



Alma Jeftić

On the Doorstep of Europe – Between Graduation and „Recommendation“

Lapsus linguae or something else

Once we know the problems with our main character, Bosnian&Herzegovinian and his dream of Europe, we can begin with a review of the major obstacles that are still keeping us away from the European threshold.

When we say that the young people are *the future of this country*, perhaps we have in mind that it is our duty to provide them with the conditions under which their potentials and knowledge will be demonstrated and used *for the benefit of this country*. But today these young people are standing in front of the offices for the employment, and their diplomas, titles and knowledge are just recorded in dusty drawers of the same offices. If a careful reader of these lines find herself/himself familiar with it, or find her/his own reflection in it, she/he should not be afraid and should not flinch like our main character, because the enlightenment of problem greatly contributes to its solution. Or at least indicates the decision.

So, let's start from the beginning! Suppose that once diligent, brave and aspiring student has crowned his work by the diploma or, to say it in a better way, by a ticket to the world of work. It is important to note that this text will not address the questions of the quality of education, graduation and similar problems, since they are the subject of another debate and another context. Thus, a former student took her/his diploma and brought with it all her/his dreams of a career, future and changes and went to a new world, the world of work, responsibilities, and manipulation.

This last word certainly did not exist in her/his glossary until then, but she/he will become familiar with it during the battle for existence. The moment in which you register in the employment office is actually the one in which you set yourself in front of a short question with difficult answer: „*How to find the job?*“ At this moment our brave former student understands

that although she/he answered correctly to the much harder questions, now she/he needs to solve a difficult, painful and existential one.

Although it should be completely different, today exists three answers to the set question:

1. by „kinship connections“;
2. by “purchase/payment” for job;
3. by “recommendation”.

As the first two answers (although inaccurate and insulting to the dignity and self-esteem) are clear in themselves, and therefore require no further explanation, it is important to mention the third one, which, in case it was not emphasized, would not present something incorrect and explanation-seeking.

Today, in time of the harmonization of legislation with the European acquis, in the time in which we are trying to approach the European values of dignity, the preservation of human rights, equality and equal opportunities for all, in the process of hiring our student is faced with a tough exam called RECOMMENDATION. But what does it entail?

„The recommendation should be written by a former professor, maybe even a mentor, who will thereby clearly explain her/his qualities, abilities, personality characteristics that will future employer consider as important and that will be used in the process of selection of best candidate for particular job.“ The answer is correct, but invalid. Unfortunately.

Recommendation, in the form in which it is used today, does not imply any written evidence, moreover, it dreads leaving any traces on the paper. It also does not include any explanation of abilities, qualities and personality characteristics, because the person who writes it does not understand the meaning of these terms. It also does not include a signature of a relevant person, such as former professors and mentors, as in this case it is not important to be well introduced to candidate's academic success – only her/his eligibility under the criteria which does not include any ability and/or trait that (when we talk about methods and techniques for selection of the best candidates, which rely on advances in the field of organisational psychology) can be considered reliable and valid predictor of the future success of the candidate at that particular workplace.

Perhaps this is a very short explanation of today very popular term „recommendation“ and it seems entirely unconnectable with the concept of Europe and European Union accession, but in fact it is very important. It is necessary to know that the reform area of human resource management (which includes job analysis, selection, methods of selecting candidates, etc.) is one of the key preconditions for European Union accession according to Acquis communautaire. Also, in order to justify the importance of oral „recommendation“ its „users“ like to mention „European Union member states in which it is quite ordinary, normal and everyday thing“. In doing so, they should know that the same recommendation has much greater significance in the European union, as it implies clearly described abilities, qualities and traits of the candidate, provided by a person who is relevant in this case to write it (this implies that the person who is writing recommendation knows candidates as her/his former student or employee, rather than as someone on whom he had heard from somebody else, and that one has heard from somebody

else who said that on the ground of suspicious reasons). Also, the same written recommendation is submitted to the candidate/applicant in a sealed envelope, which will be opened only by those whom it is addressed. And that will be the persons who will read and analyse it, because they possess knowledge necessary for an adequate selection of the winning candidate. And this is something that is acquired through education, not the oral tradition.

Standing on the doorstep of Europe, between graduation and recommendation, our student asks: „Where will this *lapsus linguae* lead us?“ The answer is: „*The European Union, certainly not.*“

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