade and services under the conditions of globalisation,

4th Section – Informatisation in the economy at the threshold of the third millennium

5th Section – The political context for the accession of Slovakia to the European Union

The 1st section's developments were summarised by doc. Ing. V. Gonda, PhD., vice dean of the FNE, who said the participants had discussed several important subjects with particular focus on questions of finance theory, inflation, theoretical aspects of foreign direct investment, and alternatives to globalisation.

Attendees were briefed about the results of the 2nd section by doc. Ing. M. Majtán, Csc. Within seven subsections there had been an exchange of scientific knowledge on the issues in question, a search for starting points from which to conduct research projects, and the establishment and deepening of mutual contacts with domestic and foreign universities.

The 2nd section included a German subsection entitled "Internationalen Management und Finanzen in der Europäischen Union". The discussion was joined by colleagues from domestic universities and also by representatives of foreign economics faculties, in particular the Faculty of Business Administration at the University of Economics in Prague, the University of Economics in Katowice, the Faculty of Economics at the Technical University of Ostrava, and the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Masaryk University in Brno.

In evaluating the 3rd section, doc. Ing. V. Michalová, CSc., said that globalisation was making a swift advance and that systemic analysis and a timely reaction to the changes was required in order to minimise its negative effects on the national economy. Doc. Ing. R. Pardelová, PhD. stressed the need for building a knowledge society and similarly, in connection with the curriculum, the creation and application of information from quantified methods.

Doc. PhDr. F. Škvrnda emphasised the topicality of the expanding interdisciplinary investigation in the following areas:

- theoretical aspects of European integration,
- various regional aspects of integration processes,
- issues of migration, security and nationality factors,
- socio-economic, legal and cultural issues related to globalisation.

The conclusions of the conference were summarised

into four specific areas: economic theory and economic systems, economic reforms and the development of the economy in trade and services under the conditions of globalisation, informatisation of the economy at the threshold of the third millennium, and analysis of the political context for the accession of Slovakia to the European Union.

We will mention at least some of the conclusions in the field of economic reforms. As regards the development of the economy in trade and services under globalisation, the discussion led to the following conclusions:

- Globalisation represents an unprecedented heightening of competition at both the macro and microlevel. As a consequence, the Slovak economy must not be closed but, on the contrary, must be as integrated as possible with the process of globalisation. One of the basic conditions of globalisation is the liberalisation of global trade and services.

- Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, which is implicitly based upon globalisation and the liberalisation of world trade, should finally result in lower prices of goods and services.

- The Slovak Government must declare and realise efforts to attract as much economic activity as possible, not through giving preferential treatment, but by creating a favourable economic environment for doing business. The Slovak corporate sector must demonstrate its ability to integrate with the world economy and to support positive impulses for the business environment in Slovakia while at the same time eliminating the negative ones.

- The globalisation of the Slovak economy must be systematically analysed at all levels, including the intersectoral level, and advance measures must be taken within the active employment policy in order to achieve a timely reaction and eliminate negative impacts.

- As regards the expansion of business opportunities in Slovakia, the most important condition is considered to be the EU's single internal market in services. The Slovak Republic is pressing for the early adoption of the Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on services in the internal market, in order to simplify the administrative and legal regulations for the free movement of services within the EU.

- It seems essential to adopt effective legislation (for trade) that prevents and more strictly punishes the use of practices which are damaging to any market participants, including customers, or which are precluding the equality of opportunities for them.

- Tourism as an industry, and all of its participant entities, must respond to globalisation with the aim of both taking the potential opportunities and facing the



possible threats, above all through flexibility and the utilisation of specific assets.

- The challenge for Slovakia is to become an active part of the globalisation process by applying strengths and priorities, thus leading to an improvement in both the economy and country and helping to solve global issues.

- For corporate entities in Slovakia at the threshold of the 21st century, the challenge is to apply relational marketing and a prospect strategy for services as a factor in the creation of value added and differentiation.

The conference, conducted at highly specialist level, demonstrated the long and fruitful development of university economics education in Slovakia, while at the same time it opened a discussion on key issues of the state's economic orientation and its incorporation in the economy of the European Union.

There emerged from the event a number of suggestions for deepening the development of theory and practice in a modern and dynamically progressing society.