



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus universiteto
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *EUROPOS STUDIJOS: IDĖJOS,
INSTITUCIJOS IR EKONOMIKA* (valstybinis kodas - 621L23003)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *EUROPEAN STUDIES: IDEAS, INSTITUTIONS AND
ECONOMY* (state code - 621L23003)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius University**

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Europos studijos: idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L23003
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Politikos mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Politikos mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2014-01-21

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy</i>
State code	621L23003
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Political Science
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Political Science
Date of registration of the study programme	21 st January, 2014

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No	Name of the document
1.	Selection of research publications of the academic staff
2.	Development plan of Vilnius university 2015-2017
3.	Methodological requirements for written assignments and final theses of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, VU
4.	Alumni feedback survey results
5.	Selected sample of Minutes of the Study Programme Committee Meetings
6.	List of the Board of Trustees Members 2016

1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

Vilnius University (hereinafter also University or VU), founded in 1579, is the oldest and largest institution of higher education in Lithuania. Presently, the University has about 3670 employees and 21 000 students. The University implements study programmes of three study cycles in the areas of the humanities, social, physical, biomedical and technological sciences; students may enrol in more than 70 bachelor study programmes, 110 master and integrated study programmes and almost 30 doctoral study programmes.

The Institute of International Relations and Political Science (hereinafter also IIRPS or Institute) is a core academic unit of Vilnius University that implements 1 first cycle (*Political Science*), 6

second cycle (*International Relations and Diplomacy, European Studies, Contemporary Politics, Public Policy Analysis, and Eastern European and Russian Studies*), and 1 third cycle (*Political Science*) study programmes. The Institute has about 60 staff members and about 660 students.

The master programme *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* (hereinafter also EU/SP or Programme) has been implemented for 19 years. In 2012 it has been substantially revised, went through registration procedure in 2014 and is accredited until July 1st, 2016. EU/SP has 26 students taught by 15 academic staff members (2015). The language of study programme is Lithuanian.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 21st September, 2016.

1. **Prof. Anu Toots (team leader)**, *Professor of Social Policy, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia;*
2. **Dr. Stefan Ganzle**, *Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Management, University of Agder, Norway;*
3. **Prof. Geoffrey Swain**, *Honorary Professor, Emeritus, University of Glasgow, Professor of European History, University of the West of England (until 2006), United Kingdom;*
4. **Ms. Judita Akromienė**, *director of public organization "Eurohouse", Lithuania;*
5. **Ms. Julija Stanaitytė**, *student of Kaunas University of Technology study programme Human Resource Management, Lithuania.*

Evaluation coordinator – Ms. Dovilė Žeimienė

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

According to the SER, the Master programme *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* is intended to prepare highly qualified specialists through the provision of the tools and skills necessary for the in-depth analysis and evaluation of political, social and economic processes within Europe, enabling them to pursue an academic career.

A conscious effort has been made to link the learning outcomes and competences of the programme with the *Description of Study Cycles* (approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2011 November 21, No. V-2212) which include comprehensive theoretical knowledge of the discipline and the region, and ability to apply this knowledge (study outcomes No. 3.1-9.2), advanced research skills and ability to synthesize and assess research data (study outcomes No. 2.1-2.2), special abilities such as to provide sound, professional recommendations to different audiences and ability to creatively solve specific practical issues (study outcome No. 2.1-2.2, 6.1-6.2, 8.1-9.2), social abilities (study outcome No. 1.1-1.2), ability to work independently and take responsibility for one's actions (study outcomes No. 1.1).

The learning outcomes were also developed in accordance with the *Descriptor of the Study Field of Political Science* approved by Order No V-828 of the Minister of Education and Science of

the Republic of Lithuania (23rd of July 2015). The descriptor specifies that upon completion of the second cycle studies of the study field of Political Science, among other skills, students should have a specific knowledge of the ongoing scientific discussion in the selected Political science specialisation (study outcomes No. 3.1-9.2), to be able to implement research projects of political phenomena, using methodological approaches and means available in the chosen field of specialisation (study outcome No. 9.1-9.2); to communicate correctly in writing and orally both with the experts in the field and with the persons who are not professional experts in that field (study outcome No. 2.2, 9.2.).

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined clear and publicly accessible. The generic and subject-specific competences and learning outcomes are set out clearly in Table 1 of the SER, and this is broken down to course level in the Study Plan Matrix on pp. 13-14. Within the SER, then, every effort has been made to ensure that the programme's aims and learning outcomes are consciously developed throughout the programme. The SER outlines (1.2) how the study programmes are made available on the university and institute websites, as well as through recruitment initiatives. During the visit, no student raised the invisibility of the programme as an issue.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. As the SER (p. 10) makes clear, the programme has been developed to meet a perceived gap in provision within Lithuania. Although some similar programmes exist in other institutions, this programme offers “a comprehensive knowledge of political economy and the main ideas underlying the European integration process”. The need for skilled and efficient experts in the area of the European Union is self-evident in modern society. In terms of the labour market, discussions with the alumni during the visit showed that most of the graduates of the EU/SP were “adequately employed”. Similarly, social partners were extremely active in supporting the programme, providing regular internships and welcoming graduates to their work places.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The programme offers a combination of courses which are all of Master level in terms of the reading and participation expected, and in the way that they provide training in terms of methodology and research techniques for the final thesis. It is clear from the CVs produced in the SER that tutors are teaching according to their research expertise. The list of dissertations written, and the quality of the final dissertations themselves and the marks and comments awarded show clearly that students are expected to work at master quality and are doing so. This impression was reinforced by the visit. Students appreciated the difference between the requirements of study at bachelors and masters level, recognising that the topics covered were much more specific and that their involvement had to be more analytical; their comments returned more than once to the advanced knowledge base needed and the importance of analytical skills and critical thinking. As to the alumni, they were convinced that the programme had taught them “how Europe works”, a view shared by the social partners one of whom commented that graduates “know the EU backwards and forwards”.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and qualifications offered are compatible with each other. An element of confusion exists in the title, which uses the word “Economy”. In SER, there are several occasions – for example p. 15 section 2.2 “Principles of curriculum design and rationale of the SP” - where reference is made to “Political Economy”, and indeed the courses offered are in political economy or economic history rather than economics pure and simple. The EU/SP alumni felt that it was certainly the “political economy”, which they had mastered being one of the best features of their studies. Current students found that the word “Economy” makes the programme more attractive. Although there are no major

problems with compatibility of the name and content, the Review Panel urges SP committee to consider avoiding misleading keywords.

2.2. Curriculum design

The study programme design meets the legal requirements in terms of volume of the programme, credits allocated to the MA thesis and focus on the study filed. The SP has been revised several times and most recently in 2016. As result of the latter, currently two versions are effective. In both versions all subject courses are within the field of Political Science, which is in concordance with the programme aims and legal requirements but exceeds significantly the national standard (no less than 60 ECTS). Such strong disciplinary approach has certainly many advantages, but leaves almost no room to develop in students understanding of interdisciplinarity.

In earlier version, the curriculum had mainly compulsory subjects – 82%. In recent (2016) version the balance of compulsory and elective subjects has significantly improved. It has now 65 ECTS (76,5%) assigned to the core subjects, and 20 ECTS – to electives. Credits, allocated to the preparation (MA seminars 10 ECTS) and writing the MA thesis (25 ECTS) are sufficient and even exceed the national standard (no less than 30 ECTS).

The share of individual work significantly exceeds the legal standard (no less than 30%). According to the SER (p.17, table 3) in EU/SP the individual work composes for compulsory courses 80% at average starting from the first semester. This kind of curriculum design presumes that: a) students are well familiarised with self-guided leaning and possess relevant skills from the very beginning of their studies; b) teaching staff is well skilled in guiding extensive amount of individual work. During the site visit the review panel made sure that both students and staff feel themselves confident in having such high portion of individual reading. One can conclude that “focus on lecturer guided self-study and development of the skills of autonomous study“, declared as one of the key principles of TLA strategy is being successfully implemented into curriculum design

Study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly across the three semesters, the last semester is devoted to MA thesis preparation and writing. The workload is equally 30 credits (4 subjects) per semester allowing studying full time. The content of compulsory subjects is not repetitive and covers all main aspects of the EU and it processes.

Currently two different versions of the study plan are in effect and therefore 1st and 2nd year students have different arrangements. Second year students still have two modules – Module of European Politics and Ideas and Module of European Political Economy (in English), most of the subjects are allocated within the modules. Due to the low number of students and administrative complexity the modular structure has been abolished in recent SP reform and all students admitted in 2016 have the same list of compulsory subjects and institute-wide list of electives. The ratio of compulsory and elective subjects is now better balanced across the semesters. Also, the choice of electives is wider. Students met by the experts expressed their strong support to the new programme design that gives them more freedom in shaping their individual profile. “I would like to have such study plan!” - one of the second year students expressed the common feeling.

The content of the subjects is adequate to the second cycle programmes; there are no introductory or very basic courses. Course descriptions' content and learning outcomes indicate analytical and problem-driven approach required for the second cycle study programmes. MA seminars (10 credits in total, 5 credits in 3rd and 4th semesters) serve as a good arena to develop

analytical skills and prepare for successful thesis writing. In order to achieve these goals students' work in Master's seminars comprises of individual research work; work with a tutor as well as in the group of students and lecturers. Members of the student panel who had graduated from the BA in Political Science at IIRPS confirmed that at graduate level “the workload is bigger”, there is “more work for seminars”, “topics are more specific and less general”.

The content and methods of compulsory and elective courses provide opportunities to achieve intended learning outcomes. Besides lectures, oriented mainly towards theoretical knowledge, strong emphasis is put on seminars and individual work. As evidenced by the SER, course descriptions and interviews, the dominant learning tool is textual analysis and critical thinking. Students estimate the workload (25-50 pp per seminar class) as challenging, but interesting and enriching. Group work, presentations, data mining and writing tasks are also often and efficiently practiced as became clear in interviews with students and employers. “These students understand what the EU is and how it works”, they can start working in full load from the very first day, social partners explained. Students mentioned positively, that compared to the undergraduate studies they are “evaluated more closely” and teachers have more time for them.

The SP documents and interviewed parties stressed the importance of developing research skills. Yet, the documents reveal that in result of the 2016 curriculum reform the course *Introduction to Political Science Research* has been made optional by the argument that many students with political science background are already familiar with research methods. As the reviewers learned during the interviews, the function of this course is mainly to level up those students who do not have BA in political science. Moving the compulsory subject to the status of an elective may pose certain risks on achieving skills' related learning outcomes at the level appropriate for second cycle studies. The Review Panel strongly recommends rethinking the status of research methods subjects in the academic programme and to include one core course on research methodology and methods.

The second area of concern is the exclusion of economy-related subjects from the programme, including those in English. This is clearly a negative outcome of the curriculum reform. Similar concern has been voiced by the employers. Students were less critical about the amount of economics (“it’s a fair share”) but would like to have more courses in English. The Review Panel finds both concerns well justified and recommends widening the options available in English, and also introducing some work tasks in English (i.e. writing in professional English) into lecture courses taught in Lithuanian.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. The programme provides opportunities to gain good knowledge of classical and modern theories of Political Science in the area of European integration and ability to apply them. Moreover, generic skills are developed within various subject specific courses. The wide range of electives is a good choice but attention should be given that the list will provide sufficient added value for each student both in terms of content knowledge and research skills. The Review Team is concerned with the exclusion of the subject *History of Europe* from the SP entirely, although SER (p. 16) assures that it will remain obligatory. Being competent in European history would provide necessary bases for understanding the contemporary debates, alliances and tensions in the EU. Graduates of the EU/SP must have excellent command of foreign language(s). Currently 8 optional courses out of 27 are offered in English, some other 3 are under consideration as told by the administration. The Review Team endorses this initiative. Yet, both alumni and employers recommended including also English language training into programme in order to enhance the employability of graduates.

The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in political science and European studies. Core courses have a good selection of various sources, both monographs and peer reviewed journal articles. At the same time, classical texts are represented as well.

2.3. Teaching staff

The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements in terms of the percent of lecturers with a doctoral degree. In several criteria the national requirements are exceeded. This is true for congruence of teaching and research profiles (93% against 60%), ECTS taught by professors (73% against 20%), share of experts with practical work experience (20%, against 40% as upper limit allowed).

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Teaching staff is delivering lectures and seminars in the area that corresponds to their qualification and research area. The SER (p. 5) lists among the main research areas of the Institute “the development of the European Union after the Lisbon Treaty” that builds a solid premise to link research and teaching activities of the staff members. A strong majority of them are active in doing research projects and publishing research results what ensures their competence in supervising students’ research work.

The number of the teaching staff is large enough to ensure learning outcomes. EU/SP is implemented by 16 academic staff members, including 5 full professors, 2 associate professors, 5 lecturers with PhD degree and 3 assistants. This allows individual approach to students and efficient supervision of seminars, course works and final theses.

The proportion of students to teaching staff is very low; in 2013-2015 the number of annually admitted students was lower than the number of teachers. At average there is about 2-3 students per teacher, the ratio is somewhat higher if other IIRPS MA programmes are also taken into account. Such ratio has certainly several advantages, but bears also the risk of staff cuts due to low number of students. Thus, some strategic plans are needed to increase the number of students and to widen the international study options.

The teaching staff turnover has been almost no existing and ensures an adequate provision of the programme. In parallel to that, some positive tendencies reveal themselves – three staff members upgraded their qualifications recently. The age distribution of staff is quite equitable across age groups, somewhat skewed towards younger ages.

The VU and IIRPS create adequate conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff. Standard requirements for academic positions are firmly kept, but personal preferences and carrier plans are also taken into account. Every staff member can annually negotiate his/her work plan and chose to orient himself/herself whether more towards research or towards teaching. Such a personal approach has been highly appreciated by the academic staff.

Since 2004 IIRPS applies the System of Motivation Promotion, which is intended to encourage teachers to increase their qualification. Each high rank scientific publication results in financial premium for the employee. Staff members, met by the panel were well aware of the system and found it being transparent, fair and efficient.

To enhance teaching skills of the academic staff, the IIRPS organises methodical and didactical seminars (R software, multivariate regression, Moodle, problem based learning, agent based learning, flipped classroom) some of which are held by visiting lecturers. As SER (p.22) describes, previously the professional development depended to a significant extent on

individual initiative, but since 2016 IIRP organises regular training seminars (two to four times during the semester) for the employees. This is clearly a positive development.

As the SER (p. 24) reveals, the academic staff of EU/SP shows outstanding results in academic mobility. During the period 2013-2015 overall ten lecturers of the program have participated in different conferences, seminars and projects abroad (around 100 visits). 9 visiting professors have been invited to hold lectures at the EU/SP in last three years.

There is no tradition of a regular sabbatical at the Institute, but both administration and staff members appreciated the current tailor made approach (for example, it is possible to postpone the provision of an elective course in sake of academic mobility). No complaints on limitations or restrictions of academic mobility or conference participation have been heard during the site visit.

The teaching staff of the programme is widely involved in research directly related to the study programme being reviewed. According to SER, (table 10, p. 23) during the period 2013-2015 the academic staff of study programme published 113 articles, book chapters and books. This is quite substantial number. Most of articles have appeared in Lithuanian academic journals and edited volumes, some in top level international academic journals or publishing houses (*Journal of Common Market Studies, Communist and Post-Communist Studies, European Policy Studies; Springer, Elsevier*). The statistical data on the distribution of publications across the staff members is not available. The estimate would be 2,3 publications per person annually, which is rather high in the political sciences in the Baltic region).

1 national and 5 international R&D projects have been implemented by the EU/SP academic staff in 2013-15, among them a H2020 project. All R&D projects stand positively out in terms of thematic congruence with the curriculum content and profile.

2.4. Facilities and Learning Resources

All of the lectures and workshops of the programme are arranged in the premises of the Institute. The premises and facilities for studies have been recently renovated and have basic equipment, i.e. the computer and multimedia projector. There are different types of rooms, both auditoriums and classrooms, available for the programme students since the classes take place in the evenings. Considering that the student groups are small (12 to 14), the size of rooms seems adequate. As pointed out in SER, until now the issue of shortage of seminar and group work classrooms is addressed efficiently by the administration approaching lecturers individually. The IIRPS administration pointed out that the availability of classes in general might become more problematic because of the need to prolong classes for BA students due to increased admission. Based on the situation, the Review Team advises to develop in time a plan how to address the issue of space availability.

The library is located in the premises of the Institute. It is rather small and closes at 6 pm. However, there are a few other spaces available for students' individual and group work, in particular two computer rooms with 50 computers open throughout the day and the winter garden. There are also other learning spaces provided by Vilnius University for its academic community, namely the Vilnius University library, located within walking distance from the Institute premises, that is open till 9 pm and the National Open Access Centre of Academic Communication and Information (Vilnius University), open 24 hours a day.

Apart from teaching and learning materials accessible to the students from the Institute library, they have also access to the materials of the Library of the Lithuanian Open Society Fund (which

boasts the richest social sciences library in the region and contains 40 000 publications in English, Lithuanian, French, German and Russian languages) and Vilnius University Library (which subscribes major international digital academic databases such as JSTOR, Sage, Willey Online Library). The yearly budget allocated to update the materials (appr. 360 to 500 EUR) seems to satisfy the needs of course conveners (teaching materials are revised twice a year). Additionally, literature resources are acquired from ongoing research projects.

Usually, the reading materials are provided to students electronically by lecturers via email, Dropbox or Google Drive. Although the academic personnel is encouraged to use Moodle (last spring training was organized for them), it is not widely used yet.

As pointed out in the self-evaluation report, the absence of wireless internet in the premises of the Institute (Eduroam is accessible only in the library) is a drawback. It is recommended to address this issue at an earliest convenience and secure necessary funding from the central office of Vilnius University.

The programme does not include a professional internship into the official student's workload, apparently because the majority of students are employed full time. In the reported period, three programme students conducted internships in different diplomatic missions. Although the EU/SP students stated that they were not offered taking part in research activities, the SER names four students that either joined a research projects or published their research findings in scientific journals ("Politologija" and "Filosofija. Sociologija").

Students and alumni, met by the Review Team note that the internationalisation of the SP should be given more attention by, for example, conducting more courses in and writing papers in English. Social partners also pointed out the need to apply practices of leading universities such as Tartu and Budapest in order to internationalise the study programme. Alumni expressed the opinion that the internationalisation of the programme should be given more attention, in particular by expanding the network of international partner institutions. The expansion of partnership network will speed up attractive carrier paths of graduates, especially in perspective of growing international competition at the high end jobs.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Admission requirements for the candidates are well – founded and publicly available on IIRPPS webpage and in the Rules of Admission to the Second Cycle Study Programmes of Vilnius University. The admission grade mostly depends on the exam (75%) and an average of grades from diploma supplement (25%). All the recommended literature for exam preparation is publicly available and easily accessible. The interviewed students highlighted that exam should be more focused on politics instead of current focus on history. The Review Team got the impression that admission exam questions are not yet updated according to the 2016 curriculum amendments. This is clearly an issue, which should be checked prior to next admission 2017.

The organization of study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. The programme has its own administration of studies, which helps students to solve their problems related to the study process, individual plans, mobility and etc. The information about study process, university life and etc. are presented clearly at introductory lecture and is publicly available on the IIRS webpage. Based on students statements, the Review Team is confident that seminars are well organised, although pretty intensive. Home reading is available via various means and there is a strong achievement oriented culture that makes students come to the classes always well prepared ("otherwise you feel yourself badly"). Teaching staff constantly supports students in the process of master thesis writing, although some students need likely more guidance than currently provided. Dropout rate

in this particular SP are really low (SER, p.30), that is a clear evidence of efficient study process management and adequate admission rules

Students are familiar with possibilities to participate in research activities. SER (p.34) states that IIRPS aims to encourage student research, but the results are modest so far. Only two examples of student involvement in research activities are mentioned in the SER and such state of affairs was further supported by the interviewed students. They are informed that “some kind of association exist” but the overall opinion was that this (the Students’ Research Association) is meant more for undergraduate students. Second reason of non-engagement is heavy seminar workload and intensive full time jobs. The Review Team recommends first, revising how the purpose of Student Research Association is disseminated and second, thinking on better integration of research activities into regular seminar classes.

Students have multiple opportunities to use mobility programs for one semester or one academic year for studies or internship abroad. VU has Erasmus co-operation with large number of universities in different countries. Students seem to be aware of possibilities participating in mobility programs both for studies and internship. Yet, the interviews supported the information provided in SER that only few students have participated in ERASMUS+ studies (p.35), somewhat more students are using opportunities for internship in EU institutions. The reasons of non-participation are related to work and family obligations of the students, which are hard to reconcile with the semester-long exchange studies. The low level of outbound exchange is to a certain extent compensated by numerous incoming international teaching staff. The Review Team highly endorses this kind of efforts.

An adequate academic and social support is ensured by the University staff. Teaching staff are available for consultation, their schedule are clear and could be easily found on the website. Students have a chance to get all relevant information from administrator of the study programme or head of the study programme committee. On the other hand there is a doubt that students receive well-organized support from administration for their final master thesis preparation. Key issue mentioned by student was lack of support before choosing the theme of final thesis. It could be recommended to give more attention to help and inform students effectively about master thesis preparation, suggest help to find proper topic for them. The main form of social support is financial allocations. Students are able to get scholarships from the university and state.

The assessment system of students’ performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. Assessment criteria are presented by lecturers during the first class and also states in the course descriptions, which are publicly available on IIRS webpage. Assessment criteria are oriented towards subject specific and general learning outcomes, which support achievement of SP learning outcomes. Interviewed students told that lecturers involve them in discussing the assessment process and sharing their thoughts about assessment components. Different assessment methods are being used in seminars such as active participation, essays, group or individual projects; the final form of assessment is usually exam. Around 50 % of the grade is composed of seminars participation, which students defined as positive thing, because in seminars students can get better understanding about the topics and practice their analytical skills.

Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers’ expectations. According to data, made by IIRPS and Alumni association, majority of programme graduates (80%) are working or studying after the graduation. Career paths of graduates vary, some graduates work in public institutions (mostly Lithuanian governmental agencies as mid-level specialists), others choose academic career or work in private sector. Social partners, met by the Review Panel assessed professional skills of graduates being at the high competence level.

2.6. Programme management

The responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* (ES) programme are clearly allocated. The bodies governing the study programme management are in place and operate in line with the VU mission statement and other university documents dealing with issues of quality insurance, such as *the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* and the *Vilnius University Quality Manual*. These documents are publicly available at <http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/90>.

According to the SER, Vilnius University (VU) is active in the professional development of its academic staff. Despite the efforts in ensuring the professional development of its academic staff, however, discussions with faculty have revealed that faculty development courses are only offered on an *ad-hoc* basis and lack an overall strategic and long-term perspective.

The Study Programme Committee (SPC) and the Faculty Council (FC) are responsible for the management of the study programme. The SPC is the key body at the institute-level and is accountable to the FC. The SPC brings together representatives from academic staff, students and social partners. The university highly values input from stakeholders – practitioners from the public sector – for the development of the programmes.

The SPC has also been central in providing the self-evaluation of programme. According to SPC members, the meetings are held regularly complemented by “ad-hoc arrangements”. In its work, the SPC can rely on a highly efficient study department and strong involvement of social partners which is strongly valued by the university. The social partners provide close links to the non-academic world.

The information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed both centrally by the Administration of Studies as well as by individual study programmes. The administration relies on the VU information system of studies which also collects information about the implementation of the study programme. Two feedback systems are in place: one managed by the VU, and another, by the IIRPS.

The outcomes of internal and external evaluation of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. Stakeholders, such as social partners, students and alumni, reported satisfaction with the 2016/17 curriculum reforms allowing students to opt from an institute-wide pool of electives. Students have perceived this change as a consequence of their input and feedback.

The evaluation and improvement processes involve various stakeholders, including, in particular, social partners. At VU, social partners are members of the board of trustees and are involved in the Study Programme Committee and the Commission of Final Thesis Defence. Social partners have expressed satisfaction with taking part in these activities. In addition, partners such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defence have not only been instrumental in providing high-quality traineeships to the students, they often serve as employers of currently involved MA students and future graduates. The social partners are very pleased with the strengthening of methodological training as part of the study programme.

Overall, the internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient. The SPC and the Administration work continuously on improving the measurement instrument and on encouraging students’ participation in surveys. The study programme has already started to address the low response rate among students by distributing and collecting questionnaires

during a class toward the end of a semester. By this change it is emphasised that regular feedback is an integral element of quality management in the study programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The IIRPS and SPC are strongly recommended to rethink the status and logic of subjects on economy and research methods in the academic programme. The Review Team advises to have both learning areas represented among compulsory subjects.
2. The name of the SP needs to bring into line with the content. If economy is not substantially represented in the content then Review Team advises not to use the word “economy” in the title.
3. The Review Team advises the Institute and SP Committee to work towards making the programme more international, e.g. expanding the number of courses available in English and adding foreign languages as electives into academic programme.
4. The Review Team advises the Institute and SP Committee to expand network of social partners beyond the circle of those who currently employ IIRPS students and graduates.
5. The Institute is recommended to streamline the student evaluation system and work towards making the evaluation process a truly interactive and ongoing communication between the lecturers and students as part of the programme’s quality assurance.

IV. SUMMARY

The Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS) is responsible for six MA-level study programmes covering areas of Contemporary Politics, Eastern European and Russian Studies, International Relations and Diplomacy, Public Policy Analysis, European Studies and Politics and Media. The *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* SP (EU/SP) is one out of five, which have been under review.

EU/SP is one of the oldest academic programmes in the Institute, which has been regularly revised. This has clearly contributed to many of its strengths, such as highly qualified staff, stable number of students, good literature resources, well established study guidelines and standards, and hard-work-oriented study culture. Whilst preserving valuable traditions, the study programme is kept up to date in terms of content and design. Beginning from the academic year 2016/17, several important changes of the study programme have been implemented, including, in particular, the dissolution of modular structure. One of the central objectives of the reform is to allow students choosing from a wider pool of electives. MA students are thus granted greater flexibility in the sharpening their individual study profile or, alternatively in broadening their disciplinary perspective. So far, the reform enjoys strong support by all parties involved – students, teachers, alumni and employers. However, clearly, the effects of these reforms need to be closely monitored and evaluated over the next few years.

The key objective of the *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* MA programme is “to prepare highly qualified specialists through provision of tools and skills necessary for an in depth analysis and evaluation of political, social and economic processes within Europe and“(SER, p.6). The core and option structure is formed so as to develop that knowledge and the competences relevant to the fields of European Studies.

The review panel is positive about the 'learning outcomes' approach underlying the programme. Programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. The programme offers what it promises, with no mismatch between the learning outcomes, content and qualifications.

The content of the study subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies and are appropriate for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Keeping in mind the future employment areas of graduates it is advised to include more study subjects, or at least study tasks in English, or add foreign language courses into the list of electives.

A real concern for the review panel is the degradation of the research methods subjects to an option mainly aimed at levelling up the students without a bachelor degree in Political Science. Staff did not perceive this to be a problem, but the review panel believes that the students might be confronted with a lack of methodological, analytical and data handling skills when starting their employment. The second area of attention is the availability of economy-related subjects in the academic programme. Review Team considers the exclusion of relevant lecture courses in result of curriculum reform as harmful.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. The staff composition encompasses both theoretical and practical expertise and covers all major topics of the programme. The staff has high rates of international academic exchange and publishes extensively in the area of their teaching. The review panel points positively out, that the mean number of research publications per staff member is remarkable and exceeds the average level in Baltic region. The Review Team advises the management to developing further the System of Motivation Promotion launched in early 2016 and aimed at increase of high level research output.

Classrooms, computer facilities, software and media equipment of IIRPS are sufficient both in their size and quality. The library is not large, but handy. Moreover - electronic scientific databases are widely accessible and regularly used in the study process. Absence of the Wi-Fi in the Institute's building may pose some limitations to the internet based learning. The Review Panel believes that new social media tools (such as Facebook) cannot entirely compensate limited access to the Internet, as well as very modest use of web-based learning platforms (such as Moodle). Infrastructure for group work is somewhat limited. It is necessary to extend the number of small classrooms, computer labs and team-work spaces. The Review Team advises the management to invest in facilities and digital learning resources, in particular infrastructure for group work and one-stop-shop learning platforms.

The admission requirements are well-specified. The university has implemented quality assurance procedures, including student feedback through regularly held surveys. The general assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. Regarding the supervision of final theses, it was felt by students as not always sufficient across various stages of the writing process. Based on these observations the Review Panel advises to pay more attention to the process of students research work, including enhanced individual approach to less talented students.

The willingness of the social partners to contribute to the programme is impressive. They are involved in programme development, final theses defence, and to a lesser extent in teaching and mentoring. In order to successfully meet future challenges (such as the increasing competition in higher education and at the labour market) the review panel recommends the IIRPS stepping out of the "conformity zone" where the EU/SP is currently positioned, and to find novel

collaboration partners at domestic and regional, but even more importantly - at international level.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *European Studies: Ideas, Institutions and Economy* (state code – 621L23003) at Vilnius University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	19

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Anu Toots
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr. Stefan Ganzle
	Prof. Geoffrey Swain
	Ms. Judita Akromienė
	Ms. Julija Stanaitytė

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
EUROPOS STUDIJOS: IDĖJOS, INSTITUCIJOS IR EKONOMIKA (VALSTYBINIS
KODAS – 621L23003) 2016-11-10 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-221
IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Europos studijos: idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika* (valstybinis kodas – 621L23003) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	19

- * 1 – Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)
 2 – Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)
 3 – Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)
 4 – Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų institutas yra atsakingas už šešias magistrantūros studijų programas, apimančias šias sritis: *šiuolaikinės politikos studijos, rytų Europos ir Rusijos studijos, tarptautiniai santykiai ir diplomatija, viešosios politikos analizė, Europos studijos ir politika ir medijos*. Studijų programa *Europos studijos: Idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika* yra viena iš penkių programų, kurios buvo vertinamos.

Ši studijų programa yra viena iš seniausių Instituto studijų programų, kuri nuolat naujinama. Tai akivaizdžiai prisidėjo prie šių jos stiprybių: aukštos kvalifikacijos darbuotojai, pastovus studentų skaičius, geri literatūros ištekliai, tvirtos studijų gairės ir standartai, į sunkų darbą (pastangas) orientuota studijų kultūra. Programos turinys ir sandara nuolat atnaujinami kartu išsaugant vertingas tradicijas. Pradedant 2016–2017 akademisiais metais atlikti keli svarbūs šios studijų programos pakeitimai, įskaitant visų pirma tai, kad atsisakyta modulinės struktūros. Vienas iš pagrindinių šios pertvarkos tikslų – leisti studentams rinktis iš didesnio pasirenkamųjų dalykų bloko. Taigi magistrantūros studentams suteikiama daugiau lankstumo stiprinant individualų studijų profilį arba, kitaip tariant, išplečiant disciplinų prizmę. Šią reformą iki šiol tvirtai palaiko visos dalyvaujančios šalys – studentai, dėstytojai, absolventai ir darbdaviai. Tačiau akivaizdu, kad dar kelis metus reikia atidžiai stebėti ir vertinti jos poveikį.

Pagrindinis magistrantūros programos *Europos studijos: Idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika* tikslas yra „parengti aukštos kvalifikacijos specialistus suteikiant jiems įrankius ir įgūdžius, kurie būtini atlikti išsamią Europos politinių, socialinių bei ekonominių procesų analizę ir vertinimą“ (savianalizės suvestinė, p. 6). Pagrindinių ir pasirenkamųjų dalykų visuma suformuota taip, kad studentai įgytų su Europos studijų sritimi susijusių žinių ir gebėjimų.

Ekspertų grupė teigiamai vertina požiūrį į studijų rezultatus, kuriuo grindžiama ši programa. Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai pagrįsti akademiniais ir profesiniais reikalavimais, visuomenės ir darbo rinkos poreikiais. Ši programa suteikia tai, ką žada, ir neatitikimų tarp numatomų studijų rezultatų, turinio ir kvalifikacijų nėra.

Studijų dalykų turinys atitinka studijų rūšį ir pakopą ir yra tinkamas numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti. Atsižvelgiant į absolventų būsimo darbo sritis, patariama įtraukti daugiau studijų dalykų ar bent studijų užduočių anglų kalba, arba į pasirenkamųjų dalykų sąrašą įtraukti užsienio kalbų dalykus.

Ekspertų grupei kelia rūpestį dalykų apie mokslinių tyrimų metodus atsisakymas pakeičiant juos fakultatyviu dalyku, kuriuo siekiama pakelti politikos mokslų bakalauro laipsnio neturinčių studentų lygį. Dėstytojai nesuvokė, kad tai problema, tačiau ekspertų grupė mano, kad studentams gali pritrūkti metodologinių, analitinių ir duomenų tvarkymo įgūdžių, kai jie pradės dirbti. Antra sritis, į kurią reikėtų atkreipti dėmesį, yra su ekonomika susijusių dalykų prieinamumas šioje programoje. Ekspertų grupė mano, kad svarbių paskaitų kursų panaikinimas reformuojant programą yra žalingas.

Dėstytojų kvalifikacija yra tinkama numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti. Dėstytojų sudėtis užtikrina teorines žinias, praktinę patirtį ir visas svarbiausias programos temas. Dėstytojai aktyviai dalyvauja tarptautinėse mainų programose ir skelbia daug publikacijų iš savo mokymo srities. Ekspertų grupė atkreipia dėmesį į tai, kad vidutinis kiekvieno dėstytojo mokslinių publikacijų skaičius yra įspūdingas, viršijantis Baltijos regiono vidurkį. Ekspertai rekomenduoja vadovybei toliau plėtoti 2016 m. pradžioje pagal motyvacijos skatinimo sistemą numatytas priemones, skirtas didinti aukšto lygio mokslinių tyrimų skaičių.

TSPMI auditorijos, kompiuterinė technika, programinė įranga ir medijų įranga yra tinkama ir pakankama. Biblioteka nėra didelė, bet patogi. Be to, plačiai prieinamos elektroninės mokslinės bazės, kuriomis nuolat naudojamosi studijų procese. Tai, kad Instituto pastate nėra belaidžio interneto (*Wi-Fi*), gali kažkiek trukdyti mokymuisi naudojantis internetu. Ekspertų grupė mano, kad naujos socialinių medijų priemonės (pavyzdžiui, *Facebook*) negali visiškai kompensuoti ribotos prieigos prie interneto ir nepakankamo naudojimosi internetinėmis mokymosi programomis (pvz., *Moodle*). Grupiniam darbui skirtos infrastruktūros mažoka. Būtina didinti klasių, kompiuterių laboratorijų skaičių ir kolektyviniam darbui skirtą plotą. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja vadovybei investuoti į priemones (įrangą) ir skaitmeninius mokymosi išteklius, ypač į grupiniam darbui skirtą infrastruktūrą ir vieno langelio principu veikiančias mokymosi platformas.

Priėmimo reikalavimai yra aiškūs. Universitetas įdiegė kokybės užtikrinimo procedūras, įskaitant studentų grįžtamąjį ryšį, nuolat organizuojant apklausas. Bendroji studijų rezultatų vertinimo sistema yra aiški, tinkama ir viešai skelbiama. Vadovavimas baigiamiesiems darbams, studentų nuomone, ne visuose rašymo proceso etapuose pakankamas. Atsižvelgdami į šiuos pastebėjimus, ekspertai rekomenduoja daugiau dėmesio skirti studentų tiriamojo darbo procesui, įskaitant individualų dėmesį mažiau gabiems studentams.

Socialinių partnerių noras prisidėti prie šios programos daro įspūdį. Socialiniai partneriai dalyvauja tobulinant programą, ginant baigiamuosius darbus, mažiau – mokymo bei mentorystės srityje. Kad Institutas galėtų sėkmingai priimti būsimus iššūkius (pvz., didėjančią konkurenciją aukštojo mokslo srityje ir darbo rinkoje), ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja jam išeiti iš „komforto zonos („conformity zone“), kurioje dabar studijų programa *Europos studijos: Idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika* yra, ir rasti naujų bendradarbiavimo partnerių vietas ir regiono, o svarbiausia – tarptautiniu lygiu.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų institutui (toliau – TSPMI arba Institutas) ir Studijų programos komitetui primygtinai rekomenduojama persvarstyti studijų programos *Europos studijos: Idėjos, institucijos ir ekonomika* dalykų, susijusių su ekonomika ir mokslinių tyrimų metodais, statusą (privalomieji ar pasirenkamieji) ir nuoseklumą. Ekspertų grupė pataria abi studijų sritis įtraukti į privalomuosius dalykus.
2. Šios studijų programos pavadinimą reikia suderinti su jos turiniu. Jei ekonomikos turinyje nelabai daug, ekspertų grupė pataria pavadinime nevertoti žodžio „ekonomika“.
3. Ekspertų grupė pataria Institutui ir Studijų programos komitetui stengtis padidinti šios programos tarptautiškumą, pvz., daugiau dalykų dėstyti anglų kalba, o užsienio kalbas įtraukti į programą kaip pasirenkamuosius dalykus.
4. Ekspertų grupė Institutui ir Studijų programos komitetui pataria plėsti socialinių partnerių tinklą dabartinių Instituto studentų ir absolventų darbdavių gretas papildant naujais partneriais.
5. Institutui rekomenduojama supaprastinti studentų vertinimo sistemą ir stengtis, kad vertinimo procedūra taptų tikrai interaktyviu ir nuolatiniu dėstytojų bei studentų bendradarbiavimu, kaip sudėtine kokybės užtikrinimo programos dalimi.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)