International expert's report on the evaluation Evaluation of the PhD program Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iași: *domain Communication Science*

1. General remarks

The doctoral programme in the domain of Coomunication science is a relatively recent programme and with that this also brings some developmental issues. Overall, the programme is a small programme, with small number of teachers and students, still in a phase of evolution. As a result, some very innovative practices emerged that help students overcoming infrastructural and systemic barriers related to PhD studies in Romania (e.g., access to software, mentoring tailored to an individual students, very motivated teachers) that need to be identified and recognised. At the same time, the fact that the programme currently has only one eligible Phd supervisor limits the potentials of the study programme and puts it within the capacity and expertise of only one (although very good) scientist. This is also reflected in the programme curriculum where only certain aspects of communication sciences are covered.

2. Specific remarks

The doctoral programme appears as an exciting and flexible programme for a small number of students in which students can pursue various personal ambitions related to their PHD studies and the field of communication science. In fact, the programme supports interdisciplinary approaches and knowledge and problems primarily addressed in other fields that makes it appropriately designed to addressed contemporary societal challenges. Addressing new topics and approaches is also supported by the supervisor and his team. At the same time the small team is very dedicated to successful delivery of the programme and invests its own social capital and networks to connect students with socientific community in the field, including individuals and teams from prestigious universities. This personalised approach is also reflected in the faculty's efforts to suppervise and mentor the students which is also clearly visible in so called one-day consultations with students which allows students to have a sincere and open conversation about the topics they are addressing, problems they are facing. Also, when it comes to software availability the staff acts in a very sustainable and innovative manner and promotes open source softwares that reduce financial burdens for students.

On the other hand, there are also some shortcomings the programme should attend to. There is a limited number of courses specifying on communication science and there are many areas of communication science (e.g., political communication) that this study programme does not cover appropriately. This is also connected to the fact that the programme is severely understaffed when it comes to professors eligible to perform the role of supervisors (only one). The faculty management should urgently address this issue and implement measures that would allow the programme to overcome this shortcoming as well as enable students to explore a wider area of possible research avenues. One noticeable issue that can be detected is also comparatively low publishing recrd of students. This is partially a cause of non-inclusive publishing ecosystem in Romania, which creates difficulties for PhD students in their efforts to publish, however, students could also be additionally supported by different trainings and services to be better at publishing. In addition to creation of opportunities to write in English, more attention should be devoted to production of original research

data (as this appears to be a common programme). To the publishing success could also contribute even more structured curriculum with very clear stages, tight deadlines, and strong mentoring as well as possible extension of studies to a longer period. This would allow more time for implementation of research and reduce time pressure to publish before a PhD defense. As a result, more extensive inclusion of students into research projects as well as hosting international faculty to a greater extent could prove pivotal for the programme and is strongly advised. One additional recommendation for the programme is to develop clearer links to the internal QA processes to gain crucial evidence guiding future development.

3. Conclusion

The evaluated programme is ambitious, developing, and flexible, implemented by a motivated team of devoted individuals. To make it sustainable and allow it to appropriately develop, the following measures are proposed:
-   increase in number of eligible supervisors;
-   expansion of scope of disciplinary topics related to communication sciences within the curriculum (e.g., political communication; communication and social networks etc.);
-   implementation of measures to support on-time completion;
-   implementation of measures to support in-land and international mobility;
-   implementation of measures supporting inclusion of students in research projects;
-   implementation of measures supporting scientific publishing of students.