**KEEU: INTERNATIONAL PROJECT AND NEW TRAINING COURSE**

**The international project of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet program is being successfully implemented at the Kostanay Engineering and Economics University named after M. Dulatov. At this time curriculum for the course "Transformation of the experience of the European Union agribusiness management in Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia" is being developed. Thus, KEEU addresses the tasks of national importance not only in education, but also in agriculture - one of the strategically important industries that ensure the food security of the country.**

**Why do we need EU experience?**

The project "Transformation of the experience of the European Union agribusiness management in Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia" is innovative for the KEEU and interesting both from the educational and practical sides. The European Union (EU) has one of the world's best experiences in agribusiness and food production. In this regard, the study and dissemination of this experience is strategically important in general for Kazakhstan and for the Kostanay region in particular. And since the agrarian sector dominates the economy of our region and it is the leader in the production of grain crops, the result of the project should have great economic importance. The university is confident that the integration of practical European experience in the field of education, management experience in agribusiness, including on adaptation of agribusiness to climate change, the introduction of innovative technologies, the creation of digital agriculture is a great prospect for interaction at the international level.

The choice of the project proposal was based on the urgent need to activate cooperation between the EU and the countries of Central Asia in the current global environment”, explained the project manager, Doctor of Economics, KEEU professor **Galiya ISMURATOVA**. - Today, activation is required in all areas of cooperation, and especially in the field of higher education, where students and researchers are considered as future participants in the economic, social and political processes in the region. Accordingly, the introduction of a new curriculum and the development of new areas of research activities will strengthen the integration of European education in Kazakhstan. The implementation of this project will increase the level of knowledge, skills and abilities of students as future specialists in the agricultural sector of the economy. The project will also contribute to the improvement of existing educational programs for training specialists for agriculture. First of all, studying the possibility of using the basic provisions and principles of building the agrarian policy of the European Union in developing and implementing state agricultural programs in Kazakhstan, studying the features of rural development policies in the EU countries and adapting this experience in our country. Effective regulatory and financial support for the functioning of the EU agri-food system has allowed the association to become a leading global player in the agrarian sector for a short historical period, to achieve the highest level of food independence. The European Union annually provides more than 1/5 of world grain production, more than 1/3 of milk and 1/6 of pork, and the union has no equal in the production of sugar beet and barley. An even brighter picture is formed by productivity in the agricultural sectors. Naturally, the processes of globalization and crisis phenomena in the world economy dictate their own rules to the European farmers. But the solid foundation achieved over the past decades, promises the European agri-food system, especially in the context of the worsening world food problem and growing demand, solid prospects. For Kazakhstani students-future specialists, as well as for students from all countries of Central Asia, it is very important to study the experience of the agrarian policy of the European Union in terms ofits practical implementation in agribusiness. Students will participate not only in the production process, but also in shaping the future agricultural policy of the region and the country as a whole. And the acquired knowledge of EU agribusiness will give them the opportunity to work more efficiently.

Thus, the relevance of the project "Transformation of the experience of the European Union agribusiness management in Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia" of the international program Erasmus+ Jean Monnet is to promote the integration of European education in the preparation of better personnel for the agricultural sector. And the topic of improving the quality of higher education is relevant for our country. The State Program for the Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017–2021 noted that, despite a significant number of state grants for agricultural specialties, the agribusiness is experiencing a serious shortage of personnel with higher education. The level of training of specialists does not meet modern requirements.

For example, in 2014–2016, the total need for specialists and scientific personnel for the agro-industrial complex (AIC) of Kazakhstan was 6,456 people, ”said Galiya Suindikovna. - According to the local state executive bodies, about 80% of the subjects of the agro-industrial complex feel the need for specialists. Of the managers of agricultural enterprises, only 12% have a higher and incomplete higher education in the agricultural sector. Only 55% of university graduates in agricultural specialties are employed. Thus, summing up, it is necessary to identify the main problems in the training of specialists for agricultural production:

1) the quality of training of specialists with higher education does not meet the modern requirements of production;

2) a low share of employment in agricultural enterprises of graduates of educational institutions of agrarian profile;

3) the lack of focus of scientific research on the most pressing production problems;

4) an inefficient system of distribution of research funding;

5) insufficient financing of agrarian science;

6) underdeveloped mechanisms for transferring scientific results to production;

7) low competitiveness of domestic scientific research;

8) weak material and technical base of most educational institutions;

9) low degree of motivation of young specialists for securing in rural areas.

Kazakhstan is focused on sustainable development of rural areas, on increasing agricultural production, on increasing its efficiency, on rational use of land resources. And the development of agribusiness using the EU experience will contribute to the successful implementation of the country's state policy in this direction. The relevance of the project is based on the introduction of a mandatory training course on the transformation of the management experience of the agribusiness of the European Union into Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia.

For the successful functioning of the new curriculum, a project team has been created at the university from among the leading professors of KEEU. University rector, Doctor of Economics, Professor **Sabit ISMURATOV** is in this team.

Sabit Borisovich spoke about the significance of the new training course and why the choice fell on the topic "Transformation of the experience of the European Union agribusiness management in Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia":

The current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU plays a crucial role in ensuring the food security of the EU member countries and the stability of the European agribusiness. Today, half of the total EU budget is spent on it. Moreover, the process of reforming the EU Common Agrarian Policy has now begun, the main goal of which is the transition to a more competitive and efficient agricultural production. And the implementation of agrarian policy should be beneficial not only for farmers, but also for all EU citizens. We have a slightly different situation. Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, are developing countries by economic indicators. Diversification of the agricultural sector is a national priority for Kazakhstan. At the same time, the main problem of the development of the Kazakhstani agrarian economy remains the low level of productivity and competitiveness. One of the conditions for the successful development of the agrarian business is the availability of skilled labor force, workers with technical, agronomic, economic knowledge. And the course "Transformation of the experience of the European Union agribusiness management in Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia", which we open at our university, will give students an idea of the main directions of EU agribusiness development and modern ways of solving problems. Agribusiness has two aspects: a theoretical one, which is a scientific concept — the philosophy of managing on earth, and a practical one. In terms of content and structure, the course curriculum is set out in such a way that both of these aspects are perceived in their organic unity and interdependence. The practical goal of studying the new discipline is to master the theory and practice of business in the field of agrarian economics. How to manage and organize work, effectively use human potential in conditions when the influence of external factors: natural, economic, political is constantly changing? What should a farmer know in order for his business to remain successful? These and other questions, students of the new course will find answers.

When forming the course, the fact that the range of professional interests of specialists in modern agribusiness goes far beyond the agrarian economy was taken into account. It is determined by the tasks of state regulation of business in the production, processing of agricultural raw materials, storage, transportation and sale of finished products. And to be competitive, it is also necessary to know what is changing in the global agribusiness at the present time. In modern conditions, the development and maintenance of competitiveness requires constant study and identification of ways to solve such problems as agribusiness adaptation to climate change, intensive introduction of digital farming, effective use of chemical fertilizers, etc.

- It is also very important to understand that the conditions for a successful business are based not only on the production of a product, its purchase or sale, - explains the rector. - Any plan or a specific goal that you set, should be built so that it can be changed at any time without loss for the business. To do this, it is necessary to study the experience of advanced countries in determining the most effective development path. Therefore, modern experience of EU agribusiness is very important for Kazakhstan. And for the countries of the European Union it is equally important to have a reliable partner in Central Asia, which is Kazakhstan.

**Emphasis on relevance**

All these issues were actively discussed at various sites of the university. On January 25 of this year, for example, the XI International Scientific and Practical Conference "Transformation of the experience of the agribusiness management of the European Union to Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia", "Dulat Readings-2019" took place here. And on March 28 at KEEU project participants organized a "round table", in the discussions of which Kostanay farmers, representatives of the public, regional government agencies took an active part. The event allowed to determine knowledge in the field of agrarian policy of the EU, Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries. There were also identified problems in the agribusiness of Kazakhstan and formed development prospects. According to the results of the “round table”, a resolution was worked out, all materials are posted on the university website, published in the media.

The program of this event was aimed at enhancing the interest of public servants not only to the EU agrarian policy, but also to other economic and social areas, - said Galiya Ismuratova. - Civil servants will be able to apply their knowledge in the preparation of proposals for improving the state policy of Kazakhstan. Agrarians got a unique opportunity to get acquainted with the practical experience of EU agribusiness.

In detail about the role of Erasmus + projects for the university, the head of the Center for International Cooperation and Project Implementation at KEEU, **Zhanat JABASSOVA**, told:

The Erasmus + program aims to further promote the modernization and development of education and training systems, onsupporting the development of youth policy and sports, as well as improving skills and, thus, improving the employability of specialists. For KEEU it is not the first experience of participating in EU programs. The history of long-term cooperation of the university with the European Commission began in 2010 with the project of the TEMPUS program “Development and implementation of the Energy Management training program based on distance learning in universities of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan”. Due to this, the university successfully implements the educational program “Energy Management” and actively uses distant educational technologies in the educational process. The results of the second project - “Implementation of the quality management system in the field of e-learning in the universities of Central Asia (QAMEL)” (deadline 01.12.2013 - 30.11. 2016) - were developed at KEEU and implemented at the national level quality standards, rules and e-learning parameter catalogs. And since September 2018, within the framework of the European Union Erasmus + Jean Monnet program, our university has launched another topical idea. The new project provides for the introduction of a compulsory official course “Transformation of the management experience of agribusinesses of the European Union to Kazakhstan and Central Asia” for undergraduate students of KEEU.

In the new direction students of the 2nd year of study will be trained (2nd semester, 30 people). In just 3 years, 90 students will be trained under the project. In addition to students of KEEU, it is planned to attract students from partner universities of Central Asian countries to open lectures using a virtual platform. Provides for the use of virtual classroom technology (Adobe Connect with the possibility of participation of up to 100 users per class). Training courses (87 academic hours per year) will be conducted in an interdisciplinary format with a study of the topic from an economic, agrarian, political and technological points of view. The application of this methodology is based on modern conditions of successful agribusiness and in order to ensure the quality of the planned curriculum.

KEEU will get a unique opportunity to train better quality personnel for the agrarian sector of Kazakhstan, Zhanat Jabassova noted. “After all, as is well known, in Kazakhstani higher educational institutions, when training specialists for the agrarian sector, the EU’s agricultural policy and the modern experience of European agribusiness are not sufficiently studied today. This applies to the introduction of innovative technologies, the processing of agricultural products, ways to solve modern problems of agribusiness in the EU countries. Only the history of the development of world agriculture is studied in general. A similar situation is developing in the Central Asian countries. The main objective of the project is to continue cooperation with the EU in the field of education. This will contribute to enhancing the activities of the faculty, researchers, scientists in the study of issues related to the formation and functioning of the Common Agrarian Policy of the European Union. It is also planned to improve the indicator of academic value added and the effectiveness of the educational system of the university. For students and project participants, the result of its implementation is as follows:

1) increasing the level of skills and knowledge about management in agribusiness in the EU, giving participants the opportunity for critical thinking, reflection on ongoing co-existence and changes in their ability to learn throughout their lives;

2) understanding the importance of the EU agrarian policy experience for the Central Asian countries, especially for Kazakhstan;

3) the development of practical management experience in EU agribusiness with a view to its dissemination in Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries;

4) studying the experience of digital farming in the EU;

5) the study of innovative technologies for the production and processing of agricultural products and the search for applications in the agribusiness of Kazakhstan;

6) obtaining new information from the point of view of European studies;

7) the revitalization of researchers, scientists in matters relating to the agrarian policy of the European Union.

This year, the European Commission is celebrating the 30th anniversary of Jean Monnet activities. The 30th anniversary of Jean Monnet in 2019 provides an opportunity to discuss its impact on European studies throughout the world, as well as its broader impact on the global community. KEEU plans to celebrate this event by conducting additional events.

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**Kostanay**

This project is funded with support from the European Commission. The content of this publication / material is the responsibility of the author and does not reflect the views of the European Commission.