

THE DIALOGUE AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES

“THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY COOPERATION PROMOTING PEACE BETWEEN EU AND RUSSIA FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES”

Intervention of Prof. Massimo Caneva, PhD, MD - President AESI ROME

Abstract: *The intervention will focus on university cooperation as an important tool to help and promote cooperation mostly between young people. This cooperation will also be viewed as an essential means of contributing to intercultural and interfaith dialogue. There will be considered commitment to fostering reciprocal knowledge and respect, both on a national and on an international level. Therefore, to analyse the roles of education and Academic Institutions as crucial tools of public diplomacy in action for young people dialogue. Tools which, from each country's domestic perspective, are also vehicles of integration for an effective management of cultural and religious.*

Introduction

One of the basic challenges for the XXI Century is international peace and development in the light of the new world balance. Today, there are problems that can only be solved by action at the global level. New strategic thinking is required to approach global issues and advance “global public goods”. Consequently, international communities must become protagonists of a new strategy to intervene to promote peace, development, a strategy based on realistic and effective foreign common policy.

Such a strategy must include the collaborative efforts of diplomatic, economic and peace forces actions, while being rooted in the common goal of development of a strong cooperation culture of solidarity capable of understanding local needs and providing quick and efficient solutions that are at once professional and respectful of human dignity.

New problems when addressed with new sensibilities can lead to truly effective solutions. Such a strategy must rely on cultural expertise and include expert knowledge of the theoretical elements of crisis and development management, and the capability to understand the real comprehensive needs of the populations, and their historical and cultural roots in order to give effective answers to them and to promote peace and development even in the first phases of the interventions.



FORUM AESI - St. Petersburg State University of Economics

Video: <https://youtu.be/efoG4Ks0rog>

University Cooperation promoting Dialogue for Peace

A competent and comprehensive response requires a multidisciplinary approach. In every university cooperation programme for peace it is necessary to take into account that the objective of an action aiming to analyse the situations must take into consideration the cultural context, in order to advance the technical and cultural objectives of the cooperation.

Universities can play a significant role in this new strategy, if they build partnerships with other relevant actors, including international organizations, diplomacy, peace forces and NGOs. Universities should not act as an elite, far removed from real problems and challenges. On the contrary, universities and their faculty should be engaged in the field and share their expertise and knowledge as well as learn from other actors.

The traditional *“academic collaboration”* is distinct from the *“university cooperation for peace and development”* understood as a strategy of action aimed to build a more developed and peaceful society. In fact, *university cooperation* needs to manage and deal with a double problem of independence in order to face the challenges to which it is called: from one side, it has to tackle the problem of research, didactics and operational services naturally built into the academic structure; from the other, it has to deal with the necessity of reconciling technical-scientific interventions, that must be tailored to the real demands of the local populations whose needs become are gradually discovered as the project proceeds.

When we speak about *university cooperation* we don't refer only to the exchange of lecturers and researchers - which is usually the objective of traditional forms of academic collaboration - although this kind of activity may be very useful. *University cooperation* implies a more general strategy based on both analysis and action, of training and research in the field, of cooperation among the academy and civil institutions, diplomats and international organizations, volunteers and peace forces, in order to provide support in both the prevention and solution of crisis promoting future development.



Rector of St. Petersburg State University of Economics, Italian Consul and President AESI

KEY STRATEGIC CONCEPTES

A. University Cooperation Responsibilities

Nowadays, Universities are called to cover new responsibilities within the context of the International Community with special attention to the crisis areas; for this reason itself, they are asked to answer to these responsibilities through new means rediscovering its mission of service in the Society. In order to avoid the fragmentation of the single initiatives and experiences and the dispersion of the results, the entire university system is called to action: this situation will strengthen and better coordinate the numerous different activities. Moreover, a “cultural return effect” would be produced; these external influences would become a legacy for the whole academic world and not only for individual protagonists of the single initiatives.

As regards the operational modalities of action, it is necessary to individuate and coordinate in an organic way three fundamental and, in a sense, “natural” and spontaneous competencies used by the University Cooperation for Peace:

- The academic and scientific dimension
- The managerial and organizational competencies
- The motivational character of service that the University is used to have towards the civil society and the international community

It is fundamental to divide the traditional “*Academic Collaboration*” due to scientific tasks from the “*University Cooperation for Peace and Development*” as a strategy of action aimed to build a more and more developed and peaceful society. In fact, University Cooperation needs to manage and deal with a double problem of interdependence in order to face the challenges to which it is called: from one side, it has to tackle the problem of research, didactics and operational services naturally built-in the academic structure; from the other it has to deal with the necessity of conciliating technical-scientific interventions, that are sectorial by their own nature, with the real demands of the local populations whose needs become more and more evident as the project goes on.

B. Education and Solidarity

There are 3 fundamental conditions that guarantee the success of the University Cooperation for Peace and Development actions:

1. The clearness of the motivational boosts creating and pushing forward the single initiatives and activities of cooperation
2. The plurality of operational options which permits to intervene and act in a targeted way aimed to respond to single and various situations according to the needs of the single local societies;
3. The clear definition of roles in order to avoid organizational anomalies deriving from the possible mixing of tasks and duties and in order to simplify the coordination among different actors.

Spreading solidarity and international cooperation values within the university structures and institutions is very helpful to promote the relations among high education and research for peace and development institutes and it determines the human person information and growth process, above all for youth.

The linkage between peace, development and freedom is very tied. Substantial freedom and liberties (such as the political participation and the right to the access to basic education) are some of the fundamental aspects of peace and development processes. Human beings were born with a limited freedom and they need help to complete and effectively and fully concretize it. Education is the first and fundamental act of solidarity. In fact, it is a great help to reach the conquest of the doing-well freedom and to realize the complete development of humanity. The international scenario shows to the whole humanity the importance of the peaceful cohabitation among different ethnic and cultural groups and the necessity of protecting its essential unity.

C. The Context

In the particular historical moment we are living in, peace and international stability are very weak and they have to be protected in all possible ways. Nowadays, in fact, it is very important to deeply reflect about how the International Community is facing the recent crisis and about the comprehension and the answers to all the urgent necessities blowing up in the new world scenario.

Each International Community intervention, which has to encourage cooperation among peoples in the world and to promote the human society development, above all in countries affected by war and poverty, has to be characterized by a political, economical and social strategy connected with the solidarity values. The new challenges of the XXI Century are peace and international security. Moreover, understanding that the respect for the human being itself and the safeguard of his inviolable rights (first of all the right to life) is the key point to build a better future and a better society where each citizen will be able to actively and freely participate to the development of his/her own country. This commitment assumes a very deep cultural meaning where future generations education acquires an evident priority.

First of all, I believe that University, even if it remains always engaged in its traditional task of developing research and didactics, can also function as a meeting and discussing place where men loving knowledge would learn to consult each other and to communicate putting their own experience in the service of colleagues. We have to desire to be witnesses of the fact that peace and cooperation are possible and that university can give an important contribution to the International Organizations and Political Institutions in developing peace in the world realizing what nor politics neither diplomacy neither armed forces had been able to do.

The historical context we are living in is marked by deep cultural and political scratches, International Community anxieties about re-creating peace in many regions of the world torn out by terrorism and war affecting unarmed and exhausted populations because of years of hardships.

University, through Cooperation, is now called to give a concrete contribution to the stabilization processes in recently democratised countries encouraging the shift from emergency to collaboration, civil integration and development. Therefore, educating youth to social responsibility and mutual comprehension of international themes means promoting the elaboration of solutions that are common and appropriate to urgent crisis and contain cooperation and solidarity values. Educating new generation also means to avert one of the most serious problem of our times: terrorism.

I would like to ask to Universities to work together with the International Organizations, United Nations and European Union where it is particularly difficult to promote peace and dialogue proposing fair solutions which would respect human dignity. Therefore, it is very important to emphasize the role of universities having them an innovative approach to cooperation projects and programmes and it is necessary to give them a bigger political attention and financial resources.

D. The Global Strategy

Universities can play a significant role if they build partnerships with other relevant actors, including international organizations, diplomacy, peace forces and NGOs. Universities should not act as elite far from real problems and challenges. On the contrary, universities and their staff should be engaged in the field and should share their expertise and knowledge as well as learn from other practitioners.

In particular, when we speak about *university co-operation in crises situations* we do not refer only to the exchange of lecturers and researchers - which is usually the objective of traditional forms of academic collaboration – although this kind of activity may be very useful. University co-operation implies, in fact, a more general strategy based on both analysis and action, of training and research on the field, of co-operation among the academic world and civil institutions, diplomats and international organizations, volunteers and peace forces, and so on, in order to provide support in both the prevention of crises and humanitarian assistance.

It is not enough to be an expert in a specific field to be able to concretely contribute to programmes promoting democracy, stability, good governance, and conflict resolution. Not only do universities need well-trained experts with the ability to intervene in particular situations in an efficient and timely manner, but they also need people that are capable of understanding and providing comprehensive answers to the specific situations and challenges of a given country, and facilitating the collaboration among all the actors engaged on the field. This requires a new role for and a new vision of the university, which has to be thought of not only as a place where people exchange ideas and deepen culture, but also and above all as an institution actively engaged in serving society.

E. What is desirable

Therefore, we have the following wishes for the future:

- The definition of new guide-lines and appropriate means for University Cooperation for Peace and Development
- The more intense promotion of the coordination between the International Organizations and the Universities in order to deepen the subjects related to the cooperation within the peace processes and that answer to the urgent necessities of the new international scenario in accordance with the International Law and the Charter of the United Nations and in the respect of the human person dignity;
- The enrichment of the traditional academic collaboration (consisting of the activities of the Universities in the international field) through the new University Cooperation for Peace

and Development strategy in partnership with all the actors, both institutional and non-institutional involved

- The guarantee that the Cooperation is an integral high-quality part of the academic courses through the continuous updating activities targeting education to specific needs of the new international scenario peace and development
- The strengthen of cooperation programmes involving students, postgraduate researchers and professors encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to the problems related to development and peace. This strategy will guarantee a better understanding of the international crisis. The common effort for a public opinion sensitization action directed to increase attention to cooperation and, in particular, university cooperation as an effective foreign policy instrument in favour of peace and development

The growth and the development of this cooperation among International Actors with Universities working together in an active way through continuous consultation in crisis situations in order to draw and implement a common strategy of action in favour of peace and development. The increase of resources so that Universities can collaborate in a more active way with the International Organization to face the new development challenges promoting peace processes in crisis situations and, particularly, about the following topics:

- University Cooperation and Education to Solidarity;
- Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication;
- Human Rights;
- Peace and Democracy Promotion;
- Migrations;
- Health and Environment;
- Cultural and Artistic Heritage;
- Information and Communication.

II - AESI promoted Dialogue and Peace

The Program of Rome International Seminar

Rome International Seminar is a University Cooperation Program for the promotion of Peace and Culture of Dialogue organized by Roma Tre University with the support of the Italian Cooperation. My long experience, as Director of RIS and also President AESI, has been very important for the organization of RIS 2015/2017/2019 Editions of the Seminar: in the crisis of the Balkans, following the Dayton Agreements, he promoted University Cooperation Programmes for Peace between the Universities of Sarajevo and Belgrade with the participation of the United Nations and EUFOR; as well as in the Middle East among Universities of Hebrew Israeli University, Palestinian Universities, Private University of Syria, USEK of Lebanon and AUM Madaba of Jordan with the participation of UNIFIL and UNTSO. In RIS Program is very important the cooperation also of St. Petersburg State Economic University, University of Vienna, University of Goteborg, St. Mary University College of London and UNED University of Madrid.

In the Balkans, at the end of the dramatic conflict, a new strategy of collaboration between the University Cooperation and the United Nations was born in favour of peace. The common goal was to create an academic program that aimed at the reconstruction and real civil integration of the countries involved in the conflict through academic training in the Public Administration and Humanitarian Aid sectors of their young graduates (Serbs, Muslims and Croats). This project would have allowed the next generation to remain in the countries of origin and the program certainly represented the first field action in this field at the international level between the University and the United Nations with their Peace Forces. In 2001, infact, the First Conference of Balkan Rectors in Sarajevo was organized for this in the UN HQ in Sarajevo. The Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Amb. J.P. Klein UNMIBH and the Rectors of the Balkans. Shortly thereafter, the Rectors of Sarajevo and Belgrade met to sign an agreement for a Masters in State Management and Humanitarian Affairs that would have seen more than 120 young graduates from the various universities, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia attend. Many of them would have found work and actively participated in the state institutional development (one of them was Deputy Mayor of Sarajevo, others are Legal Advisers of the Presidency of the Republic, etc.) and international.

The importance of the Cooperation among Diplomacy, Military Peacekeepers and Universities is a point at which AESI pays particular attention to its activities in the crisis areas. In fact, the culture of peace passes through an increasingly careful strategy of true cooperation among those who are International Actors, aimed at guaranteeing security and peace in the areas of crisis. The AESI devotes particular attention to the institutional relations with these International Actors.

AESI devotes particular attention to institutional relations with these actors. An example, the South NATO command in Europe in Naples led by Admiral James Foggo. The friendship and collaboration with Admiral Foggo is now a consolidated reality: Known when he was already the commander of the sixth US fleet in Naples and then visited at the Pentagon in Washington in his duties as chief of staff of the Navy, is an important reference point in the international education of AESI students.

In the **Middle East**, starting from Lebanon, where AESI has been committed for more than 16 years in the work of dialogue and promotion of the culture of dialogue and solidarity between the academic realities of the country such as those of the Lebanese State University with a strong Muslim presence and with that Of the Christian Maronite Usek University. Also in this case, AESI involved the reality of the United Nations international military forces as UNIFIL, thanks to continuous visits and contacts with the commanders, beginning with General Claudio Graziano.

In Cyprus, the AESI sought in 2010 to bring its message of university cooperation with the UN military forces of interposition meeting the representation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Force military Commander.

In Jerusalem, the realities of the crisis that sees conflicting Israelis and Palestinians with repercussions throughout the Middle East. Particularly linked to this difficult reality, the AESI has always undertaken to maintain contact with the command of the UNTSO in Jerusalem, meeting in Jerusalem the various commanders and inviting them to visit Rome and to participate in Congress activities and courses that They have always facilitated this tremendous job of seeking peace.



MIDDLE EAST. Starting from Lebanon, where AESI has been committed for more than 16 years in the work and promotion of the culture of dialogue and solidarity between the academic realities of the Countries such as those of the Lebanese State University with a strong Muslim presence and with that of the Christian Maronite USEK University. AESI involved the reality of the United Nations international military forces as UNIFIL, thanks to continuous visits and contacts with the commanders, beginning with General Claudio Graziano.



JERUSALEM Another scenario, the realities of the crisis that sees conflicting **Israelis and Palestinians** with repercussions throughout all the Middle East. Particularly linked to this difficult reality, the AESI has always undertaken to maintain contact with the Commander of the UNTSO in Jerusalem, meeting in Jerusalem the various Commanders and inviting them to visit Rome and to participate in Congress activities and courses that they have always facilitated this tremendous job of seeking peace.



SARAJEVO. Since the post-signing of the Dayton Accords, AESI has been present, meeting them in Sarajevo and inviting them to Italy as Ambassador Klein, representative of the UN Secretary general together with the rectors of the universities of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Muslim cultural and religious expressions, Croatian and Serbian) then collaborating with EUFOR through the commander General Castagnotto an important reality that has seen the synergy of all international actors.



CYPRUS. In 2010, AESI promoted its message of University Cooperation for Peace with the UNFICYP and met the Head of the Mission Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Force Military Commander.



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University of Roma Tre : Director of Rome International Seminar University of Roma Tre (Editions: 2016/2017/2019/2022) Video: <https://youtu.be/9Me4K3Hx8Bg>

University Hospital Campus Bio-Medico: Coordinator of the International Program "Health and Diplomacy" 2019/2020. Convention between University Hospital CBM with MAECI and Ambassadors to the Holy See - Video PUCBM: https://youtu.be/so4iue0a_p8

Video Health and Diplomacy Program: <https://youtu.be/oHJui6GU2YE>

University of Roma Tor Vergata: Coordinator: European and Mediterranean Rectors Conference in Rome (9 November 2018) (23 June 2017); World Rectors Conference XIII Symposium Jubilee of University (8 September 2016); EU and Middle East Rectors Conference (23 June 2017), Rectors Conference Villa Mondragone 2018

Sapienza University of Rome: JERUSALEM ROME Secretary General Master on "Social Sciences and Humanitarian Affairs" with Israeli and Palestinian Universities (2005/2015) with the Patronage of UNESCO (Paris) Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Db95tvOUvbg>

LEBANON: Secretary General of the Master on "University Cooperation for Peace and Development" with USEK and Lebanese Universities (2008/2014) Professor (contract) of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Courses (2012/2013) Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydJGjIb4wKg&feature=youtu.be>

ROME : Development and Crisis (2013/2014) at the Degree on Sciences of Development and Cooperation - Faculty of Political Sciences ERASMUS Students Courses

Italian Foreign Affairs - Italian Cooperation: Coordinator of the Universities Committee for Cooperation for Peace and Development DGCS - Italian Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006/2014

Programmes of University Cooperation: Latin America: Epidemic of Cholera in Peru, in Chile for MCH cooperation (1987/1995); **Asia:** Philippines MCH in Tondo Manila District, Sri Lanka Tsunami (1990 and 2010); **Middle East:** Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan for university cooperation for peace with UNESCO - UNTSO and UNIFIL (2002/2017); **Caucasus:** Armenia for Humanitarian Assistance for Earthquake (1988/95); **Baltic Region:** Estonia for social crises integration of Russian Speaking and Estonian University Students (1996/97) Russian Federation : St. Petersburg State University of Economics FORUM AESI 2017/2018; **Balkans :** Peace programmes Sarajevo and Belgrade with collaboration of Italian Ministry of Defence /Peace Force SFOR – EUFOR (1999/2015)

Italian Basket National Team: Medical Doctor of the National Teams (1986/87)