

Laudatio

In honor of Professor doctor Evangelos Vitoratos, University of Patras, Greece

Professor Evangelos Vitoratos from Department of Physics of the University of Patras started collaborating with faculties of Physics in Romania, mainly through the works of EUPEN (European Physics Education Network, 1996-2003) and later in the frameworks of the European projects: ‘Tuning, 2000-2008’, ‘‘STEPS (Stakeholders Tune European Physics Structures, 2005-2008), ‘‘STEPS-TWO, 2008-2011’’ and HOPE (Horizons in Physics Education, 2013-2016) and recently in CALOHEE (Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Europe, 2016-2017). From the beginning, he had a special relationship with Professor Gheorghe Singurel and with the Department of Physics from Iasi. Among the emotional arguments for that may we mention the fact that, being a connoisseur of the history of the Balkans, he has always linked the city of Iași, with the historic region of Moldavia and the history of the struggle for the liberation of the Greek people and Filiki Eteria movement. Sensitive observer and researcher of the history and evolution of Greece - Romania relations, Professor Evangelos Vitoratos considered that peoples of the two countries pertaining to the same development region, with centuries of common history must be the engine of a very solid and fruitful scientific and academic cooperation between Patras and Iasi.

From the administrative positions occupied at the Department level and as member of the Senate, Professor Evangelos Vitoratos encouraged and supported cooperation between our universities not only in Physics but in other areas of studies.

Socratic spirit and great lover of the history of science and technology, he has always considered students, regardless of their profile or specialization, not only heirs of history but also its makers, and as consequence he is a highly admired teacher irrespective of the country of origin of the students that had the opportunity to meet him in formal and informal events. Many students have benefited from the support of his mastery in Physics Studies as well as his experience in European Physics Education Networks and Erasmus Programme.

Born April 1st, 1954, in Cephalonia, one of the popular islands of Greece in the Ionian Sea not only because it is the biggest of them, Professor Evangelos Vitoratos grew up scouting the sea and particularly Ithaca, the island of Odysseus and Penelope. Sitting on the white sand of the beach of Myrtos, situated not far from their hometown, famous among travelers and tourists, he probably repeated many of Kafavis beautiful lyrics that make Ithaca not an impossible target but the purpose of a voyage. “Keep Ithaca always in your mind. /Arriving there is what you are destined for. / But do not hurry the journey at all. / Better if it lasts for years, so you are old by the time you reach the island, wealthy with all you have gained on the way, not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.”

Professor Evangelos Vitoratos has chosen to make an impressive career at the University of Patras, probably because returned from his frequent wanderings throughout the world, he can travel in any season to native island of Cephalonia to scout Ithaca as a possible and permanent target.

He studied at the University of Patras, where he graduated in 1976, where he did Master degree studies and the doctorate that he defended in 1989. The subject of his doctoral thesis is “The Study of Magnetoresistance in Fe₇S₈ single Crystals”.

In 2003 he became full professor at the University of Patras where he worked the entire life but is also associate at University of Athens, Thessalonica University and the Hellenic Open University.

During this period not only engages in research in the field of Solid State physics but also carried out activities of the European networks, mentioned at the beginning. Research areas are: transport phenomena in solids (Semiconductors, conductive polymers, conductive transparent films), magnetism (magnetic semiconductors, terrestrial magnetism and archaeomagnetism) and scientific and technological education (teaching, history and philosophy of science, semiotics, intervention in the classroom).

Professor Vitoratos is deeply involved in the initial and in-service education of teachers of Physics and Sciences in Greece and Europe and participated as a consultant in the design and implementation of Master of Science and Ph. D. programmes in Physics Education.

He was one of the founders of the Museum of Science and Technology at the University of Patras and leads Museum Committee.

Professor Evangelos Vitoratos is a great lover of classical, folk and modern music. He is a founding member of the Club of Classical music in the city of Patras and among the founding members of the "The Plucked Strings Orchestra of the Municipality of Patras" with which he performed in many cities in Greece and Europe. He was also a member of the "Patraiki Mandolinata" a well know orchestra in Greece.

Professor Vitoratos supervised dozens of scientific internships and working visits in the departments of Physics of Romanian students and participated in numerous working meetings in European projects in which he was involved promoting Romania and Romanian faculties of Physics as active members of educational networks.

In short, in an alphabetical order of the countries, cities and universities visited by Professor Vitoratos we can mention : Austria (Linz, Vienna), Belgium (Brussels, Antwerp, Gent), Bulgaria (Sofia, Pleven, Varna), Cyprus (Nicosia, Limassol), Croatia (Zagreb), Estonia (Tallinn), Finland (Helsinki), France (Paris, Marseille), Germany (Berlin, Hanover), Ireland (Dublin), Hungary (Budapest, Miskolc, Szombathely), Italy (Rome, Naples, Palermo, Bologna, Udine), Latvia (Riga), Lithuania (Vilnius), United Kingdom (Imperial college of London), Netherlands (Amsterdam, Eindhoven), Portugal (Coimbra, Aveiro, Lisbon), Romania (Constanța, Bucharest, Sibiu, Iasi), Slovenia (Ljubljana), Spain (San Sebastian, Bilbao, Madrid, Granada, Barcelona).

A prestigious scientific research activity in the field of Physics of condensed matter materialized in over 70 articles ISI with a Hirsch index of 16. The vast majority of these articles, published in journals with a high impact factor, treats the phenomena of electrical conduction in materials like natural compounds or synthesized in the laboratory, pirotyne and iron sulfides, cadmium sulfide, cobalt germanides, conducting polymers or copolymers, compounds nonmetallic, conducting polymer-zeolite composites, heterojunctions, etc. One must mention his pioneering contribution in the field of aging and degradation studies of semiconducting organic compounds useful for technological applications.

Permanently concerned about the teaching of physics and how natural sciences are taught, how teachers are trained, and how they are supported to evolve into a career, professor Vitoratos has dedicated many hours on pedagogical research publishing dozens of papers or reports or translating books. Proof of his being a great lover of music, theatre, dance and visual arts stand many of the articles published in education journals with high impact factor as Science and Education, Semiotics, Review of Science,

Mathematics and ICT Education, etc. could be encountered in the field of “Science and Arts!”

To understand the European dimension of the contribution made by professor Vitoratos in the field of Physics Education, one can mention several reports from projects in which he was involved:

- Learning Outcomes: Generic Skills.
- Conclusions and Recommendations from the Pilot Project "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe"
- The Academics' Evaluation of the Specific Competences, in Tuning Educational Structures in Europe
- Operational Definitions of the Core Contents, in Tuning Educational Structures in Europe
- The Physics Degree Profiles in the Bologna Process, in Tuning Educational Structures in Europe
- Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Physics
- Physics Teacher Education and its European Dimension

In recognition of his prestigious scientific and educational activities Professor Evangelos Vitoratos was invited to lecture in many international meetings on Materials Science or Education in Science Museums and Science Centers.

Professor Vitoratos was head of the Department of Physics, Member of the Senate and was re-elected by the members of the School of Sciences for a second three-year term Director of the Museum of Science and Technology at University of Patras.

He is a member of the Hellenic Society of Physics and European Physical Society.

Professor Vitoratos is a good friend of the Faculties of Physics in Romania, of their representatives and of tens of students who visited through an internship in longer or shorter Erasmus stages the University of Patras. Not the sea nore the great geographical position of the new campus of Rio in Patras make these visits so

desired but Evangelos Vitoratos' professionalism in carrying out research, projects or supporting professional development of young is well-known.

Scientific knowledge, cultural and human qualities of Vaggelis Vitoratos make him a partner of discussion in an extraordinarily pleasant way. These qualities have enchanted many Greek and European students who chose to maintain a very close professional and human relationship with their mentor, Vaggelis Vitoratos.

By proposing to award the title of Honorary Professor of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi to Professor Evangelos Vitoratos, we express our admiration for his scientific and teaching career, for the devotion and diligence with which he has initiated and developed collaborative relations between Romania and Greece, between the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi and the University of Patras.

In recognition of his outstanding scientific results and the role played in the development of friendly relations of cooperation between the universities of Patras and Iasi, today, May 18th 2017, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi awards Professor Evangelos Vitoratos the title of Honorary Professor.

The Laudatio Committee

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Iasi, 18 May, 2017