



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ  
ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ  
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**H.Q.A.**

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND  
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

LAW SCHOOL

DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE



**European Union**  
European Social Fund



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS  
MANAGING AUTHORITY

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EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Law of the Democritus University of Thrace consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Dr. iur. habil Panajotta Lakkis (President)  
Former University professor in Würzburg, Germany
  
2. Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Schwarze  
Emeritus University Professor in Freiburg, Germany
  
3. Prof. Dr. Thomas Skouteris  
Associate Professor, The American University, Cairo, Egypt

#### ***Introduction: The External Evaluation Procedure***

The External Evaluation took place from Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> of March until Sunday, 23<sup>th</sup> of March. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) arrived in Athens on Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of March and was briefed at the offices of the Hellenic Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency on Tuesday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. The same day the EEC travelled to Komotini and was there received and welcomed by the Rector of the University of Thrace, Prof. Dr. Constantinos Remelis, the Vice-Rector Prof. George Kosta, the Dean of the Law School, Prof. Maria Youni and members of the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA).

Visits to the Law School in Komotini and interviews were conducted on Wednesday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of March and Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. The EEC met with Faculty members, administrative and supportive staff and postgraduate students. Faculty provided with the requested documents and the evaluation took place in a constructive and cooperative spirit notwithstanding student protests mentioned below. Requests by the EEC for additional information or clarifications were promptly met. Part of the interviews had to be conducted on the hotel premises because when the EEC was about to hear the representatives of the Department of Public Law a group of students entered the room and announced that the External Evaluation had to be terminated. They claimed being representatives of the students' association "Kostas Varnalis" and stated as their reasons for the action that only students themselves are legitimized to evaluate their University. The EEC advised and invited the students to discuss their concerns about their studies and the Law School during the scheduled meeting to which all of them were invited by the Dean, Professor Youni, on Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. It was clarified that meeting time had been stretched to two hours on request of the EEC and that no Faculty members would be present. The EEC offered to not only discuss with the students but as well to take into

consideration written statements they would bring with them. These offers were not accepted on the grounds that such course of action would constitute a validation of the Evaluation as such which was deemed unacceptable. The EEC decided to conduct the following interviews on hotel premises. It has to be noted and it was appreciated that in spite of the disagreement itself in the matter of the Evaluation the discourse with the group of students mentioned took place in a civilized manner without hostility or improper conduct of any kind.

On Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, the EEC visited the library and had interviews with its staff. The following interview with the head of administrative staff was again interrupted by a group of students. The arguments were the same as the day before. Upon request of the EEC a copy of the protocol of the students' assembly on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 was handed over to the EEC. It is signed for the board by representatives of the parties EAAK and APEN. Again the EEC invited the students to officially take part in the procedure. A small number of students accepted the invitation and started discussing students' problems with the EEC, but this interview was interrupted as well and it had to be terminated. The interview with the head of the administrative staff could be conducted before the EEC departed.

The Committee took into consideration the Internal Evaluation Report, including its annexed tables and the additional information material provided. European tendencies were taken into account from own experience of the EEC members and from the reports, communications and press releases of the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

([http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm)).

## ***A. Teaching and Curriculum, Course Material, Examinations***

### ***I. Introduction***

Compared to other faculties Law Faculties are focused to a large extent on preparing graduates for the entry into specific professions, namely as lawyers and judges. Moreover legal science is strongly affected by the barriers of language and of the national legal systems. At the same time international interdependencies and influences arise – either directly where European legislation is applicable or indirectly through the internationalization and globalization of legal transactions.

The average life span of legal norms is steadily decreasing, the influence of “private” terms of use in some cases (think about major social media sites) far exceeds the geographic scope of legislation. At the same time the complexity of economic life is more and more depicted in changing and emerging legal and combined professions.

This dynamic development, which will gain momentum in the years to come, puts Law Schools before a big challenge. Whilst the scientific character has to be maintained and underlined, graduates have to be prepared for an ever-growing number of possible workplace exigencies including interdisciplinary dimensions. This goal cannot be achieved by increasing

the number of taught subjects or the information load within existing subjects. On the contrary, the focus has to shift away from providing detail information (“learning”) towards “learning to learn”, basic critical thinking, disputing and problem solving skills. In this context an inherent danger of using database information has to be noted: Whilst accessibility of information is a big gain, students have to be made aware of the danger of shifting to data accumulation and uncritical reproduction as opposed to critical thinking. Legal science is approaching the state of “Big Data”, which makes it very important to aid students in the skills of first understanding this phenomenon and then dealing effectively with the information overload. Moreover Law Schools should focus not only on reproducing hard data, but on productive, original thinking as well, teaching students the basic techniques of drafting contracts and legal norms. Finally students should become familiar with the new tendency for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

These objectives can only be met mid- to long term by a combined strategy of devising a teaching policy and a new Curriculum conception.

## II. Teaching

Due to the student actions mentioned in the introduction it was not possible to consult undergraduate students about their assessment of teaching methods so that the following suggestions are of general character depicting the new standards in the EU. According to the Annual Internal Report (Table 18, pages 77-78) students evaluate the courses and lecturers positively.

It is advisable that the Faculty form a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology. The objective of teaching has to be “learning to learn” (see the eight competences of the European Key Competences Framework, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11090\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm)). European tendencies in this field are gathered in the “Report to the European Commission on improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe’s higher education institutions”, submitted in June 2013 by the High Level group on the Modernisation of Higher Education ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/modernisation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/reports/modernisation_en.pdf)). Dr. Lakkis suggests that a future pedagogic policy should focus on two major objects: Teaching as such has to become professionalized and the teaching goal has to become preparing the students for flexing their own intellectual muscle (“learn to learn”), as the shelf-life of knowledge is becoming continually shorter. Professionalization of teaching requires multiple elements: Institutional backing of (already existing) individual efforts through training and coaching programmes (which can be organized at university level for more than one Faculties) combined with target agreements and quality management measures. Dr. Skouteris disagrees with the suggestion that teaching at the Law Faculty has to become “professionalized” inasmuch as evidence from the visit to the Law Faculty suggests that teaching is adequately professionalized and it is not clear to him what “professionalization” of the work of qualified academic teachers entails. Prof. Schwarze agrees with Prof. Skouteris.

Already Faculty is evaluating all of the courses. It is important that the input is further

processed to reach not only quantitative but qualitative conclusions showing possibilities of improvement as well. The report for each course should include the perception of the lecturer and her/his suggestions for the future. An annual synthesized review on teaching (and examinations, see below) could pick up the major issues and be communicated and discussed with the students. There seem to be good reasons to instate a (vice-) dean for student affairs in charge of coordinating and implementing the decided policy and functioning as a “liaison officer” between students and lecturers.

While many measures can be taken without additional costs, Ministry and state support is essential in the mid and long run, especially in funding training courses in modern teaching approach.

### III. Curriculum

To implement and support a common didactic policy as stated above there is need for a Curriculum adjustment – both quantitative and qualitative. It is advisable to shape the Curriculum in a dialogue among all stakeholders, i.e. teaching staff, students, graduates and labour market actors (see recommendation 7 of the Report mentioned above). The number of specialized subjects should be reduced as the workload has to stay manageable. The possibilities of eClass and of new technologies should be further mined – see below. Learning outcomes and competences should be stated for each course.

The current Curriculum incorporates and integrates European Law adequately and contains courses on modern subjects, such as sustainable development. It is remarkable as it shows some deviation from traditional structures, for example Civil Law begins in the second semester with Family Law rather than with the General Principles and Public International Law is taught in the first semester. This deviation from traditional schedules is in itself neither good nor bad. Starting with Family Law might indeed be meaningful as it is a more or less clearly defined subject and maybe the growing importance of International Law can justify teaching it first, although Prof. Skouteris and Prof. Schwarze point out that offering Public International Law in the first semester is an unusual choice, given that students have not yet been exposed to Public Law courses, and Constitutional Law in particular. The EEC encourages out of the box thinking, providing there is an underlying clearly defined pedagogic concept taking into account and fine-tuning all concerned courses.

This is currently not always the case: The EEC is wondering if it makes sense to discuss Methodology at the end of the third year. Apart from that the course sequence in Civil Law is problematic: For example in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester General Principles of Civil Law, Property Law and Commercial Law are taught simultaneously, whilst Law of Obligations is for the first time taught in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester – preceded in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester by Individual Labour Law. This sequence can only lead to students learning uncoordinated and fragmented pieces of information by heart without the opportunity to grasp the bigger picture. This situation is aggravated by the provision that students are not allowed to take courses belonging to higher semesters than they are currently in (see <http://law.duth.gr/undergraduate/curriculum/> at the end). This provision is unnecessarily hindering students from forming their timetable in the

most effective manner. On the other hand it is positive that the decision to obtain an official entry of specialization is left to the students, although maybe the requirement that 5 out of 6 elective courses have to be linked to one of the five departments is too strict.

The Curriculum should be reconsidered as well from the point of view of manageable workload: It is questionable if students can concentrate for four or five consecutive hours in one subject, while the timetable mostly doesn't allow for a lunch pause. The last semester is impossibly overloaded: Apart from the five major, synthetic courses repeating and consolidating Penal and Penal Procedure Law, Public Law, Civil and Civil Procedure Law, Business Law and International/European Law the timetable provides for Intellectual and Industrial Property Law as compulsory and one elective course as well. The number of teaching hours per lesson in combination with the relatively high number of courses leads to a not manageable workload for students, particularly there is barely time left to repeat and let information sink.

The Curriculum doesn't comprise compulsory seminar lessons in which coursework has to be submitted, which will provide the students with an opportunity to make the first steps of scientific work and expressing own opinions as opposed to gathering knowledge. At present many Faculty members offer the opportunity for coursework on a voluntary basis. Good work is then rewarded with one or two extra points added to the final exam mark in the written (or oral) exam at the end of the course. As the maximum amount of points to be reached is 10 this makes up a significant bonus. While the initiative in itself is a positive one, there might arise some issues of equality and transparency as there is no underlying official common policy.

It is advisable that Faculty sets up a corresponding common legal frame. Faculty might as well consider switching from the current voluntary option to compulsory seminars for all students. Students will benefit most if two seminars (with a time gap between them) are compulsory. Alternatively if choosing only one seminar this will probably be most effectively incorporated in the specialization phase during third or even fourth year. If restructuring the curriculum accordingly, Faculty should keep the overall student and staff workload in mind and not simply add new seminars. In addition, coursework can be limited in length (20 to 30 pages), which will be good training in concise and to the point argumentation.

Faculty could consider offering some courses, particularly those with a strong international dimension, in English, French or German. This could at the same time prepare Greek students for the exigencies of future legal professions and help attract students from other countries as either regular or visiting students (see also student mobility).

Faculty generally try to ensure that European and general international dimensions are incorporated in all affected courses and are not limited to the specific courses. This is a modern and positive approach, which could be further augmented by more interdisciplinarity in teaching, both on the graduate and postgraduate level. According to page 22 of the Internal Report, Faculty members teach at other Faculties – the reverse would be desirable too.

Furthermore synergy between the departments of the Law School can and should be enhanced and further developed. Co-teaching or other forms of synchronization are advisable where subjects are interdependent or similar subjects (as already practiced e.g. regarding Individual

Enforcement/Insolvency Law or European and International Tax Law). Faculty should create a legal framework providing to what extent such courses are apportioned to the involved lecturers (concerning fulfilment of mandatory weekly teaching hours).

The same applies to incorporating external lecturers with workplace experience either as teaching staff and to the extent Greek Law permits or as invited speakers on a particular issue. Here as well fine-tuning is preferable to merely parallel or even disjointed teaching.

The current Second Postgraduate Programme “North-Eastern Europe Studies” is a unique interdisciplinary approach which Faculty can and should promote more widely. Faculty members reported of thought for a similar interdisciplinary new post-graduate programme about medical liability (see under research). Mid-term Faculty could think about a joint postgraduate or even graduate programme with the School of Economics for students not aspiring to becoming lawyers or judges.

#### IV. Course material

Faculty follows the Greek tradition of providing free textbooks on which the course is based. The procedure is now organized electronically as a steppingstone to future electronic textbooks ([www.eudoxus.gr](http://www.eudoxus.gr)). In most subjects more than one option is provided (details for the Law School of Komotini for 2013/14 on

<https://service.eudoxus.gr/public/departments/courses/2785/2013>). In some particularly fast changing subjects this system could be too slow to meet teaching and student demands: e.g. both alternatives for Consumer Protection textbooks date from 2008. The system could be less well suitable for very general, introductory and specialization courses as well. eClass offers opportunities for pointing out additional learning aids. This is already practiced by some Faculty who provide extra material such as recent cases either in eClass or via email.

#### V. eClass

Faculty makes use of eClass

(<https://eclass.duth.gr/eclass/modules/auth/opencourses.php?fc=11>). Currently slightly less than half the courses are represented. Although the site provides the option for password protection nearly all material is unlocked. The level of detail and of the provided material varies widely. This initiative is positive and should be kept and improved. It is advisable that Faculty devises a common policy regarding the use of the medium. This will not only benefit students but will relieve administrative and teaching staff as well as many individual queries will become unnecessary.

#### VI. Examinations

Examinations are mostly written with the possibility of oral exams. The EEC viewed samples of marked exam papers. The topics were of high calibre, and especially in the exams for senior students expressing founded opinions on contemporary issues was required. Nearly all marked exams had either only a mention of the final grade on them with no further feedback or

marking of “right” or “wrong” in the margins without further feedback.

It is of vital importance for the positive, constructive function of examinations for students to be able to understand which factors were taken into consideration in determining the grade. A minimum requirement is ex post justification on demand.

According to Prof. Schwarze's view it should be left by that, given the existing workload and the lack of assistance which in other European Universities may exist in this respect.

Dr. Lakkis is of the opinion that assessment of examinations has the constructive role of learning for the future for which feedback alone through a grade as such is not sufficient. She points out that feedback, which justifies the grade should be mandatory regardless of an application for reassessment with the level of detail being determined by the corrector as deemed appropriate. In counter-balance, if this policy is adopted, student applications should not only express the wish for reassessment or the statement that the grade was too low, but should also require substantial argumentation.

Regardless of the method Faculty should decide upon, Faculty is advised to create a common official legal framework easily accessible to the students on the Faculty website. Publicizing model answers (not necessarily to the general public, but accessible to the students, e.g. via eClass) is already partly practiced and could become a common practice as well.

It is advisable that statistical data about passing ratios and grade distribution is provided and combined with the results of the course evaluation by students (see above). Significant deviations in grading should be discussed at an annual basis.

## ***B. Student mobility, support and involvement***

### Student mobility

Participation in the Erasmus programme is uneven between outbound and inbound students: In the last three years over twenty students where outbound each year while only 4 were inbound in the year 2013/14 (the previous two years it was only 1 student each year). A major inhibiting factor leading to this low level of interest in Komotini Law School could be that the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is not fully implemented. Faculty is advised to participate in the ECTS which could encourage student mobility

Faculty should take advantage of the new Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020, which will not only have a 40% budget increase compared to current spending levels, but is also now an integrated programme bringing together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, Youth and Sports aiming to support transnational partnerships and bridge the worlds of Education and work

([http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm)).

Moreover the Faculty can take advantage of the geographical location of Komotini and expand existing cooperations with universities in the Balkans and/or South Eastern Europe.



### Student support and student involvement

As graduate students could not be consulted (see above) the report is limited to some specific issues and some general suggestions. There seems to be scope for improvement in matters of student information, especially concerning the legal framework about their studies.

This applies particularly to the sensitive matter of exams and reassessment mechanisms. As stated in the Internal Evaluation Report (under 3.1.3.) and confirmed in the interviews, some Faculty members assign coursework with which bonus points can be gained which are added to the note of the course exam. Whilst assignment of coursework is beneficiary to the students, there should be common and official Faculty guidelines for this practice. The same applies to the option for an oral rather than written examination.

In addition to that a common official legal framework should be decided and published about reassessment procedures. This has to be fine-tuned to the policy Faculty will adopt about feedback on grading (see above).

The current Faculty website is not particularly informative for the students, for example in the section “graduate studies” the tab “Rules and Requirements” is vacant as well as the tab “electronic courses” (here a link to eClass would be meaningful), the tab “course descriptions” doesn’t bear any descriptions but is again linked to the model timetable. General information to students of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester cite other compulsory courses than the model timetable. There is as well a discrepancy concerning how many courses have to be passed for the degree: General information speaks of 36 compulsory and 9 elective courses, the model timetable comprises 43 compulsory courses and mentions that 6 elective courses have to be passed. Faculty should put a focus on student-friendly information systems.

The current practice of the Department of International Law to present and explain all elective courses at the beginning of the academic year is positive and should be generalized.

Mentoring is particularly important at the beginning of student life. Students in advanced semesters or postgraduate students could be involved in this process, as they are closer to the needs and to the mentality of the new students and are thus generally consulted more often with questions one wouldn’t dare to pose to a professor. If this model is adopted it has to be ensured that the mentors are being paid for their contribution.

### Extra-curricular student involvement

There are some extra-curricular initiatives Faculty members take with their students, mostly in the post-graduate programmes but also at graduate level, as for example the penal moot court organized in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester. Students from Komotini are as well taking part at the Telders Moot Court and the Model United Nations project. These activities are extremely important both in terms of the students acquiring experience but also in terms of the reputation of the Faculty.

### ***C. Research and young academics***

#### Research

Research is mostly based on individual effort and initiative, which is not uncommon in Legal Science. A significant number of Faculty members are present at both international and Greek conferences, which enhances the visibility of Komotini Law School. The number of publications is impressive.

Particularly in times of diminishing state funds and growing demands it is advisable to form research collaboration forms with an interdisciplinary focus, although interdisciplinarity as such is not a cure-all. Particularly the Departments of Business and of International Law can gain momentum by cooperating among each other but as well with the other Departments. Moreover Faculty can take advantage of its unique geopolitical position and focus further on issues of (cross-border) environment protection and of energy law. Moreover research in intercultural dimensions could be a major asset particularly for Komotini.

Faculty is aware of both the necessity for research collaborations and the problem does not seem to lie in a lack of ideas. Representatives of the Department of Penal Law for example reported ongoing efforts to set up a joint research programme (and maybe a corresponding post-graduate programme) about Medical liability together with the Departments of Civil and Administrative Law and the Medical Faculty in Alexandroupoli). The biggest perceived problem is lack of funding. Faculty expressed the idea that professional assistance in acquiring funding would make sense to take advantage of hitherto untapped opportunities. The Committee agrees with this, funding has today become so complex that researchers have to be aided in finding suitable programmes and in drafting the proposals. In the mid- to long run such a measure will be cost neutral or even will save money, a (slightly) bigger overhead than the current 5 % could be an argument for getting approval for such a new funding officer.

Apart from that current research infrastructure is not sufficient due to the deficits in recent printed and online media provided by the library (see below). Lack of sufficient books was a recurring theme both in the interviews with Faculty members as with postgraduate students and the few graduate students that could be heard.

Faculty could further promote existing research strengths, which will enhance its attractiveness both for (visiting) students and for future hirings. The website is somewhat lacking in this sense: Regarding “Research and development” most tabs are vacant, only two post-graduate theses are to be found (one from the Department of International Law and one from the North-Eastern Europe postgraduate programme).

#### Young academics

Faculty contribution to forming the new generation of academics lies mainly in the postgraduate programmes and the doctoral studies.

Postgraduate students present at the interviews expressed themselves very favourably about the programme and the support through Faculty members.

The number of successful doctoral candidates is very low (in the last three years only 13 –

while it was reported by the administrative staff that 380 are listed as active), moreover a very small percentage of Faculty members (only 8) were involved, while 6 of the 13 successful candidates were supervised in the Department of International Law. A solution could be cooperation with the two other Greek universities as well as the implementation of binational cotutelle procedures. Faculty could consider the possibility of research schools, preferably of interdisciplinary nature and in cooperation with other faculties and scientific organisations. Moreover Faculty could reconsider if the provision that post-graduate studies have to precede the doctoral thesis (page 15 of the Internal Report) is to be upheld. In any case it would be advisable to formulate common standards and best practices for doctoral theses, especially concerning citation techniques.

Some of the post-graduate and doctoral students interviewed expressed a wish for more scholarship opportunities. According to the Faculty website (<http://law.duth.gr/structure/services/#ypo>) scholarships can only be granted to students of Greek origin or nationality. It is questionable if this provision is in accordance with European Law, but probably the provision is set by the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY).

#### ***D. All Other Services***

##### Administration, secretariats

Administrative and support staff is very committed and appreciated by Faculty. Secretarial staff is either appointed to the five departments or in charge of general matters, i.e. archiving, student support (an individual folder is kept for each student), election and/or advancement of teaching staff, Faculty meetings). There is an electronic archive since 1998, but nonetheless there is a double entry into the physical folder kept for each student. This redundant procedure is ineffective, nevertheless some of the changes might not be possible for Faculty without support from laws regarding the requirements for document authenticity. At present the University IT-department is working on a solution that students can apply for certificates online. Currently the opening hours (10.30-12.30, Monday to Friday) are inadequate, resulting in long lines and waiting time.

Current legal framework has brought additional burdens for the Faculty's secretariat whilst at the same time reducing personnel from 9 to 4 (for example since last year students eligible for a housing grant, which is granted by tax authorities, have to submit necessary material at the university which subsequently forwards it to tax authorities). The self-perception of staff is that there is no more room for optimizing but that three or four more employees are needed.

##### Library

The EEC visited the Law Library facilities on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 for a 45-minute session and was received by the four Library Staff and Professor Constantinos Antonopoulos, the Faculty member chairing the Law Faculty Library Committee.

The library serves the needs not only of the Law School, but also of the School of Economics and of Social and Political sciences. The Committee was informed that the current annual

budget of 40.000 € is accordingly divided as follows (approximate numbers):

- 32.000 € for subscriptions, including databases and contributions to HEAL-Link (Hellenic Academic Libraries-Link)
- Of the 8.000 € remaining 4.000 € are allocated to the Law School, which would make a total of 800 € p.a. for each of the five departments). Up to now only half of this amount is certain for the first semester of 2014.

Such a budget is grossly inadequate in order to keep up to date with current literature, even if it can be slightly augmented by utilizing earnings from photocopies (over 6.000 € in the year 2013).

The library report states a total weekly number of 55 hours, however on the website (<http://lib.duth.gr/index.php%3Frm=2&pm=40&sm=33.html>) opening hours are stated as such:

- Winter schedule: 9.00-19.45, Monday-Friday
- Summer schedule: 9.00-14.00, Monday-Friday

Even if „summer schedule“ is meant as during semester break these opening hours are insufficient both for graduate students and even more for post-graduate students and Faculty members doing research. Opening hours could be extended by hiring students paid by the hour for supervising at the entry desk.

The Library offers 26 seats for visitors, supported by an additional 25 seats in a reading room adjacent to, but external to the library itself. The total number of 51 seats is deemed inadequate to the current needs in view of the number of students and Faculty to be served.

Library visitors have access to electronic resources by means of two (very dated) computer terminals only, supplemented by an additional 10 terminals in the computer lab external to the library. The computer terminals are relatively old (5 years or older). Computer facilities are deemed inadequate for the current needs in view of the number of students and Faculty to be served. Wi-Fi is not available on the whole premises, the wireless network particularly does not reach the library premises, where there are only three Ethernet-sockets. Much less is VPN-access to the electronic databases provided.

Following interviews with the Librarians, it became known to the EEC that no specialized IT officer is available to the Library. The IT needs of the Library are served by (the apparently limited) IT staff of the University at large. In view of the contemporary demands of Library operations, it would be desirable to benefit from the services of specialized IT staff. It is positive that the Library catalogue is searchable online and integrated with other Greek University libraries through the OPAC network. During the visit of the EEC it was reported that the Library network was incapacitated due to a hacker attack for an extended period of time, rendering operations difficult. This validates the point that further IT support is needed.

Both sections of the Library (2<sup>nd</sup> floor and basement) encounter regular problems with humidity that affect the integrity of the collection and the work of the visitors and staff. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor section, humidity has damaged the roof and has resulted in leakages that have seeped on to library shelves. The situation seems more acute in the basement (where journals are

stored), where regular influx of ground water has necessitated the installation of water pumps to remedy the situation. The EEC notes that such issues pose great difficulties to the operation of the library and the integrity of the collection and should be addressed.

The Library is staffed by four Librarians. The self-perception of the Librarians is that the number of staff is inadequate to serve the needs of the Library. The selection of titles to be purchased is made by Faculty and not by the Librarians. In view of the number of visitors to be served, it is to be presumed that a larger number of staff is needed for the Library to operate in an optimal manner, however additional staff does not necessarily have to be qualified librarians.

The Library contains approximately 85.000 printed books and 24.000 journal volumes. The collection presents several strengths and weaknesses. In terms of strengths, the EEC noted a rich collection of monographs published in earlier decades, especially the 1980s and 1990s in Greek and relevant foreign languages – with a noticeable focus on English. Some significant printed journal collections date back to the beginning of the 1900s. Several donations in previous decades have significantly enriched the collection. It is clear that at a given moment in time the Library collection of printed volumes was strong. On the side of weaknesses, Library users (students, Faculty, and Librarians) have reported in harmony that the existing collections, especially books and monographs, by and large do not meet contemporary research needs. The EEC confirmed this observation. While some fields are better represented than others (particularly Private Law seems to be better equipped than European and Public Law), the collection presents significant gaps, especially with regard to books published during the past 15 years and especially in terms of the last five years. It is particularly unfortunate that in the field of European Law most books date back to the 70s.

Books can be borrowed either locally or through the Zephyr-portal from other Greek libraries. According to the newest Library Report for the years 2008-2013, the number of borrowed books has significantly increased. Unfortunately, more than 10% of the borrowed books are not returned (582 of 5.522 in 2013). Faculty should define a clear policy about these cases. Books from other Greek libraries can currently be borrowed via Zephyr. Following interviews with the Librarians, it was reported that Library users make very little use of this possibility. The reason could be the relatively high costs (approx. 22 € for shipping two ways from and to mainland Greece). It has to be noted that there is much good will to help in the dire economic situation, for example many students donate the textbooks they don't need anymore to the library. The EEC concludes that the needs of postgraduate or Faculty research are by and large difficult to meet with the current collection.

Electronic journal subscriptions have been strongly curtailed in the last years due to budget restraints. Subscriptions to WestLaw, Heine online and LexisNexis have been cancelled. Beck online is currently available only for Civil Law, however an application for funding the modules Administrative and Constitutional Law is pending. Through HEAL-Link there is access to many electronic journals (contents on

[http://www.heal-link.gr/journals/en/subcat.jsp?cat\\_id=25&cname=Law](http://www.heal-link.gr/journals/en/subcat.jsp?cat_id=25&cname=Law)).

While the Library presents significant strengths with regard to older printed materials and

some electronic databases, the current (printed and electronic) collection falls short of fully serving contemporary research requirements. Facilities, from seating to building condition and IT facilities, seem inadequate to serve the needs of the visitors. An increase in staff would also significantly improve library operations and institute more user friendly opening hours..

### **Collaboration with non-university organizations**

Compared to other Law Schools Komotini Law Schools shows strong individual links with non-university organizations. A significant number of Faculty members are also lawyers and/or taking part in law-making councils. Moreover many Faculty members are teaching at the Judges' Academy and at postgraduate studies. The link to judges is further forged as at postgraduate studies 5 seats are appointed to them.

This presence in the public dialogue is an asset as history is full of regrettable incidents of laws being utilized for the wrong purposes. Particularly in times of crises, which lead to an increased perception of "unjust" or "unfair" legal measures, legal science is called for to take on an active role in the discussion and to support students in developing a critical yet constructive approach to legal science. Faculty could (and maybe should) move from individual efforts to a stronger institutional presence in an interdisciplinary approach including political science, economics, philosophy, psychology, social science and history as well. Concerning the opening of Faculty to market agents, there is a strong fear among student representatives that this could lead to a commercialization of academia. These reservations are to be taken seriously in the sense that student representatives should be not only informed but also involved in forming the modern "knowledge triangle", i.e. the interaction between research, education and innovation.

### ***E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors***

The Law School in Komotini has up to now had the main strategic purpose of preparing the students for entering the subsequent stage of legal trainee, which subsequently leads to the qualification as a lawyer. Faculty rightly recognizes in the Internal Report that this focus has to be kept in principle. However today's career opportunities and demands have become more complex, which makes a strategic planning and a stronger interdisciplinary effort advisable.

The unique geopolitical position of the Law School Komotini which was already mentioned above (under "research") can be a great asset in its overall strategic planning, as continuing globalization does not only require a competitive edge but also a growing awareness of and training in intercultural competence (see the Report to the European Commission mentioned above). Komotini can take a leading role in promoting understanding of different interests, respecting others' thinking patterns and synthesizing them into new, dynamic approaches.

Dr. Lakkis is of the opinion that at present Komotini Law School shows significant and disturbing deficits concerning diversity in general and gender diversity in particular.

According to table Nr. 1 annexed to the Internal Report male to female-ratio is:

- Full professors: 15 / 2
- Associate professors: 11 / 0
- Assistant professors: 14 / 5
- Lecturers: 12 / 4

Dr. Lakkis points out that these numbers give cause for concern as they are observed in the entry levels as well, so that the ratio will not shift any time soon. During the discussion of this point, members of the Internal Evaluation Group explained that the imbalance in numbers is not intentional but a result of the discrepancy in numbers of male and female applicants for vacancies. Faculty estimates that this phenomenon is due to the problem that Komotini is a regional university and most female candidates are not willing to relocate or to commute. Prof. Schwarze and Prof. Skouteris agree with this latter view, underlining that there seems to be not a specific problem of Komotini, rather than a common phenomenon among Law Schools in Europe. In their view no perfect answer has been found so far how this discrepancy could be overcome.

Another major issue in Komotini has to be mentioned: the problem of commute. Whilst it is true that modern communication methods ameliorate the problem it cannot be denied that physical presence on the premises is important – both for the students and for creating team spirit. On the other hand too strict provisions could diminish the attractiveness of the Law School resulting in a quality drop. Faculty should form a strategy taking both points into account. A possible compromising solution could be to ensure that staff is present on more than two whole days in the week and that courses are in general taught on more than two days. However, in Prof. Schwarze's view, this would be again too strict a rule which should be avoided. Also in comparison with other universities in Europe exact figures concerning the days of presence of the teaching staff are not the key issue in this context. What seems more important is the fact that students have adequate access to their professors. In this respect no critique has been formulated - on the contrary - by the postgraduate-students which the Commission had the chance to hear. Moreover, in Prof. Schwarze's view, stricter rules on the physical presence of the teaching staff would make it even more difficult to encourage female candidates for application.

### ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

The general impression of the performance of the Law School in teaching and research is definitely positive. Overall it was apparent that there is much good will and individual efforts in many cases exceed expectations. Especially staff with no tenure is partly providing service without knowing if the contract will be renewed or not. These existing individual efforts can and must be supported and generalized on an institutional basis. There is a need for a more strategic and coordinated approach in the future. The current transitional period with the constantly changing legal frame is inhibiting on the one hand, but on the other hand it bears the opportunity for major qualitative readjustment. Faculty should use this chance and develop

a more entrepreneurial thinking and a clear institutional identity. Significant steps have to be taken considering a binding operational framework, for details see above.

While the EEC recognizes that current budget restraints in Greece affect the Law School, there are many measures Komotini can take even under those conditions. For example, Komotini could take on an active role in life long learning programmes, with or without summer schools. Such programs could be built up in synergy with existing courses – both in graduate and post-graduate studies.

### The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Dr. iur. habil Panajotta Lakkis (President) Former University professor in Würzburg, Germany	
2. Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Schwarze Emeritus University Professor in Freiburg, Germany	
3. Prof. Dr. Thomas Skouteris Associate Professor, The American University, Cairo, Egypt	