THE EVOLUTION OF LEGAL KNOWLEDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS – VARNA

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Introduction

Law and legal science are phenomena which follow the public development and are a complex mechanism for influencing and regulating the entire system of relations. As a rule law does not determine, rather it follows the dynamics of contemporary economics. In its role of superstructural category, it is objectified through theoretical constructs, based on generalizations and experience gained in the process of public development. The contemporary concept of legal knowledge in economics is closely bound to the main function of law as a normative regulator of public processes. Law is not just a reflection of changes in society, but in fact, it can speed them up or slow them down. In that sense, the legal knowledge and skills for applying legal standards play a significant role for the development of the economy.

The connection between law and economics exists also in the Universities, being centres of scientific knowledge. One consequence of their objective interaction is the traditional presence of legal knowledge at Varna Economic University. In higher education, knowledge is not reduced to a mechanical aggregate of perceptions, rather it is a special process, aimed at the acquisition of professional competence and its successful realization.

The importance of legal knowledge in the training of future economists is connected with: a) acquisition of theoretical knowledge of fundamental legal categories and formation of a special type of legal consciousness; b) good legal culture, which will facilitate proper application of legal acts in practice; c) understanding the effects of law as a normative regulator; d) familiarization with the structure of the civil service; e) gaining competitive advantage as a result of a comprehensive legal and economic evaluation of social processes.

In this line of thought, the above-mentioned conclusion regarding the currency of legal knowledge in economics predetermines the purpose, the object and the subject of the present article.

The purpose of the present article is to make a division into periods and analysis of the development of legal knowledge at Varna University of Economics. The object of study is legal knowledge in economics, and the subject of study is legal knowledge at the University of Economics - Varna. The purpose is achieved through the following specific tasks:

- Historical review and division into periods of legal knowledge at UE Varna;
- Indication of the principal lecture courses for certain historical periods;
- Indication of lecturers, who present legal knowledge at Varna University of Economics;

Continuity involves preservation of historical memory and paying due credit to the founder teachers, who laid the beginnings of the introduction of legal knowledge at the Higher School of Commerce in Varna, which later became the University of Economics. In the history of EU development, four major periods can be outlined.

1. Legal knowledge at the Higher School of Commerce (HSC) – Varna during the period 1920 - 1945;

The Higher School of Commerce - Varna was established in 1920 as the first school of commerce in the country, owing much of its creation to the contribution of the citizens of Varna. We are about to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the educational institution which demonstrates its consistency and continuity in the training of specialists with higher economic education. Running parallel with this auspicious occasion is also the completion of 25 years of independent existence of the Department of Legal Sciences as part of the University structure.

Along with the establishment of the Higher School of Commerce (HSC) the relevance of legal knowledge and its importance to future university graduates is being rationalized. Every year, even to this day, economic students along with other specialized subjects, study various legal disciplines, preparing themselves for the most effective management of public processes.

The period with which we associate the emergence of legal knowledge in the Higher School of Commerce dates back to the 1920s. In the first syllabus of instruction developed by its founder Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev and approved by the government minister Rayko Daskalov, substantial space was allotted to legal disciplines such as general theory of law, civil law, commercial law, maritime law, international law, competition law.

The syllabus is the principal methodological document, which reflects the structure of scientific cognition. Further, we have also examined the legal disciplines incorporated in the syllabus and their close connection with economic issues. The main emphases are placed on the basic concepts of the General Theory of Law with respect to legal norms, subjects, legal relation and description of juridical facts. There follows specialization of legal knowledge in private law relations connected with the civic, commercial and maritime law.

The principal law institutes offer courses on subjects such as property and various kinds of servitude, basic contracts - sale, rent, exchange, insurance, annuity, convention, and types of obligation and methods of their redemption. A considerable number of classes is allocated to commercial law, which provides knowledge, connected with subjects in the form of companies, different types of associations and their management, the specific responsibilities of merchants, the main commercial contracts (those of current account, commission, transport, issuance, insurance policy, etc.), as well as the commercial securities (promissory note and bill of exchange).

We should also draw attention to a very specific feature, connected with the differentiation of a separate legal discipline under the name of Competition Law. It reflects the issues regarding commercial insolvency, the classification of debts and their collection, the peculiarities of competitive proceedings as a form of overcoming insolvency and the consequences of bankruptcy. The foresight demonstrated with the inclusion of this subject in the curriculum is undeniable given the topicality of the issues even today.

As lecturers in legal disciplines for the period 1921-1945 we can point out: Dr Vasil Karamihailov - an adjunct professor in maritime law - 1921-1924; Evtim Vodenicharov, an adjunct professor in maritime law for the period 1927-1935; Dr Goran Ivanov, a reader in commercial and maritime law 1937-1941, Kosta Karaivanov, an adjunct professor in civil and commercial law 1927-1932; Dr Sevdalin Penchev, a reader in social law and social policy - 1940-1944, etc.

In view of the well-preserved scientific research sources and publications of the lecturers of legal sciences we can conclude that there is a wide variety of research topics on the one hand and intransience of their topicality, on the other. At the present stage, we need to mention *The rights of the shareholder and their lesion* and *The corporate idea in the modern economy* as works of outstanding scientific value.

2. Legal knowledge at the Higher State School Sveti Kiril Slavyanobalgarski during the period 1945-1957

The development of legal knowledge at the Higher State School Sveti Kiril Slavyanobalgarski during the period 1945-1957 is closely bound to the teaching and research activities of Prof. Karol Ivanov Telbizov, who graduated from the University in the town of Cluj (Romania) being conferred the title licentiate in state and legal sciences (1938). He is declared Doctor at the Faculty of Law of SU Sv. Kliment Ohridski. Besides being a lecturer, he is also Dean of the Faculty of Accounting during the period 1959-1960 and Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Commodities for 1960-1966. He is also believed to be one of the founders of the Department of Management back in 1967.

With the conviction that legal knowledge is an important component for the professional training of economists, Prof. Telbizov inspired in students motivation and

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striving towards compliance with the law and increase in legal knowledge. He wrote a great number of textbooks on Civil Law, Principles of the State and the Law, International Law of Tourism. Alongside these books, he also did scientific research focusing on the legal aspects of specific economic issues. They reflect the close link between legal knowledge in economics and their significance for the preparation of the future economists. His research addresses problems such as delivery contracts, large-scale construction agreements, freight contracts, marine insurance, expropriation, private ownership over farmland, the role of state arbitration, decentralization of the system of bargaining, etc.4

An eminent researcher and lecturer of legal knowledge for that period is also Dimitar Dimitrov, a professor of public and administrative law during the period 1946-1947. The more important legal subjects are connected with the fundamental issues of the state and the administrative structure such as: General Doctrine of the State; Public and Administrative Law and Social Law and Social Policy.

3. Legal knowledge at the Higher Institute of National Economy

Dimitar Blagoev (HINE) during the period 1957-1990

An important characteristic of the legal knowledge during the period 1957-1990 at the Higher Institute of National Economy (HINE) is its orientation towards the civil and labour law of the Republic of Bulgaria. This fact is logically justified by the close relationship between economic science and private law in particular. On account of that the principal courses are in the following fields: Principles of Bulgarian Private Law, Civil Law for Economists, Civil Law and Construction Legislation, Private International Law, Commercial Law, Labour Law, Maritime Law.

The 1980s witnessed a new development in legal knowledge as a result of the activity of associate professor Vasil Yordanov Mitkov. Having worked for the District Court in Varna, he joined the Department of Civil Law Sciences in 1983, to become an associate professor and give lectures until 1994.

During the period 1983-1988, the subject Principles of Law was introduced as a major discipline in all economic programmes. It is included also in the current syllabi as part of the general educational foundation and encompasses the most important issues of all the legal branches of our national system. The academic staff were also the principal body of authors who took part in the production of manuals and handbooks for the respective period. As more important literature under the guidance of Assoc. Prof. Dr V. Mitkov, there can be pointed out the following sources: Law of PRB and Financial and Accounting Law, Principles of Administrative, Family, Labour and Criminal Law of PRB, Economic Law of PRB, Principles of Law.5

During this period there occurs the institutionalization and differentiation of an independent Department of Legal Sciences, which brings together lecturers with a law degree. In December 1989 the Department of Planning and Management of the

National Economy headed by Prof. Nora Mitsova was restructured into the Department of Legal Sciences. The initial academic staff were later joined by Assoc. Prof. Vasil Mitkov, Assoc. Prof. Dr Radoslav Rachev, Assoc. Prof. Dr Margarita Bachvarova, Dr Sonya Mihaylova, Margarit Mitsev, Yuri Stoykov, etc. The first Head of the Department was Assoc. Prof. Dr Vasil Mitkov. During this period more and more staff members were being recruited to work in the Department.

4. Legal knowledge at the University of Economics – Varna during the period 1990 – 2014

The development of legal knowledge at the UE – Varna for the period 1990-2015 is closely linked with the establishment of the Faculty of Law (1991 to 1998). Legal knowledge is differentiated according to the established criteria in higher education, on the basis of which three legal Departments were formed i.e. the Department of Public Law Sciences, Department of Civil Law Sciences and Criminal Law Sciences.

Founder and Dean of the Law Faculty was Prof. Dr. Ec. Sc. Petar Markov Tsankov. During this period, eminent scientists and representatives of legal thought were invited to deliver lectures. Indeed, due credit for the preparation of future cadres in legal education should be given to corresponding members Acad. Chudomir Goleminov and Rumen Yankov, Prof. Dr Ivan Vladimirov, Assoc. Prof. Dr N. Beronov, Prof. Dr B. Stankov, Prof. Dr L. Yosifov, etc. They were credited not only for their work as lecturers at Varna University of Economics but also for their participation in central state authorities and structures. During this period there is a marked tendency of binding the legal knowledge at the University with its practical application in individual areas of state administration. Distinguished practitioners from the courts of law and the public prosecutor’s department were also invited to read lectures.

During the period 1993 – 1998, legal subjects that are legitimate for the legal education were offered as lecture courses. In addition, the services of part-time lecturers and practising lawyers were ensured to teach in the Law major program. For the period of existence of the Faculty of Law there have been taught legal subjects consistent with the state requirements, due to the regulated nature of the legal profession.

Since 1998 till the present day, due to the closing of the Faculty of Law, the main academic staff have been restructured into the Department of Legal Sciences, which until 2000 was headed by Prof., Doctor of Laws, Dr. Ec. Sc. P. Tsankov. In the education process and in the development of legal knowledge a number of distinguished scholars took active part, among which Prof. B. Stankov, Assoc. Prof. Dr R. Rachev, Assoc. Prof. Dr M. Bachvarova, Assoc. Prof. Dr A. Andreeva, Assoc. Prof. Dr G. Yolova, Chief Assist. Prof. O. Marinova, G. Tsviatkova, Assist. Prof. V. Vladova. The main disciplines and the legal knowledge taught with them are in close connection with the economic programmes and the most read of those are Principles of Law.

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6 Lachezar Dobrilov - district attorney, Prof. Dr Zdravko Traykov - director of the Central Prison, Vanuhi Arakelyan - judge from District Court - Varna, Despina Georgieva - judge from Regional Court - Varna, etc.
Financial Law, Commercial Law, Civil and Commercial Law, Principles of Law and Normative Legal Regulation of Tourism, Employment and Social Security Law, Private International Law.

Under the contemporary conditions, typical of the Department of Legal Studies is the internal specialization of its academic staff, following the basic division of our legal system into public and private law. This allows for the upkeep of legal knowledge in the two main branches of the science.

The main objective of the academic staff of the Department of Legal Sciences is to maintain high educational standards in teaching, to renew and bring up-to-date legal theory with scientific research and to apply the creative achievements in the practice.

Conclusion

The historical overview connected with the emergence and the evolution of legal knowledge at UE Varna gives us reason to make the following conclusions and findings.

The need for legal knowledge has been embedded in the methodology of economic education ever since the creation of the HSC - Varna, of which there bears testimony the first syllabus of the higher school of commerce, dating back to 1920. The dynamics of the number of legal subjects is directly related to the program objectives for dissemination of knowledge, which correspond to the level of developing science and the standards of European higher economic education. An overriding trend today is the inclusion of legal knowledge and disciplines with priority in the sphere of private law, such as commercial law, labour law, law of estate, contractual law. In conclusion, the following can be suggested as guidelines for future development: broadening of the specialized legal disciplines in the training of economists, conducting of interdisciplinary research and creation of joint publications and introduction of new legal disciplines in certain programmes.

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Abstract

In the present article there are discussed the origins and the evolution of legal knowledge at the University of Economics – Varna. There is presented a historical overview and done a division into periods of legal knowledge, in accordance with the stages of development of the higher school. There is discussed the first syllabus of the higher school of commerce and the legal subjects included in it. There is observed certain dynamics of legal knowledge depending on the goals of teaching, which follow the development of science and the standards of European economic education. There is emphasized the main trend of the evolution of legal knowledge in economics, connected with certain fundamental questions of the state system and in private law relationships.

Keywords: higher education, teaching, legal sciences.