TEN YEARS AT ST GALLEN

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Peter Ulrich's appointment as Professor of Business Ethics at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland. This was the first chair in the subject (Wirtschaftsethik) in a German-speaking faculty of Business Administration or Economics.

Formerly a professor of Business Administration at the University of Wuppertal, Germany, Peter Ulrich has developed a complete programme of business and economics ethics courses on all academic levels. In 1989 the Institut fur Wirtschaftsethik (IWE) was founded by St Gallen, offering research projects and services for clients as well as the general public.

From the beginning, the public resonance was enormous, *writes Peter Ulrich.* Many interested people from many academic disciplines, from the business world and from the media all over the German speaking countries and beyond wanted to know more about business and economics ethics in general and with regard to special subjects. Business ethics seemed to 'exist' now, so it should be 'delivered' like fuel from a petrol station! But the few attendants at that station had a little problem. There was not really a consumable substance in the pump yet, at least not one which was ready for the mind 'machines' in that cultural area.

One of the main reasons for that situation is rooted in the very different academic traditions between the Anglo-American and the German speaking world. Whereas here economics and business administration are usually connected in one faculty, there the business administration departments are almost completely separated from the economics department. As a result, the (dominating) Anglo-Saxon conception of business ethics seems, from a German academic point of view, rather biased towards corporate ethics, taking the societal presuppositions and the political framework of the market simply as 'given' instead of reflecting first of all on their normative grounds.

To fill those normative grounds of the almost empty ethical 'fuel-pump' with a comprehensive ethics of the market economy, a lot of scientific activities had to be undertaken in the years since the adventurous beginning of the IWE. The central aim was to develop a sound approach to *Wirtschaftsethik* suitable to integrate all ethical questions regarding our industrial way of life (*Wirtschaftsform*) and to the politico-economic framework of the market (*Wirtschaftsordnung*) as well as corporate ethics (*Unternehmensethik*) and citizen's ethics (*Wirtschaftsburgerethik*).

For this reason, several research projects referred to the history of economic thought, to the ethical thinking-patterns of business people and to systematic questions of economic ethics. Step by step, the 'St Gallen approach' of *Integrative Wirtschaftsethik* has taken shape. To coincide with the tenth anniversary, the first comprehensive elaboration of this approach was published by the writer in July 1997. The title of the new book is *Integrative Wirtschaftsethik - Grundlagen einer lebensdienlichlen Okonomie* (foundations of a life-conducive economy), published by Paul Haupt, Bern/ Stuttgart/Wien. It contains ten chapters on 516 pages: for more information see the Internet homepage of the IWE, http://www.unisg.ch/~iwe/index.html

The IWE had already published no less than 18 books since 1987, most though not all in the series *St Galler Beitrage zur Wirtschaftsethik* (Paul Haupt Publishers). Seven further books are in print or in preparation. Among the published books there is non-academic educational material with 24 lectures for vocations and trade schools, which was developed on behalf of the Swiss government. Seventy-seven brochures have now been brought out in the series *Beitrage und Berichte des Instituts fur Wirtschaftsethik:* seven hundred or more copies of them are sold every year to a broad range of interested individuals, institutions and libraries.

Within St Gallen itself, 12 doctoral dissertations and 2 habilitation theses on business ethics themes have been completed in the first decade. Moreover, the IWE had the honour to organise the seventh annual EBEN conference in 1994 in St Gallen (and to be its main sponsor by considerable means earned with other projects). Last, but not least, the holder of the Chair and his few assistants have given several hundred speeches and lectures outside the University of St Gallen during this time. More than 100 or even 150 invitations to speak now reach the Institute every year, most of which have to be refused by reason of limited capacity.

Nevertheless, the influence of the IWE on ethical thinking concerning economic theory and practice is steadily growing in the German academic debate, in the media and in the business world, which almost surely means a lot of work remains to be done also in the second decade of the Institute.