



**Visegrad University Association  
General Meeting  
Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland, 29 September, 2015**

**MINUTES**

**1. Opening of the GM:**

The VUA General Meeting was opened by VUA President Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. Peter Bielik, PhD., Rector of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, who welcomed the participants and introduced the representatives of the hosting university - Warsaw University of Life Sciences (WULS). He expressed gratification that VUA aim to link the partner universities has been fulfilled in number of concrete activities in the past year. He also spoke about the new ideas and proposals to be introduced later during the meeting. The hosting university was represented by the Vice - Rector for Education Prof. Banasik and Vice – Dean for International Relations of the Faculty of Economic Sciences Dr. Nina Drejerska who introduced the university and faculty in their welcome addresses.

**2. VUA Annual Report and VUA Financial Report**

VUA 2015 Annual Report was presented jointly by prof. Elena Horska, VUA Liaison Officer and Mgr. Vladislav Valach, VUA Secretary General. The following activities for the period from October 2014 till August 2015 were presented:

- 1.1 "Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development"
- 1.2 VUA Summer School
- 1.3 Student scientific conference – “Let science bring us together“
- 1.4 Training program based on IVF project: Young Innovation brokers for Visegrad countries
- 1.5 VUA YOUTH
- 1.6 VUA Award of Excellence
- 1.7 VUA THINK POOL
- 1.8 Promotion of VUA

**Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development (VJBSD)**

Two issues of the VJBSD were published - Issue no.1, vol. 3, 2014 in June 2014 and no.2, vol. 3, 2014 in October 2014, each contained 8 articles. The first issue of 2015 was already published in April 2015. VJBSD has been registered with Degruyter Open Access in order to raise awareness of the Journal and its citation rate. Prof. Horska informed that request has been send to the Scopus database in order to find out what criteria has to be met in order to register the Journal in them. According to their answer, the regional focus and thematic

orientation of the Journal was appreciated, however visibility of the Journal and its citation has to be increased substantially, as well as high quality standards have to be maintained. In order to achieve this the Editorial Board was revised in Sept. 2014 and the Cross Check System will be used to check originality of the submitted papers. Prof. Horska emphasized the necessity of increasing promotion of the Journal within the partner universities and ask colleagues, PhD. students even MSc. students together with their supervisors to submit articles. In October/ November 2015 we are expecting the results of application to register VJBSD in Copernicus Database which may be of interest especially for the Polish partners. She informed that for the next issue in October 2015 there are still papers needed thus all partners are kindly asked to promote the call for papers at their home universities.

### **VUA Summer School**

VUA Summer School “Food Science and Business Studies” was planned to be organized by Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia; Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary and University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Austria.

However, due to low interest of students the event was not organized. It was agreed with Corvinus University in Budapest to organize the summer school in 2016 in Nitra and Budapest.

### ***Student scientific conference – “Let science bring us together”***

On 26 November 2014, the Visegrad University Association and the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences of the **Szent István University** organized a scientific conference for students in Gödöllő, Hungary with the support of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

More than 110 students could present their work in 12 Hungarian and 2 international sessions. The 2 international sessions were dedicated to the VUA YOUTH sessions. 13 international students participated in these two sessions from 8 countries (not only from VUA members): Slovakia, Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Macedonia, Nigeria, Gambia and Rwanda. Each full paper was reviewed by two reviewers and each member of the scientific board evaluated the presentations individually.

Next year the conference will again be organised in Gödöllő.

### ***Training program based on IVF project: Young Innovation brokers for Visegrad countries***

The training was organised in February 2 – 7, 2015 in Hungary and was supported by IVF small grant No. 11420084. The aim to train and educate young innovation brokers (PhD, master and bachelor students) who became to contribute to the Visegrad countries’ successful participation of the innovation activities in the European Union. It was coordinated by Szent Istvan University in Gödöllő, Hungary together with SUA Nitra, CZU Prague and AR Krakow. VUA supported 3 best applications by a total amount of 600€.

## **VUA YOUTH**

VUA YOUTH is a sub-section of Visegrad University Association that is to help to fulfil the objectives of the association from the students perspective. VUA YOUTH was established during the V4 Doctoral Symposium: Multifunctionality and Regional Development in Gödöllő (Gyongyos), Hungary on October 3-5, 2013.

In 2014 VUA YOUTH participated in the preparation of **Student scientific conference – “Let science bring us together”** where a VUA YOUTH session organized.

Mgr. Valach emphasized the VUA YOUTH potential that could be exploited to even greater extend and invited all partners to promote it among the students of their home universities.

The communication platform for the students is the VUA YOUTH Facebook page :

<https://www.facebook.com/vuayouth>.

## **VUA Award of Excellence**

In 2014 the **VUA Award of Excellence** was awarded to the most active member university for the first time, based on the results of the election of the General Meeting. Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra as the Chairman’s University decided not to be nominated. Nominated were 7 universities: Szent István University, Gödöllő, Hungary; University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland, University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic; Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary; Russian Timiryazev State Agrarian University; Belgorod State Agricultural Academy named after V. Gorin, Russia and Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic.

The winning university, according to the results of the elections confirmed by the **Executive Committee** represented by Prof. Peter Bielik, Prof. Tamás Mészáros, Prof. Janusz Zmija and Prof. Vojtech Adam, was **University of Agriculture in Krakow, Poland** represented by **Rector, Prof. Włodzimierz Sady**.

## **VUA THINK POOL**

This tool was introduced in order in 2012 as a dissemination and information platform for VUA members to inform each other about new possibilities of cooperation as well as to search for partners in projects etc. The tool is **accessible** through VUA website ([www.vua.uniag.sk](http://www.vua.uniag.sk)). 6 posts promoting events (mostly international conferences, call for papers, other events) organized by the VUA members were published during the period of December 2014 – August 2015.

All partner universities are invited to use the platform.

## **Promotion of VUA**

Understanding the importance of disseminating and promotion activities, Visegrad University Association has been widely promoted during 2014 -2015. VUA has been represented at various academic and scientific events in Slovakia and abroad. Similar to the previous period VUA is presented and complete information on its activities and members are provided to all academic and diplomatic visits of SUA. For example University of Plovdiv

has been informed about the association during a visit to Nitra and has applied for Membership.

Mgr. Valach presented the VUA Financial report 2015 and thanked all members for paying the membership fees on time which enables the association to realise all the activities planned.

<b>Expenditures:</b>		<b>Income:</b>	
<i>Activity/Cost item</i>	<i>Amount in EUR</i>	<i>Activity/Cost item</i>	<i>Amount in EUR</i>
VJBSD, printing, editing and publishing	1372	VUA Membership Fees (Sep 15, 2015)	10700 €
Doctoral symposium	600		
IVF Training program	600		
VUA Award of Excellence	96,58		
<b>Activities in total</b>	<b>2668,58</b>		
Promotion	300		
Secretariat	200		
Other costs	31,77		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3200,35</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10700</b>
<b>Positive balance</b>	<b>7499,65</b>		

After the presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Report 2015 were approved unanimously by the representatives of partner universities.

### **3. Presentation of activities proposed for 2016**

The following activities for 2016 has been proposed:

1. "Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development"
2. "Science connecting nations" – 2<sup>nd</sup> VUA YOUTH Scientific session
3. The Agri-Food Value Chain: Challenges for Natural Resources Management and Society VUA session: Studies on agri-food value chain in Visegrad and Eastern partnership
4. VUA Summer School
5. VUA supports IVF projects
6. VUA YOUTH
7. VUA Award of Excellence
8. VUA 2016 General Meeting
9. Promoting of VUA

### ***"Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development"***

There will be two issues of the journal published in April and October 2016. Each issue will contain 8 articles.

It is important to maintain high quality of published papers and greater promotion of the VJBSD and its citation. At the SUA in Nitra new person, Ms. Ingrid Košičiarová, has been assigned for facilitating the communication between the Editorial Board and the authors.

### ***"Science connecting nations" – 2<sup>nd</sup> VUA YOUTH Scientific session***

The annual scientific conference organized for bachelor, master and PhD at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences of Szent István University (SZIU), Gödöllő, Hungary under the auspices of the Visegrad University Association was proposed with the aim to provide a forum for bachelor, master as well as doctoral students of VUA institutions to present their research results and to have a publication in a conference proceeding with ISBN.

Professors and lecturers from VUA institutions will constitute the scientific committee whose role will be to give guidelines to the students regarding the continuation of their research.

Proposed number of participants is **100**, proposed date: **November 25, 2015**

**Deadline** for registration and **abstract** submission is **16 October 2015**. **Full papers** (20-25 pages) are to be submitted till **6 November 2015** via email.

The conference is free of charge. Participants are asked to prepare a 10-minute ppt, presentation about the aims, hypotheses, results, conclusions and recommendations of their research. It is proposed that VUA supports the event by 600 €.

Representative of Szent István University (SZIU), Gödöllő, Hungary Robert Magda cordially invited all partners to motivate their students to participate, as it is a great opportunity to present their research free of charge.

### ***The Agri-Food Value Chain: Challenges for Natural Resources Management and Society VUA session: Studies on agri-food value chain in Visegrad and Eastern partnership***

Prof. Elena Horská presented the International Scientific Conference to be organised at the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra in cooperation of Visegrad University Association in May 2016. It is proposed that one session will be devoted for Visegrad issues with focus on food quality and marketing aspects.

One of the keynote speakers will be Dr. **John Russin, Louisiana State University, USA**: Role of the University in Modern Society: Partnership with Industries and Connections with Citizens.

It is proposed that VUA supports 10 experts (max. two experts from one university) by 100€ covering the registration fee.

Proposed number of participants: **200**

Proposed dates: **May 19-20, 2016**

## ***VUA Summer school “Food Science and Business Studies”***

***VUA Summer school with the subtitle: Inputs for Food Product Design and Development: Quality, Safety, Innovations, Sensory and Consumer Analysis has been proposed to be organised by*** Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia and Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary in the following dates: June 27 – 3 July 2016 – Nitra, Slovakia, July 3-10 2015 – Budapest.

First call and information will be sent to VUA contacts in February 2016.

Proposed number of participants : **25-30**

Proposed date: **27/06/2016 – 10/07/2016**

## ***VUA supports IVF projects***

It is proposed that VUA offers the support to IVF projects coordinated by VUA members in order to strengthen the connections of VUA members and the International Visegrad Fund.

The proposed support will include:

- promotion and dissemination
- publication activities (Visegrad Journal on Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development)
- minimum financial support of 500€ (the support will be specified so that it meets the aims and objectives of VUA).

## ***VUA YOUTH***

Students organized under the Visegrad University Association (VUA) maintain regular communication and contact. Since 2014 when VUA Youth had been founded as a youth organization of VUA, more and more students had engaged to mutual cooperation and they are trying to find common subjects and topics among them.

Communication proceeds mainly on social media and by emails. Students also meet during conferences, foreign studies and student exchange programs among the universities not only those united by VUA.

Main topic are possibilities in scientific cooperation, looking for intersection in science and research where there are possibilities for mutual support directly in research and with tackling scientific challenges. Cooperation in research project leads to wider possibilities in publication and presentation of results in any field of science.

Another important issue is student communication with university and faculty management. Students' possibilities to communicate among individual departments of university structure and not only individual students' problems but also complex and system problems are discussed.

One of the discussion and exchange of views in this period of time was how to communicate with students. Open communication during which a student is able to describe his/her problem and suggest a solution is necessary.

VUA Youth is a very helpful project where young people full of enthusiasm are able to meet. It is proposed that new students join VUA YOUTH network in order to support the aims and objective of Visegrad University Association within student community.

VUA Executive Committee proposes that mobilities of master and PhD students are supported through **VUA YOUTH Grant Programme**. Grant winners should be selected from the applicants based on the criteria specified in the call. Details to be discussed during the GM. It is proposed that each partner university nominates one active student to participate in activities in VUA Youth.

### ***VUA Award of Excellence***

VUA Executive Committee proposes that Visegrad University Association will award the **VUA Award of Excellence 2016** at the General Meeting to one VUA member university with the outstanding contribution to the aims and objectives of the association.

Conditions for awarding include:

- sustainable achievements in the field of education, science and research
- active international cooperation within and outside VUA
- promotion of Visegrad University Association
- other activities supporting the common goals of Visegrad University Association
- paid VUA membership fee

### ***VUA 2016 General Meeting***

VUA GM will be organized at Szent Istvan University, Gödöllő Exact date to be announced shortly.

VUA 2017 General Meeting will be organized at Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague Czech Republic. Exact date to be decided.

VUA Executive Committee proposed that the university organized VUA General Meeting is exempt from paying the VUA Membership fee for the year the GM is organized.

### ***Promoting of VUA***

VUA Executive Committee would like to ask all VUA members to promote the association and its activities as widely as possible.

### **Preliminary use of VUA budget in 2015-2016:**

Activity/Cost item	Amount in EUR
Visegrad journal VJBSD – De Groyter	1440
Visegrad journal VJBSD editing and paper version	1200

2 <sup>nd</sup> VUA YOUTH Scientific session	600
VUA session: Studies on agri-food value chain in Visegrad and Eastern partnership	1000
Summer school	1000
VUA supports IVF projects	1000
Activities in total	6240
Promotion	500
VUA Secretariat	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>6990</b>

After the presentation the proposed activities were approved unanimously by all representatives of partner universities.

#### **4. Presentation of new members:**

Three universities that applied for membership were presented by their representatives:

##### **Uman National University of Horticulture, Ukraine**

**Address:** 1, Instytutaska st., Cherkasy region, 20305, Uman, Ukraine

**Rector:** Olena Nepochatenko

##### **University Mission:**

“The purpose of Uman National University of Horticulture is the discovery, communication, and preservation of knowledge. In our teaching, research, and scholarship, we are committed to creativity, innovation, and excellence. We value integrity, quality, and teamwork in everything we do. We inspire critical thinking, personal growth, a passion for learning and strive to enable students to take best advantage of their educational opportunities. We serve the social, cultural, and economic needs of our community and our society.”

Date of Foundation: 1844; Number of students: 5154; Number of staff: 377



**University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, Bulgaria**

**Address:** 78 Dunav bvld, 4003, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

**Rector:** Dimitar Kirilov Dimitrov

**University Mission:**

To provide quality academic product at Bachelor's and Master's degrees levels, and continuing education and lifelong learning to Bulgarian and foreign citizens in the field of agribusiness, rural development, tourism, economics, management and administration;

To implement the knowledge-based economy and to play a role of educational, research and expertise center for economic and management sciences, based on the relationship between education, science, academic cooperation and entrepreneurship, according to the individual recruitments of its students and the conditions for successful professional realization and career development in the market environment, and at the same time educating them in the European values;

To prepare highly qualified specialists in the field of Management who are familiar with the economic, historical and cultural traditions of regions and are able to respond promptly and effectively to the challenges of the real sector and contribute to preparation and implementation of major development projects in Bulgaria and Europe.

To actively participate in the implementation of the strategy "Europe 2020" EU which forms the basis for European efforts to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Date of Foundation: 1992; Number of students: 6330; Number of staff: 303

**University of Žilina, Slovakia**

**Address:** Univerzitná 8215/1, 010 26 Žilina

**Rector:** Tatiana Čorejová

**University Mission:**

The University of Žilina includes 7 faculties, e.g. Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Management Science and Informatics, Faculty of Security Engineering, Faculty of Humanities. The University of Žilina includes also 11 institutes and centres. The University as a public university provides education at all three levels of higher education (Bachelor's degree, Engineer/Master's degree and Doctoral degree) in both full-time and part-time forms. With its more than a half century history, the University has taken a prominent place in the Slovak educational space not only with the number of its students, with the range of accredited study programmes, but also with its scientific and foreign activities based on cooperation with domestic and foreign companies and institutions. In the field of science and research, individual working places of the University have been involved in solving of more than 150 scientific and research projects financially supported from public sources through countrywide grant schemes. Currently, scientific teams have been working on 35 projects supported from abroad, mainly within the EU 7th Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020. Except for solving project tasks, the issues of quality technical

equipment of experimental working places and increasing quality of human sources have been monitored.

Date of Foundation: 1953; Number of students: 9520; Number of staff: 1350.

One university applied for Honorary Membership:

**Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and Louisiana State University College of Agriculture, USA.**

**Address:** 101 J. Norman Efferson Hall, 708 03, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

**Head of university:** William B. Richardson

**University Mission:**

The LSU AgCenter seeks to provide global training, education and outreach in the areas of food and nutrition, rural development, natural resources and improved and sustainable agricultural practices, thereby enhancing lives and livelihoods for individuals throughout the world.

The primary mission of the college – teaching- is an integral part of the university’s land grant responsibilities. The other component of the university’s agricultural land grant mission, research and service, are the primary responsibility of the LSU AgCenter. Many of the faculty of the college are jointly appointed with the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, the research and service arms of the LSU AgCenter. The relationship between teaching, research and service is a hallmark of the land grant system and an underlying aspect of the long-range plan for the College of Agriculture.

Date of Foundation: 1908; Number of students: 1597; Number of staff: 1209.

Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University, Ukraine has cancelled their application for membership.

All of the applying universities were subsequently approved by unanimous voting of representatives of members.

University of Szeged asked for membership cancellation, the request has been accepted and membership cancelled as of 29.9.2015.

**5. VUA Award of Excellence Ceremony**

The representatives of members voted for the most active university to be awarded VUA Award of Excellence. SUA in Nitra as the Chairman’s University decided not to be nominated. Nominated universities were: Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland; Szent Istvan University, Hungary and University of Agriculture in Krakov, Poland.

The winner was Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland, that obtained 9 votes. VUA President Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. Peter Bielik, PhD. presented prof. Bogdan Klepacki, Vice – Rector for teaching of WULS, the award.

## **6. Elections of Vice – Presidents and Executive Committee members**

Mgr. Valach explained the system of voting and asked the candidates for short introduction. There were 5 nominated candidates for 3 Vice- Presidents:

- Parakhin Nikolay V., Orel State Agrarian University, Rector presented by Dr. Nina Pervykh
- Snitynskyy Volodymyr, Lviv National Agrarian University, Rector , not present during elections
- Tózsér János, Szent Istvan University Gödöllő, Rector presented by Dr. Robert Magda
- Turyanskiy Alexander, Belgorod State Agricultural University, Rector presented by Dr. Tatiana Litvinenko
- Żmija Janusz, University of Agriculture in Krakow, Rector

Election committee consisting of Ms. Agnieszka Parlinska, Ms Ivana Tregenza and Ms Gabriela Slivinská has been approved unanimously before the election collected and counted the votes and announced the results of the elections to VUA president prof. Bielik, who presented it to the plenary. The results were:

Prof. Zmija – 17 votes, elected 1. Vice – President;  
Prof. Tozser, 11 votes, elected Vice –President;  
Prof. Turyanskij, 8 votes, elected Vice – President.

Afterwards the candidates for Executive Committee members introduced themselves:

- Litvinenko Tatiana, Belgorod State Agricultural University
- Nagy Henrietta, Szent Istvan University Gödöllő presented by Zoltan Topa
- Malak Rawlikowska Agata, Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW
- Pokluda Robert, Mendel University in Brno
- Serikov Svyatoslav, Stavropol State Agrarian University
- Slavkova Olena, Sumy National Agrarian University

Election committee consisting of Ms Agnieszka Parlinska, Ms Ivana Tregenza and Ms Gabriela Slivinská collected and counted the votes and announced the results of the elections to VUA president prof. Bielik, who presented it to the plenary. The results were:

Malak Rawlikowska Agata, 17 votes, elected member;  
Litvinenko Tatiana, 13 votes, elected member;

Pokluda Robert, 11 votes, elected member;  
Nagy Henrietta, 9 votes, elected member.

Official certificates will be issued for the elected Vice – Presidents and Executive Committee Members.

## **7. Presentations of invited speakers:**

**Dr. Piotr Bajda**, IVF Trustee for Poland presented the aim of the IVF, budget appointed by each V4 state and other donating organisations from Netherlands, USA, Switzerland, Canada and other countries. He also presented the IVF offer for beneficiaries – grant programmes (small, standard and strategic grants) and scholarships for MSc/ PhD. students and Post-docs within the V4 countries, between V4 countries and Western Balkan countries and between V4 countries and Eastern Partnership countries.

**Dr. Agnieszka Wojciechowska De Cokere**, WULS, International projects office presented the Horizon 2020 program of the EU for science and research support. She presented the structure, main aims and priorities of the programme and basic rules for participation. In discussion prof. Banasik, WULS recommended also the COST programme that is not so difficult for administration and WULS has a very good experience with it.

**Dr. John Russin**, Vice – Chancellor of LSU, USA presented the US governmental programmes and schemes to support cooperation and exchange of staff and students in the USA. Dr. David Picha, LSU added information about possible support for visiting professors and PhD. students.

**Ms Gabriela Slivinská**, IRO SUA in Nitra on behalf of assoc. prof. Natalia Turčeková, SUA in Nitra presented the AgroBioTech research centre for applied research that is to be opened in October at SUA in Nitra. All VUA members are cordially invited to participate at the official opening.

## **8. Closing remarks**

The VUA Presidency appreciated the even organisation by Warsaw University of Life Sciences and thanked all participants for active participation and friendly atmosphere.