

THE IMPACT OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAM ON THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CROATIAN VITICULTURE AND ENOLOGY ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE POLYTECHNIC IN POŽEGA

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Abstract

The Polytechnic in Požega was founded in 1998. with the one of primary aim for improving winegrowing, enology and fruit production in Slavonia (Croatia). Taking into account the history and the relatively young independence of the Croatia, one of the goals of the establishment of the Polytechnic in Požega is to create an international recognition of Croatia's viticulture and enology. Nine years ago the Polytechnic received the first ERASMUS charter, which is also the first international institution project. The paper presents the importance of ERASMUS + mobility program on education and development of students social skills, teacher training and international recognition in the example of cooperation between the Polytechnic in Požega and the equivalent French wine schools. The study includes data collected from the system of ERASMUS+ program at the Polytechnic in Požega a survey of current students on professional study Viticulture – enology – pomology, students and teachers who participated in the exchange with French schools. After data processing, the positive impact of participation in the mobility program is reflected in several aspects. Better communication in a foreign language, two-way transfer of new and traditional technologies in wine and grape production between Croatian and France, more intensive participation in international wine events and professional associations, as well as dispersion of the international association of the Polytechnic in Požega with the mediation of French partner institutions. The presented data show indisputable international recognition Polytechnic in Požega in areas of viticulture and enology and therefore Croatia itself.

Keywords: *ERASMUS+, viticulture and enology, Croatia.*

1. Introduction

On Croatian territory are evidence of viticulture since the time of the Etruscans and Greeks which spread viticulture westward (Mirošević I Karoglan Kontić 2008). Although it has a very long tradition of grape growing and winemaking, it is necessary to take into account the fact that independent Croatia was internationally recognized at 1991. Allegations in certain wine-growing and winemaking atlases Croatia mentioned just in a group of Balkan countries (Domine, A. 2004). It is not uncommon to mention only coastal areas that are tourism-exposed, and that the continental region is completely ignored. In recent years, great efforts have been made to make Croatian winemaking recognizable on the international stage. One of the goals of the Polytechnic in Požega is to create an international recognition of Croatia's viticulture and enology. The Polytechnic in Požega was founded in 1998. Nine years ago, the Polytechnic received the first ERASMUS charter, which is also the first contact of institution with similar educational institutions in Europe.

A significant link between the Polytechnic and the French Wine Schools was done by Mrs. Corinne Samouilla (French Ministère de L'Agriculture et de L'Alimentation). The mentioned cooperation over the past three years has resulted in the inclusion of the Polytechnic in Požega on the European network of Wine Schools. Active participation in conferences and competitions The Polytechnic becomes an ambassador of Croatian viticulture and winemaking. Communication with colleagues from the European family with the aim of presenting Croatian wines has resulted with this research.

2. Objectives

The aim of the research was to present an importance of Erasmus+ program on the example of the Polytechnic in Požega in the promotion of Croatian viticulture and winemaking through partnerships with French and European educational institutions.

3. Methods

The study was performed with students involved in Erasmus+ mobility program. Besides the usual participants of exchange program we also include, students which attended the professional, international competitions that came from the collaboration of the French Ministry and the Polytechnic in Požega. The questionnaire contained the following questions that we are asked foreign students on international exchange program or in viticulture and winemaking competitions:

1. Do you know some Croatian grapevine (*Vitis vinifera* L.) varieties?
2. Do you know the three leading grapevine varieties in Croatia?
3. What is Graševina?
4. Do you know some vine growing areas in Croatia?
5. Where is Slavonia?
6. How are labeled wines in Croatia?
7. Did you taste any wine from Croatia?

The data were collected in the population of students from the wine school of Europe. The study also includes students from French wine schools who have been studying at the Polytechnic in Požega. All students are ages 18 to 25. The research has been conducted over the last three years.

4. Discussion

Research results suggest that colleagues from Europe have very little knowledge of the Croatian wine scene. The exception is neighboring countries such as Slovenia, Hungary and the northern part of Italy. First of all it should be noted that the study included mostly younger people, mostly aged between 18 and 20 years. Students do not know the most common wine varieties in Croatia (Graševina, Malvazija Istarska I Plavac mali). This is particularly important because the names of wines in Croatia are equal with names of grape varieties. Graševina, which is the most widely planted grape variety, is cultivated under different synonyms in the Danube Basin (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Romania), and is not related to one of the synonyms of the variety. This indicates that Graševina wines are completely unknown to students from Europe. Graševina wines become interesting especially if we are presented as domestic grape variety of Croatian. Although Croatia is a small country area of wine growing is a very diverse. All wine-growing areas in the world are divided on the basis of the sum of effective temperatures. Of the five zones in Croatia we find four (B, C1, C2 and C3) (Maletić I sur. 2003). There is little known fact that two of the three types of climate are represented in Croatia both the Mediterranean and the Continental. The largest and most important wine sub-region, Slavonia is completely unknown and is often mixed with Slovenia or Slovakia.

Wine quality marks on labels are completely unknown since they are specific for the Republic of Croatia and Slovenia. The students of Slovenia still have more knowledge of Croatia's wine compared to other students thanks to the historical connection with Croatia

As the data collection was done in English, the research has also had a positive impact on the international affirmation of students of the Polytechnic in Požega.

5. Conclusions

Although the results indicate the currently weak recognition of Croatia as wine country, it is worth inclusion Polytechnic in Požega in international, professional associations. On this way the promotion of Croatian wine-growing areas, wine grape varieties and wines gives a significant contribution to Croatia's viticulture. The Polytechnic in Požega is currently the only Croatian representative in the European network of Wine Schools with the aim of including new institutions in the network, primarily a related professional study in Poreč. We will continue to research and promote Croatian wines during 2019 at student competitions in Paris and Schengen.

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