

INTRODUCTION

In Saint Petersburg G20 Leaders' Declaration of September 6, 2013 we can read: "26. Policy reforms to support higher employment and facilitate job creation and better matching of skills with job opportunities are central in our growth strategies. We commit to take a broad-ranged action, tailored to national circumstances, to promote more and better jobs..." and further on in the text: "Invest in our people's skills, quality education and *lifelong learning programs* to give them skill portability and better prospects, to facilitate mobility and enhance employability. (G20 Leaders' Declaration, September 6, 2013, St Petersburg" (<http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2013/2013-0906-declaration.html>).

The 'Europe 2020' strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth calls for the development of knowledge, skills and competences for achieving economic growth and employment. The accompanying flagship initiatives 'Youth on the Move' and the 'Agenda for new skills and jobs' emphasise the need for more flexible learning pathways that can improve entry into and progression in the labour market, facilitate transitions between the phases of work and learning and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Council Recommendation, 2012). In this context it is important to emphasise that not only formal education but also non-formal and informal education, based on e-learning, will be of crucial importance for lifelong learning, and so will the identification and analysis of contemporary solutions to priority questions regarding theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of e-learning.

The monograph "*E-learning & Lifelong Learning*" includes the best papers, prepared and presented by authors from eight European countries and from more than twenty-five universities during the scientific conference entitled "*Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Distance Learning*", subtitled: "*E-learning & Lifelong Learning*", which was held on 14-15.10.2013 at the Faculty of Ethnology and Sciences of Education in Cieszyn, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

The speakers were from the University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), Extremadura University (Spain), Jagiellonian University (Poland), Warsaw University (Poland), Silesian University in Opava (Czech Republic), University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), National Defence University (Poland), University of Defence in Brno (Czech Republic), Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (Poland), The Graal Institute (Portugal), Lublin University of Technology (Poland), Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (Poland), Częstochowa University of Technology (Poland), Cracow Pedagogical University (Poland), Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University (Ukraine), Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University in Yekaterinburg (Russia), Centre for Innovation, Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw (Poland), Nowy Sącz Business School – National-Louis University (Poland), Herzen State Pedagogical University (Russian Federation), Dragomanov National Pedagogical University (Ukraine), State Higher Vocational School in Krosno (Poland), Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (Poland), Lisbon

University (Portugal), University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw (Poland), Ternopol State University (Ukraine), Academy of Social Science in Slupsk (Poland), Cherkasy State University (Ukraine), Poznań University of Medical Sciences (Poland), University of Žilina (Slovak Republic), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Mieszko I College of Education and Administration in Poznań (Poland), Innsbruck University (Austria), Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education "Ignatianum" in Cracow (Poland) and other educational institutions.

The authors include well-known scholars, young researchers, academic lecturers with many-years' training and experience in the field of e-learning, PhD students, distance course designers, writers of multimedia teaching materials, designers of web-sites and educational sites.

I am convinced that the monograph will be an interesting and valuable publication, describing the theoretical, methodological and practical issues in the field of the use of e-learning for societal needs, offering proposals of solutions to certain important problems and showing the road to further work in this field, allowing for exchange of experiences of scholars from various universities from many European countries and other countries of the world.

This book includes a sequence of responses to a great deal of questions that have not been answered yet. The papers of the authors included in the monograph are an attempt at providing such answers. The aspects and problems discussed in the materials of the include the following:

- A new role and possibilities of using e-learning for lifelong learning (LLL);
- The place and role of distance learning in the education systems and lifelong learning in Visegrad group countries and other European countries;
- Teachers' and learners' competences in distance learning and computer science;
- A relation between building an information educational environment of the university (school) and forming lecturers' (teachers') ICT competences
- Efficient use of e-learning in improving the level of students' key competences;
- Pedagogical and methodical aspects of Cloud Computing;
- Distance learning of humanities as well as science and mathematics – a differentiated approach;
- How to successfully use e-learning in the training of professionals in the knowledge society
- Formal, non-formal and informal distance education and LLL
- Psychological, social, ethical, cultural and legal aspects of distance learning;

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- E-learning and social media for the disabled; the use of Internet technology and social media for people with limited abilities and special needs – theoretical and practical aspects of their use;
 - Appropriate, efficient methods, forms and techniques in distance learning;
 - Quality tools in E-learning and criteria for evaluation of distance courses;
 - Educational strategies to enhance learners' motivation in e-learning, etc.

Publishing this monograph is a good example of expanding and strengthening of international cooperation. I am very grateful for valuable remarks and suggestions which contributed to the quality of the publication. Here I especially want to thank Andrzej Szczurek for his assistance in editing this publication. Also, I would like to say 'thank you' to the authors for the preparation and permission to publish their articles. I wish all readers a pleasant reading. Thank you.

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