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**SPECIAL
EDITION**

AMU goes international

Jolanta Lenartowicz speaking with Prof Jacek Witkoś,
Vice-Rector for Research and International Cooperation

Our University is clearly becoming international-oriented. This goes both for the educational process and research work. How long, do you think, will it take for us to win an important position among Europe's and world's leading universities?

It all depends on what we understand by 'an important position'. To be classified among the top hundred or two hundred of the Shanghai ranking is, and will long remain, an unattainable objective for us and most of the other Polish universities. What we can strive for, however, is to become recognisable as Adam Mickiewicz University, an objective we have, to a large degree, managed to achieve. One might say after all and beyond much doubt that we are no longer an anonymous site in the central and western part of Europe.

Several decades of scientific cooperation and student exchange, especially over the recent two decades, have delivered results. So have over two hundred international agreements concluded by the AMU. We try to maintain close relationships with foreign institutions in all research areas explored at AMU. Therefore, our biologists, historians, archaeologists, philologists, chemists, or computer scientists are also active at other universities.

We are much less recognisable in far-away regions of Asia, South America or Australia. Now, going back to your question: it will not

only take a long time for the AMU to achieve a satisfactory level of international identification, but it will also absorb a lot of money. Suffice to say, annual costs of promoting our university abroad may amount to tens of thousands of euro.

At your work, you have an opportunity to visit many foreign universities. From your perspective, what are our strengths in the comparison and what are the barriers on the way to achieving an international status?

Being located in the very centre of Europe is certainly one of our strong assets. Our laboratories, relatively speaking, are well equipped. From what I have seen, the equipment of our scientific departments is comparable to that of other universities of that size.

Our staff are relatively young, very active and dynamic. Apart from being involved in research work, they speak foreign languages, publish articles in leading scientific magazines and inflict their enthusiasm upon students, who are confronted with an image of a scientist as a person combining an interesting job with personal interest and passion rather than an eccentric recluse.

Let me point at three barriers that hinder our University's actions at the international level. Firstly, our funds are rather modest when compared to those of the countries of the old Union, Australia or the USA, or to put



it more strictly, there is a financial gap between us and them. In this regard, we still seem to belong to two different worlds. The difference is particularly clear when it comes to research budgets, funds spent on conference trips or scholarships. Our Western neighbours attract foreign students not only with attractive courses, but also with attractive scholarships.

Secondly, we are tied with a rigid framework of regulations, which are in many cases inconsistent with the EU legislation or other countries' national standards which tend to be more practical and flexible than ours. Let me give you a simple example: there is a tendency in UE countries to carry out joint projects called European Masters. Several universities develop a common curriculum and provide education at the Master's level. Certainly, such projects require a high degree of mobility from both students and teachers, but usually also a common diploma issued upon completion of an educational stage.

Universities in other countries encounter no difficulties in issuing such diplomas, while we have to apply Polish regulations, whereby studies cannot be actually joint. We always need one university to play a leading role, we cannot issue diplomas to individuals whom we have not enrolled first, and so on and so forth. At present, the AMU is running four of such programmes and their Polish coordinators have had to go through a real bureaucratic nightmare, even though they have been supported by the University authorities and relevant administration departments.

Thirdly, most Polish universities, including the AMU, are affected with the problem of excessive segmentation and narrow specialisation. Young people from developing countries, our prospective students, are mainly interested in such areas as engineering, medicine or economics, less so in biotechnology or computer science. All these courses are offered by classical, general universities, such as the University of Munich.

Therefore, this versatile type of schooling is perceived as more attractive in the international market. Notably, this is how our inter-war universities looked like. It was only in the 1950s that the segmentation and narrow-sector specialisation began to prevail following the Soviet Union's educational model.

Let me add at this point that some efforts have already been made in Poznań to neutralise this segmentation by developing strict co-operation between the city's public higher education institutions in attracting foreign students on joint basis: together with the University of Medical Sciences, the University of Life Sciences, the University of Economics, the University of Technology, the University School of Physical Education, The Academy of Fine Arts, and the Academy of Music we have built a strong platform to attract foreign students to Poznań. The initiative is supported by the city authorities.

How can foreign students learn about the AMU's offer?

As our research shows, the Internet is the main source of information for our candidates, including those from abroad. Therefore, we have created an international version of the AMU's website, which is regularly updated owing to the efforts of the University Centre for International Education. We plan to continue the process of adjusting the website and the offer it includes to the needs of candidates from Asia, e.g. China or Vietnam, where we see good prospects of cooperation.

Another interesting offer is the School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students, with 186 students qualified for an intensive Polish course in the academic year 2009/2010. The attendance has been growing year by year, proving great popularity of the course.

We have managed to consolidate curricula of a number of faculties in English and come up with an offer of a full course of first and second degree studies in English. At the same time,

owing to the endeavours of the Information and Promotion Office, we have drawn up successive sets of materials to be directed to the Asian or American markets. We also plan to participate in selected international educational fairs while making use of ever increasing benefits stemming from the exchange of experiences under the European Universities Public Relations and Information Officers (EUPRIO) and the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNECC), which facilitates our working contacts in the development of international marketing campaigns.

Can we promote our University abroad, what can we attract foreign students with, do we have a marketing system at a faculty level?

We try to do our best, and the annual total of 400 foreign students (around 0.8% of the overall student population) proves our efforts to be visible and effective. We have put in place LLP-Erasmus, the best and most efficient student exchange programme in Poland (1st reward for 2009). 689 students have already gone abroad under this scheme in the academic year 2009/2010. We also have the AMU-PIE programme initiated and run by Hanna Maus, including courses in foreign languages addressed to both our Erasmus visitors, and individual students interested in the "A Year at AMU" programme.

Since last year, we have signed a number of agreements with agents dealing with recruitment of prospective students from abroad. While initiatives of that kind are primarily developed at the central level, some faculties launch their own marketing activities basing mainly on international agreements they are involved in.

There is no time to waste. It is high time to act. Where should we start right now?

Actually, it's not a matter of starting, it is more about clever continuation. First of all we have to enlarge our range of courses taught in foreign languages. Last year, for example, 16 Chinese students began a paid English course to prepare for studies offered by our University in English.

We try to encourage our teachers to provide their classes in English, by offering them a favourable remuneration system with one hour of class time in English counting as 1.5 hour of class time taught in Polish.

The challenge we have to face is to develop a larger number of full-fledged curricula in foreign languages so that our foreign students could receive their full education here instead of choosing the AMU only as an interesting partner or a complimentary measure to their studies at home.

You said we were hardly recognisable in the far-away regions of Asia, South America or Australia. But certainly you don't mean Kazakhstan, where we have a long record of successful relationships...

Indeed, our University is trying to build beachheads in some distant regions of Asia

where we are better recognised. We are taking efforts to strengthen our historically good contacts with Vietnamese universities, but our major focus has been on Kazakhstan. Currently, we have active agreements with five Kazakh universities (Al-Farabi Kazakh National University; Kanysh Satpayev Kazakh National Technical University; Almaty Technological University; Ahmed Yasawi Kazakh-Turkish International University; Taraz State Pedagogical Institute), and there are two more being finalised (Kokshetau State University, Abay Kazakh National Pedagogical University). The mobility and exchange programmes cover students, PhD students and academics. Some of them also foresee joint doctoral dissertations and joint doctoral studies. The recent one and a half years saw a new development in the typical pattern of our contacts: pay internships at the AMU for master degree and PhD students, and young Kazakh academics. The Kazakh educational system requires master degree and PhD students to do their internships abroad. Such internships are funded directly by Kazakh universities or Bolashak, the governmental agency for promotion of science and higher education. Following the talks held in Kazakhstan in June 2009 by a delegation of Poznań universities, with the AMU represented, among other, by Prof. Marek Gawęcki, we managed to strike very good contacts with a number of higher education institutions and the governmental agency. As if in return, the AMU was one of the main destinations for a delegation of Kazakh universities during their Bolashak-organised visit that took place in November 2009.

These contacts have already delivered first tangible effects: 17 students, PhD students and young scientists have already come to do their internships in the AMU, and further 11 are planned to arrive in the next academic year 2010-2011. Our visitors are most interested in such disciplines as law and administration, biological sciences, linguistics and history, in particular the history of Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. Regardless of how long their internships are, duration ranging from two weeks to nine months, all interns are given necessary support so that they can make the most of their stay and want to promote this form of internship among their friends home. We wish to attract more visitors of that sort.

In fact, we are planning for an AMU delegation to take another visit in Kazakhstan in September this year to maintain the existing relationships and start new working contacts with Kazakh universities. It is a very good time to undertake such actions as the Kazakh Government is interested in strengthening the position of their universities, raising the level of higher education and shifting the focus of their international cooperation from Russia more towards the Western European and global perspective. We hope for the AMU to become a constant part of this new, ever so promising perspective.

A melting pot with an oriental touch



PHOTO MACIEJ MIECZYŃSKI

Jolanta Lenartowicz speaking with Prof. Marek Gawęcki from the AMU Institute of Eastern Studies, head of the Central Asian Research Centre



PHOTO MAREK GAWĘCKI

Poznań academics have long been showing great interest in the East, even as far back as the 1930s. What fascinated them so much? What did they look for in the Central Asia?

Poznań orientalists have always been cantered around the University, ever since its foundation. The register of the Polish Oriental Society of 1930 includes such prominent names as: Kazimierz Winiewicz, Antoni Śmieszek, Rev. Alfons Groszkowski and Jan Czekanowski... Eastern issues were also raised at lectures given by Prof. Kazimierz Chodynicki and Maria Ruxer. What were they all interested in? I think it was exoticism, cultural differences and the merger of traditionalism with Western modernity... Trips to Central Asia at that time were more of an individual undertaking. The history of structured oriental studies date back to the mid 1960s, their beginning marked by a several-month scholarship in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan by Zbigniew Jasiewicz, a young academic from the Chair of Ethnography. The results of his studies made in the regions, which at that time were Soviet republics, were published in a number of scientific and popular scientific articles, and the monograph entitled *Uzbeks. Studies on Social and Cultural Transformations in the 19th and 20th Centuries* is a valued source of knowledge up to date.

And you, when did you first get interested in the East?

One could say, from my very first year at the University. I was fascinated with the work of my teacher, professor Jasiewicz. As I was with the issues he dealt with. In 1973, an

idea was conceived to prepare and conduct studies in Afghanistan. For a beginning ethnographer, such as I was, that country seemed to be a perfect place to study a traditional society hardly influenced by modernity. This is how the undertaking known as Ethnological Asian Expedition (pol. Etnologiczna Wyprawa Azjatycka) came into being. We called it in short EWA - 76.

So it was EWA that seduced you?

Yes, you might say that. But seriously speaking, what we went for was two years of tedious, now hardly imaginable formalities and organisational efforts. Finally, we managed to sort it all out. A car from one company, canned food from another, for the promise to advertise HCP ship engines (on the desert!) and Inka grain coffee in an Uzbek tea shop (great idea, too). And so on, and so forth... Sponsors' generosity had to be rewarded somehow. Several months of studies delivered very good results. One of our major achievements was to discover and describe an unknown endogamic ethnical group of Haydariho. That finding became a subject for a number of significant publications in Polish and international scientific periodicals.

You said at the beginning that the regions of Central Asia had always been an interesting research area for scholars from Poznań. What was their main point of interest?

Just like mine, the relationship between tradition and modern culture. It was an ethnological expedition, so the researchers were interested in traditional agriculture and its transformation, family, building, craftsmanship, or traditional medicine and its

links with the European medicine. We have drawn up an extensive documentation: interviews, descriptions, recordings, translations, photos, print-outs... Unfortunately, video materials have not been preserved. This was indeed a quantum leap in Polish studies of Central Asia.

Was it the leap that upgraded Polish Afghan studies to the World Research Area.

Yes, it was more or less in that period. Ever since then we have been recognised at international conferences by our publications. We started our contacts with young scientists who were beginning their careers then and now are distinguished figures in this discipline of science. Regrettably, the revolution in Afghanistan put this course of studies to a sudden end.

Our presence in Kazakhstan has certainly helped discover some Polish traces in this part of the world.

Indeed, the fall of the Soviet Union, subsequent foundation of new states in Central Asia and freedom of movement over these territories activated our scholars and scientists. Far-reaching studies were initiated on the culture and ethnic awareness of Polish people deported from Kazakhstan to Ukraine in 1936. We wanted to learn how they lived, what was the level of their Polish language...

The awareness of Polish society was very low in this respect

This is quite obvious. There had been many contradictory views regarding those issues and there was no awareness of the size of the Polish population in Central Asia. After a

long period of politically-imposed silence Polish authorities and Polish public felt obliged to somehow redress their compatriots for the grievance they had experienced under the Soviet regime. There were spontaneous initiatives of humanitarian aid, repatriation possibilities were discussed. First Polish priests and teachers arrived at Central Asia. Kazakh students began coming to Polish universities. I took my first research visit to Kazakhstan in 1989, then I had ten more by 1994. Studies were first financed by the AMU, then by the "Wspólnota Polska" Society and the Scientific Research Committee. We also started joint projects with scientists from Almaty.

More and more young people kept bringing scientifically valuable materials and interesting results from there

Right. Some interesting MA theses, studies and a book were written basing on these materials. To give you an example, one of the researchers, an ethnologist and chair of the Museum of Musical Instruments, Janusz Jaskulski, made many contacts and gathered (brought to Poznań) one of the world's finest collections of Kazakh instruments. Janusz Jaskulski also initiated and organised an exhibition called "On the far-away steppe". It was displayed in many cities both in Poland and Kazakhstan. It should be added that a catalogue-monograph issued to accompany the exhibition is used in Kazakhstan as a supporting material for Polish course-books. It has its second edition now.

This is how people in Poznań and the rest of Poland can learn about the country in the far-away steppe. This brings us together. So do the ever closer academic contacts.

In 1992, the delegation of the AMU led by the Vice-Rector, Prof. Jan Strzałko, myself included, signed a cooperation agreement between our University and the al Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty. We have a strong presence in the area archaeology.

But the real showcase of Poznań's Central Asian focus is Poland's and Europe's only department of Kazakh studies, in the framework of Department of Turkic Studies headed by Prof. Henryk Jankowski.

Owing to the successful cooperation of orientologists, a new generation of young, well-educated and language-proficient scholars have grown to develop their careers in Central Asia.

Many distinguished specialists in the matters of Central Asia have been educated in Poznań's Institute of Eastern Studies, where I have the pleasure to work. Although these regional studies have a relatively short history, we are proud to see our graduates working in nearly all diplomatic representations in Central Asia and many international institutions. Actually, our graduates hold more positions there than those of the Diplomatic Academy.

Prof. Andrzej Rozwadowski from our Institute is a world recognised expert in interpretation of Central Asian rock art, Prof. Danuta Penkala Gawęcka from the Institute of Ethnology

and Cultural Anthropology has made her reputation in the area of Asian medical systems and wrote a book on complementary medicine in Kazakhstan. Paweł Jessa, who completed his Ph.D. on the cult of saints in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, works at the Polish Embassy in Astana.

Poznań academic community is represented by scholars rather than scientists. Is it going to change?

We hope to be joined by representatives of geographical sciences whose delegation have already visited Kazakhstan. Mathematicians have started scientific cooperation with the International University of Bishkek. We observe young people's growing interest in political science and language teaching methodology. We are cooperating in implementation of the Bologna system both in Kazakhstan and Poland.

It is with the aim of this institutional approximation that the Central Asian Research Centre has been established. This international body has been founded at the initiative of Prof. Stefan Jurga who had the opportunity to visit the universities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It is becoming a platform of coopera-

tion for all researchers active in science and popular science, representing a variety of disciplines related to the broadly understood Central Asia.

What are, or should I say will be, the Centre's principal lines of activity once it becomes fully operational?

We will carry on initiating contacts with academic communities of Central Asia, as well as Polish centres of Eastern and Oriental studies, in cooperation with EU research centres. We also intend to carry out research projects and publishing activity. We have started a series of publications called *Poznańskie Studia Środkowoazjatyckie* (Poznań's Central Asian Studies).

One of our most difficult and ambitious objectives is to organise a research station in one of the region's countries.

Let us now look at Kazakhstan with the eyes of diplomat rather than a scholar. You spent six years there as an ambassador. You had a chance to learn about this country from perspectives other than those of a researcher. Is it a surprising place for an outsider?

It is, in all sort of ways. The biggest of all surprises may be the view you have while entering the capital city. You actually don't feel any... oriental touch. It's a huge, modern and wealthy city located at the foot of snow-capped mountains with more and more skyscrapers rising. Spectacular buildings, interesting architectural structures - it's a novelty of recent years, works of world-famous architects, master builders.

What languages are spoken most?

Russian remains the predominant language. It is understandable with Kazakhstan being a multicultural country. Kazakhs represent around 53 percent of the population. Half of them speak Kazakh belonging to the Turkic language family.

The rest do not speak it at all or just a little. Therefore, Russian or English are used on official occasions, in political life and in diplomacy. It is necessary if only for the fact that Kazakh has not developed necessary terminology yet. It is all in the making right now.

How do you see the cultural gap between Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries or the West in general?

The gap is clearly closing up. In culture, fashion, lifestyle. Take for example the music of the street, you can hear some oriental accents all right, but music charts are basically the same as in other regions of the world. The same goes for fashion, habits, etc. Anyway, Kazakhstan today is an attractive destination not only for its oriental mysticism, but also for its dynamics, openness to changes, and mix of influences. Kazakhstan is a melting pot with an oriental touch. This, however, does not hinder traditional elements of native and immigrant cultures from reviving. This all makes up a unique mixture and the process of its formation and functioning is an interesting field for investigation into the past and present.



PHOTO MAREK GAWĘCKI

Not only Turkey

Ewa Wozińska speaking with Prof. Henryk Jankowski, head of the Department of Turkic, Mongolian and Korean Studies, Chair of Asian Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University.

When the Department of Turkic Studies was founded at the AMU on your initiative in 2002 similar courses had already been taught at two other universities...

Indeed, Turkic studies had been offered by the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and the University of Warsaw, that is why in Poznań we decided for a different, wider approach... I developed a programme combining the knowledge of Turkey, its language and culture, with education regarding other Turkic peoples. The public in Poland remains unaware of how big an area they occupy and how significant was their role in history. Hence our emphasis on teaching another Turkic language. We focused on Kazakh. Consequently, quite a few classes relate to culture and history of Kazakhstan. The curriculum, however, includes some related disciplines as well, such as Korean as a second Oriental language or Written Mongolian. After all, the area of today's Mongolia was the homeland of Turks up to the 10th century. Therefore, we were also interested in the broadly understood Central Asia.

Let us focus on Kazakhstan though. Had there been any studies on that country before the Turkic Department was founded?

Yes, they had. If we are talking about related disciplines, you need to mention representatives of Poznań's ethnological school, such as Prof. Zbigniew Jasiewicz or Prof. Marek Gawęcki. What they dealt with, however, was the Kazakh culture rather than language. It should be added that Poland has a strong tradition of studies on other Kipchak languages. Their users live in the north-west part of the

Turkic world, extending from Central Asia through the Black Sea northern coast region up to the borders of Poland. Myself, I got interested in those languages long time ago when I studied in Budapest and later when I started work at the AMU Institute of Linguistics. But never before had there been in Poland so many projects related to the Kazakh language as at our University after 2002.

What kind of projects are they?

First of all, we should realise how few publications concerning the language and history of Kazakhstan have ever been issued in Poland. We had no dictionary, no course book, no Kazakh grammar book. Our goal is to make these aids available. The Kazakh-Polish dictionary comprising over 20,000 entries, developed by Gulaikhan Akhtay and myself, has already been submitted for print, and towards the end of this year a course book by Akhtay and Zuzanna Grzywacz will be published. We have also thought about Kazakh grammar book. Lately, I have finished translating "The Book of Words" by Abay Qunanbayuli, one of the founders and classical representatives of Kazakh literature. We are also planning a more general publication aimed to bring Kazakhstan closer to the Polish public as we have gathered quite a lot of materials in our department and there is no such book on the market.

We are talking about learning Kazakh, but is it not enough for a person interested in Kazakhstan to speak Russian?

According to the Constitution, Kazakh is a state language, while Russian has a bit unclear status of a second official language. The po-

sition of Russian continues to be very strong, also owing to the approach of president Nazarbayev who speaks perfect Kazakh and yet uses Russian in all sort of official situations, thus underlining his friendly approach to the users of that language in Kazakhstan. This does not mean, however, that the position of Kazakh is weak. The country has a strong policy of supporting its language. None of the other Central Asian countries publish so many books in its national language.

You have been awarded honorary doctorates of the universities in Turkistan and Kokshetau and last year you were distinguished with an award for the contribution to the development of science in Kazakhstan in Kazakhstan. It seems that Kazakh people appreciate your efforts in spreading knowledge about their country.

Thank you. I think it's very nice that the work of our Department is appreciated. For me it's also a proof of successful cooperation with both Kazakh universities and Polish authorities. Ever since 2002, we have conducted cooperation and student exchange projects under a bilateral governmental agreement. With a new agreement recently signed, we hope to develop our cooperation even further. At the national level, we have very good contacts with the Embassy of Kazakhstan who presented us with the yurt now standing in the HCP building. Kazakh diplomats were also present at the opening ceremony for the Kazakh Studies Research Group, we got many book as gifts. I think the cooperation between the AMU and Kazakhstan is very dynamic.

Not only Kazakhstan

At first, I thought I would never be able to pronounce Polish *przepraszam* (excuse me), because there are far too many consonants in this word - recalls laughingly Dr. Gulaikhan Akhtay who moved to Poznań for one year but stayed ever since.


PHOTO MACIEJ MECZYŃSKI

In 2001 Ms Gulaikhan Akhtay was a teacher of her native language at the International Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University in Turkistan, south of Kazakhstan. At that time, Prof. Henryk Jankowski made his way to Kazakhstan to look for a lecturer and Kazakh language teacher for the Department of Turkic Studies that was being founded at Poznań University. He decided to start cooperation with Turkistan University as he liked their teaching methods best. My boss seconded me to Poznań but I had permission to stay one year only - Dr. Akhtay recalls. - This is how I first landed in Poznań in 2002. I had been really horrified because I did not know anybody here. But I was received at the airport by Prof. Jankowski whom I met for the first time then and who was to become my husband. When she came to Poland, Dr. Akhtay did not speak any Polish, but she hoped she could communicate in Russian. It turned out, however, that residents of Poznań, even though they knew Russian, did not want to speak it. - This made me learn Polish pretty fast - says Dr. Akhtay laughing. - And it needs to be added at this point that at first my boss strongly discouraged me from taking any Polish courses. He was afraid that students, knowing I could explain things in Polish, would not be motivated to work hard enough on their Kazakh.

Beginnings

Gulaikhan Dr. Akhtay remembers well her first class in 2002: there were more than ten fresh students of Turkic Department, all of them looking terrified as soon as she started speaking Kazakh. Most students were certainly Polish, but there were also young people from mixed Polish-Turkish families and after a while also Turks participating in Erasmus exchange projects. The AMU is the only Polish university to

offer Kazakh courses (attempts have also been made in Warsaw). In Dr. Akhtay's opinion, it is grammar that students have most difficulties with. - For example, the word order in Kazakh is completely different, auxiliary verbs are used in every sentence and it's hard to explain when a given verb fits and when it doesn't. What students have to do is shift to different way of reasoning than the one they know from learning languages of the Indo-European family - she explains. - Here, I can surely praise my students for their consistence in overcoming those difficulties -- she adds. There are also many things in the Kazakh language that delight them, like the discovery of what Kazakh names mean (e.g. Gulaikhan translates as "Queen of the moonlight flower").

At the beginning, it was not easy for the teacher either. - Kazakh families are very close together, so even though I had all I needed here, I would come back to the hostel, played Kazakh music really loud and wept into a pillow - she recalls. - I think I was the only Kazakh in Poznań then. Fortunately, after a while some other Kazakh teachers joined me. Now they are back home. Before that I was given support from a Polish friend whom I met during a walk.

Research Group

After a year, Dr. Akhtay extended her contract and after two years, she decided to stay for good, a decision strongly disapproved by her Kazakh employers and family. - My mother calmed down only after she visited me in Poznań and saw that I was happy here. Apart from personal reasons, there were some important professional challenges that made me stay, I mean the work on the Kazakh-Polish dictionary, together with Prof. Jankowski, and on a Kazakh course book, together with

Zuzanna Grzywacz, first graduate of Poznań's Turkic Studies to become a Kazakh language teacher. First part of the book should be ready in autumn. That's the first publication of that kind in Poland. You might imagine how difficult it has been for students so far to work without a course book - says Dr. Akhtay. On 21 April 2009, the Kazakh Studies Research Group was opened with Gulaikhan Dr. Akhtay in charge. Topics selected by students for their theses ranged from language-related issues to broadly understood culture, including complementary medicine or Kazakh traditional customs. Materials can be gathered on-site at visits made under exchange projects. There were some funny stories, too, related to those visits. - One of our students went to the Academy of Arts in Almaty. She was a blonde, so on seeing her all teachers automatically changed to Russian and were very surprised to hear her complaining that she didn't understand a word of they had said - she says laughing.

Those visits also offer an opportunity to notice cultural differences. As Dr. Akhtay sees it, Polish people are usually irritated that Kazakhs are slow and lazy in everything they do and spit around. What Kazakh people dislike is that Poles always complain about everything and blow their noses loudly. Both nations, however, are united in their love for good cuisine. Dr. Akhtay says that the favourite meal of her Polish guests is *orama*, a pie made of a thin, rolled dough wrapped over a filling. Gulaikhan Dr. Akhtay does not regret having moved to Poland. - It's a wonderful feeling to see a student in front of you who doesn't speak a word of Kazakh, and then after several years you can hear him or her speaking it fluently. It is a great satisfaction!

Ewa Woznińska

Wschód? The East! We've seen most of it

Interview with Prof. Krzysztof Pietkiewicz,
head of the Institute of Eastern Studies, AMU

PHOTO MACIEJ MĘCZYŃSKI



What is the Institute of Eastern Studies?

When the USSR was falling down in the early 1990s it turned out we didn't really know much about this country. Paradoxical as it may sound, the Soviet Union was until then treated as a "sacred land" that could only be explored in an official manner. Therefore, Prof. Jacek Leoński decided to gather a group of scholars from Poznań's academic institutions and proposed foundation of an institute following the example of other Polish cities. The range of activity of the Institute of Eastern Studies, which first operated as an independent unit to become part of the Faculty of History in 1995, is not limited, however, to pure historical, ethnological or political studies. What we deal with in the IES goes beyond the borders of classical disciplines. This follows from the fact that the post-Soviet territories have their own unique attributes inherited from the period of the Soviet dominance. It is a legacy of economic and social problems that need to be identified and examined. We want our students to develop their own perception of the East, even if it is different than that of their teachers representing classical academic disciplines. Our ambition by the end of this decade is to consolidate the IES position as a strong scientific and teaching centre. Together with other similar institutions and centres, we also strive for eastern studies to reach a comparable status as European studies, that is to become recognised as a separate academic discipline.

The East covers a huge area. Does the Institute concentrate on any specific places.

There several locations to mention. Intensi-

ve studies are being carried out in Eastern Europe by professors and students of Ukrainian Studies. We operate in Siberia and the Far East. Maria Koško has been studying Sakha for years, while Ivan Peshkov deals with relationships with China and Mongolia. We learn about processes occurring in that region from the works of Prof. Marek Gawęcki from AMU Central Asian Research Centre. We also plan to strengthen our cooperation with teachers and scholars from the AMU Department of Oriental Studies. We are happy to see our staff members and students start activities in new places. Intensive studies are being carried out in Moldova, their effects including a recent MA thesis on Gagauz people. We also had an MA thesis on relationships with Russia developed in Iran. Trips taken by our younger students are a separate thing, but they, too, can become a starting point for interesting studies. On the other hand, when some time ago I was watching an exhibition of photos from those trips I thought I'd rather not know where they were going, otherwise I'd be quite worried about them. Nevertheless, it seems they do 'control' the whole Eurasia.

How many students do you have to be worried about?

First 18 students were admitted in 1995 for parallel studies. Then in 1996, there were 40 of them starting their education on standard basis. The interest is huge, so now we are recruiting around 80 new students a year with several candidates applying for each place. We also admit students from the East who come to our University as holders of scholarships

granted by the Polish government. We have visitors from Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as Polish students from Belarus. We also run exchange projects with more than ten foreign universities. These, however, had to be temporarily suspended due to financial difficulties caused by the economic crisis. We have publishing cooperation with our partners from the East. Our magazine called *Sprawy Wschodnie* (Eastern Matters) exchange articles with Russian „Istoriya i sovremennost” ("History and Present")

What do graduates do?

Many of them find employment in the trade, business and banking sectors, as well as tourist service. Our graduates' great asset is proficiency in Russian combined with extensive knowledge of Russian economy. We have never intended to train diplomats (although there some teaching contents related to diplomacy), but as it turns out some of our graduates work in the embassies in Georgia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. We are not aware what many others do, hence my surprise when one day I wrote to the ambassador in Cyprus to request internship for a group of our students. I was replied by a secretary of the Embassy in Nicosia. She wrote she would be happy to receive some of her younger schoolmates. It seems to me that our graduates do well on the labour market. And what's equally important, we manage to break the stereotype of Russia as a historical enemy and show that states established after the downfall of the USSR are interesting partners for Poland.

Ewa Woźnińska



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Integration into the international education space is a long-term and sure-to-win project

Aiman Aubakirova

(Kazakhstan, JSC Center for International Programs)

In his Address to the Nation "The new decade, the new economic upturn, the new opportunities of Kazakhstan" in January 2010 President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev stressed it was necessary to improve quality of education: "The quality of higher education should meet the highest international standards. The higher educational institutions of the country should aspire to be featured into the ratings of the top-ranking world universities".

Since gaining independence Kazakhstan has been working on harmonizing its system of education with the international educational standards. The three-cycle model of specialists' training (Bachelor-Master-PhD) has been introduced.

The National System of education quality assessment has been created. It includes all elements of the independent internal assessment (licensing, attestation, accreditation, rating, single national testing, interim state control, complex testing for applicants, etc.)

Since 2008 Kazakhstan has been working on the international accreditation of 2 educational programs for universities which are to be recognized by the international educational community.

Development of science is focused on 6 priority fields: nanotechnologies and new materials; biotechnologies; new technologies for hydrocarbon and ore-mining and smelting sectors and service fields concerned; nuclear and renewable energy technologies; information and space technologies; national idea as a basis of sustainable development.

5 national laboratories of open type in priority fields are to be set up within the framework of the State Program of Science Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2012 through provision of the scientific organizations with new equipment in order to boost quality of scientific research.

15 engineering laboratories in priority fields provided with modern equipment are being set up at a number of large regional higher educational institutions.

Scientists of Kazakhstan made two significant discoveries in 2007: creation of vaccine against bird flu and solution of a mathematical problem brought forward by Japanese mathematician Masayoshi Nagata 40 years ago.

Currently Kazakhstan purposefully works on harmonizing the system of higher education in Kazakhstan with the educational systems of the Bologna Process member countries.

The world educational system has sufficient experience of determining and introducing the advanced trends into the system of

education and science. Thus, in 1998 at the jubilee of Paris Sorbonne University the ministers of education of Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain suggested initiating educational space with common laws, standards and guidelines and called for other states to join it. However, the world community doubted it was possible for countries with different cultures, traditions and educational systems to cooperate in such a manner.

Nonetheless, the common European zone of higher education was initiated.

The guidelines of the Bologna Declaration adopted on 19 June 1999 are as follows: the adoption of a common framework of readable and comparable degrees, the introduction of undergraduate and postgraduate levels, ECTS-compatible credit system, the elimination of remaining obstacles to the free mobility for students and teachers: provision of free access to education and practical training for students; recognition of periods of research, teaching and internships in the European context for teachers and researchers; promotion of the European cooperation in provision of quality; promotion of the European standards of higher education (development of curriculum, inter-university cooperation, models of mobility and joint educational programs, practical training and conduction of research).

Kazakhstan joined the Bologna Process within the framework of the Ministerial Forum in Budapest on 11 March 2010. Decision on Kazakhstan's accession was anonymously supported by representatives of 46 Bologna Process member countries. Thus, Kazakhstan has become the 47th country to enter the European zone of higher education. The national flag of Kazakhstan has been installed in the gallery of flags of the Bologna Process member countries. Prior to that 30 out of 145 higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan signed the Magna Charta Universitatum which is the basis of the Bologna Declaration. Decision on Kazakhstan's joining the Bologna Process was adopted by the Bologna Ministers Committee. It is the recognition of reforms in the sphere of higher education conducted by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

From now on Kazakhstan is the first Central Asian country recognized as the full-fledge member of the European zone of higher education. It is undoubtedly important for the international positioning of the national system of higher education. Kazakhstan's entry into the Bologna Process gives tangible advantages to Kazakhstani students and national higher educational institutions. They are as follows:

1. harmonization of the national educational programs and curriculum with the European standards;
2. recognition of the national qualifications and academic degrees;

3. provision of academic mobility of students and teachers;

4. recognition of credits obtained abroad;

5. implementation of two-diploma programs;

6. recognition of Kazakhstani diplomas of higher education in the European zone, employment of graduates in any Bologna Process member country.

One of the brightest examples of implementation of the tasks set out by the Head of the State is the Bolashak International Scholarship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, initiated to do Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees at the best world universities.

Young people from Kazakhstan obtain high-quality education under various majors. The priority is given to medical and technical majors.

The Strategy of Kazakhstan's joining the 50 most competitive countries of the world outlines that it is crucial to create all conditions for lifelong education.

Since 2008 the Bolashak scholarship is awarded to researchers, teachers of higher educational institutions, research workers and those willing to do a research internship abroad.

The state supports research workers financially in order to boost the level of theoretical and practical training through the usage of new and unique methods, equipment and technologies, exchange of experience and expansion of scientific contacts abroad.

The Bolashak Scholarship Scheme has opened doors for researchers to many foreign higher educational institutions. Our researchers conduct research at such internationally reputed institutions as University of Cambridge, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the Shaim Sheba Medical Center, University of Delaware, University of Bologna, University of Paris 1, Pittsburg State University, etc. Our researchers realize their projects at the Russian higher educational institutions with which we have common well-established scientific traditions.

It is worth mentioning that this year we have started cooperating with one of the top-ranking universities of Poland - Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. We hope it will be a long-term and fruitful cooperation.

Kazakhstan's accession to the European zone of higher education is not only the next step in the process of integration into the world educational space but it also meets the requirements of the domestic market of educational services. The main objective of creating the common educational zone is to harmonize the Kazakhstani system of higher education with the world standards, improve its quality and gradually integrate into the world community.

AMU School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students

Foreigners' interest in Polish language on the rise

Learning Polish as a foreign language has been growing more and more popular in the recent years. For many foreign students studying at AMU, Polish is the passport to a world of new opportunities and career advancement. It wouldn't be possible if it weren't for AMU School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students by the Institute of Polish Philology.

The changes that took place in Poland over the last ten years and the rise of interest with our country around the world have brought about the willingness to learn Polish as a foreign language among more and more people. Not only are foreigners who intend to study in Poland interested in learning Polish, but also those who are staying in Poznań for vocational reasons. Thus, it comes as no surprise to learn that the number of students at AMU School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students is growing by the year. Almost 500 people from over 60 countries such as Germany, Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Great Britain, Australia, USA, Cameroon, Algeria, Brazil, the Philippines, Vietnam, Columbia, Egypt, Chad, Dominican, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand or Tunisia, among others, took part in the courses run by the School in 2009 only. Much indicates that in 2010 the numbers are yet to increase.

An extensive offer

Foreigners learning Polish in the School are above all scholarship holders of such educational programs as LLP Erasmus, the Lane Kirkland Program, the Polish-U.S. Fulbright Commission's Programs, GFPS, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Scholar-

ship Program of the Polish Government for Young Academicians, but there are also exchange students from Korean, German and Ukrainian universities, regular foreign students at AMU who attend obligatory course of Polish, AMU employees i.e. lecturers of foreign languages at AMU and, last but not least, people outside the University who want to learn the language from the very beginning or improve their Polish. *The latter constitute one third of all course participants, about 100 persons per semester. We are very pleased with this number increasing systematically, because it is a clear sign that the School's offer is attractive for foreigners from outside the academic environment as well,* says Agnieszka Mielczarek, Ph.D., the chair of AMU School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students. The offer of our Polish language courses is targeted at a large group of prospective students and meets the current market demands. *We organize various courses: 2, 4, 6 and 10 hours per week on semestrial and yearly basis, on six main levels of language advancement. Also, we run the one-year preparatory course for candidates who are planning to study in Poland,* explains Agnieszka Mielczarek, Ph.D.

In addition, the School's employees are lecturers at the Postgraduate Studies of Teaching Polish as a Foreign Language, which prepare to teaching Polish to foreign students, and they also conduct classes during the Summer School of Polish Language and Culture at AMU. *It is worth pointing out that some of our teachers are members of 'ZAZiE' (The Group of Tasks' Authors and Examiners) of the State Commission for the Certification of Polish as a Foreign Language. Hence, we help in conducting the Certificate Exams of Polish as a Foreign Language in Poland and abroad,*

and we also participate in the organization of this exam in Poznań, adds Agnieszka Mielczarek, Ph.D.

A new dimension

According to Professor Józef Tomasz Pokrzywniak, the dean of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, the importance of the School has increased over the recent years. *The Polish law to a greater degree than before regulates the matter of having the Certificate of Polish as a Foreign Language by foreigners who undertake work in Poland. Furthermore, the fact that Polish is one of the European Union's languages adds a new dimension to its learning,* says Professor Józef Tomasz Pokrzywniak.

Within the structure of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, the School, due to its specific character, is obviously open to developing international connections. This enables us to promote not only Polish language and culture among foreign students, but also degree programs proposed by our faculty. It is conducive to tightening international cooperation between our faculty and research centers around the world, claims Agnieszka Mielczarek, Ph.D. Thanks to the School's engagement, in 2012 Poznań will host an international conference of Bristol Association of Polish and Foreign Teachers of Polish Language, the largest organization of Polish as a foreign language teachers. *In autumn this year we are planning to organize a Poznań-Szczecin Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages,* adds Agnieszka Mielczarek, Ph.D.

All information about AMU School of Polish Language and Culture for Foreign Students may be found at www.schoolpl.amu.edu.pl

Foreign students in figures

Foreign AMU students are most numerously represented by participants of the Erasmus programme. Interestingly enough, out of 152 who came to Poznań in the academic year 2008/09, it was Turks who made up the largest group (28 %), followed by Germans (18 %) and Spaniards (13 %).


The number of foreign students is growing year by year (60 in 2004/05 vs. 142 in 2007/08), but the AMU is still sending abroad

much more students than it is receiving. According to this year's statistics, 216 candidates has applied to study in Poznań in 2009/10 (with the summer semester recruitment not yet completed, this number is likely to grow even higher). Again, students from Turkey are at the lead (76) followed by Spain (63). German students, however, have shown much less interest, with only 13 applying for the programme. Erasmus students choose mainly

to study Social Sciences, History, Polish and Classical Philology, Modern Languages and Literature, Mathematics and Computer Science, and Geographical and Geological Science.

The overall number of foreign students is much higher as it includes also students from the former Soviet Union, many of whom go for courses related to the knowledge of Russian language.

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Ślubiце. AMU Collegium Polonicum is a joint research centre of two Universities: the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). The mission of Collegium Polonicum is to develop scientific and cultural cooperation between Poland and Germany.

Across universities, across disciplines

The most interesting discoveries of modern times are made on common grounds of different scientific disciplines. For exact sciences, this interdisciplinary cooperation seems to be particularly vital. Science knows no borders, it is international by nature. Therefore, it is so essential to go beyond the limits of particular universities and faculties. And this just what is happening with two unique undertakings which are being led by the Adam Mickiewicz University.

The first of them, the Wielkopolska Centre of Advanced Technologies (WCZT), being compliant with the European priorities of innovative development, will be co-financed through European Funds. *The WCZT brings together the whole academic community of Poznań* - says Prof. Bogdan Marciniak, a chemist, project manager and coordinator - *not only the universities, but also the institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research and development centres, and, as an additional partner, the authorities of city of Poznań. There are 12 participating parties altogether. As shown by specialist analyses, Poznań has an over-average research potential which has failed so far to be sufficiently translated into practical applications. The Centre of Advanced Technologies will see representatives of exact, life and technical sciences work on new materials and novel chemical syntheses that may prove useful for optoelectronics, ceramic engineering, medicine or agriculture. A good example of this may be fine chemicals, sophisticated chemical compounds which are needed in small amounts for many types of syntheses. New cellular therapies may prove important in medicine; application of genetics in plant breeding*

in agriculture; biodegradable packagings - in industry. Scientists from Poznań have remarkable achievements in all these areas. Researchers working in the Centre will also develop technologies for new products, while innovative companies grouped in the Poznań Science and Technology Park - another stakeholder of the Centre - will use these technologies in their production processes. This way knowledge will be "pumped" into the economy. The Centre of Advanced Technologies will employ around 200 people. Job applications are already pouring in from young Polish scientists, now employed abroad, who wish to return to work in Poland - says Prof. Bogdan Marciniak.

At the same time, walls of the other facility, the Interuniversity Nanobiomedical Centre, are rising at the Morasko Campus. This project is a fruit of the alliance between the AMU, Poznań University of Medical Sciences, Poznań University of Life Sciences, and Poznań University of Technology. Some of the most talented students from Poland and abroad will take their interdisciplinary M.A. and Ph.D. studies here under tutelage of distinguished professors from Poland and 18 foreign universities. *We will search for talents all over the world*, says Prof. Stefan Jurka, a physicist, head of the Centre. The first recruitment headed by an international selection committee will begin in May.

Young researchers will have nine laboratories at their disposal: the biological lab, the chemical lab, the medical lab, the microscope lab, the optical spectroscopy lab, the NMR spectroscopy lab, the nanostructure generation lab, the physics of vision lab, and the neuroscience lab. They will also have access to a clean room ne-

cessary for certain types of experiments and measurements. The Centre will be equipped with the state-of-the-art equipment. All costs totalling PLN 111,400,000 are covered through the European Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment, while Ph.D. scholarships are financed in part from the grant of Foundation for Polish Science.

What will the centre focus on? *Nanomaterials* - says Prof. Stefan Jurka - *it's a guiding concept, and how to apply them in biology and medicine, as well as IT tools to be used in this research. Let me give you some examples of research topics: magnetic and electric properties of nanometal molecules, carbon, nanodetection of free radicals, etc. These topics have been highly evaluated by a group of international experts. Each of these topics require interdisciplinary cooperation.*

Among foreign collaborators of the Centre are such distinguished figures as Prof. Krzysztof Matyjaszewski from the Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, an expert in polymers and a Nobel Prize Candidate; Prof. Markus Antonietti from the Max Planck Institute, a world renowned expert in colloids; Prof. Jacek Klinowski from Cambridge University, an expert in physical chemistry, or Prof. T. Brezczewski from the University of Bilbao. They were encouraged to join the project by the scientific authority of Prof. Jurka and other Poznań's scientists.

- *While discussing the vision of the AMU development* - says the AMU rector, Prof. Bronisław Marciniak - *I was not afraid to talk about the competition with other Europe's universities and I am confident that both our modern centres will indeed help us become more competitive.*

Maria Rybicka



AMU Auditorium, one of Poznań's best concert halls. Apart from regular classical concerts performed by Poznań Philharmonic Orchestra, it hosts jazz concerts, University events, (conferences, closing ceremonies), and large pop music concerts.



At Fredry street, in the former Emperor's District, stands a Neo-Baroque edifice of Collegium Maius



Adam Mickiewicz University. Collegium Minus. The building houses University authorities and administration.



University Library. The edifice built in a late Renaissance style for Kaiser Wilhelm Bibliothek in 1899-1902; designed by a German architect Carl Hinckeldeyn.



AMU Botanic Garden is a modern teaching and research facility with a plant collections used for internal teaching purposes and general public education.