



Visegrad University Association

General meeting 2017

Russian State Agrarian University – K.A. Timiryazev MAA

September 14th, 2017

1. Official opening and welcome address

Dr. Galina Zolina

The VUA general meeting was opened by the Rector of Timiryazev University, Dr. Galina Zolina. She welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of international cooperation. The participants were reminded of the status of Timiryazev university as a research center as a place where the daily problems of humanity are being solved. 3500 new students, 800 foreign students have been enrolled this year. Timiryazev university is a cultural heritage site and the base organization of all 54 agrarian universities of Russia. Dr. Zolina listed the main facilities and research streams of Timiryazev university and its motto – “From the quality of agrarian technologies to the quality of life”. The utmost importance of training professionals for the agrarian education and science was particularly stressed. International projects are truly in the list of the university’s long-term projects (48 of them completed within the last 20 years).

Afterwards, Mgr. Vladislav Valach thanked the rector and passed the floor to VUA President, Dr. h.c. prof. Ing. Peter Bielik, Rector of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra. He expressed his gratitude to the hosting university, the rector and colleagues and emphasized the importance of cooperation between European universities and Russian and Ukrainian universities, extending his gratitude to all the rectors. He recalled the September of 2011, when the journey of VUA began and the accomplishments of VUA over the past years (conferences, joint study programs, mobilities, double degrees, Visegrad journal) and encouraged the 57 member universities from 23 countries to intensify university activities. Program, organized in Louisiana State university, opened many opportunities so the representatives of LSU were thanked.

He regretted that some universities could not join the events. Horizon 2020 program was introduced as one securing Europe’s global competitiveness. The program is open to anyone and offers to get grants and achieve results fast in a dynamic partnership. There are 6 of them. Food security and food safety can be a very good stream for future cooperation. Breaking barriers to create a single university market is the goal and activity of VUA.

Erasmus+ comprises 7 programs, including Lifelong Learning program, “Youth in action” program and 5 international cooperation programs. There are contracts between Nitra, Krakow, Warsaw, Moscow, Belgorod, Oryol, Vinnitsa, Siedlce, Vienna, Louisiana, etc.

Prof. Bielik encouraged participants to share their ideas and have a productive work. Once again, thanks were offered to Dr. Galina Zolina, Prof. Evgeny Koshkin, Dr. Anna Voronina and Mgr. Vladislav Valach for the organization.

2. VUA Annual Report 2016 and VUA Finance Report

The Visegrad University Association Annual Report 2017 consists of the following parts:

1. Overview of VUA activities for the period October 2016 to August 2017
 - 1.1 “Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development”
 - 1.2 “Future Scientists for Sustainable Development”- 3rd VUA YOUTH Scientific Session
 - 1.3 Agricultural Universities in the 21st Century: Importance of Technology and Information Transfer for Program Sustainability
 - 1.4 VUA Summer School
 - 1.5 VUA supports IVF projects
 - 1.6 VUA YOUTH
 - 1.7 VUA Award of Excellence
 - 1.8 VUA Think Pool
 - 1.9 VUA 2016 General Meeting
 - 1.10 Promoting of VUA

Mgr. Vladislav Valach, VUA Secretary General, introduced the agenda and handed out the voting tickets.

1. *Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development* (Managing editor - Prof. Elena Horska)

By Prof. Elena Horska

Two issues have been published in 2016-2017. In 2016, 5 articles were published in Issue 2 out of 7 received. They came from Szent Istvan University in Godollo, Wageningen University in collaboration with a Uzbek university, Oryol State University and University of South Bohemia. In 2017, 7 articles were published in Issue 1 out of 8 received (5 articles from Szent Istvan University in Godollo, other ones from Plovdiv University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, SUA Nitra and KazNAU). There is a big need for good articles in greater numbers as well for the increase of VJBSD citation in other high-ranked journals. For the reason of small number of articles submitted, Skype/video meeting of VJBSD did not take place as had been recommended by VUA General meeting 2016.

In 2017, VJBSD celebrates its 5th anniversary of being published. In November 2017, the 10th issue will be announced. VJBSD was included in Index Copernicus Database.

Prof. Horska raised such issues for discussion as: 1. Use the above reasons for promoting VJBSD; 2. Aim to have VJBSD indexed in international high-reputed databases (Scopus); 3. Index VJBSD in national databases. Polish partners are kindly asked to register the journal in the list of the Ministry of Education. 4. Decide whether it is advisable to open VJBSD for public (non-member universities); 5. Remember to focus on the regional issues and bioeconomy.

2. *“Innovation as a driving force of sustainable development” – 4th VUA YOUTH scientific session for students in Szent Istvan University, Godollo.*

By Prof. Robert Magda

An introduction of VUA YOUTH sessions was given. 31 research papers presented by students for all over the world (VUA and other countries, including Madagascar, Burundi, Nigeria, Laos, etc.). The first session focused on Ph.D. students, the second was for M.Sc. students. The 2nd prize winner Gregory Obozuwa was given special attention. The 3rd session was for B.Sc. students.

Prof. Magda invited students to participate in the 4th session of VUA YOUTH for bachelor, master and Ph.D. students' conference in at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences of Szent Istvan University, Godollo to be held in November, 2017. The aim of the conference is to provide a forum for students of VUA institutions to present their research results and to have a publication in the conference proceedings with ISBN. The conference committee of VUA professors and lecturers will give guidelines to students on how to continue their research. The conference creates an opportunity for students to meet their counterparts from abroad and build professional relationships.

Deadlines: Registration and abstract submission online – October, 13, 2017; full paper (15-20 pages) submission by email – November, 3, 2017. The conference is free of charge. Participants are to prepare 10-min ppt presentation (including aims, hypotheses, results, conclusions and recommendations).

“Agricultural Universities in the 21st century: Importance of Technology and Information transfer for Program Sustainability”

By Prof. John Russin

A symposium titled “Agricultural Universities in the 21st century: Importance of Technology and Information transfer for Program Sustainability” was held in April, 2017 in Louisiana State University. Discussed topics: patents, licenses and technology transfer, assistance to partner universities. Food incubator – Entrepreneurship. New partnership was established with MOU. All members of the conference became students for the university for 1 day. A new diplomatic partnership in Washington, DC (Embassy of Slovakia and Hungary) was developed. Embassies are very willing to help. A formal invitation to a similar conference in April 2018 was offered to all participants.

The Symposium programme included:

- Lessons Learned from Land Grant University System in the United States

- Strategies for Technology and Information Transfer
- Alumni and Donor Relation
- University Marketing and Branding
- Public-Private Partnerships and Role of Sponsored Research
- Entrepreneurism, Food Company Incubator, and Spin-Off Initiatives
- Role of Genetic Modification of Crops in Global Agriculture
- Examples of Strategic Information Transfer at LSU AgCenter

3. *VUA Summer School*

VUA Summer School was not organized due to problems (will be held in 2018, updated program to be disseminated).

Organizing universities: Belgorod State Agricultural University (Russia) and Orel State Agrarian University (Russia)

Summer school “Agrisummer in Black soil regions of Russia” organized by Belgorod & Orel State Agrarian Universities in August, 2018, in two modules – one in Orel, one in Belgorod.

First call and information will be sent to VUA contacts in February, 2018.

Deadline for registration: June, 14th, 2018

Proposed summer school dates: August, 12th-26th, 2018

Registration fee for VUA members: 350 Euro per city

Expected number of participants: 25-30

4. *VUA supports IVF projects*

VUA offers support to IVF projects coordinated by VUA members in order to strengthen the connection of VUA members and International Visegrad Fund, including:

- Promotion and dissemination
- Publications through Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development
- 500 Euro finance support

In 2016, no request for IVF support was offered. Mgr. Valach emphasized the importance of connection between VUA and IVF activities.

5. *VUA Youth*

Students organized under the Visegrad University Association (VUA) maintain regular communication and contact, mainly in social networks, media and email. Students also meet during conferences, academic exchange universities not necessarily included in VUA.

VUA Youth is very helpful where young people, full of enthusiasm, are able to meet. It is proposed that new students join VUA Youth network in order to support the goals and objectives of Visegrad University Association within student community.

6. *VUA Award of Excellence*

The voting for VUA annual award of excellence is to take place. Last year's winner was Szent Istvan University in Godollo. It is proposed that in 2018 the VUA Award of Excellence is also awarded to one VUA member university with the outstanding contribution to the goals and objectives of the association. Mgr Valach encouraged participants to work hard to be awarded to VUA Award of Excellence.

The criteria for VUA Award of Excellence nomination are:

- Sustainable achievements in education, science and research;
- Active international cooperation within and outside VUA;
- Promotion of VUA;
- Other activities supporting the common goals of VUA;
- Paid VUA membership fee.

At the beginning of the meeting, tickets were handed out for voting for the nominees of VUA Award of Excellence. The nominees were:

University of Agriculture in Kraków

Szent Istvan University in Godollo

RSAU-MTAA named after K.A. Timiryazev, Moscow

Louisiana State University

The representatives of member universities voted for the most active university to be awarded VUA Award of Excellence. The winner was Louisiana State University, USA. Prof. John Russian from Louisiana State University accepted the Award from VUA President Peter Bielik and Rector Galina Zolina.

7. VUA General meeting

The new members – Belgorod State Agrarian University, Kursk State Agricultural Academy, Louisiana State University – are greeted. The new meeting place for the next year is to be discussed.

Rector Ladislav Havel (Mendel University in Brno) opted for hosting the General meeting in 2018

Rector of Alexander Turianskiy (Belgorod SAU), on behalf of the university, expressed their desire to host the respected audience at their University and would like to be included in the list of candidates willing to host the GM VUA 2018

8. VUA Financial report

Financial report (money from membership fees) was explained by Mgr. Valach.

Mgr. Valach initiated a discussion before the approval of the financial report.

Voting for the report. The report accepted unanimously.

Introduction of VUA activities for the period 2017-2018

Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development (by Prof. Horská)

4th VUA Youth Scientific session

Faculty of Economics and Management, SUAN with representatives of the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture.

9. Promoting VUA

On behalf of VUA Executive Committee, Mgr Valach encouraged the members to promote VUA as much as possible for enhancing international cooperation

10. Proposal of the preliminary use of VUA budget

Activity/Cost Item	Amount in EUR
Visegrad Journal VJBSD – De Groyter	1440
Visegrad Journal VJBSD editing and paper version	1200
Godollo conference	600
Summer school	1000
VUA supports IVF projects	1000
VUA General Meeting	3000
Activities in total	8240
Promotion	250
VUA Secretariat	500
Total	8990

Voting for proposal of the activities. The VUA activities for the period 2017-2018 were approved unanimously.

Presentation of Agrimba ICA

Prof. Wilhelmus Johannes Maria Heijman (Wageningen University)

A network for academic inputs for low cost MBA programmes in Warsaw, Zagreb, Prague, Debrecen, Kiev, Nitra, Belgrade, Kazan, Belgorod, Ulaan-Baatar, Stavropol and Tomsk. The network partners with GCHERA.

President: Peter Bielik, Secretary General: Wilhelmus Heimann

Annual General Board meetings of MBA students. The network has part-time MBA programme, for post-experience young managers in agribusiness and commerce, life-long learning. 7 modules, including economics, management, marketing, agribusiness, etc. The programme is accredited by national accreditation authorities. Fee is lowest possible (4000-5000 Euro for the whole course).

ICA has its own biennial congress.

Short notice

Ihlet Lifewater Concept

By Mgr Vladislav Valah

Ihlet Lifewater Concept is an environmental initiative for the countries in the river basins of the Danube and the Tisza. In November 2017, a meeting in London to protect river basins of the Danube will be held. 2 or 3 members can participate in the meeting in London and give a start to this cooperation.

Online welcome from Prof. M. Zasada (SGGW)

Prof. Zasad greeted the participants of VUA General Meeting in Moscow and encouraged contributions to the journal.

11. *Introduction of new members*

The following universities applied for becoming full VUA members:

University of Eszterhazy Karoly, Hungary

Address: Eger, Eszterházy tér 1, 3300 Hungary

Rector: Dr. Kalman Liptai

Date of foundation: 1774

Presented by Prof. Zoltan Bujdoso

Mission: The university is proud of its past: due to the efforts of Bishop Károly Eszterházy, one of the oldest facilities in Hungary serving higher educational purposes was established in Eger in the second half of 18th century. Nowadays they provide intensive research opportunities, talent management and quality education for future professionals in a friendly atmosphere and unique cultural environment.

Prof. Bujdoso presented the university, 5 faculties, the old one being the one of Agriculture and Science, the 2nd – of Economics. English international programs MBA, Tourism, etc. There are many scholarship opportunities for international students and scholars (Erasmus+ and 2 more).

University of Debrecen, Hungary

Address: Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, 4032 Hungary

Rector: Prof. Dr. Zoltán Szilvássy

Date of foundation: 1538

Presented by Prof. Isztvan Komlosi

Mission: The University of Debrecen, as a leading and prominent institution of Hungarian higher education and in line with the spirit of the Magna Charta of European Universities, is dedicated to developing and improving universal scholarship and Hungarian society by providing high-quality, versatile and interdisciplinary educational as well as research and development programs. Such a mission is pursued jointly by the faculty, staff, and students of the university committed to high quality and in cooperation with Hungarian and international partners. The University of Debrecen aims to provide service for Hungary and its citizens in line with its mission statement preserving its diversity, unity, and systematic activities on all levels of education ranging from pre-school to adult education. Besides providing services in education, research, healthcare and prevention activities, and agriculture the university is also committed to strengthening cooperation with society and the business sphere and to accomplish the third mission of higher education, the propagation of sports and culture. The main focus of the University of Debrecen's activities is directed at the health industry.

Debrecen is the largest city in the north of Hungary. The University of Debrecen is Hungary's oldest higher education institution, within the Top 500 universities of the world. In 2000, all universities in Debrecen were united as the University of Debrecen. 30000 students, 4000 international, 14 faculties. 45 training programmes fully in English (medicine, agriculture, engineering, IT, natural resources, etc.) 400 Erasmus+ partner institutions, 23 doctoral schools. Faculty of Agriculture, Food Science and Environmental management. Agriculture Science and Animal Science in English (M.Sc.), B.Sc. courses taught in English.

Kyiv Cooperative Institute of Business and Law

Address: 18 Lomonosov str., Kyiv, 03022 Ukraine

Rector: Tetiana Kaminska

Date of foundation: 1920

Mission: The mission of the institute - is to contribute to society through research, generation of new knowledge and its dissemination in terms of the innovation ecosystem, preparation on this basis of competitive professionals and creative individuals.

It is also important to help young people in defining the goal of their lives, taking into account their abilities, social and personal opportunities; in choosing priorities in life in a world which is rapidly changing in terms of innovation landscape.

Presented by Mgr Vladislav Valach

Master, Bachelor and Ph.D. degree in auditing and economics. Cooperation with some European countries, Erasmus+

Discussion and approval of the new members by the General Meeting

Voting for the new membership (by simple majority)

Eszterhasy Karoly University - YES

Debrecen University – YES

Kiev University of Business and Law – YES

All universities applying for VUA membership have been accepted by unanimous consent.

12. *Membership cancellation*

Czestochowa University of Technology (Poland) - membership cancelled as of today

University of Novi Sad (Serbia) - membership cancelled as of today

13. Awards Ceremony – VUA Award of Excellence

VUA Award of Excellence was awarded to Louisiana State University, USA, based on the voting of GM. The Award was presented by Prof. Peter Bielik, Dr. Galina Zolina, Rector of RSAU-MTAA to Prof. John Russin LSU Vice-Chancellor.

14. *Presentations of invited speakers*

Moderator: Prof. Evgeniy Koshkin

Invited talk: **Climate changes, Food Embargo and their impact on Agriculture in Russia and Europe**

Prof. Sergey Kiselev, Lomonosov Moscow State University

Questions and comments:

1. Prof. E. Koshkin – import of cut flowers from the Netherlands. There are other markets for cut flowers, most flowers come from Columbia and other countries in South America. Wine from Europe (mostly from France and Italy) was not banned because of the fiscal issues (excise tax).
2. Prof. W. Heimann (Wageningen University) – Dutch growers grow their flowers commercially in America and Africa.
3. Norway salmon was banned but we get salmon from Chile (Santa Bremor) and Faroe Islands. Cultivated fish in the Russian Far East.

4. Prof. E. Koshkin – Increasing food production in Russia but what about the quality? The quality is better and better. Instead of Italian or Dutch cheese, I buy Swiss cheese. It increases the quality of cheese produced by Russian farmers.
5. Prof. V. Koshelev (RSAU-MTAA) – Russia’s food self-sufficiency. There is a trend that ordinary people produce their own food at the suburban houses (carrots, cucumbers, etc).

Invited talk: **Trangenic crop plants. Are there any potential risks related to GMA?**

Dr. Alexander Golikov

Questions

1. Prof. S. Kiselev. You said you don’t care about GMOs but could you tell us what particular GMO crops (which have undergone modern technologies) you would recommend? Hazards and potential benefits. All their material should be assessed – risk assessment and risk management should not be mixed up. My personal preference – abiotic stresses (GMO are resistant to soil salinity, e.g.) and of course, how to produce pest- and pathogen-resistant plants. Traditional methods are not enough to deal with this problem.

Invited talk: **Syngenta experience in Russia and CIS countries – public-private partnership in agrarian education**

Dr. Sergey Groshev, “Syngenta” project director

Questions/comments: none

Closing remarks

Mgr Vladislav Valach as VUA General Secretary appreciated the involvement of all participating members of VUA General Meeting. He offered thanks to the invited speakers and VUA members. VUA President Peter Bielik expressed his belief in the great success of implementation of all activities planned for the future.

Prof. Isztvan Komlosi (University of Debrecen) asked to be included in the list of candidates for hosting VUA General Meeting 2018. It was decided that the 2018 GM will be hosted by the University of Debrecen.

