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THE COMPARISON ANALYSIS IN THE OPERATION OF LIAISON OFFICES IN EU COUNTRIES AND THE BELARUSIAN COUNTRIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF TEMPUS PROJECT UNITE

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ABSTRACT

Liaison Offices of the Universities, nowadays are extremely important for the interaction between enterprises and educational institutions; The industry modernization sets new challenges for higher education. Among the priorities for higher education are: creation of new product ranges of textiles, flexibility in production procedures, customisation, and new marketing methods. Educational institutions and industrial enterprises cooperate in the following areas:

- *conducting of joint research and development (R&D);*
- *conducting of industrial internship and thesis projects;*
- *specialists of the enterprises improvement qualification;*
- *development of material and technical basis of the university;*
- *career-guidance work.*

The UNITE project (1-6) is a Tempus project that is established between 12 partners, 8 from EU countries and 4 from the Republic of Belarus. The focuses are to improve the actual system of the industrial interaction between enterprises and educational institutions; to define the degree of compliance of training programs to requirements of modern manufacture; to define the compliance of theoretical and practical experience of graduates to the requirements of labour market; and to assess the role of interaction of educational institutions and the enterprises in the formation of young professional competences.

The project has managed to improve some existing structures and to establish new working methods in order to get a quick response system in collaboration and better results.

The paper presents a comparative analysis in these services and the connection with the industry, in combination with the needs of students, the market and the society in each country.

Key Words: *textile industry, European projects, education, Liaison Offices*

1. INTRODUCTION

The collaboration between higher education centres and universities and firms and businesses which offer entrepreneurship possibilities and consequently employability can be both a teaching effort and the organized transfer of experience and reflection.

Textile in Europe is a significant sector of the European manufacturing industry. According to the latest data available [1], in 2006 there were 220.000 companies employing 2.5 million people and generated a turnover of €190 billion. The textile and clothing sector accounts about the 3% of total manufacturing value added in Europe, so we realize that it is a crucial part of the economy.

Textile production in Belarus is one of the largest one among Eastern Europe states and one of the largest in Europe as they have a highly skilled workforce: the sector provides 28% of the country's gross domestic product [2]. Textile industry in Belarus is in the process of large-scale modernisation although the fact that this sector has already implemented modern manufacturing methods. The on-going modernisation of the industry sets new challenge for higher education institutes which they should satisfy the market needs for new directions. In the frame of UNITE project it is proposed a scheme of partnership between Universities and enterprises in the textile sector, in order to support this on-going process of the modernisation of Belarusian textile sector.

The wider objective of the project is to build capacity of textile High Education Institutions in Belarus, for a permanent modernisation process, connecting Higher Education Institutions with textile Industry.

Therefore, aiming to achieve the following targets:

- conducting of joint research and development (Research & Development);
- conducting of industrial internship and thesis projects;
- specialists of the enterprises improvement qualification;
- development of material and technical basis of the university;
- career-guidance work.
-

In this paper we will compare the operations between the Liaison Offices in the involved countries in the frame of UNITE Project and their involvement in the Industry.

The involved countries of UNITE Project, which is funding by European Agency by 90% under the umbrella of Tempus Program, are: Greece - Portugal - Spain - Brussels - Belarus - Lithuania. The participants of the Project are universities with direction in Textile sector and companies with direction in Textile sector and quality assurance in education also.

A brief description of the involved parties, in which, we have collect the relatives' data:

- Piraeus University of Applied Sciences, Department of Textile Engineering. Piraeus University of Applied Sciences (PUAS) is an independent and self-governed Institute of higher education. The degrees offered are recognized by the Greek state and EU and are fully evaluated. The studies in the Departments of Piraeus University of Applied Sciences (Technological Education Institute of Piraeus) for the first level degrees are lasting four years typically and are equivalent to 240 ECTS, according to the Bologna Process Guidelines. After graduation, the new scientists may continue their studies in the second level (MSc) programs that last one to two years weighted 90-120 ECTS. Then, a third level course is possible for PhD studies in collaboration with several Universities in Greece or in European region. Nine (9) Departments exist in Piraeus University of Applied Sciences (former name: Technological Education Institute of Piraeus), grouped in two schools: Engineering School and School of Business and Economics. Department of Textiles is the only one in Greece and provides education and research for the Greek textile and Apparel sector International activities and is a member of International Textile Academia, AUTEX (Association of Universities of Textiles) and IAF(International Apparel Federation)
- University of Ghent, Department of Textiles (UGent). The department offers education at national and international level, is involved or coordinating several national, European and international research projects and renders technical and scientific services to the textile industry. There has always been a strong link with local industries but with a view

on the future. For instance, research on cotton nowadays focuses on genetic improvement, carpet research has evolved into artificial turf. More than 80% of funds are acquired through industry. Two education programs are offered, both targeting specific engineering profiles: material science (basic material technologies with emphasis on textiles) and a European master in textile engineering (targeting the international scene). Industry representatives are member of the education board responsible for the organization of these master programs. The department was granted in 1997 an accreditation according to EN-45001 (General criteria for the operation of testing laboratories), which changed in an ISO-17025 accreditation later on. The research activities are evolving more and more into fundamental research having a clear multidisciplinary character and introducing several new technologies.

- University of Beira Interior, Sciences Faculty, Textile Science and Technology Department (UBI) which is a public university of Portugal. In order to supply its own needs and those of the local community itself, the university has also five centers: the Teaching and Learning Resources Centre (CREA); the Centre for Patrimonial Studies and Recovery (CEPP); the Computer Centre (CI); the Optics Centre (CO) and the Centre of Studies for Regional Development (CEDR) which establishes the interface between the university and the community providing consulting services to local institutions in the areas of regional development.
- Kaunas University of Technology, Faculty of Design and Technology, Department of Textile Technology (KTU). Kaunas University of Technology has significant impact on the development of the region and the State, sets a leadership standard for other institutions, accommodates best laboratories in Lithuania and undertakes world-class research, according to international and Lithuanian experts.
- Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV): Universitat Politecnica de Valencia is a public higher education institution that offers modern degrees, according to the Bologna Process, as well as official postgraduate programmes that are subject to demanding educational quality control systems. The main scientific and technological domains are information and communication technologies, electric, electronic, mechanical and chemical engineering, civil engineering, architecture, food and agricultural technologies, business sciences and fine arts. UPV has three campus sites with a total of over 36187 students, 2843 members of teaching and research staff, and 2396 administrative and services staff. UPV has repeatedly ranked among the top 5 European Universities in terms of incoming and outgoing students under the Erasmus Programme. UPV has broad experience in the management of European projects and takes part in different actions, both as a coordinator and as a Partner.
- CITEVE is the Technological Centre for the Portuguese Textile and Clothing Industry, created in 1989. As a private nonprofit organization, it has 500 associated companies and more than 2000 customers. CITEVE's main activities are technology transfer, laboratorial analysis, IPR information, training, technical and vocational secondary education, certification & standardization activities and R&D activities at national and European level.
- AITEX, is a non-profit association in Spain established in 1985, composed by textile and related companies, whose main objective is to improve the textile companies' competitiveness, promoting modernization activities, new technologies introduction and improvement of the quality. AITEX acts on behalf of the textile and clothing industries in Spain and overseas, having a strong industrial representation.

- IDEC is a training consulting company located in Piraeus, Greece. Its activities consist of training, management consulting, quality assurance, evaluation and development of Information Communication Technologies solutions for both private and public sector. IDEC has experience developing and delivering training programs for vocational and adult training, using traditional teaching methods as well as innovative teaching methods and tools, using modern ICT technologies. IDEC has a long term consulting experience in the textile and apparel sector, with affiliates in the major companies, enterprises associations in Greece and research institutes in Greece.
- Vitebsk State Technological University is an entire academic-scientific-production complex, which trains higher education specialists for light industry and other branches of economy, prepares highly qualified scientific personnel, provides qualification improvement and employees retraining on different spheres, implements fundamental and applied scientific research on broad aspects, manufactures light industry products, develops international co-operation with higher educational establishments and enterprises.
- Mogilev State University of Food-Stuff in an entire academic-scientific-production complex, which trains higher education specialists for food processing, chemical and light industry, prepares highly qualified scientific personnel, provides qualification improvement and employees retraining on different spheres, implements fundamental and applied scientific research on broad aspects, manufactures light industry products, develops international co-operation with higher educational establishments and enterprises.
- The Belarus State Economic University is the leading university in the field of education in economics and management, finance and banking, accounting and statistics, commerce, international economic relations, economic policies, business communications techniques, marketing, logistics, economic law, economics and management of tourism, economics of labor and nature use, advertising activities, price formations, and manufactured merchandise expertise. BSEU constitute the national system of higher economic education in Belarus. BSEU has a well-developed infrastructure of a training and scholarly complex, including Institutes and Centers of economic researches and staff retraining.
- The Belarusian State Concern for Production (Bellegprom). The Concern's mission is to maintain the sustainable development of light industry and to create the leading brands of domestic goods of light industry and to promote them on domestic and foreign market as the Textile sector Concern will represent the Belarusian textile companies, will act as a mediator between the project and the companies and actively involve companies in the project realization.

There have been completed many activities, during the first year of the project's implementation, such as:

- Development of UNITE Council (University and Industry for textile sector in Belarus), which is the bridge between the Industry and the Higher Education Institutions in order to facilitate dialogue between these parties in order to offer a curriculum which satisfies the market needs but also the students and professors educational targets.
- Reports for "Good practices in EU countries", "Needs analysis survey", and "exploitation strategies". These reports are functioned as Guidance for the Belarus partners in order to be adopted to their system.

- Establishment of Liaison Offices in Belarusian Universities if there is no already one according to the European Liaison Offices.
- Training of the Liaison Offices staff of Belarusian Universities according to the European standards.
- Training of trainers of Belarusian Universities.
- Publication of relatives articles in research magazines, textile magazines and web-sites
- Creation of project webpage and sustainability of the connection between Industry and Higher Education Institutions.

In the present paper they will be derived the data from the conclusions of the following studies:

- Cooperation between University and Industry - Good practices in European countries.
- Needs analysis for liaison services in Belarus.

The above data will be correlated with the services, which are already provided by the Liaison Offices in Belarus in order to evaluate the degree of fulfilment of the desired outcomes.

2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIAISON OFFICES' PROVIDED SERVICES-EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

The main need nowadays for higher education graduates and postgraduates in Europe is to make a career in the market or in the research area and this fact has become one of the first priorities both for universities and for enterprises. An effective and successful step-by-step socialization of higher education graduates - future workers or entrepreneurs - is a substantial goal of educational systems all over Europe through internationalization[5] (common strategy, teaching & curriculum, for all Higher Education Institutions, as the market is common for all). The Knowledge Society based on Education, and eminently on higher education, is essential for the thinking human capital.

Our twenty-first-century Knowledge Society is witnessing that the human capital is progressively increasing in importance. This increase has to be understood as something that has to be taken care of. If nothing is done towards helping these new graduates, they will go to work out of Europe. Therefore all the university investments in investigation and graduates training will be implemented in other non-European countries, which is what it is happening now.

The collaboration between higher education institutions and firms and businesses which offer entrepreneurship possibilities and consequently employability can be both a teaching effort and the organized transfer of experience and reflection. Due to the fact that entrepreneurship is not taught ex cathedra, it is required to create the necessary structures and make these operate so that the aforementioned principles will be achieved. The creation, operation and further development of Liaison Offices (the necessary structures just mentioned) is crucial for the accomplishment of many goals from Higher Education Centres and Universities to further formation. For a resounding success, Liaison Offices play a vital part by linking the University with society and market through their activities and "the good practice" they implement.

In the frame of the present project was conducted a study for the presentation of good practices used at the Liaison Offices of the involved European Universities. It follows a brief presentation of these practices per university.

A few figures for the involved Universities and their performance as Higher Education Institutes (those data refers to 2013 -2014 year):

	PUAS	GENT	UBI	KTU	UPV
SCHOOLS AND FACULTIES	2	11	5	9	13
DEPARTMENTS	9	120	5	10	42
INTEGRATED DEGREES	25	11	29	64	35
MASTER DEGREES	17	136	40	69	59
DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES	Not yet	5	25	17	30
UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER'S STUDENTS	25.000	41.000	7.200	<10.000	36.187
DOCTORAL STUDENTS					1.751
TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF	460	2.959	600	No data at the moment	2.843
ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES STAFF	210	2.379	270	<1.000	2.396

We should note that PUAS, as all the Technological Institute in Greece, for the moment has no doctoral programs, according to the education law as it is for Applied Sciences University, a fact that we hope to change in this year.

A few words for the Liaison Offices in the relatives' universities and their operations:

- At PUAS the Research & Development activities are conducted in the frame of research programs, which are funded by the state budget through the Ministry of Education and European funds. Additional funding is provided by National and European Framework research projects (RTD), through other ministries and third bodies that receive services provided by the Higher Educational Institutions. The Liaison Office in PUAS provides support in terms of information, advisory services, signed agreements and administration for the generation of activities and scientific and technical collaboration between companies and the university. A data base is run with all the firms and business offers in order to keep informed the students daily by the webpage of the Liaison Office.
- UGent - There is one centre inside the university is headed by a business development manager, who can act as a direct point of contact for industrial partnerships, research services, collaborative research, or IP licensing. Ghent University (UGent) has created a number of Business Development Centres that group complementary research departments by application area or domain of expertise. These centres together constitute the Industrial Liaison Network. Each centre is responsible for technology transfer within its area of competence. A centre is headed by a business development manager who can act as the direct point of contact for industrial partnerships, for research services, collaborative research, or IP licensing.
- UPV: The Support Centre for Innovation, Research and Technology Transfer (CTT) is the UPV research and technology transfer knowledge office. The functions of this liaison office department is to enforce the cooperation between UPV research departments and the sector firms focused on scientific and technical cooperation. Their mission is to provide support in terms of information, advisory services, signed agreements and administration for the generation of activities and scientific and technical collaboration at UPV. The Integrated Employment Service acts as a connection office between UPV students and firms or businesses to do an internship. A data base is run with all the firms and business offers. Therefore, UPV students can locate and check all the necessary information about internship proposals at any time of the year. Technical support is also provided which involves the drafting of an expert study by the University, based on already-existing knowledge, aimed to provide solutions to your company's

demands and technical problems. The Guidance & Training programme aims to facilitate adequate employability of UPV graduates into the workforce by developing career guidance activities for employment and self-employment.

- UBI: The Technology Transfer Office supports research efforts of the University and enables the dissemination and implementation of UBI technologies to industry, with the purpose of developing new products and services beneficial to society. University is setting up data bases of job and internships offers which are available at the Job Portal. The Internationalization and Career Prospects Office provides to the community a set of tools for promoting the mobility and a more effective occupational integration into working life.
- KTU: Information about job offers is gathered by academic staff of our university, which has good and long-term relations with Lithuanian textile companies and research centres. Majority of engineering and management staff of textile industrial companies are graduates of textile engineering studies of our university. Doctoral students have possibility for internships supported by Lithuanian Research Council. Other levels of students do not have possibility for internships supporting. Research Council of Lithuania has been founded on 1991 to fulfil the role of an expert institution tackling challenges of science development on a national level. The Council is a counsellor of the Lithuanian Parliament and the Government on research and researchers training issues, implements programme based competitive funding of research, administers most important Lithuanian science development programmes, evaluates research performance and represents Lithuanian science in various European institutions and other international organisation.

So, from our research [3] we have the following data which summarises all the Liaison Offices services offered by the University partners

Operations	PUAS	UGENT	UBI	KTU	UPV
CENTER FOR INNOVATION RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	√	√	√	√	√
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	√	√	√	√	√
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES OFFICE	√	√	√	√	√
ENTERPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT OF ENTERPRISES UNIT	√	√	√	√	√
LIFELONG LEARNING	√	√	√	√	√
BUSINESS CHAIR PROGRAMME (SEE EXPLANASION)	√	√	√	√	√
COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT	√	√	√	√	√
NETWORKS OPERATIONS	√	√	√	√	√

As "BUSINESS CHAIR PROGRAMME", we mean the existing operation in universities, which encourage and increase the relationship between businesses and companies with the educational Institute. The Business Chair Programme offers collaboration with firms and

institutions for the development of specific courses and also facilitates technical and research assistance. The main activities for this operation are:

- Training: internships, scholarships, awards, conferences, seminars, courses, firms training programmes, etc.
- Research: implementation of research projects in firms, development of research fields of interest to both the University and company or institution, doctoral thesis, etc.
- Technology transfer and dissemination: assistance in publication of remarkable and breakthrough topics, technical and technological meetings, technology transfer to firms, etc.

So far, we realize that the operations of Liaison Offices in European countries are similar and their purpose is to equip students with the new methods applied in the labour market in order to have connect with the market and finally make it easier for them to go into the workforce with many skills and knowledge, according to the society needs.

3. INVOLVED TO THE PROJECT BELARUSIAN UNIVERSITIES

In our Project in the frame of Tempus Funding European Program we examine the operation of the Liaison Offices in the Belarusian countries. As we know these countries have specific economic and political characteristics, since a dominant role in all actions is the rule rather than the private initiative and autonomous of each Higher Educational institution.

So, the project aim is to improve the services provided from the Liaison Offices at Belarus and to implement relevant European operations to all involved universities in order to be provided to all students' similar services and opportunities to develop, as far as this is possible within each country, regarding to the specificity of specific financial or geopolitical data.

During the first year of the project implementation there has been conducted an activity for training of the Liaison Offices staff of the Belarusian Universities by the staff of the liaison office as some trainers of PUAS. After the conduction of this course of seminars it followed a reconstruction of the list of the provided services at these universities.

The involved Universities of Belarus, as we mentioned before, are:

1. VSTU: Vitebsk State Technological University, Department of Natural and Man-made Fibre
2. BSEU: Belarus State Economic University, School of Commerce Economics and Management
3. MGU: Mogilev State University of Food-Stuff, Chemical Technology of Macromolecular Co

It follows the list of the improved services of the Liaison Offices at Belarus.

- **Provided services of the liaison office of VSTU**
 - Registration of enterprise specialists payments for the practice management
 - Registration of contracts with the enterprises for the organization of all types of students practice
 - Registration of contracts with other higher educational institutions on granting of places in hostels for the period of university students' practice
 - Calculations and billings executing with organizations for practice coordination of employees of enterprises and organizations.
 - Conclusion of contracts with companies for scientific research
 - Development of scientific and technical documents at the request of enterprises
 - Information services to enterprises:
 - About manufacturers of goods, products and services;
 - About new technologies;

- About scientific and technological developments;
- About investment projects in various stages of implementation.
- Selection of business partners in the Republic of Belarus and abroad.
- Organization of scientific-technical and scientific-methodical conferences
- Organization of participation of students, teachers in competitions, conferences, symposia, and exhibitions.
- Comparative evaluation of innovative development of the university scientists and similar foreign developments
- Testing of products samples for certification and research at the request of enterprises and organizations, teachers.
- Testing of new textile and light industry products developed by the units of VSTU
- Development of technical regulations for textile and light industry products
- A study of companies demand in educational programs for career enhancement to improve staff's skills and retraining.
- Conclusion of contracts for professional retraining and career enhancement
- Conclusion of contracts for professional retraining and career enhancement
- Calculations executing with companies for educational services providing (the invoices, acceptance certificates and acts of reconciliation with the companies)
- Maintaining a database of enterprises-customers of educational services to improve the skills and retraining
- Counseling services on the enterprise implementation of knowledge gained during the training in practice.
- Faculty of Qualifications Improvement and Staff Retraining
- Interaction with companies acting as basis of internships for students training (conclusion of the internship agreements, the coordination of internship programs, the analysis of the report on the passage of the internship).
- Study of the degree of satisfaction with the quality of educational services for an additional adult education on the basis of questionnaires and Welcome Books of students of refreshment courses about the level and quality of education received.
- Development and coordination with client enterprises curricula and programs to further adult education
- Implementation of correspondence with clients-enterprises on advertising and organization of new educational programs.
- A study of the demands of the country, region, branch in specialists, prepared by the University, and correspondence with companies on these issues
- Making long-term bilateral agreements on training with companies, organizations and institutions, listing and preparation of the necessary information about them
- Registration and preparation of invoices for training
- Counseling on the conclusion of agreements on training, both paid and free of charge
- Counseling on the conclusion of agreements on the target training
- Preparation of the list of places of assignment in accordance with the signed agreements and received applications
- Building the database of places for graduates employment, based on monitoring of the labor market and the requested staff
- Forming of applications for reassignment and employment of university graduates, being unemployed for various reasons
- Exploring the views of businesses on the graduates of the University and its influence on the distribution, preparation of proposals for improving the training of specialists
- Develop strategies for promotional activities in the media
- Students assignment to the enterprises after graduation

- Promotional brochures
- Collections of scientific articles and abstracts
- Samples of scientific developments
- Collections of scientific articles and abstracts
- Blanks of contracts for fee-paying education
- Blanks documentation on the payment for training
- Questionnaire to assess the satisfaction of enterprises and graduates
- Questionnaire to assess satisfaction with the course participants for additional adult education
- Web site with information on the services provided by additional adult education
- Training materials for additional adult education

○ **Provided services of the liaison office of MGU**

The following work has been done in departments that carry out cooperation with companies in various fields:

- 1) On the personnel department: marketing research of the enterprises requirements for young professionals conducted.
- 2) On the educational methodically department:
 - Carried out updating of standard documentation on the organization of passing of internship by part-time students;
 - Satisfaction's monitoring of the enterprises by young professionals' training and to analyze the information received organized.
- 3) On the department of chemical technology of high-molecular connections:
 - Meeting of university staff and enterprises for the purpose of coordination of research and development and technological works conducted;
 - The stand displaying research and development of department and results of activity of the enterprises, making and processing fibrous materials executed;
 - Standard tasks for increase of internships efficiency by part-time students at the enterprises making and processing fibrous materials developed;
 - Carried out some activities on development of subject of term and thesis projects and activities, connected with improvement, development and justification of existing and new technological decisions and types of production;
 - There were developed course syllabi for five e-learning courses: "Modern aspects of manufacturing fibres and yarn for special purposes", "Modern aspects of manufacturing fibres and yarns for textile purposes", "Theoretical aspects of chemical fiber, yarn and films spinning", "Modern aspects of manufacturing yarns and fabrics for technical purposes", "English for chemical engineering".
 - Carried out improvement of qualification of employees for the purpose of personnel training.

A Unit functioning under the University Council aimed at the coordinating cooperation of the University units with enterprises has been developed. Implementation strategy has been developed (a plan of dissemination and exploitation of the activities realized within the project as well as a plan for sustainability of the project results after the termination of the project have been worked out).

○ **Provided services of the liaison office of BSEU**

At Belarus State Economic University are provided studies within the I and II stage of higher education:

- Training in accordance with the curriculum;
- Additional training and counselling.

Relatively to the students internship there are the following activities:

- Development of programs for internships of various specialties;
- Selection of organizations for internship and concluding contracts with them;
- Selection of supervisors, drawing plots for individual tasks; - Issuing of diaries, referrals to internships, individual tasks;
- The assignment of students to their internship places ;
- Payment of per diem and travel expenses to students studying at the expense of the budget during the internship passage outside of Minsk;
- Paying for internship of pre-diploma students to enterprise employees and managers;
- Organization of internship summarizing

Regarding the graduates of the University:

- Providing graduates educated at the expense of the national budget with the first work place
- Post-graduate education (post-graduate and doctoral)
- Post-graduate studies, doctoral studies;
- Reception of candidate examinations and tests

About the Professional Development, there are:

- Training of managers and specialists, as well as departmental groups upon the request of enterprises (14-16 directions annually).
- Study full-time (day, evening) curriculum volume 36-80 hours;
- Short period (1-2 days) seminars on stock trading, cost management of an organization, product promotion using Internet technologies, current accounting issues and changes in legislation, etc.;
- Workshops, training on the introduction of modern management systems, risk management, and others. (Upon the request of enterprises);
- Teaching entrepreneurial skills in "Accounting and 1C: Accounting for Entrepreneurs" (primary training) for those without accounting (economic) education.
- Retraining of executives and specialists with higher education.

4. Results

If we compare the operation in the European countries Liaison Offices and the Belarusian, after the implementation of our Project we will realize that they offer similar operations with similar procedures, for example: mobility programs, training courses, workshops and conferences or organizing career days in order to enhance the connection between industry and the education area: students, professors, etc. although not meeting the same political or economic conditions.

From the data that we have presented we realize that the success of Liaison Offices is the effect of four factors: (a) the relevance and the quality of the provided services, (b) qualifications of staff, (c) strong links with stakeholders in Research & Development, (d) promotion of the services among the target groups. It is obvious that all these factors had been taken in mind, when designing the restructured list of services and it constitutes a good basis for the maximization of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Liaison Offices in Research & Development and employment.

The results of the study for the improvement of the services provided from the Liaison Offices at Belarus are combined with the results of the rest activities of UNITE project so the efficiency of the whole system will be increased until the finalization of the project.

5. Discussion

"No single university is good at everything", said Professor Dr. Frans van Vught, U-Multirank's joint project leader [6], but nowadays the issue for all Universities and their

services to the students and to the society demands a quality to their services and to their learning outcomes in order to be competitive and international as we are a global market.

Nowadays it is fundamental to be prepared to operate in a worldwide market which demands a high level of specialization. So, the Liaison Office could be the key department which will play a very crucial role in this process by serving as a knowledge platform, which supports the transformation of new resources into new business opportunities and ends up conquering some highly valued niche markets. In today's particular harsh environment, companies are driven by a rapidly changing market demand in combination with the new educational methods as e-learning, e-classes, the implementation of new tools in transportation of knowledge as simulators for laboratories, etc. To face up this situation, Universities and Industry are obligated to a constant update and innovation. The generation of partnerships between high education institutions and the market or Industry are the only way to enhance company's competitiveness and to offer to the market new equipped scientists.

It is proven that in a more dynamic environment the preponderant factors for the company's success is precisely the ability to renovate, developing new skills, and integrating/reconfiguring internal resources. All these key issues were tackled by the case studies provided by the contributors.

The key factor to solve most of the particular problems inside the companies or to develop new innovative solutions is the qualifying and training of their personnel.

Despite of being a complex process, the described examples of relationship between companies-university demonstrated some possible strategies to overcome the existing weaknesses of the textile and apparel industry, particularly, from the more conventional and with intensive manpower textile industry.

Globally and when considered in their particular field of intervention, the presented examples can be seen as guidelines for the improvement of the Belarus textile and apparel industry. They objectify a series of tools to overcome some eventual lacks such as:

- Outdated strategies highly influenced by mass production principles and by a short term vision;
- Technological fragilities in the development of new products or processes;
- Difficulties to deal and absorb emergent know-how;
- Negligence with the up-to-date training and qualification of their personnel;
- Generalized lack of cooperation: internal or external; horizontal or vertical.

Obviously, the reported models have to be adjusted in conformity with the Belarus socio-economic reality. Notwithstanding, they are to be seen as good practices, already developed and tested in other countries which, contribute to strengthen their local textile and apparel mills at different levels, namely:

- Strategic use of technology and information so as to attain competitive advantages;
- Use of innovative human resources policies to achieve the employees best qualification;
- Better understanding of the relation suppliers-companies;
- A constant search to improve quality in all their dimensions;
- Some indications that might lead to cost reductions;
- Development of proprietary knowledge and expertise in their fields of operation;
- Minimize investment risks grounded upon the direct involvement of workers;
- Possibility to have in their ranks top skilled professionals;
- Generation of spin-offs and start-up companies;
- Development of patented products or processes.

Based upon the above considerations a consolidated Companies-University partnership has all the potential to trigger and promote some cultural, organizational and operational

changes that encouraged by information and knowledge exchange, contribute decisively to the competitiveness and survival of companies in a globalized, market.

6. Conclusion

In the frame of the UNITE project it is aiming the improvement of the current forms of cooperation between HEIs and enterprises and the enhancement of the cooperation and increase its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency for a permanent modernisation process. During the first year of implementation there have been completed many activities, but especially with the conduction of the following activities:

- Development of UNITE Council (University and Industry for textile sector in Belarus)
- Reports for “Good practices in EU countries”, “Needs analysis survey”, “exploitation strategies”
- Establishment of Liaison Offices in Belarusian Universities
- Training of Liaison Offices staff of Belarusian Universities according to the European standards
- Training of trainers of Belarusian Universities

As a conclusion of this paper, we declare that from our deliverable reports through the UNITE Project we eliminate the gap among the Higher Education Institutions in European countries and Belarusian countries and their market through the previous activities, although the fact that the Liaison Offices in Universities are operated and functioned in different political environments, which demand different ways of solving (large public sector which controls everything, in comparison with small private initiative).

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