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University of Opole cooperation with Iran

2016–2019

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Mohammad Murtaza Kohistani, Michał Wanke
Office for Scientific Research and International Relations

Initiation of cooperation

Cooperation between the University of Opole and Iran started in 2016. The University of Opole has reached out to potential partner universities in a series of digital and telephone conversations made by Mr. Mohammad Murtaza Kohistani of the Office for International Relations of UO. It is important to note that the University of Opole treats the cooperation with the Persian language speaking countries extremely seriously. An expert on the Middle East region, Mr. Kohistani, a graduate of International Relations programme at the Black Sea Trabzon Technical University in Turkey was hired in 2016 to develop cooperation with the region.

We recognize the immense intellectual and scientific potential of the I. R. of Iran, we find the Iranian universities highly valuable, with a great tradition and incredible human capital. The first years of cooperation only confirmed this assumption – be it students, doctoral candidates or – last but not least – professors – we met only brilliant academics, clearly belonging to the world's elite, whom we respect and wish to interact with further.



Establishment of connection

Initial contacts were followed by the visit of deputy rector for science and finance professor Janusz Słodczyk to Iran in June 2016. The business trip covered two academic centers: the University of Mazandaran in Babolsar and Shahid Chamran university Ahvaz. The first Memoranda of Understanding were signed, the first talks took place and the directions of further cooperation were agreed.



Erasmus+ KA107 grant application

The first joint application to the Key Action 107 of the Erasmus+ programme was filed in early 2017 for International Credit Mobility grant. The application was successful and the exchange mobilities for the 2017–2018 academic year followed shortly after. They covered both student and staff exchanges. The same application was made in 2018 and another one is being prepared for 2019. The second application brought also student mobilities for training in Opole. They will be carried out in the summer of 2019.

The mobilities were carried out in 4 disciplines: Economics, Sociology, English Philology and Art.



The first mobilities to Iran

Mobilities from the University of Opole to Mazandaran University were carried out in April and May 2018. They included Staff Mobility for Teaching and Staff Mobility for Training, the latter carried out by Erasmus departmental coordinator, dr. Wojciech Goleński, and mr. Mohammad Murtaza Kohistani of IRO. The University of Opole professors included: professor Janusz Słodczyk of the Faculty of Economy, professor Magdalena Hlawacz of the Faculty of Art, dr. Marek Korzeniowski of the Institute of Sociology, acting as the deputy dean for teaching of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and dr. Michał Wanke of the Institute of Sociology.



The 10-day visit was devoted to teaching in different departments and holding talks about the future cooperation. It resulted in:

- The next round of Erasmus+ funding for the academic year 2018–2019.
- Initiation of a joint sociological research project on social consequences of the Polish presence in Iran during and after the IIWW – together with professor Mahmood Sharepour.
- Submission of two articles to the UMZ journal of Sociology of Social Institutions edited by professor Yaghoob Foroutan.
- Submission of an article in sociology to the UO journal *Borderlands*, co-edited by dr. Michał Wanke and professor Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska.
- Cooperation between the Art Faculties of both universities, including the special focus on calligraphy and bookbinding Department of Handicrafts and Art Research (professor Mostafa Rostami).
- Extending further cooperation in the field of natural sciences between UO and UMZ.





The first mobilities to Poland

The staff and student mobilities were also carried out in the opposite direction. Classes and training sessions were held with colleagues from departments of: Economics, Sociology and Art. Also student exchange programme included 5 persons' stays in Opole for the whole semester. As many as 7 colleagues from Babolsar taught the students of the University of Opole. The mobilities also included special events. Our colleagues had lectures, participated in conferences, the contact seminars and conducted workshops for students.





Further cooperation

Current cooperation involves ongoing mobilities and a research project in sociology as well as conferences in economics and collaboration in art. Several mobilities in both directions will be carried out in 2019, including student exchange for studies and for training.

Iran remains a very important partner for the University of Opole with many projects ongoing, personal partnerships flourishing and possibilities opening.



