

## European Experiences Regarding Doctoral Schools in Administrative Sciences

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**Abstract.** By analyzing the overall situation of the European universities' doctoral programs in Administrative Sciences/Public Administration, the aim of the paper is to compare the European research programs, on two main directions: 1) analyzing and comparing the curricula implemented by European universities in the mentioned research areas and 2) identifying and some common principles applicable for the third cycle- doctoral studies, which are not regulated like the other two cycles by clear and strict provisions.

**Keywords:** Doctoral school; administrative sciences; public administration; Bologna process

### 1. Introduction

Reforming the European higher education system accordingly with the *Bologna Process – Towards the European Higher Education Area* has three main objectives: introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), quality assurance and recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

A growing interest on the third cycle system of doctorate has been shown for both European universities and PhD candidates, for establishing and developing, respectively in applying for doctoral programs. A favorable bridge from the “old” to the “new” system was created by new possibilities of cooperation and developing new research programs between European universities.

Research methodology will be based on the qualitative analyze regarding the curricula and the doctoral programs of the main European Schools on

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Administrative Sciences and on the empirical analyses on the inter-institutional regarding the reforms which Bologna system generated in the states which signed the convention.

## 2. Reforming the European Higher Education System

The reform of the education system in Europe was started in the early 1999 by the *Bologna Declaration*. At the declaration participated by voluntary decision the Ministers of Education and university leaders of 29 countries. The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010; it has further developed into a major reform encompassing 46 countries<sup>1</sup>.

The Bologna Process does not aim to harmonies national educational systems but rather to provide tools to connect them. The intention is to allow the diversity of national systems and universities to be maintained while the European Higher Education Area improves transparency between higher education systems, as well as implements tools to facilitate recognition of degrees and academic qualifications, mobility, and exchanges between institutions (EC, The Bologna Declaration Explanation).

The main key point in the realization and implementation of the reforms can be synthesized in the following steps:<sup>2</sup>

1. **1998: Paris.** The Sorbonne Declaration on the harmonization of the architecture of the European Higher Education System. The declaration was signed by France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany.
2. **1999: Bologna.** The Bologna Declaration which aims *to create a coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010*. The declaration was signed by Ministers of Education from 29 European countries. The main objectives of the declaration were: to adopt a system of

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<sup>1</sup> **Participating countries: Since 1999:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. **Since 2001:** Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkey. **Since 2003:** Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russian Federation, Serbia (and Montenegro), The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. **Since 2005:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. **Since 2006:** Montenegro- as an independent state.

<sup>2</sup> The informations were collected from the. The exactly documents are cited in the references of the paper.

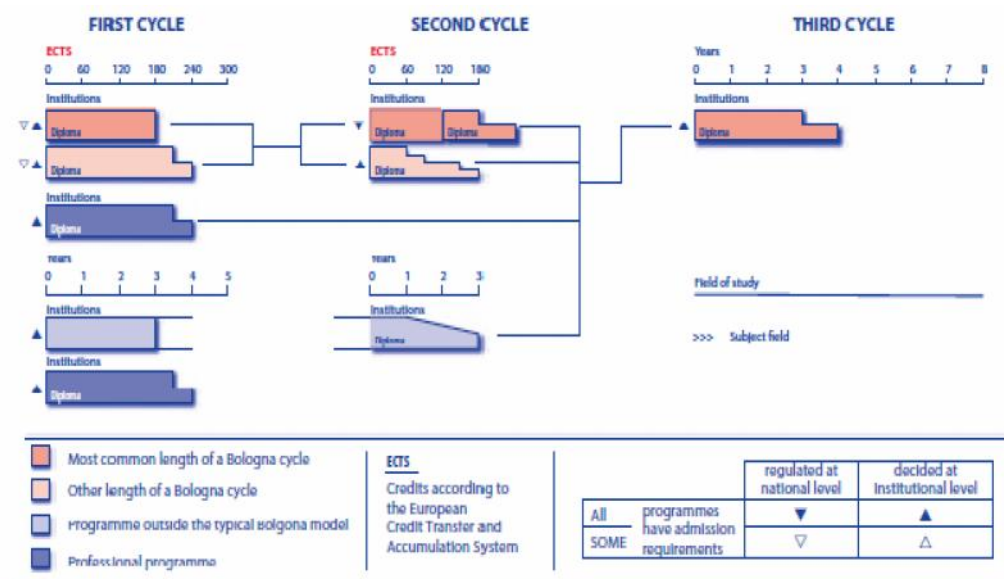
easily readable and comparable degrees, to adopt a system with two main cycles (undergraduate/graduate), to establish a system of credits (ECTS), to promote mobility by overcoming legal recognition and administrative obstacles; to promote European co-operation in quality assurance; promote a European dimension in higher education.

3. **2001: Prague.** Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the objective of establishing the European Higher Education Area by 2010. Ministers welcomed and reviewed the report *Furthering the Bologna Process* commissioned by the follow-up group and found that the goals laid down in the Bologna Declaration have been widely accepted and used as a base for the development of higher education by most signatories as well as by universities and other higher education institutions.
4. **2003: Berlin.** The Ministers agreed to speed up the process by setting an intermediate deadline of 2005 for progress on: quality assurance; the adoption of a system of degree structures based on two main cycles; recognition of degrees. Moreover, they decided to add the additional Action Line *Doctoral studies and promotion of young researchers*, including specific mention of doctoral programmes as the third cycle in the Bologna Process.
5. **2005: Bergen.** Ministers committed themselves for their next meeting in 2007 to reinforcing the social dimension and removing obstacles to mobility, as well as to making progress on: Implementing the agreed standards and guidelines for quality assurance. Implementing national frameworks of qualifications Awarding and recognizing joint degrees Creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.
6. **2007: London.** Ministers underlined that good overall progress has been made in the last two years in the realization of the EHEA.
7. **2009: Leuven.** It was underlined the importance of maintaining the existing stakeholder approach post 2010 – which means that students, universities, business, in tandem with governments, will share responsibility for the development of future reforms and cooperation.
8. **2010: Vienna.** The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been officially launched. EUA has reflected on the achievements of the Bologna

Process so far, and on the new steps to be taken in the first decade of the EHEA.

## 2.1. The Degree System of Higher Education

One of the most important results of these meetings regarding the reformation of the higher education system was that all participating countries have agreed on a comparable three cycle degree system for *Bachelor degrees*, *Master degree* and *PhD degree*.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1** Diagram of the three-cycle structure

Source: *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The Impact of the Bologna Process*, published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA P9 Eurydice), p. 48.

<sup>1</sup> The informations were collected form the Communication Reports of each Conferences.. The Bologna Seminar on “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society” and Shared ‘Dublin’ descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards. The exactly documents are cited in the references of the paper.

Two basic degrees, Bachelor and Master, have been adopted now by every participating country; sometimes in parallel to existing degrees during a transition period, sometimes replacing them completely. Typically, a Bachelor degree requires 180-240 ECTS credits and a Master programme between 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 ECTS at Master level.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) plays now an important part in curriculum design and in validating a range of learning achievements. In this system, credits reflect the total workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme - objectives which are specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired - and not just through lecture hours. It makes study programmes easy to read and compare for all students, local and foreign, and therefore facilitates mobility and academic recognition

In the third cycle, European PhD programs are not defined by ECTS credits, however, common principles can be applied also to this cycle. By the analyses made in this paper on the curricula we will try to identify which are the common principles which are regulating the Doctoral studies in public administration.

For doctoral studies, major aims and principles were outlined in the *Bologna Seminar on "Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society"*, 2005, but ministers did not specify a desired length or credits volume, reflecting both the intention to maintain diversity of provision and the conviction that it would be inadequate to express doctoral education in terms of credits. And indeed, a diversity of models continues to be found, with three years nominal duration up to the award of the doctoral degree being most frequently mentioned (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Duration of the Doctoral Studies

Number of years	Countries	Number of countries
3 years	Austria, Belgium-FI, Belgium-Fr, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Romania, Slovenia	16
3-4 years	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Poland,	9

	Portugal, Slovakia, UKE/ W/Ni, UK-Scotland	
4 years	Armenia, Estonia,2 Finland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey	6
3-5 years	Albania, Germany, Iceland, Malta, Serbia, Switzerland	6
other	Cyprus (3-8 years), Holy See (2-4 years), Lithuania (2-6 years), Russia (3+3 years), Spain  (4-5 years), 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (min. 2 years).	6
<b>Note:</b> Liechtenstein, Andorra, and Luxembourg: not applicable. Azerbaijan and Ukraine: data not  available		

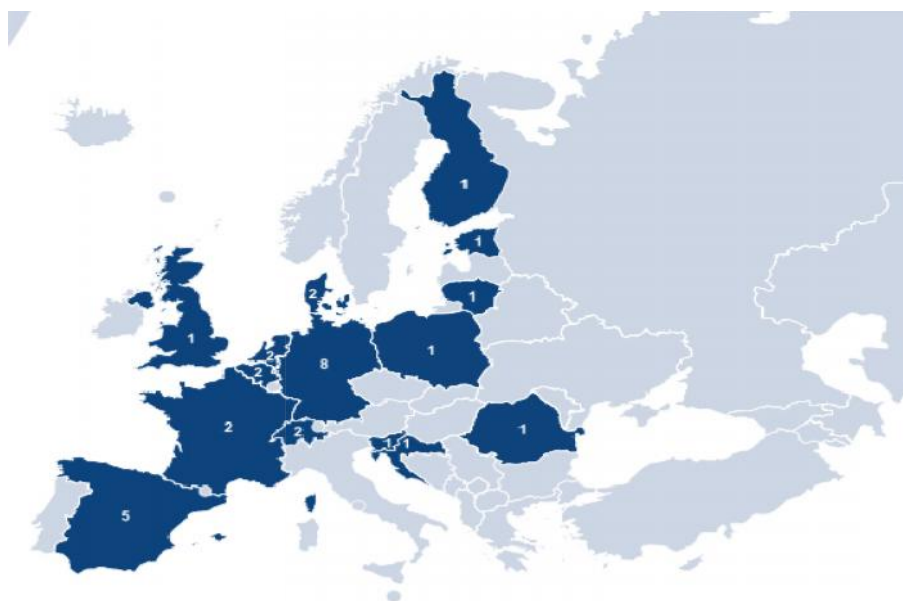
Source: *The Bologna Process Independent Assessment reports, Directorate  
General for Education and Culture of European Commission*, p. 21

## 2.2. Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process includes the promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance as one of its ten objectives. The current structural and curriculum reform provide an opportunity for universities to reflect upon management practices and to review programmes and teaching and assessment methods with the aim of ensuring their quality.

In parallel, common requirements for national systems have been defined at European level to improve the consistency of quality assurance schemes across Europe. European standards and guidelines (ESG) have also been developed for internal and external quality assurance in order to provide universities and quality assurance agencies with common reference points.

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) has been established aiming at increasing transparency of quality assurance, and thus enhancing trust and confidence in European higher education.



**Figure 2** Quality assurance agency registered on EQAR

Source: <http://www.eqar.eu/register/map.html>, accessed: 7 November 2013

In the Figure 2, it can be observed the countries which are registered QA agencies and the number of agencies of each country.

### **2.3. Recognition of Studies**

Recognition of credits and degrees internationally is one of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process. Growing international mobility demands agreements on the value of credits and qualifications, and recognition fulfils this need.

The main international legal text that aims to further the fair recognition of qualifications is the 1997 Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European

Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention, LRC). This is the only legally binding text in the Bologna Process. Tools that further facilitate the recognition of qualifications are the Diploma Supplement (DS), the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS; see chapter 2), and the EHEA Qualification Framework

The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is a multilateral legal framework designed to facilitate the international recognition of higher education qualifications and periods of study. The LRC mainly addresses academic recognition. Academic recognition refers to decisions that either allow a person to access or continue higher education or that confers the right to use a national title or degree from the host country on the basis of a title or degree acquired in the country of origin.

Although the Bologna Process and the LRC do not primarily deal with professional recognition of qualifications, professional recognition is obviously very closely linked to academic recognition and also to the notion of employability. Professional recognition in the European Union is regulated by EU directives and can therefore not be considered a Bologna instrument as such. Obviously, the transposition of this directive is only compulsory in the Member States of the European Union.

### **3. Analyzing and Comparing the Curricula Implemented by European Universities**

The objectives of analyzing and comparing the curricula implemented by the European Doctoral programs in Administrative Sciences are the following: the identification of the curricula content (disciplines), the identification of specialization (*Public Administration versus Public Management*), the identification of the specific domain (*Social Sciences, Economics, Juridical Sciences, etc.*) and the identification of dominant disciplines profiles (*theory versus research*).

The directory path in identifying the universities with doctoral schools in Administrative Sciences in Europe is represented by the Christoph Reichard and Walter Kickert's paper for the Permanent Study Group 9 "Public Administration and Teaching" – "*PhD Training in the field of Public Administration/Management*



*in Europe. Some evidence from selected countries and some conclusions”* (European Group of Public Administration Conference 2007, Madrid).

Among the directions within mentioned-paper, there were identified also some universities in partnership with National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, namely University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy (identified also in Reichard and Kickert’s paper) and Sakarya University, Turkey.

Thus, the current paper will focus on the following universities: *University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria; University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland; University Grenoble, Grenoble, France; University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany; University of Rome Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy; National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania; Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey.*

### **3.1. Stage 1: The identification of specific domain, specialization and curricula content**

#### ***A. University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria (UI)***

The success of being one of the largest educational institutions in Europe in fields of business and economics, business law and social sciences is based on result impact measurable in 6.000 students in the first year of study, average student population 26.800, about 1600 graduates annually and about 90 doctoral degrees per year.<sup>1</sup>

Vienna University of Economics and Business offers doctoral programs in Economics and Social Sciences, Business Law, Finance and International Business Taxation.

*Specialization Public Management* is identified within the domain of Economics and Social Sciences, a three-year program with 26 weekly hours of courses.

*The curricula* for the doctoral program are composed by:

- compulsory courses: Academic writing, Research methods, Methodology and theory, Interdisciplinary Research seminar, Research seminar – Participating in Scientific Discourse

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wu.ac.at/structure/en/about/>, accessed at 05.11.2013.

- elective courses – which can be attended outside the University, for example in national or international summer schools or another post-secondary educational institution

### ***B. University of Lausanne, Switzerland (U2)***

With a tradition in education of more than 450 years, University of Lausanne represents an interdisciplinary education and research model in the region. It is composed by seven faculties, with over 13.000 students and 2.700 researchers.<sup>1</sup>

By combining training and intellectual development elements, the doctoral programs cover a large number of domains, such as Theology and Religious Studies, Law and Criminal Justice, Arts, Social and Political Sciences, Business and Economics, Geosciences and Environment, Biology and Medicine.

Specialization of *Public Administration* is affiliated to the domain of Social and Political Studies, which targets the analytical, conceptual and methodological capacities of the students in the field of public administration.<sup>2</sup> The PhD program in Public Administration runs in collaboration with Institute of High Studies in Public Administration.

Chapter III PhD Training Program (Formation doctorale) refers to Learning Agreement (Le plan d'étude) established by the agreement between the PhD candidate and the PhD coordinator. It has to include at least one specific public administration module and it combines doctoral activities, namely courses, seminars, colloquies, academic contributions, etc.<sup>3</sup>

There are no specific references to *the curricula's* content.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unil.ch/central>, accessed at 05.11.2013.

<sup>2</sup> Doctorate Regulation in Public Administration, University of Lausanne, Chapter 1, art.1 [http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/ssp/shared/reglements/doctorats/Doc\\_Adm\\_publique.pdf](http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/ssp/shared/reglements/doctorats/Doc_Adm_publique.pdf), accessed at 05.11.2013.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.idheap.ch/idheap.nsf/0/6499c5255000b5b1c1257266002f2eef/\\$FILE/IDHEAP%20\(23.4.10\)%20PhD%20R%C3%A8glement.pdf](http://www.idheap.ch/idheap.nsf/0/6499c5255000b5b1c1257266002f2eef/$FILE/IDHEAP%20(23.4.10)%20PhD%20R%C3%A8glement.pdf), accessed at 10.11.2013.

**C. University of Grenoble, France (U3)**

University Grenoble is located in the largest suburb of Grenoble city. It is a large dimensions university, with more than 58.000 students and 3600 PhD students, with a budget of 740 millions euros and internally recognized.<sup>1</sup>

Doctoral schools cover a large range of domains, in Chemical and Life Sciences; Physics, Electronics, Electro techniques and Automatics; Engineering; Literature and Humanities; Economical Sciences; Juridical Sciences, etc.

Specialization of *Public Administration* is identified within the Doctoral School of Juridical Sciences. The activities for the doctoral program include participation to conferences, seminars, research stage, colloquies, etc. all related to law disciplines.<sup>2</sup> As well as the Swiss doctoral program, *the curricula* do not make any specific references to the courses disciplines.

**D. University of Potsdam, Germany (U4)**

As a young, dynamic and innovative university built in 1991, University of Potsdam creates the proper educational environment and knowledge and technological transfer for more than 22.000 students.<sup>3</sup> The educational and research areas are represented by faculties and interdisciplinary centers in fields of Law, Arts, Humanities, Economic and Social Sciences, Mathematics.<sup>4</sup>

*PhD program in Public administration* is characterized by uniqueness and independent brand label in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences lines and it runs under the Research Training Group on “Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations: Knowledge, Coordination, Strategy”. On a period of three years of study and research, the course program is composed by four pillars: PhD colloquiums, Concepts and theories, Methods, Professional Skills.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.grenoble-univ.fr/jsp/fiche\\_article.jsp?CODE=02859498&LANGUE=0&RH=GUGIPFR\\_VISI&RF=GUGIPFR\\_CHIF02](http://www.grenoble-univ.fr/jsp/fiche_article.jsp?CODE=02859498&LANGUE=0&RH=GUGIPFR_VISI&RF=GUGIPFR_CHIF02), accessed at 10.11.2013.

<sup>2</sup> <http://edsj.upmf-grenoble.fr/activites/>, accessed at 10.11.2013.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/aktuelles/>, accessed at 12.11.2013.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/einrichtungen/>, accessed at 12.11.2013.

<sup>5</sup> <file:///F:/DoctoralSchools/Germany/GermanyCourse%20Program.htm>, accessed at 12.11.2013.

*The curricula* include courses during the whole period, as follows:

- first year - Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods of Public Administration and Research Design, Public Administrations and Organizational Theory, Advanced Research Methods of Public Administration and Research Design, Theoretical Perspectives on Administration Change;
- second year – Methods and research design (or summer school or work experience), Theory (or teaching experience), one class from Potsdam Graduate School (Promotion Teams, Disputation Training, Effective self-presentation and self-marketing in sciences and research, Time and self-management, Scientific and academic writing, Career strategies and development, Self-presentation at scientific conferences, Successful interviewing, Conflict management, Presentation with professional poster sessions, Coach writing for Humanities scholars, Disputation training, Policies competences);
- third year – one class from Potsdam Graduate School.

***E. University of Rome “Tor Vergata”, Italy (U5)***

Despite it is a young university built in 1981, University of Rome Tor Vergata has expanded the educational and research activities through innovative programs and international cooperation. Composed by almost 20 departments in different areas of Medicines, Engineering, Mathematics, Biology, Philosophy and History, etc.,<sup>1</sup> the university represents one of the most important research centers in Rome.

The Doctoral School was set up in 2005 as complementary educational program in the three pillars of higher education, with the aim of providing to doctoral students advanced scientifically and technical culture in research. The particularity of *PhD program in Public Management and Governance* is the purpose of preparing graduates for high level of leadership in public institutions and to carry out innovative research, under the coordination of Department of Business, Government and Philosophy Studies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://web.uniroma2.it/modules.php?name=Content&navpath=RIC&section\\_parent=254](http://web.uniroma2.it/modules.php?name=Content&navpath=RIC&section_parent=254), accessed at 12.11.2013.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/dottorato/gestione-aziende-amministrazioni-pubbliche/default.asp?a=280>, accessed at 12.11.2013.

The curricula is represented by courses and seminars during the entire period of three years as follows:

- courses of Master in Public Management and Innovation (Management of Human Resources, Accounting systems in Financial Management, ICT and E-Government, Planning, Programming and Controlling, Administrative Law and PA History)
- Seminars for Public Certified Accountants
- Seminars in Business Administration
- Seminars in Public Administration
- Seminars in Research Methodology in Management
- Seminars in Statistical Methods for Social Sciences

***E. National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania (U6)***

Internationally recognized by interdisciplinary and advanced sciences, NSPSPA is also a young university (1991). The institutional vision links the academic life to practical transformations of the political and administrative arenas.<sup>1</sup>

The university is composed by four faculties of Public Administration, Political Sciences, Communication and Public Relations Sciences, Management and one department of International Relations. All these structures developed doctoral schools in the specialized domain.

*Doctoral School in Public Administration* is unique at national level and it has an international notoriety by intense activities in collaboration with public administration networks. The PhD program has a specific characteristic within the universities sample – it belong to the specific domain of Administrative Sciences (affiliated to Faculty of Public Administration).

The curricula for the first year of study are composed by:

- two compulsory disciplines- - Advanced Studies in Administrative Law and Progressive Processes in Contemporary Public Management
- seven elective disciplines – Public Sector and Public Services Theories, Advanced Systems of Accounting in Public Institutions, E.U. Institutional

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.snspa.ro/p/misiune>, accessed at 12.11.2013

Law, Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Fundaments of Public Administration Europeanization

- one facultative discipline – Statistical Research Methods in Administrative Sciences

#### ***F. Sakarya University, Turkey (U7)***

As the other universities described before, Sakarya University is a new educational institution in Turkey, built in 1992. The university is a modern and internally affiliated institution, with the mission of offering to students the opportunities in knowledge and technology, contemporary participatory educational culture.<sup>1</sup>

For the doctoral programs, the university's institutes offer wide research domains as Educational Sciences, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences.

*PhD in Public Administration* is affiliated to Institute of Social Sciences, with complex *curricula*, composed as follows:

- compulsory course in Research Area (Literature Research, Article analysis and methodology, Experimental and empirical studies, Evaluation, Report and presentation)
- elective courses – Administrative procedural law, Administrative responsibility in Turkish law, Anomie and Alienation, City law, Civil Society and democracy in Turkey, Comparative democratization, Comparative Public Administration, Contemporary approaches in public administration, Contemporary Turkish political thought, Control in Public Administration, Current political problems, Discipline of public administration, Election systems, Environmental administration and policy, Ethics in public administration, European Union and Administrative Law, Evaluation of Turkish Public Administration, Fundamental rights and Freedoms under 1992 Const., globalization and Politics, History of Turkish Culture, History of Turkish Democracy, Intergovernmental relations, Local governments and their problems, main approaches in social sciences, Metropolitan administration, Models of comparative metropolitan city adm., Organization and bureaucracy, Philosophy of science, Political development, Political life in Turkey, Practice of zoning, Protection of Human rights in international context, Public personnel administration and main issues, Public

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sakarya.edu.tr/en/sayfa2-18-general-description-of-the-institution.html>, accessed at 12.11.2013

policies and analysis, Reorganization of public administration in Turkey, Service methods in public administration, Social change and integration, Social structure of Turkey, The nature and development of modern state, The politics of multiculturalism, The thought of the constitutional state and the constitutional issues of Turkey, Theories of nationalism, Theories of Constitution, Theories of Democracy, Transparency and accountability in Government, Turkish administrative structure, Turkish political parties.

### 3.2. Stage 2: Comparing the Doctoral Programs

**Table 2** Comparing the doctoral programs

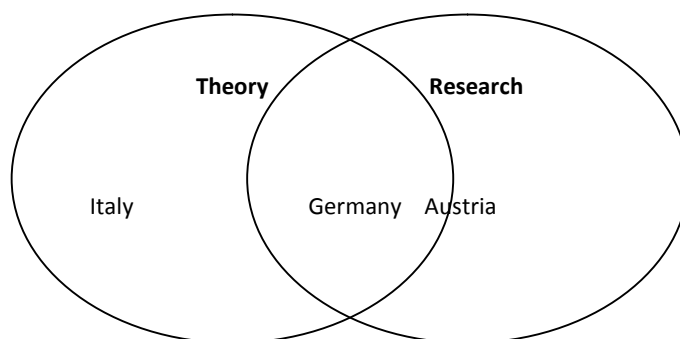
University	Domain	Specialization (Public Administration/ Compulsory courses (Y/N)	Elective courses (Y/N)	Theoretical courses (Y/N)	Research methodology courses (Y/N)	Dominant courses (Theory/ Research)	Dominant theoretical profile (PA, politics,
U1	Economics and Social Sciences	PM	Y	Y	Y	Research	-
U2	Social and Political Sciences	PA	-	-	-	-	-
U3	Juridical Sciences	PA	-	-	-	-	-
U4	Economics and Social Sciences	PA	Y	Y	Y	Balance d	PA
U5	Business, Government & Philosophy	PM (&Gov ernance )	Y	Y	Y	Theory	PA, Governance
U6	Administrati ve Sciences	PA	Y	Y	Y	Theory	PA
U7	Social Sciences	PA	Y	Y	Y	Research	PA, Politics

Source: Authors

Table 2 illustrates the following aspects:

- 1) PhD in Administrative Sciences is affiliated to various domains of research, such as Economics and Social Sciences, Juridical Sciences, Business and Government, but there is the particular case of the U6 Romania to develop the specific program under the cover of Administrative Sciences domain.
- 2) Specialization Public Administration is identified in 5/7 doctoral programs (exception U1 Austria and U5 Italy).
- 3) Comparing the curricula (exception U2 Switzerland and U3 France where there are no specific mentions regarding the curricula content), one can observe the fact that all doctoral programs have both compulsory and elective courses, both theoretical and research methodology courses. The differences are obvious regarding the dominance of theoretical or research courses.

In U1 Austria and U7 Turkey, the research methodology courses are compulsory, while theoretical courses are elective. On the opposite side, in U6 Romania the theoretical courses are compulsory and the research methodology are facultative (no elective). In U5 Italy both theoretical and research methodology courses are compulsory, but the PhD students have the option to elect from a wide range of disciplines. In U4 Germany, the theoretical and research methodology courses are balanced, they are both compulsory, and there are some extra theoretical courses that the PhD students can elect from ("alternatively"). In the cases of U4, U5, U6, U7 there can be identified the dominance of PA disciplines within the curricula, but there are identified also disciplines of Governance (U5) and disciplines of Politics and Sociology (U7).



**Figure 3** Mapping the theoretical and research dimensions

**Source: Authors**



#### **4. Conclusions and Final Remarks**

From the research made in the paper we can remark that most of the 46 countries have adopted new higher education legislation to introduce and regulate elements of the Bologna Process. Many countries have allocated additional funds for the implementation of new Bologna policies. The European Commission has also supported projects for the introduction of reforms.

Regarding the first 2 cycles of studies, we consider that we can speak about a type of convergence regarding the ECTS and the academic recognition of studies.

Regarding the doctoral studies, the word which is characterizing this cycle is divergence. As we stated before in these field there are no clear regulations like in the other two cycles. Divergence has been strengthened by the fact that key actors in different countries interpreted elements of the Bologna reform agenda differently. But, there are also positive and common aspects regarding the curricula and the organization of the PhD studies in Europe, which without doubt were influenced by the Bologna reform.

The doctoral programs in Administrative Sciences across European universities are characterized by various commune and particular aspects, namely the domain and specialization, the curricula referring to theoretical and research dimensions, the theoretical dominant disciplines.

In Romania there is a specific domain of Administrative Sciences for doctoral program, comparing to other universities that develop doctoral programs in Public Administration/Management affiliated to various domains (Economics, Social Sciences, Juridical Sciences, etc.). The research methodology is well-represented in the majority of the analyzed universities, but in the case of Romania, there is no compulsory character of this course.

Even if the basic theoretical disciplines are in Public Administration, some universities include also Politics, Sociology or Governance disciplines, as an interdisciplinary approach.

Even if there are there are still a lot of differences between individual countries in the way they understood to implement the reforms of higher education, the research made in the paper on the curricula regarding the doctoral programs has showed us that the Bologna process has brought about fundamental and dramatic change in higher education structures across the European Higher Education Area.

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