

BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES THE FIRST 110 YEARS

Nicolae Lupu

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, nicolae.lupu@com.ase.ro

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The accelerated development of foreign trade, as well as domestic trade – encouraged by the end, after 1829, of the Ottoman monopoly on the foreign trade of the Danube Principalities, as well as the improvement of roads and the modernisation of the ports of Brăila, Galați, and Giurgiu – required the appearance of the first courses, classes, and later commercial schools (1864). At the same time, the establishment of chambers of commerce was regulated. The same course was followed by trade education “over the mountains” in Transylvania, with the mention that the first trade school was opened by the Saxons as early as 1833. In 1860 and 1864, in Iași and Bucharest, respectively, the first universities were created.

It is the merit of Dionisie Pop Marțian (1829-1865) – a political refugee from Transylvania, creator and organiser of the Romanian statistical apparatus in the time of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, initiator of the protectionist economic school – to have shown: “Government owes commerce a high school, that is, an academy or college of commerce...”

Remaining in a dormant state, the problem of the organisation of specialised higher education was reactivated at the beginning of the 20th century. The acute need for professionals determined the establishment, in 1912, of an ad hoc commission, which carried out its activity under the direct guidance of the Minister of Industry and Trade, Nicolae D. Xenopol (1848-1917), and with Ion Răducanu as its secretary, later rector. The law establishing the Academy of Higher Commercial and Industrial Studies – the Commercial Academy, as it was usually called – will be promulgated by King Carol I on April 6, 1913. The model is represented by similar institutions in the West; moreover, initially, most of the teachers are doctors with the title obtained abroad.

After 1913, the Academy's courses were divided into departments, commerce being the primary field of study. However, the precarious material conditions and the German occupation of Bucharest made the progress of the fragile “ship” extremely difficult. After the first rector, the mathematician Anton Davidoglu, the one who was at the “helm” in 1917-1918 was Eugen Ludwig (1866-1927), a chemist, delegated to hold the course Study of goods. Of the 698 students in 1913, the first declared graduates in 1918 numbered nine. In 1921, the doctorate was also instituted. The Palace of the Commercial Academy, today's Ion N. Angelescu building, named after the rector who founded it, the first professor of the history of commerce, was inaugurated in 1926. At the celebration of two decades of the Academy's existence, in 1933, the mural painting in the current Aula Magna, belonging to Cecilia Cuțescu Storck and dedicated to the history of Romanian trade, will be unveiled. For the educational process, from the establishment of the Commercial Academy until late, museums will represent a precious auxiliary with samples of goods.

In 1947, through a merger, the Academy of Commercial and Cooperative Sciences appeared, which, for the first time, was structured into two faculties: Commercial Sciences and Cooperative Sciences. However, the curtain of black clouds was gradually falling. A year later, the name of the institution becomes the Institute of Economic Sciences and Planning (ISEP). Nicolae Maxim (1899-1948), a chemist, and Gromoslav Mladenatz (1891-1958), the most important theoretician of Romanian cooperation, were among the rectors of that troubled period, all with short mandates, being appointed by delegation. Later, as they had become undesirable, both fell victims themselves by being removed. The martyrdom of Professor Nicolae Maxim is emblematic.

In 1948, through a process of so-called reform, the content of education was disconnected from the previous evolution, proceeding to politicisation and even to sovietisation – in an approach foreign to

the democratic tradition that had taken root. The first encouraging signs will be recorded only after a decade.

In 1951, by transferring the commercial section to the Faculty of Cooperation, for example, the Faculty of Commerce and Cooperation was established. 1951 was also the year of the hijacking of the destiny of more than 40,000 people from Banat and Mehedinți, deported to Bărăgan.

In 1967, the current name, the University of Economic Studies (ASE), was adopted.

1990 was the year of new hopes, bringing real prospects for relaunching – based on the foundations of real democracy and university autonomy, as well as free market economy – economic and business education.

Between 1995 and 2003, the educational offer also included in-depth studies, lasting one year, which will prove to be precursors to the master's cycle. Starting from 1998, distance education will be introduced, first in Bucharest, then, gradually, also at the level of territorial centers.

The new structure of higher education, in accordance with the “Bologna process”, with three cycles of bachelor's, master's and doctorate, lasting 3, 2 and 3 years, respectively, was adopted in 2005.

In 2013, the Bucharest University of Economic Studies crossed the border of the first century of operation. 2023 was, once again, an opportunity to take stock.

The day of the institution is April 6, commemorating the moment when King Carol I promulgated the founding law. Now, in 2023, after 110 years of operation, the events began on Monday, April 3, with the inauguration, after restoration, of the Ion Nanu-Muscel House, next to the palace in Romană Square in Bucharest, which will continue to house the museum institution, as well as an art gallery. Three exhibitions were also opened: of photo-documents about the buildings in Romană Square, of paintings (Horea Paștina and Cristian Dițoiu), as well as of “traditional costumes” from Romania (Virginia Mărăcine). Also on Monday, officials from the institution laid wreaths at the graves, from the Bellu cemetery, of some illustrious ancestors: Nicolae D. Xenopol, the founder of the institution; Stanislas Cihoski, the rector who initiated the construction of the palace in Romană Square; Virgil Madgearu and Nicolae Iorga, great teachers and people of the city, assassinated on November 27, 1940; Gheorghe Dolgu, rector in the 1970s, in a period of relative ideological “thaw”.

On Tuesday, in the Aula Magna, three volumes from the ASE History Collection, of the institution's publishing house, were launched. Bucharest University of Economic Studies. 110 years of continuous performance. Evocations, opinions, personal experiences, and testimonials of graduates include 90 accounts of former students of the institution's faculties, among those whose career is an obvious success. A second volume is represented by The Doctor Honoris Causa Laureates of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. 110 years of academic excellence, during which the portraits of 52 personalities, from the country and, above all, from abroad, are drawn, distinguished at the highest possible level of academic recognition. The editors of these two volumes are professors Nicolae Istudor and Dumitru Miron, the first being the rector in function of ASE, and the second, the president of the institution's university senate. The third volume is a re-edition of the work Rectory of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, by Ion Gh. Roșca and Liviu Bogdan Vlad, the editors of the new edition, professors Nicolae Lupu and Dumitru Miron, proceeding to a responsible revision of the text from 2013 and bringing it up to date by adding the profiles of the two most recent rectors, professors Pavel Năstase and Nicolae Istudor, with numbers 25 and 26 in the sequence of mandates, over time, at the ASE level. Next, awards were given to some partner institutions, as well as some teaching staff with a prodigious career in ASE. The distinctions are named “Nicolae D. Xenopol” University Merit with Gold Medal (for institutions), respectively “Virgil Madgearu” University Merit, with or without Gold Medal (for individuals). Thus, 21 “Virgil Madgearu” distinctions were awarded with the Gold Medal and 13 “Virgil Madgearu” distinctions, including for the editor-in-chief of our publication, Prof. Univ. Dr. Gabriela Cecilia Stănculescu.

On Wednesday, events dedicated to scientific research and internationalisation of the institution were organised, and the university's promotional store, ASE Shop, as well as the ASE TV studio were inaugurated. The Gala event, “110 years of academic excellence” followed: the festive gathering at

the Romanian Athenaeum, followed by a concert by the “George Enescu” Philharmonic and a cocktail party.

On Thursday, April 6, in the presence of the President of Romania, the insignia of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of ASE were handed to Mr. Jean Claude Juncker, former President of the European Commission (2014-2019).

On Friday, there was the award ceremony for the winners of an interdisciplinary competition on economic topics addressed to high school students, the scientific communication session of the students, as well as a suite of sports competitions for the students of ASE.

On Monday, April 10, at Elisabeta Palace, the Royal House of Romania also held an event dedicated to ASE.

Finally, as part of the anniversary events, on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, on the day when former rector, Ion Gh. Roșca, would have turned 74, the volume “In Memoriam. 10 years without Ion Gh. Roșca”, initiated by his friend from Timisoara, Prof. Ioan Talpoș, was launched in the Aula Magna/

In the first 110 years of operation, the number of graduates of bachelor's, master's and doctorate cycles is over 300 thousand people. Currently, the University of Economic Studies includes 13 faculties and has – in all three education cycles together – more than 23 thousand students. The number of full-time teaching staff is over 750, and the number of employees in the non-teaching and auxiliary teaching category is almost 700 people. ASE now asserts itself as the leader in higher education in economics and public administration in Romania and South-Eastern Europe.

Vivat, crescat, floreat the Bucharest University of Economic Studies!