

The establishment of the Lithuanian DAAD Club

A lot of former DAAD scholars participated in the seminar, which was held in the Senate's session hall of Vilnius University on January 24th, 2003. The main intention of this seminar was to establish the Lithuanian DAAD Club, which would not only gather former DAAD scholars but also help Lithuanian students who want to receive the DAAD scholarship and study at German universities. The DAAD scholarship gives a unique possibility to students from different countries to go to Germany and to improve their German language skills as well as their professional skills.

Its initiator, Prof. Vaidotas Kažukauskas, opened the seminar where participated not only the former DAAD scholars, but also honored guests: the German ambassador to Lithuania Dr. Alexander von Rom, the Parliament member Prof. Justinas Karosas, the Director of the Goethe Institute in Vilnius Dr. Martin Wälde, Vice-Rector of the Vilnius University Juozas-Vidmantis Vaitkus, a Vice Minister of Education and Science Rimantas Vaitkus and the others.

The guests were glad about the idea to establish the Lithuanian DAAD Club. The German ambassador to Lithuania Dr. Alexander von Rom called this day a historical day which fit to this time in history: relations in Europe have been growing ever stronger, Lithuania finished the EU accession talks and soon will become a member. The establishment of this club is one more step in strengthening German – Lithuanian cooperation.

Dr. Martin Wälde spoke at the seminar about the Goethe Institute's activity in Lithuania and its goals. The Goethe Institute offers an interesting cultural program, ensures the spread of the German language in Lithuania and provides information about Germany. Dr. Wälde offered to organize international seminars, to which not only guests from Germany but also from other European countries would be invited, where experiences could be exchanged and important questions discussed. "The Goethe Institute wishes luck to the club and looks forward to future cooperation", said Dr. Wälde.

The parliament member Prof. Justinas Karosas said he was happy that many Lithuanian students had already received the DAAD scholarship and had an opportunity to study in Germany. He also spoke about the financing of the universities in Lithuania, which at the moment is quite a problem. According to J. Karosas, the only solution to this problem is to reorganize the educational institutions. He expressed his joy about the help from the EU funds and Germany. J. Karosas said that the establishment of the Lithuanian DAAD Club was a good decision and that it would help to strengthen German - Lithuanian relations.

According to the Vice-Rector of Vilnius University Juozas Vidmantis Vaitkus, Lithuanian and German universities should cooperate closer so that the students, who return after studies to Lithuania, could continue the research programs which they started in Germany.

The Vice Minister Rimantas Vaitkus said that Lithuania had already achieved quite a lot by adapting its education system to those of the other European countries. Now there is a system of studies of three levels in Lithuania (as well as in other European countries): bachelor, masters' and doctoral studies. There is a newly established credit system in Lithuania as well, which enables the subjects that the students studied at foreign universities to be also included and accounted at Lithuanian universities.

The participants of the seminar discussed the items of the Lithuanian DAAD Club, elected the president (the initiator and facilitator of the seminar Prof. Vaidotas Kažukauskas) and an a board of seven members. The most important goals of the club were mentioned too: the strengthening of German – Lithuanian relations, the maintaining of the relations with the DAAD and the German embassy, stimulating of the relations between the former DAAD scholars and helping by consulting Lithuanian students who would like to receive the DAAD scholarship. All the students that would like to get more information about the DAAD scholarships are welcome to seek it through the members of the club board. They are willing to help anyone that is interested.

After the seminar the German ambassador Dr. Alexander von Rom invited the former DAAD scholars and the seminar guests to a reception at his residence in Turniškės.

We would like to thank the president of the club and all the former DAAD scholars for their determination and good will, which helped them and gave start to the establishment of the club, which will be immensely useful for Lithuanian students, starting their studies and seeking advice, and consulting those with previous experience. This club will hopefully unite our young and older generations and through this cooperation of ours it will bring fruit.

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