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International Balkan and Near Eastern Social Sciences Conference *

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Conference Notes

International Balkan and Near Eastern Social Sciences Conference Series (IBANESS) Conference series are held in different Balkan Countries with hosting Universities in Balkan countries. The organization committee includes respected scientists from all over the world. International Balkan and Near Eastern Social Sciences Conference Series is held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria on March 12-13, 2016. The conference is hosted by University of Agribusiness and Rural Development-Plovdiv.

The main aim of the conference is to bring together scientists from Balkan countries in order to disseminate the knowledge and mutual understanding. The dissemination of knowledge is very important for new growth theory of economics. As such, the new growth theory emphasizes the knowledge and dissemination of knowledge as the key determinants of innovation and thus economic growth. Likewise, mutual understanding is important for international relations and relationship with neighbors.

Interaction among Balkan people is not a new issue. For example, after the World War I people in Balkan countries had to migrate from some parts to other parts. When the people from Balkan Countries migrate to Turkey, they couldn't bring their physical capital, but they brought their knowledge and experience, in other words they have brought their human capital. Scientific studies point that after they arrived, we have seen some developments in agriculture and in some industries like dairy products and tobacco industry in Turkey. In modern times, fairs and conference serves for the same end.

The conference brought together distinguished social and behavioral science researchers from all over the world. Participants found opportunities for presenting new research, exchanging information, and discussing current issues. Thus they shared their experience and knowledge with each other, in return the conference helped dissemination of knowledge and mutual understanding among participants. Conference dinner and city tour also created a warm environment among participants.

There were many fruitful sessions during the conference. One of the main topics centered during the conference was Education. One of the hot debates and discussions in Education topic was centered on New Bologna revised quality standards for higher education institutions. The revised quality standards for higher

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education institutions in the European higher education area (EHEA) adopted by the ministers of Bologna signatory countries in Yerevan on May, 2015 have opened up new challenges to university organization and management. Debates are focused primarily on standard 3, requiring from universities to introduce learning outcomes approach in defining their programmes and curricula, as well as methods of teaching and assessment. Patrica Georgieva on her presentation titled “Challenges in University Quality Management Posed by the New Bologna Standarts for Quality Assurance” considered some of the key factors influencing the university management and its ability to address the challenges typically associated with introducing the learning outcomes approach. She stressed the need for a well established quality framework, with clear links with the national qualifications framework in order for a university to be able to manage with the new standards successfully. Comparison between well developed quality and qualifications frameworks with less developed ones support the argumentation and lay the ground for identification of practical ways for university managers to introduce institutional change and innovation in response to the new quality assurance standards. During discussions, Higher Education Institutions in Turkey were also advised and urged for preparation for new standards in advance.

The other main topic centered during the conference was Agricultural Economics. From the topics “European practices to reduce work accidents in the agricultural sector” to “the role of cooperative organizations in the development of ecotourism” are discussed in detail. Women topic is also attracted interest of participants. Mehmet Çıtak presented the problems of women in working life while Oğuz Kaymakçı analyzed policies for increasing women’s employment in Turkey and Bilal Kargı analyzed the relationship between labor force participation rate and economic growth.

Cross-country studies are also presented during the conference. The relationship between foreign direct investment and employment, productivity effects of privatization, and tax policy efficiency and macroeconomic stabilization for the case of Balkan countries are presented by Nuri Baltacı, Rasim Yılmaz and Tanya Plamenova Todorova, respectively. Participants also shared their country’s experience in some issues. As such, Ekaterina Arabska presented Bulgarian experience in improving effectiveness of activities in public employment while Teoman Akpınar presented the legal position of university students working for part-time in Turkey. Nursel Toksoy presented determination of rural tourism potential of the Northern Gulf of Soros in Turkey while Zlatka Grigorova presented rural food tourism in Bulgaria.

Presented articles of the conference are published in a conference flash disk, proceeding book with ISBN number and on conference web site. Selected papers are also published in KSP journals and Balkan and Near Eastern Journal of Social Sciences which is the official journal of IBANESS Conference Series.



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