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European Union Policy Concerning Organization of Lifelong Education

Educated citizens are the pledge of development of any modern society, important constituent of economic, social, moral and democratic evolution of the country. Education appears to be the inward countenance of a person, formed by means of moral and spiritual values. At the same time education proves to be the process of breeding, self-training, which influence greatly the mentioned person's inner world.

The most important factor is not the extent of knowledge, but combination of it with personal traits of character and ability to operate the knowledge independently. Education stands out as the tool to stand against the forces that "impersonalize" people.

Apprehension of this key aspect causes the movement for education development in general and lifelong education particularly. Access of people to education in the context of lifelong education is a fundamental aspect of the right of education; it enables them to take active part in political, cultural and scientific life [1].

Considering the information mentioned the interconnection between lifelong education and European Union policy becomes quite obvious. European summit (March 2000, Lisbon) became a crucial turn of European Union educational policy line of development. Its results confirm that Europe has entered the global informational epoch of knowledge. The conclusions of the summit state that successful transition to innovative society which is based on the principles of sufficient knowledge must be accompanied by the process of lifelong education. European Commission and EU member states announced lifelong education as the key part of European Employment Strategy being the all-round educational activity, carried out on regular basis with the purpose to improve knowledge, skills and professional competencies.

Recently Europe has become a "knowledge-based society". The result of it is in increase of interest towards information, knowledge and motivation for their regular renovation where skills necessary for it become crucial factor of development, competitiveness and effective functioning of labor market. And if full development of a person appears

an integral part of normal development of the society as a whole, it becomes obvious that there is no progress without the ability to participate actively in social processes and to adjust to the changes. This is another proof of the fact that only education in the widest understanding can facilitate successful result.

A number of European organizations run the processes of lifelong education. Most of them are international and non-commercial. Their main aims are:

- to promote the development of lifelong education;
- encourage and maintain co-operation in the sphere of lifelong education at European level;
- to carry out political influence on international authorities in order to make them conduct responsible educational policy based on the needs of EU member states' citizens;
- to assist European non-commercial associations in active co-operation and work on international level [2].

Great influence on the processes of lifelong education in Europe is made by Lifelong Learning Programme which main objectives are to support the development of quality lifelong education and help EU member states develop their own education and training systems. It includes several sub-programs, the ones worth our attention are:

- The Erasmus program, supporting exchanges of students in higher education, as well as cooperation between universities and colleges;
- The Leonardo da Vinci program, supporting actions in initial and continuing vocational education and training;
- The Grundtvig program, supporting actions in the field of adult education [3].

So, European Union policy concerning organization of lifelong education promotes strengthening of national systems of lifelong education as well as its development on international level, involving organizations and participants from all over the world.

List of Sources

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