

THE PROFESSOR – TEACHER, RESEARCHER, BUT MOSTLY MENTOR OR...THE NEED FOR MODELS

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About nine years ago, I was writing about the teacher's visionary qualities that marked the entire evolution of the Department of Tourism and Geography within the BUES, from its founding (1990) to the present. Nearly 30 years since his name continues to mark us: Professor Radu Emilian².

Beyond presenting his impressive biography, it is worthwhile to bring to light his personality, which continues to inspire us and make us realize that we have so much to learn, so much to give, so much to accept.

As a graduate of the Faculty of Commerce, his entire career was dedicated to this field of activity. But as tourism and gastronomy were (and still are) components of commercial transactions, at a certain point in his career he chose (or was "assigned", as he confessed) this beautiful direction.

"I entered into the office of Dean professor Alexandru Puiu with my opinions and as a Lecturer of Marketing, and I exited his office carrying his opinions and as a Lecturer of Gastronomy and Tourism Management..."

This was in 1977, when the new study program was established: *The Economy of Gastronomy and Tourism Services*. Moreover, it is due to him - as to other emeritus professors of our department, Rodica Minciu, Gabriela Stănciulescu, Maria Ionică - the evolution of this study program, transformed into Tourism-Services in 1990. However, irrespective of the name of the study program under which the students were prepared in the field of tourism and the hospitality industry, the Department of Tourism and Geography (the former Department of Tourism-Services) increased harmoniously through the care of these four distinguished professors. In fact, 1990 was the beginning of a highly productive period in the educational, journalistic, tourism research field, because Professor Emilian slowly created a young, dynamic, cohesive collective.

Many of the specialty disciplines have been created by himself or suggested to his colleagues to be implemented in the curriculum. One of these disciplines is the *Hotel and Restaurant Management Simulation Game*, which has begun to repel many generations of students: from the 1980s to the present. If at first you seemed overwhelmed by the multitude of information, requirements, uncertainties - which actually simulated real life - by the end of the semester you would have realized how captivating it was, while afterwards, entering into practice, you would realize how useful and real it had been! Subsequently, other faculties or study programs have implemented such simulations, but for us, those who have studied tourism in the last decades or have collaborated with him in this course, *Hotel and Restaurant Management Simulation Game* remains one of the courses that marked us deeply.

Of course, we may mention other courses that in their time proved the visionary quality of Professor Emilian: *Human Resources Management*, *Tourism Operations Management*, Business Ethics, Operations Management in Business Services, Operational Management, *Organizational Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality Industry*, and many more besides. All these may still be founded today in the bachelor or master programs' curriculum.

The introduction of the one-year postgraduate study program in hospitality, followed by master programs such as *Business Administration in Tourism and Hospitality* or *Business in Tourism online program*, has been another major contribution of the Professor to the educational progress in the Higher Tourism Education. The programs were also successful due to the fact that specialists from the business field (former students of the tourism study programs ...) have accepted to share their experience. This model of collaboration is still valid today....

In order to increase the cooperation with the business field, he also encouraged the members of the department to organize training courses for various companies, to collaborate in consulting projects, or even to participate actively in all business events in the field of tourism. We can mention here the annual participation at the Romanian Tourism Fair (both editions, spring and autumn) of our Department, from 1999 until now, without interruption, which allowed us to keep in touch with the practical reality.

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² See the article "Radu Emilian – A Visionary Professor", in *Amfiteatru Economic*, Vol. XII, Nr. 27, 2010.

But the most important asset Professor Emilian left behind is the department's team. He has contributed to our professional development, including as a doctoral supervisor, but especially as a mentor. He also marked our evolution as humans, taught us to dedicate ourselves to the profession, to do everything with passion, not to give up, to put the student above all. The way we do today professionally, or think, or react, is under his positive influence.

All we can hope for is to become, at some point, models to follow for the young generation, as he was for each of us.

IN MEMORIAM



Prof. Radu Emilian, PhD.
1938-2019

Head of Tourism-Services Department 1991-2008
Bucharest University of Economic Studies
Teaching his entire life...and inspiring the others