

# INTERNET UČENJE I VEZA SA VAŽNIM POSLOVNIM CILJEVIMA OBRAZOVANJA NA TODOR KABLESHKOV SAOBRAĆAJNOM UNIVERZITETU

## E-LEARNING AND THE LINK WITH THE BUSINESS – IMPORTANT GOALS OF EDUCATION AT TODOR KABLESHKOV UNIVERSITY OF TRANSPORT

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Petar Kolev <sup>1</sup>, Daniela Todorova <sup>2</sup>, Nina Gergova <sup>3</sup>

### Summary

One of the major tasks of Bulgaria is to create favorable conditions for the university education and professional development of young people. This is a national cause that will provide European development of Bulgaria. On the other hand the up-to-date education and opportunities for development of young people would contribute to improve demographic status in the country. Also they are major factors for overcoming the economic crisis and increasing the quality of life.

The EU developed a special Resolution on the social inclusion of young people to meet the requirements of the Lisbon Strategy. All activities and events aim at promoting the entrepreneurship, innovations and competencies of young people. The goal is to stimulate young people to strive for independence and realization by making independent decisions and applying individual approach to life.

The number of the higher education institutions in Bulgaria – 51 (30 universities, 13 specialized higher schools and 8 independent colleges), demographic collapse, as well as the EU requirements for harmonization of the approaches and practice with other European countries resulted in increase of competition in the field of university education. Recently, the emigration of young people increased in Bulgaria. The rate of the unemployment among the young also increased. This in turn, results in increasing the competitiveness of the labor market for young professionals. The young graduates in order to be successful in the labor market need to have knowledge, skills and competencies covering the employer's expectations. Regarding this, the education obtained in university has to meet the economic needs of specialists with certain skills and qualification.

Todor Kableshkov University of Transport, with a 92 – year –old history, is a key player on the education market. It has considerable experience in training specialists from all educational and qualification degrees and according to the opinion of the managers of the big transport companies is the biggest academic and research transport centre in the country.

The university's educational policy is based on the mission, objectives and strategic goals. It is addressed to the society needs in regional and national aspect.

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<sup>1</sup> "Todor Kableshkov" University of Transport, Sofia, Bulgaria

<sup>2</sup> "Todor Kableshkov" University of Transport, Sofia, Bulgaria

<sup>3</sup> "Todor Kableshkov" University of Transport, Sofia, Bulgaria

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According to the up-to-date official data in Bulgaria only 1.7% from the population of working age (25-64 years) is involved in some form of lifelong learning, having stipulated in Lisbon Strategy for EU – 28 a figure of 13%.

Regarding this, it is very important that efficient lifelong learning system is established and developed, which will stimulate the constant “self improvement” and facilitate employment mobility, for instance via applying appropriate didactic tools and contemporary forms of training – distance, electronic, etc.

The e-learning development is in line with the development policy of Todor Kableshkov University of Transport, namely:

- to develop and modernize educational process by means of new forms, methods and technical appliances, to enhance quality of education;
- to orient the education towards business requirements through maintaining stable relationships with companies, professional organizations, governmental and non-governmental institutions;
- to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and qualification.

E-learning is natural response to the needs of contemporary students for flexible training, accessible anytime and anywhere. Contemporary computer technologies are used for the preparation, carrying out and management of the training.

The Bulgarian e-Learning faces a huge challenge, since a lot of resources are needed to become a fact. In 2012 our university developed a project that was approved: “Development of Electronic Forms for Distance Learning and Virtual Library at Todor Kableshkov University of Transport, Sofia” in search of opportunities for development of this alternative form of training. The project is under OP “Human Resources Development and co-funded by European Social Fund. The grand is amounting to BGN 530 994, 95 (EUR 270 000). The project objective is to promote lifelong learning process as opportunity for improving the professional skills and competencies without prolonged absence from work by developing electronic forms for distance learning at Todor Kableshkov University of Transport. It is envisaged to create conditions for development of electronic forms for distance learning, adapted to certain educational needs and providing opportunities for self-planning and development of flexible academic courses at Todor Kableshkov University of Transport. To this end, a Training Center will be developed and modernized. It will offer e-learning and services. Additionally, an Internal University Quality Assurance and Control System will be developed. A comprehensive training programme in distance form, online courses (subjects) in a volume exceeding 50 % of the academic content of the respective curriculum of MSc Programmes will be developed. The courses will be uploaded to distance learning platform of Todor Kableshkov University of Transport. The project implementation period is two years as we expect the electronization of the educational process to improve the quality of the academic activity and to provide the opportunity for the students to use course materials in a convenient time for them, without considering the strict time schedule of the classes.

Being the only higher school, specialized in the field of transport, in Bulgaria, Todor Kableshkov University of Transport aims at promoting the lifelong learning process by developing electronic forms of training. Thus opportunities for improving the professional skill and competences, without long absence from work, are provided.

The paper discusses the concept for development of electronic forms for distance learning as required condition for adapting the education to business needs. The achieved results according to the implementation of the pre-set indicators in the project: “Development of Electronic Forms for Distance Learning and Virtual Library at Todor Kableshkov University of Transport, Sofia” are presented. In current market conditions, the contemporary universities have to efficiently combine education with business so that they can meet the challenges of the labor market.

**Keywords:** electronic forms, distance learning, education

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