

# Successful partnership in education, research and practice between German and Czech universities

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**abstract** : Related to the old principle for an excellent university education postulated by A.v Humboldt and extended by the fact, that the lessons, exercises etc., especially in later studies, should be closely related to practical, this can also be extended to the improvement of relationships between universities, as shown in the described collaboration between the West Bohemian University (WBU) of Pilsen (CZ) and the University of Applied Sciences of Regensburg (G). At the beginning, about 12 years ago, the partnership between the UAS and WBU was based only on the existing EU- programs SOCRATES, ERASMUS etc. and additional bilateral contract, and was not directed on special topics.

This collaboration has since worked normally, but on a relatively low level (only few students and an equivalent number of lecturers per semester).

The situation became closer about 9 years ago when the electrical engineering departments of both universities commenced a close partnership, related to relevant energy engineering problems. In addition to an increase in the number of students and staff on exchanges, a number of small engineering projects were carried out, for instance, EMI on overhead power lines, over-voltage problems in networks etc. Even a common book for teaching purposes, used in both universities, was commissioned. This new kind of collaboration was also helpful in breaking down old ideological and cultural barriers between both students and teaching staff. German students have obtained additional theoretical knowledge, based on the high level of theoretical tuition in Pilsen. Czech students used the excellent conditions and practical resources available in Regensburg. Both sides have learned and profited enormously from one another, linguistically as well as technically.

Necessary conditions for this process were common project interests. Nevertheless, the excellent human contacts, developed between the programming co-ordinators, have greatly helped.

Due to the improved relations, a university foundation was created, initiated by the regional enterprises of Regensburg. The main intention of this foundation is the increase the number of Czech exchange students coming to Regensburg, whereby the funding was obtained through foundation capital. Additionally, it was foreseen that students, if they wished, would have the possibility of obtaining practical placements in one of the foundation enterprises.

By such practices it was possible to also carry out higher level engineering projects, interesting to highly qualified students such as PhD- candidates.

Under optimum conditions it should be possible to utilise the results obtained for such a PhD- thesis. This new collaboration possibility has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students. On the other hand, this new opportunity also enables closer scientific collaboration, because the responsible member of staff, closely linked to the project, becomes a future supervisor for the PhD- thesis from the other university.

Finally, it should be remarked, that the described collaboration exists as an excellent example for successful partnership between, politically very sensitive, neighbouring regions.