



*”Establishing and Capacity Building of a Southern Serbian Academy and a National Conference for Vocational Higher Education in Serbia – **ECBAC**”*

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
of various aspects of the higher education system
in the European Union and Serbia

Autors

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Preface

The importance of the project named "Establishing and Capacity Building of a Southern Serbian Academy and a National Conference for Higher Vocational Education in Serbia - ECBAC" which has been running in Serbia since 2011 is multifaceted. The primary objective is to improve the quality of higher education by means of integrating particular vocational orientation forms into different areas of the system. Various peculiarities with respect to social and economic conditions, the geo-strategic position, as well as different experiences regarding the implementation of Bologna declaration confirm the validity of the need to create a unique landscape of higher education in Europe. The results and observations obtained through the comparative analysis of various higher education quality policies, the role of students in the process of higher education, human resources management and internationalisation between the EU and Serbia clearly show that Serbian higher education has made big steps in the right direction. The achieved results proved the validity of reforms and made room for the development of all participants in the process of education.

The priorities of the Bologna Process encompass adoption of a common framework with respect to qualifications and diplomas, introduction of the ECTS, and introduction of European standards for quality assurance while preserving national, cultural and linguistic specificities, encouraging mobility of students and teachers within the European space, simplifying the process of recognition of diplomas, etc. A permanent system change and modification of laws and regulations ensures the effectiveness of the system of higher education and its compliance with the principles established in the framework of European integration. Our analysis shows that the next key step in the development of higher education should be based on the integration of different institutions of higher vocational education taking into account various work fields that they cover, as well as the social, economic and geo-strategic aspects of the Southern region.

Authors

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CHAPTER ONE

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: THE EU AND SERBIA

INTRODUCTION

By means of introduction of the Bologna model approved through the adoption of the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Serbia in 2005 proper conditions have been met for a dynamic development of Serbian higher education. All amendments have been based on European values of higher education, with a clearly defined starting point - that higher education is a public good, accessible to all [1].

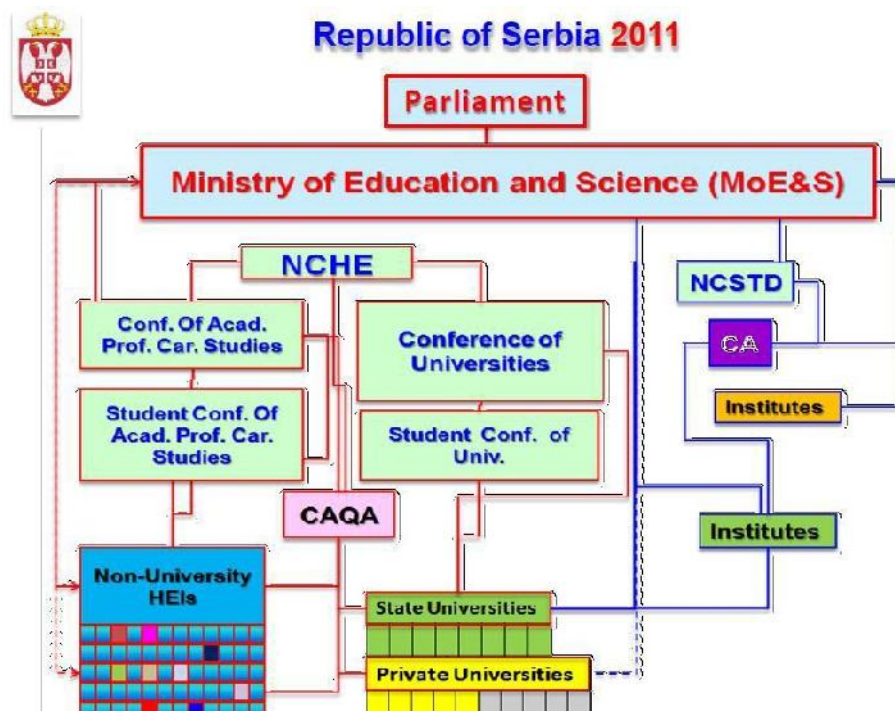


Figure1. Education system structure¹

¹ NCHE: National Council for Higher Education; CAQA: Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance; NCSTD: National Council for Scientific and Technological Development



Higher education in Serbia today is represented by 65 colleges of vocational studies (48 public and 17 private colleges) with 20,578 students enrolling in the first year of studies. Furthermore, there are 18 universities (8 public and 10 private) with 53,942 students enrolling in the first year of studies covering a large number of accredited study programmes and scientific expertise with large-client resources in every respect [2].

The main features in the background of the Law have been focused on the promotion of real and relevant market demands. Moreover, it promotes the need to improve interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programmes for new professions created in the technological era. The previous system of joint study and examination regulations has been replaced by the accreditation system. The numbers of courses with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees have increased and they were initiated in the winter semester of 2007. The students have been involved as partners.

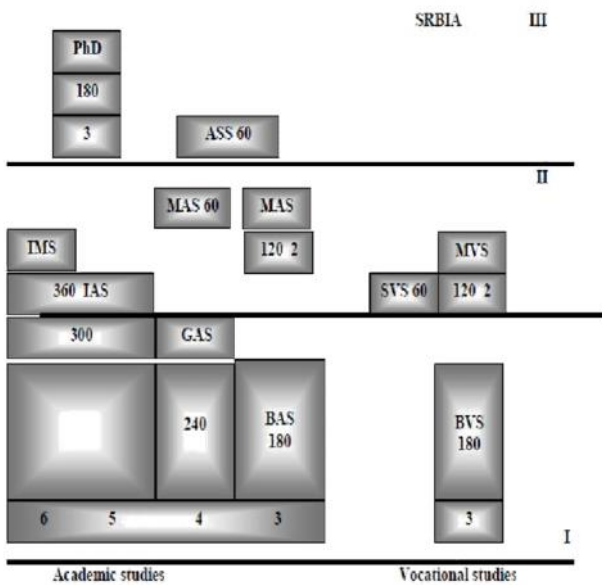


Figure2. Tertiary system of Serbian higher education

All courses and study load is expressed in terms of the ECTS points where 60 ECTS credits correspond to overall student engagement during forty-hour workweek within one school year. This means that one academic year bears 60 ECTS credits. Bearing in mind this distribution, the duration of education in higher education has been improved as follows:

- certain painful points in the system of higher education have been largely exceeded: the duration of studies, the level of students who drop out, and the price of studying that is usually found a culprit. One of the goals of the higher education reform in Serbia conducted in accordance with the Bologna Process was creating the conditions for competitiveness of our higher education institutions at international level. Positive experiences from the EU in this area speak in favour of this approach to reform. The same was amended in 2010 by introducing changes in the existing Law. Those changes should contribute to better implementation of all aspect of the Bologna Process [3].

- the whole set of reforms in the system of higher education in the last decades of the twentieth century in Serbia was left without the right answer and it remained at the level of an experiment.

Various problems, such as too many ambitious goals, the impact of the world economic crisis, the consequences of the transition period which lasted longer than planned, etc. forced the

Level I of Higher Education:

Undergraduate academic studies carry from 180 to 240 ECTS credits and last either 3 or 4 years;

Undergraduate vocational studies carry 180 ECTS credits and last for 3 years.

Level II of Higher Education:

- Academic studies - Master studies carry either 60 or 120 ECTS credits, depending on whether the previous total of undergraduate studies was 240 or 180 ECTS credits. This basically means that Master's degree studies last for 5 years;

- Specialist vocational studies carry at least 60 ECTS credits and last for at least for one year;
- Specialist studies carry at least 60 ECTS credits and lasts for at least one year.

Level III of Higher Education:

A Doctoral degree studies carry 180 ECTS credits and last for 3 years



authorities to initiate the preparation of a new strategy for the development of higher education in 2020, which was promoted in April 2012. The strategy seeks to respond to the challenges of higher education and to have its results reflected on the development and creation of a modern Serbian society. The strategy starts from the viewpoint that combined effects of science and higher education sector can contribute to keeping up with the developed societies. Consequently, the strategy places emphasis on the issues of quality. The authors have tried to avoid bidding for ambitious goals which aspire to quantity, and they have succeeded. The strategy specifically addresses negative demographic trend which constitutes a major problem in the long run. On the other hand, the development of higher education in the EU is a continuous process, based on the real needs of the labour market, demographic trends, technology and knowledge transfer. It is also an irreversible process of establishing a unified and orderly market.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BELGIUM

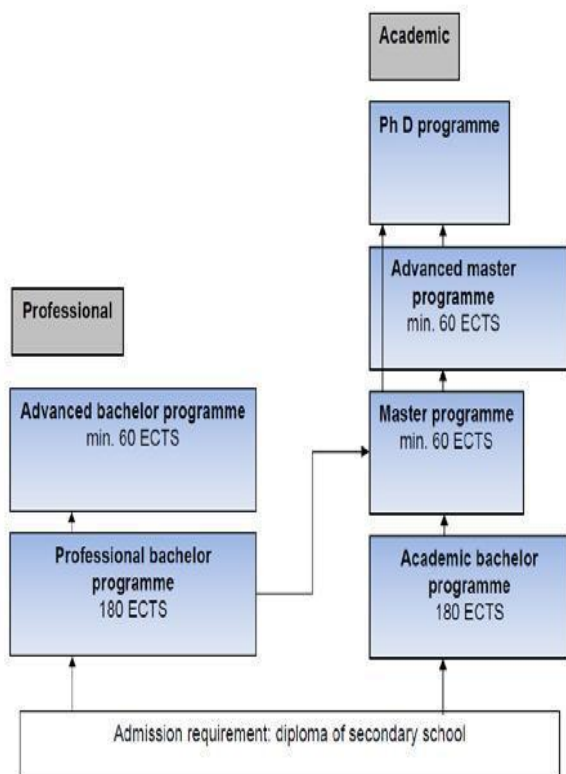


Figure3. Tertiary higher education system in Belgium

From the standpoint of their structures, the higher education system in Belgium is very similar to higher education system in the Republic of Serbia. The higher education system in Flanders is a binary system with clearly defined degree programmes. The fact that this system allows for the possibility of horizontal mobility makes it extremely flexible. The reform of higher education in Belgium started in 1999 with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration and it was legally confirmed through the Law on Higher Education Reform (2004), the Law on Participation (2004) and the Law on Flexible Learning Paths (2004) [4].

The terms and conditions of admission and enrolment in the first year of either academic or vocational studies are more or less standard-based and they have been designed to meet the basic requirements of the Law on Higher Education which guarantees access to higher education to everyone. The programmes are based on well-defined objectives and outcomes and correspond to high demands of the economy of Belgium. The degree of acquired competences of graduates is placed in the focus and it is one of the main indicators of the success of a study programme.

The level of funding is defined by gross domestic product, taking into account the general guidelines of the Lisbon Declaration. The special quality of Belgian higher education system is the possibility of horizontal mobility from vocational Bachelor programmes (180 ECTS) to Master academic programmes (60 ECTS) (Fig. 3). The status of students and their participation in the management and decision-making are precisely defined by the law of 2004. The overall objectives of study programmes are clearly defined and delimited. Vocational programs (180 ECTS) aim to

provide students with the adequate level of general and specific knowledge and competencies required to perform specific actions in accordance with the requirements of the modern labour market. With this level of competence, graduates are competitive at the labour market and they are largely capable of meeting the requirements. Furthermore, graduates have the option for further education through advanced Bachelor programmes (at least 60 ECTS) within vocational, or Master programmes (min. 60 ECTS) within the academic system (Fig.1). The goals of academic programmes are focused on acquiring scientific knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to further one's academic development within various relevant scientific fields. Some Bachelor programmes are a follow-up to another (vocational) Bachelor programmes. This follow-up programme is geared towards the broadening of or specialising in competences acquired during the initial Bachelor programme.

According to Higher Education Qualifications Framework in Flanders "...Master s programmes have the objective to bring students to an advanced level of scientific or artistic knowledge and competences required for scientific or artistic work in general, and to a specific domain of sciences and arts in particular, which is required for autonomous scientific or artistic work or to apply this scientific or artistic knowledge independently in one or a group of professions." One is granted a PhD title by a panel of researchers after a public presentation of the thesis in which a candidate demonstrated that he/she is able to conceive new scientific knowledge based on independent research. One of the merits of a doctoral thesis should be the potential to lead to publications in scientific journals.

University colleges and universities have full authority over the curricula of their programmes. A curriculum consists of a coherent set of components. The content of the curricula corresponds with the award-type descriptors of the National Framework of Qualifications of Flanders. Additionally, the content of these curricula needs to take into account the requirements regarding certain functions or professions determined by national and international legislation (e.g. the European Directive 2005/36). The outcomes of a curriculum consist of a coherent set of competencies which are well-defined through teaching units, learning and evaluation activities aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. A component can consist of one subject (in the traditional sense of the word) but can also consist of a cluster of subjects and learning activities. An average full-time student would take up 60 credits per academic year, which represents a workload of 1500 to 1800 hours and a full attainment of the learning outcomes of the components involved. The load of a component is expressed in the ECTS credits. One component comprises a minimum of 3 credits with a maximum of 12 components per 60 credits. A student has completed a component and obtained the respective credits when an assessment or assessments demonstrate that he/she has satisfactorily acquired the relevant competencies. In this respect, he/she is assessed on a scale from 0 to 20 (in whole numbers), with 10 being the pass threshold. Every student is entitled to enrol at least twice for every course component and has the right to sit at least two exams per enrolment.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PORTUGAL

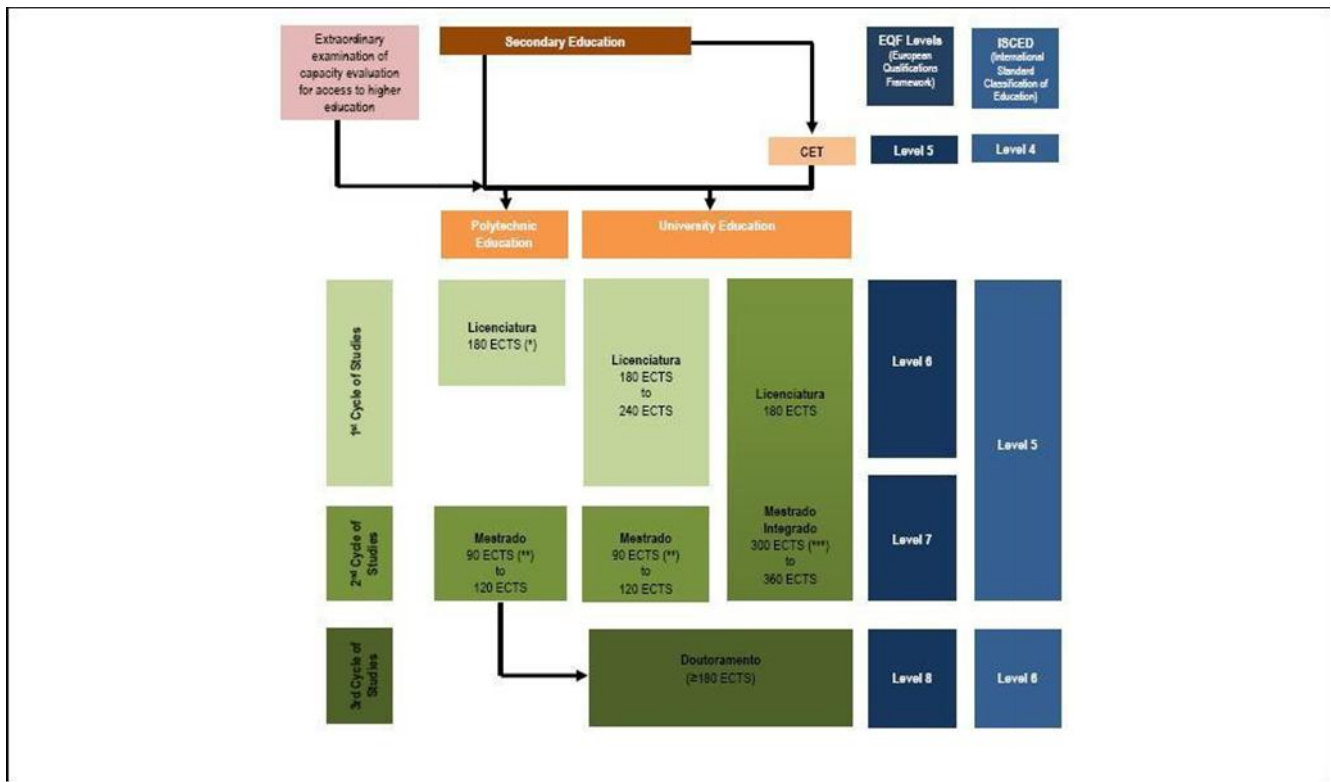


Figure4. Higher Education System in Portugal

The implementation of the Bologna Process in Portugal led to the adoption of essential measures to promote equal access to higher education, improve student support systems, increase levels of participation and completion in higher education programmes, attract new consumers within the lifelong learning context and guarantee the qualifications of Portuguese citizens in the European area. [5] The new Portuguese higher education framework under the Bologna Process is defined in the amendment to the Basic Law on the Education System (2005) and the respective regulations in the Law Decree No. 74/2006 [6].

The higher education system in Portugal is binary, comprising university institutions and polytechnic institutions, which can be public or private (Fig.4). There are more than 150 higher education institutions. The public sector includes 14 universities and a non-integrated university institution, 15 polytechnics and a number of polytechnic schools integrated in universities, 9 non-integrated nursing schools, 4 university-level military schools and 5 polytechnic military schools. The private sector includes 34 university level military schools and 5 polytechnic military schools.

The private sector includes 34 university level institutions and no less than 66 polytechnics. The private sector also includes a Catholic university.

The university and polytechnic subsystems are mainly differentiated by their formative role in research: the polytechnics are vocationally or professionally oriented and do not carry out fundamental research as the universities do. Only applied research is conducted at the polytechnics. The number of higher education institutions expanded rapidly in the eighties and early nineties as a response to an increase in student enrolment.

The higher education system in Portugal is regulated through a number of degree laws. The common fundamental principle of the degree laws is the prevalent autonomy of the public universities. These universities are, in terms of the law, entitled to statutory, scientific, pedagogical, administrative and financial autonomy. This means that the universities have almost complete freedom to initiate, suspend or cancel study programmes. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (DGES), which holds the formal responsibility for the universities, registers all new study programmes and degrees. With the University Autonomy Act of 1988, this approval process was reduced to a bureaucratic procedure without any actual impact. The Ministry is only entitled to refuse study programmes or degrees if they are inconsistent with formal requirements in terms of duration of the course programme or a number of total credits needed to obtain a degree. Regardless of this, decisions are not based on evaluations or accreditations [6].

The autonomy of the public polytechnic institutions is almost similar to that of the universities, but the procedure for approval of new study programmes is somewhat more restrictive. The public polytechnics are not allowed to create new study programmes without a formal approval by the Ministry. They are obliged to submit all proposals to the Ministry (General Director for Higher Education at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) for approval. The proposals are subjected to a technical review at the Ministry where the compliance with formal requirements in terms of duration and number of credits is tested. The review usually takes about a year. Private universities and private polytechnics are regulated through the Private and Cooperative Higher Education Act. The institutions must be officially recognised in order to award degrees. The procedure for approval of new study programmes and degrees is much more restricted compared to the approval process applied to the public universities and polytechnics. The approval procedure can take up to four years and includes not only a ministerial technical review but also an academic review by an external expert committee. The prolonged duration of the approval process is due to the extended process for feedback from the expert committees. However, there is no clear evidence that this extended procedure has improved the quality of new study programmes provided by the private sector, but it has undoubtedly created a more self-disciplinary behaviour in terms of a number of applications for approval of new study programmes. This assumption is substantiated by the relatively low number of undergraduate study programmes offered by private institutions compared with the number of undergraduate study programmes offered at public institutions, even though the number of private institutions is substantially higher.



The ECTS credits express the quantity of work that each module requires relative to the overall work necessary to successfully complete one year of study at the establishment, including: theoretical classes, practical work, seminars, internships, field research or surveys, personal work (in the library or at home), as well as exams and other assessment methods. Thus the ECTS is based on the overall work of the student and is not just limited to class hours (direct contact). The ECTS system is based on the principle that 60 credits measure the full-time workload for an academic year for a typical student, 30 credits correspond to one semester and 20 to a quarter, with 1 credit corresponding to nearly 30 hours of work. The workload of a full-time study programme in Europe usually involves 1500 to 1800 annual hours per academic year, and in that case one credit equals 25 to 30 work hours.

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GERMANY

There are 409 officially recognised institutions of higher education in 165 towns and cities in Germany today. Among them, there are 270 public higher education institutions, 37 church-maintained colleges, and 102 private universities. In Germany, higher education is offered within three types (tertiary system) of higher education institutions: universities (*Universitäten*), universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and universities of Art/Music (*Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*) (Fig.5)

- ***Universities*** offer the whole range of academic disciplines. They place particular focus on basic research so that the advanced stages of study have mainly theoretical orientation and research-oriented components.
- ***Universities of Applied Sciences*** offer study programmes which deal mostly with engineering and other technical disciplines, business-related studies, social work, and design areas. The common mission of applied research and development implies a distinct application-oriented focus and professional character of studies, which include integrated and supervised work assignments in industry, enterprises or other relevant institutions.
- ***Universities of Art/Music*** offer studies for artistic careers in fine arts, performing arts and music, in such fields as directing, production, writing in theatre, film, and other media as well as in a variety of design areas, architecture, media and communication.

Aside from these three main types, which may be either public or private institutions recognised by the state, there are also certain special categories such as church-maintained colleges, universities of cooperative education, colleges of education or colleges of public administration. In their operations, including the organisation of studies and the designation and award of degrees, all types of these institutions are subject to higher education legislation [7].

Germany was involved in the Bologna Process from the beginning. The introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes to German higher education structure is considered as a crucial step in the international strategy of German higher education institutions. Starting early in 1998 the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes were in a testing phase next to the existing Diplom and Magister Programmes. In 2002 the former system of a joint coordination of study and examination regulations was replaced by the system of accreditation. The number of courses with Bachelor's and Master's Degree has increased and starting from the winter semester of 2009/2010 there are no longer Diplom and Magister Programmes in Germany [7]. In the accreditation process study courses are examined to prove that they fulfil minimum standards in terms of structure, subject and content, as well as in terms of its professional relevance. The accreditation process is a formalised and objectively verifiable process. The accreditation is executed by decentralised

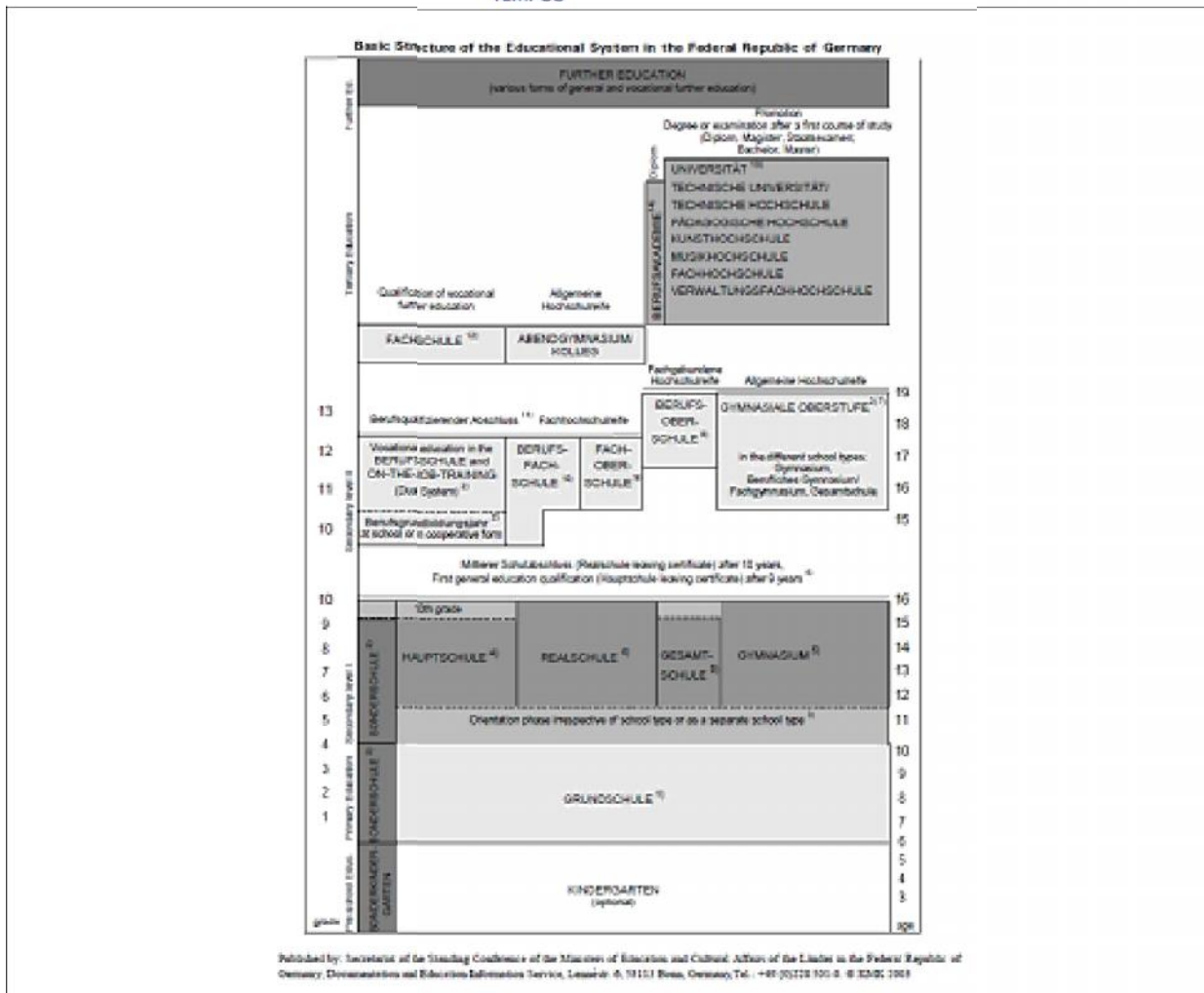


Figure5. Structure of educational system in Germany

accreditation agencies that are themselves accredited by an independent Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat) that acts on behalf of the entire country.

Students who gain a Bachelor's degree in 6 to 8 semesters will have an academic qualification that gives them fast access to the job market. The Bachelor's degree is the initial entrance qualification to a profession and combines scientific knowledge with practical experience. If students want to broaden or deepen their knowledge after a Bachelor's degree they will need to continue their studies in a Master's course. The new structure of Bachelor's and Master's courses improves the qualifications for professional entry, increases student mobility, and shortens the time taken to qualify. The award of credit points means that grades earned in another German or European University can be recognised without difficulty [8]. If students decide to enter a Master's course after obtaining their Bachelor's degree it will be to deepen and broaden their knowledge. They will be aiming either for a scientific career or for further specialisation. A Master's course lasts 2 to 4 semesters and the degree is necessary if they want to go on to PhD studies.



As a rule, the Universities of Applied Sciences have admission requirements for Master's courses such as above average grades during the first level of studies or a certain level of professional experience. The actual structure of the degree programmes may vary and it depends on a university. For Bachelor's programmes the standard time to obtain a degree is from six to eight semesters, including time spent producing the Bachelor's thesis and taking all the exams. The basic study stage lasts from two to three semesters and it represents an orientation and aptitude phase, generally completed with an intermediate exam. On the other hand, the duration of the main study stage is four semesters. If prescribed by the relevant study regulations, students in the main study stage complete compulsory sojourn abroad as well as their internships. To graduate, students have to produce a Bachelor's thesis and in most cases to take an oral exam.

Programmes have a modular structure. One module consists of several courses with a coordinated thematic and chronological structure. The basic study stage teaches foundation modules. The main study stage is largely made up of specialisation modules. Standard time to obtain a Master's degree, depending on the programme in question, is two or three semesters (including the time required to produce the Master's thesis and to take the Master's exams). The procedure is as follows: the programme extends over two to four semesters. Students complete the Master's thesis in the second or fourth semester. The students also need to sit for the final oral exam that lasts around 60 minutes.

AN OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS: THE EU AND SERBIA

The starting point was the analysis of the vocational education systems in the EU countries, which are partners in the ECBAC 517200 project (Belgium, Germany, Portugal) and then compare them with Serbia. Through detailed analysis of the systems of higher education in Serbia and the EU (Belgium, Germany, Portugal) we have clearly separated similarities and differences, as well as some points of overlap between them.

Higher education in Serbia today is reflected in 65 accredited colleges of vocational studies (48 public and 17 private) with 20,578 students in the first year, 18 universities (8 public and 10 private) with 53,942 students in the first year and a large number of accredited study programmes. On the other hand, the EU has approximately 4000 institutions of higher education, with more than 19 million students and about 1,500,000 employed, with clearly defined jurisdiction of their national governments. Legal frameworks are in compliance with the Lisbon Strategy and its amendments.

When comparing the condition of higher education in the Republic of Serbia with the same in Belgium, Germany and Portugal it can be concluded that the Republic of Serbia has made a lot of steps in the right direction in the area of higher education. Clearly established and defined goals of higher education, its relations to work fields and industry, academic freedom, the questions of autonomy and integrity, as well as the right of everyone to higher education are universal and unique in the area of higher education both in Serbia and the EU. Study programmes are carried out in one or more educational and scientific, or educational and artistic fields which have clearly regulated and defined the conditions and frameworks of functioning and developing study programmes. The power of binary systems within higher education provides an excellent basis for the transfer of knowledge and technology in the scientific field of economy. This is a common feature of all four considered systems with appropriate reservations about the specificities of the partner countries. The legal framework has clearly predicted two directions of the higher education system and defined the frames of their development.

One of the biggest shortcomings of the Serbian higher education system is a problem of a non-existing national framework of qualifications. It implies a problem of recognition of professional studies. This problem is consequently reflected on the financial aspect of the business of vocational higher education institutions and their position on the market. Another problem and a weakness of Serbian higher education system is a lack of horizontal mobility between vocational and academic studies. Hence, the scientific professional development of the employees in vocational higher education system is limited by the system.

Quality assurance in higher education is clearly defined in the Community Framework through the responsibilities of institutions of higher education. The quality of academic

programmes, their structure and relevance are in compliance with those in the EU and provide a good basis for the realisation of the goals and outcomes of both academic and vocational programmes, offering the required level of competence.

First and foremost, we should point out the contribution of the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) which is responsible for the implementation of the standards set forth by the National Council for Higher Education. Those standards and procedures are applied in accordance with the standards and procedures that are implemented by the member states of ENQA². The programmes are based on the goals and outcomes that are reflected in the level of competence of graduates and their ability to respond to the demands of the labour market. The ETCS system is completely defined and consistent for all three cycles. It comprises clearly defined indicators of student progress, grade structure, the level of technical equipment, as well as physical capacities of reference of the teaching staff.

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The legal framework: openness and accessibility to everyone; academic freedom, independence; Bologna Declaration ❖ Binary system ❖ The ECTS system ❖ Three levels of studies within the system of higher education ❖ Pre-university system of education: Grammar and Vocational schools ❖ Curricula aims, objectives and outcomes ❖ Dedication to obtaining higher level of competences ❖ Student mobility ❖ Teaching staff competences ❖ Accreditation system: CAQA, ENQA ❖ Scientific fields ❖ %GDP³ as a measure for deterring the amount of financing for the institution and scientific work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Framework of Qualifications ❖ Horizontal mobility ❖ Structural organisation of the non-academic sector of higher education ❖ The level of integration ❖ Percentage of integrative study programmes ❖ Financing ❖ An access to the EU funds ❖ Scientific research available only to academic sector

² The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

³ Gross domestic product

Furthermore, the flaw of higher education in the Republic of Serbia is reflected in the small number of accredited integrated study programmes, despite the existing legal framework and standards for their accreditation. This fact indicates a possible problem of isolation of higher education institutions within the Serbian higher education system. In addition to this it is necessary to point out the rare examples of student and teacher mobility, which is not the case in the EU. The issue of mobility has already been mentioned, and it will constitute a core issue of higher education reform in Serbia in the future period.

The question of governing bodies over the higher education institutions have been regulated in accordance with the law, through the statutes of these institutions with respect to the national specifics of the climate and the system of higher education. In addition, it is important to highlight the autonomy of management which refers to the freedom of choice in terms of the issues of scientific and professional development, human resources and quality assurance.

The issues of higher education funding resources have been defined by the legal framework with clearly defined parameters of financial accounting, as well as the amount of national budget allocated for education that is tied to the gross domestic product. One also needs to bear in mind the number of accredited public institutions of higher education and the scarcity of the current method of funding. The analysis of the established similarities and differences cannot leave us indifferent. Although we have established a high percentage of similarities in respect to key elements which define the systems of higher education, the issue of functionality and sustainability of high quality in the following period represents a great challenge to further development of vocational studies.

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⁴ Zakon o visokom obrazovanju Republike Srbije

⁵ Godišnji izveštaj o radu KAPK-a za period od 7.4.2011 do 7.4.2012., Beograd, 30.04.2012.

⁶ Vodiš kroz Evropu 2020, Evropski pokret za Srbiju, Fond za otvoreno društvo

CHAPTER TWO

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HIGER EDUCATION: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE EU AND SERBIA

INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Process has put emphasis on the importance of the involvement of students in the quality assurance of higher education. In order to achieve the goals set for the European Higher Education Area the ministers of education of the Bologna signatory states have underlined the importance of partnership between higher education institutions and their staff and students. Furthermore, the response to two main challenges of the Bologna Process, perceived through the student as a centre of the learning process and through identification of indicators that show how programmes in higher education can be recognised as student-centred, depends first and foremost on students' full involvement in all aspect of higher education process. The students' role in the process of higher education from the Bologna viewpoint involves several aspects such as:

- Social dimension was introduced into the Bologna Process in Prague in 2001. Social dimension is considered a transversal action line that has an impact on all other action lines. The impacts of the reform should be considered also from a socio-economical point of view. Higher education and the reforms should help to create additional social cohesion. This means that students' entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of European societies and that all students should have the possibility to study in higher education regardless of their background
- Quality assurance dimension which has been developed into a central action line of the process
- Student participation - the need for student participation in order to successfully implement the Bologna Process was readily recognised and turned into positive practice on the European level
- The issue of mobility is stated as one of the core issues of the Bologna Process and is seen as a cornerstone for establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Although mobility is one of the key issues of the Bologna Process it is still far from being accessible to all students and staff
- Cycles and credits

- Qualifications framework of the Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was primarily based on the development of a compatible and readable system of degree structures at the European level, able to facilitate mobility, transparency and recognition
- Tertiary higher education system
- European dimension and attractiveness of the EHEA

Student organisations and the manner of student organisations have a very significant role in achieving the objectives in all segments of the educational process. In the following presentation of the structure and functionality of student organisations in Belgium, Portugal, Germany and Serbia we will try to provide a framework of and directions for the future development and role of student organisations in the Republic of Serbia.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN BELGIUM

The General Student Council, established by a decree, takes care of the interests of the students at a university college. It is an advisory body that provides advice with respect to the registration fee, the examination regulations, etc. In addition, the General Student Council is also consulted in relation to quality assurance and teaching staff evaluation. The General Student Council consists of representatives from each department. The Board consists of a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary and a treasurer. In normal circumstances, there are five meetings per academic year. The General Student Council is a beating heart of the student participation. The ASR⁸ is a student council at an institutional level. The ASR is directly elected in May for the coming academic year. The mandates are distributed according to study programmes. The voting breakdown is based on a chair per initial group of 700 students. This group is determined on three principles: (1) each study programme must be represented, (2) the total number of mandates may not exceed 50 in order to ensure a workable meeting and (3) major study programmes must still be adequately represented.

⁸The Association of Student Representatives (Algemene Studentenraad)

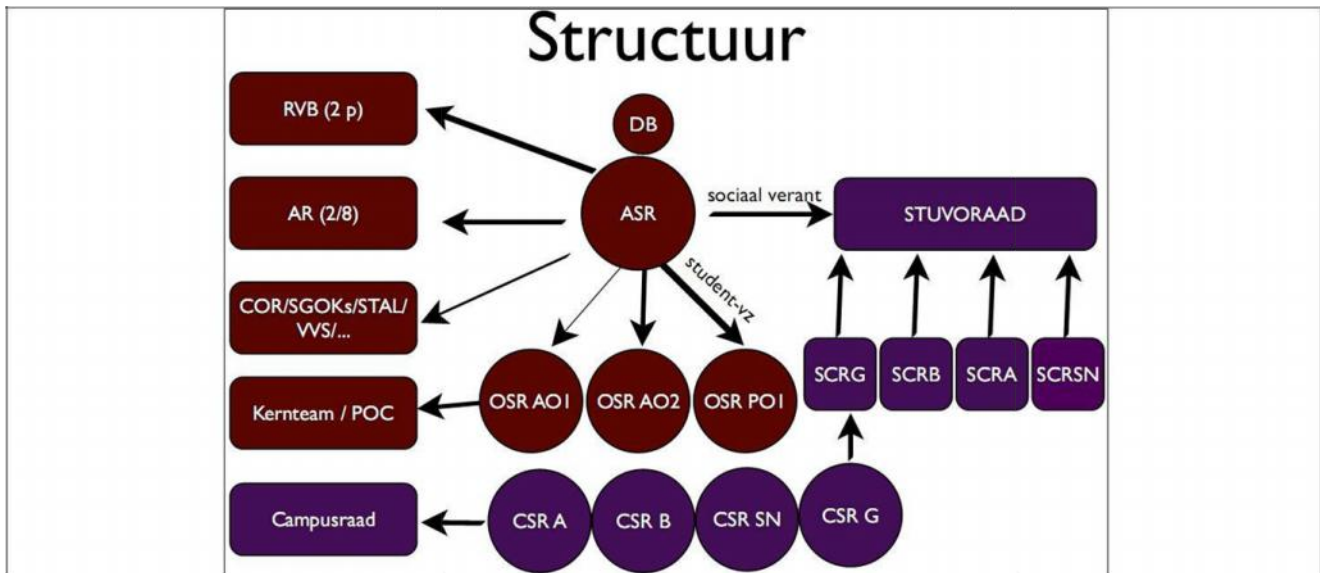


Figure1. The Structure of Student Participation in Belgium

The Board of the current academic year acts as an organiser of the elections. In May the ASR elects:

- The chairman and the vice-chairman: both of them also take place in the Board of Directors of the university college. Preferably, they should come from different study programmes.
- At least five Board members:
 - o External Policy: this board member is delegated to the General meeting from StAL⁹ and VVS¹⁰.
 - o Secretary: responsible for the reports within the ASR and management / distribution of documents.
 - Communication: responsible for communicating
 - Coordinator Study Councils
 - o Coordinator Campus Student Councils
- Ten representatives in the Academic Council of the University College. There is a good distribution pursued across the disciplines and faculties.

⁹ Student Association Leuven (Studentenraad Associatie Leuven)

¹⁰ Flemish Association of Students (Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten)

- A representative in the SGOK¹¹ AO (academic student) and a representative in the SGOK PO (vocational student).
- A representative in the Faculty Board.

The ASR meets at least 5 times per academic year: October, December, February, March and April. The decisions are made by simple majority. The adjustments to the operating rules, the electoral rules or the participation rules require a three-fourths majority. The final exclusion of a member requires also a three-fourths majority.

The Executive Committee (DB) of the Student Council consists of a chairman, a vice-chairman and Board members. The Committee has at least one student of each educational group. This Committee prepares the meetings of the ASR (including the agenda) and coordinates the student representation. It can make decisions in case of emergency, if the ASR is not in the position to gather in due time. The Committee will report this at the next meeting of the ASR, in either written or oral form. This Committee functions at the university level.

The Study Programme Student Council (OSR) operates at study programme levels. This Council is composed in the first three weeks of the academic year and it deals with social and campus matter. The Council, together with the ASR, is directly elected in May. A mandate in the Council can be combined with a mandate in the ASR. The Study Programme Student Council consists of 8 students.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PORTUGAL

Student unions assume an important role in higher education, not only because they represent students in the management bodies of various universities, faculties, schools, and colleges, but also because they promote activities in various areas, from offering social support to providing services and performing and promoting different cultural, recreational and sports activities. Student unions are independent from the Government, political parties, religious organisations and the like. They are also free to develop their own statutes and internal regulations, to elect their governing bodies, to manage and administer, as well as to develop their own activity plans. Student unions have the right to obtain financial support provided by the Government to develop their activities in pedagogical, cultural, social and sporting areas.

Student population in Portugal (about 400.000) attend 159 higher education institutions (35 public and 124 private). The specificity of the Portuguese educational system reflects in various aspects of their student organisations (Fig.2).

¹¹ Steering Committee for Education and Quality (Stuurgroep Onderwijs en Kwaliteit)

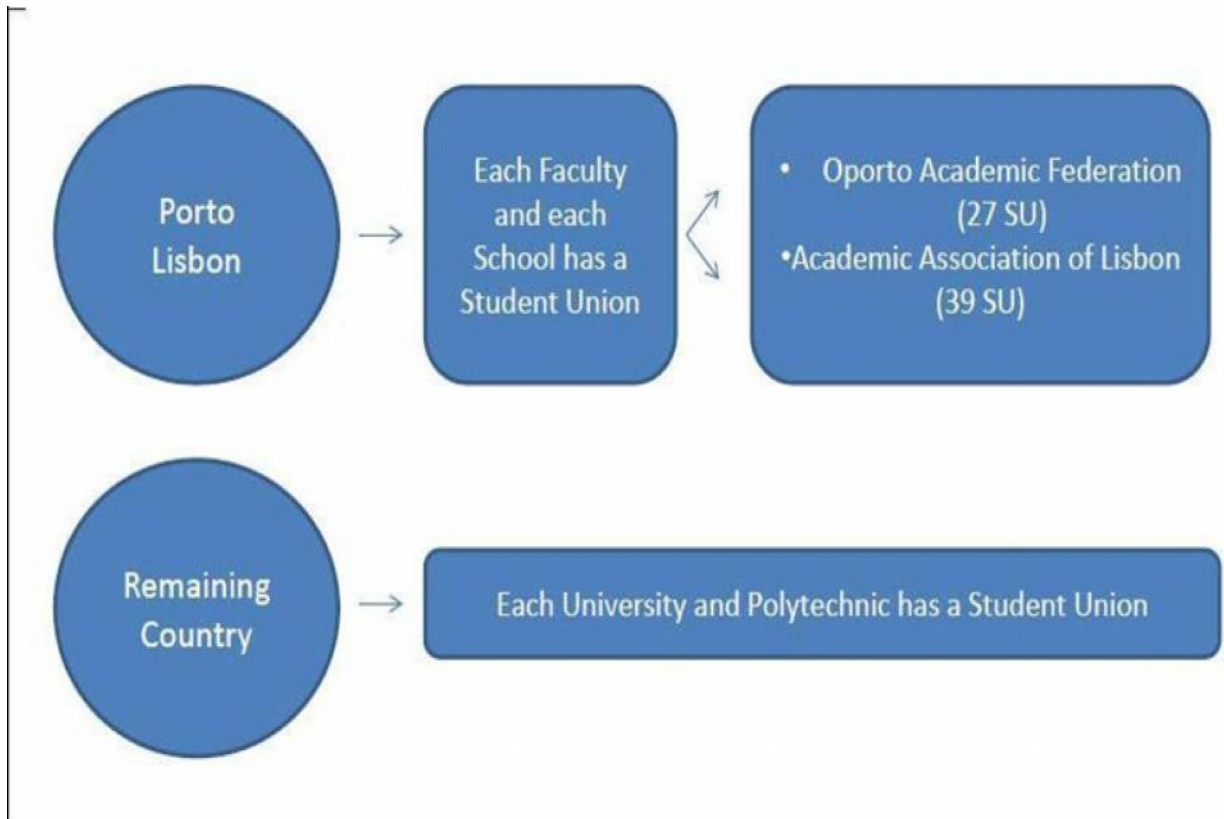


Figure2. Student Participation in Portugal

Students in Portugal have their representatives in all official bodies of the higher education system and higher education institutions. They have their representatives in the governing bodies, student welfare services and on the campuses.

The structure of student unions mostly comprises the three main bodies:

- General Assembly
- Directorate/Administrative Board
- Fiscal Council

The General Assembly is directed by a Board which is composed of three elements: the President, the Vowel(s), and a Secretary. The General Assembly is the highest body of the Student Union, and its responsibilities are, among other things, the approval of the activity plan, the adoption and amendment of the statutes and the approval of the annual report. The Executive Board is composed of at least three elements: the President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and the main function of this body is the executive management of the Association. The Fiscal Council is composed of at

least three elements: the President, a Secretary and a Reporter-controller. The basic function of this body lies primarily in the control of the Student Union accounts. The Executive Board and the Fiscal Council are composed of an odd number of elements, one of whom is the President.

Together with the aforementioned organs, student unions are normally organised in departments/areas, bearing in mind the support they offer to their members, making sure that at different levels and at any given moment they are capable of meeting the students' needs such as: social welfare and solidarity, academic activities, pedagogical affairs, culture, sports, science and vocational training, recreation and leisure, communication and image, internal management, etc.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GERMANY

There are many various students associations in Germany. All of them make great effort to improve the position of students, the studying conditions and the positioning of graduates in the labour market.

Germany has a central organisation on a national level which functions as a public service for the economic, social, medical and cultural support for students at German universities. The German National Association for Student Affairs¹² encompasses 58 local (regional) student service organisations. In cooperation with the universities and city administrations, they help to create a society based on equality. The German National Association for Student Affairs is a voluntary association of student services in Germany. Their contribution includes the improvement of tertiary education and participation in shaping the university life. In order to reach these goals, this association continues to offer its share. From a structural viewpoint, The German National Association for Student Affairs consists of three bodies: General Assembly, Board of Directors, and a Secretary General. There is also a Board of Trustees¹³. This Board consists of rectors (chancellors), students, representatives of federal and local governments, German Association of Towns and Cities, unions and employers, as well as of Members of Parliament and other public persons. The Federal Council¹⁴ consults the Board of Directors and the Secretary General regarding all matters of fundamental importance. The Student Council was established in 2004. It is composed of student members who are actively involved in the bodies of the local student association.

¹² Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW

¹³ Kuratorium

¹⁴ Der Bundesrat

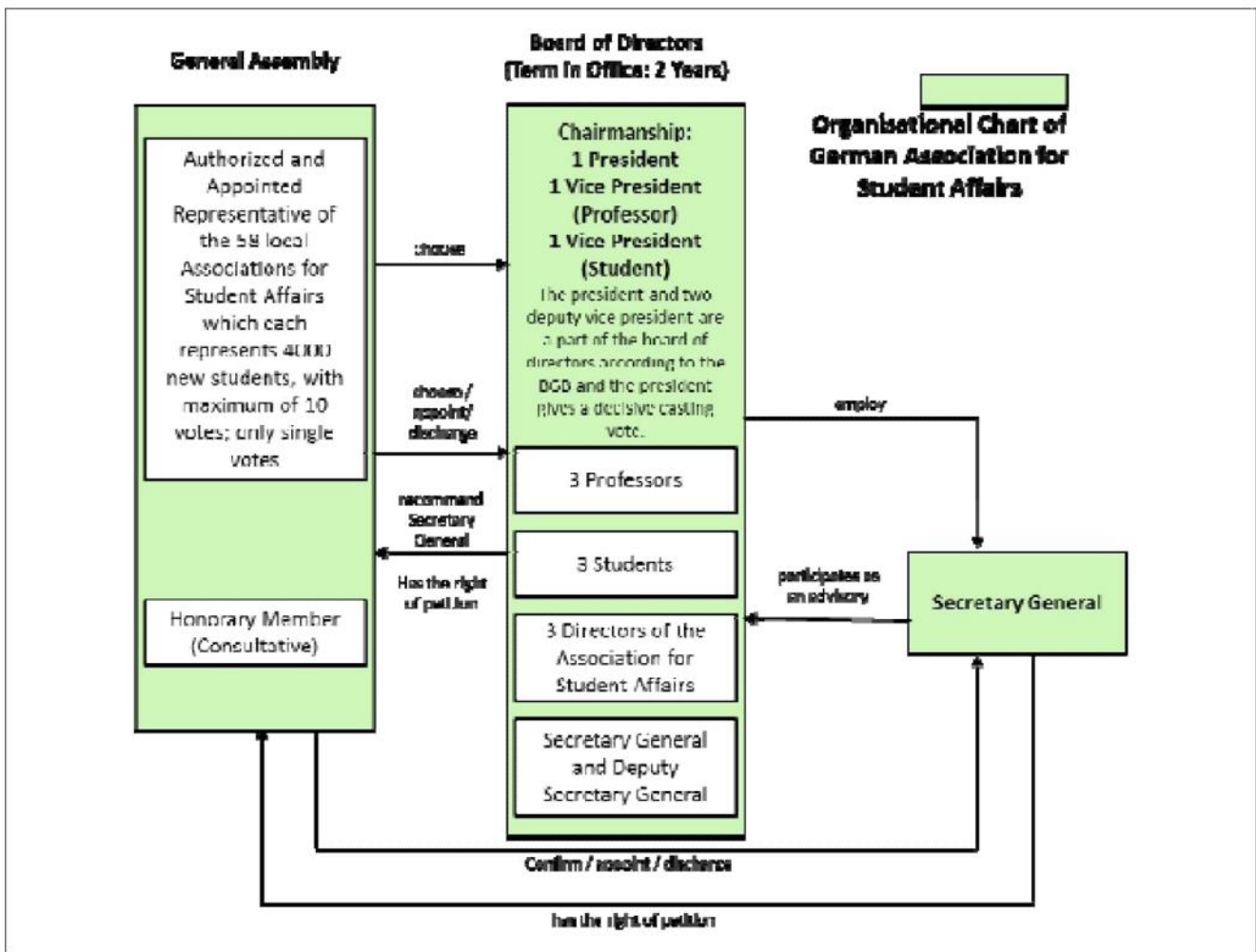


Figure3: Student Participation in Germany

The German National Association for Student Affairs strives to be international, intercultural, open and tolerant organisation with clearly defined mission and action plan. The growing internationalisation of the European higher education requires from the Association to have its own Department for International Relations.

The German National Association for Student Affairs also aspires to be a higher education area in which the social and economic well-being of all students are guaranteed by strong, independent, professional and well-equipped student service organisations. The growing internationalisation of the European higher education area (EHEA) involves not only research and teaching, but also the understanding that excellent social, economic and living conditions for all students is a precondition for successful learning. It also requires broad access to higher education for all social groups in a society of knowledge. Therefore, the Association works towards free, democratic and accessible higher education for everyone, regardless of their nationality or social background. The international and intercultural activities of the Association intend to provide a free exchange of experiences, mutual learning, and the creation of new knowledge in all important areas

of student affairs. As a national association, it supports the internationalisation of local student service organisations in such a way that it supports the development of long-term partnerships, exchange programmes and international cooperation of the 58 German student service organisations with partners in Europe and overseas. Internally, the Association is actively involved in intercultural diversity of student service and it assists with the integration of international students in Germany in order to help create a tolerant, open and culturally diverse higher education area.

In order to turn this vision into reality the mission of the Association is translated into specific tasks. The Department for International Relations of the German Association implements activities with the aim of supporting the local student service organisations with international cooperation, partnerships and exchange programmes, creating a friendly welcome and integration of international students in Germany, defending the model of strong and independent student service organisations at the international level, coordinating and managing the exchange of experience with student service organisations in Europe, North America and Asia, promoting the exchange of experts and knowledge at the international level by means of conferences, delegations, exchange programmes and similar activities, working closely with European partners, e.g. within the framework of the European Council for Student Affairs, influencing the decisions and developments in the field of international educational policy, cooperating with international organisations such as the EU institutions, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe etc.

The Regional Student Association offers students an access to state benefits in various areas, starting from student finance, grants (BAfÖG¹⁵), student accommodations, university gastronomy services, social care all the way to counselling. Offering good services along with achieving optimal efficiency is the focus of the Regional Student Association. As a cross-organisational and information university platform, the Regional Student Association ensures sustainability and maintains an access to good quality services and state benefits for students.

It is important to emphasise that the actual form of student participation varies from one province to another. In most provinces every university has a General Student Council. The General Student Council¹⁶ is the acting executive board and the external representing agency of the student body at most German universities. Besides the General Student Council (AStA) there exists also an official student union¹⁷, with the exception of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

¹⁵ Das Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz (The Federal Training Assistance Act)

¹⁶ AStA - Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss

¹⁷ Verfasste Studierendenschaft



STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The role of students in the development of modern higher education in the Republic of Serbia is the same as in the whole EHEA (European Higher Education Area). The challenges of technological development have taken the leading role in higher education and the Bologna concept in the entire Europe. A full implementation of the Bologna Process is impossible without an active participation of students in all aspects of higher education. From the point of view of higher education the issues of quality assurance, as well as the terms competences and labour market, etc. can be seen as synonymous with the term student. Obtaining feedback information from the labour market, as well as timely and realistic understanding of the importance of quality assurance procedure are the key points of the Bologna mechanism in which students and their organisation hold a central place.

The Bologna Process has highlighted the importance of involving students in the quality assurance process in higher education. The Ministers of Education of the signatory countries have stressed the great importance of establishing a partnership among higher education institutions, their teaching staff and students in order to achieve the goals of improving the quality of higher education institutions in Europe. An application for the Bologna Process means equal participation of students in higher education institutions, for which, from the viewpoint of teachers and management of higher education institutions, there have to exist clearly defined, appropriate legal instruments.

The student organisation in the Republic of Serbia is represented through the following bodies: a Student Parliament and a Student Conference. The functions, structure and role of these representative bodies and student organisation in general, in the system and processes of higher education have been defined by the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Student Standards and the Law on Associations.

A Student Parliament is the body through which students exercise their rights and protect their interests in higher education institutions. All those students who began with their studies in the school year in which the Student Parliament is to be elected have the right to elect and be elected a member of the Student Parliament. The mandate of the Student Parliament is one year. In the selection and nomination of the Parliament members, the representation of both genders is taken into account.

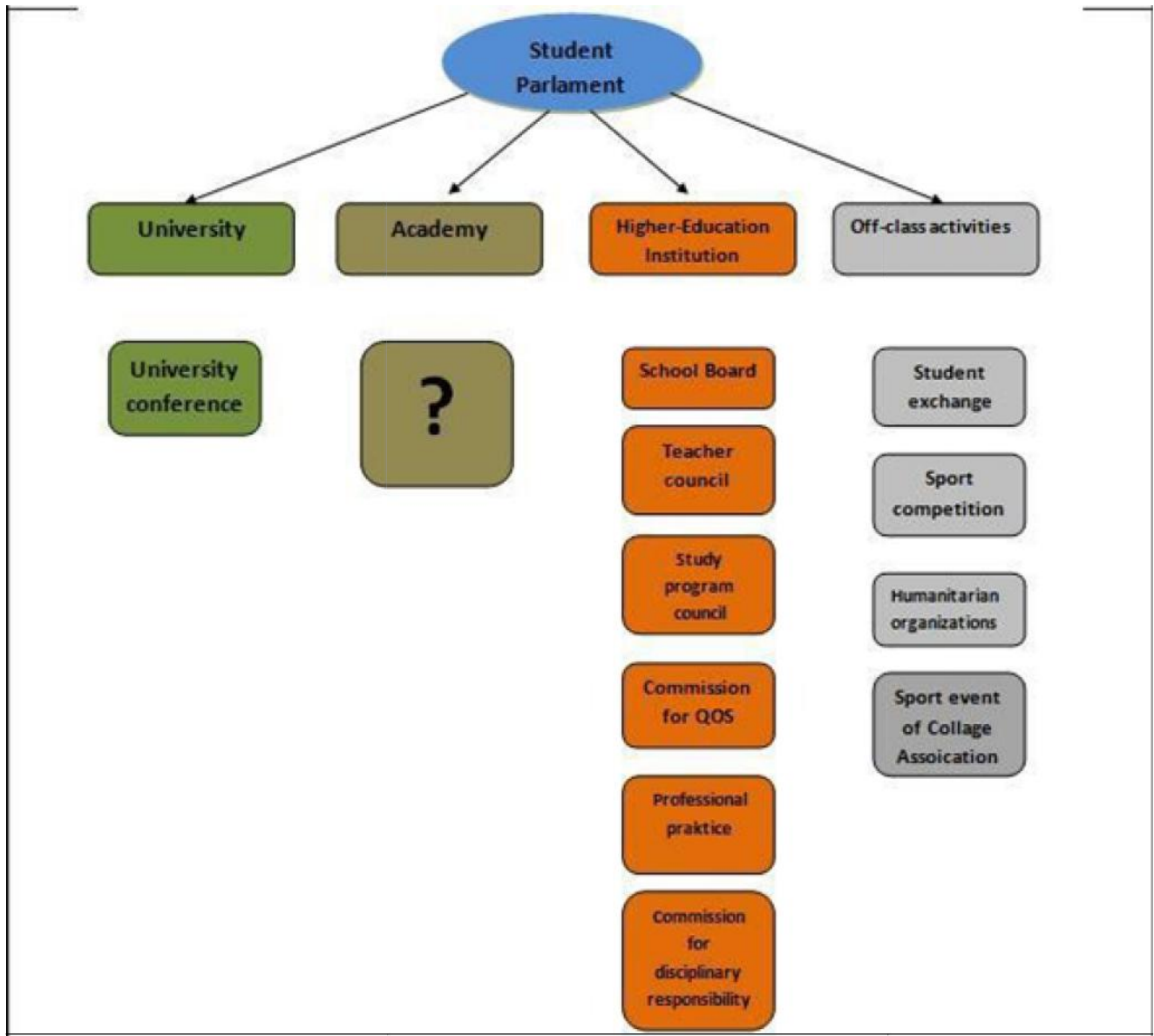


Figure4. Student Participation in Serbian Higher Education

In order to exercise the rights and protect the interests of students, the Student Parliament elects and dismisses the student representatives in the official bodies of higher education institutions. The Student Parliament has representatives in the following bodies within a school: School Board, Academic Council, Study Programme Council, Commission for Quality Control, Commission for the Disciplinary Responsibility of Students, etc. The Student Parliament has a right to introduce the Rule Book of the Student Parliament, to elect and dismiss the chairman, vice-chairman and the secretary of the Parliament, to appoint and dismiss student representatives in the bodies of other institutions, to participate in the process of self-evaluation of the institution or its organisational units, to analyse the effectiveness of the study process, to determine the number of the ECTS credits within a subject or a study programme, to help improve student performance, to encourage scientific research of students, to protect students' rights, to improve student welfare, etc. The method of selection and the number of members in the Student Parliament is determined by the General Act of a higher education institution. The work of the Student Parliament is regulated by the General Act of an Institution and the General Act of the Student Parliament. The main problem of the Student Parliament is the fact that there are still no clearly defined mechanisms for enforcing their decisions and implementing initiatives. The aforementioned Law on Higher Education defines the functions of Student Parliament in one single article, without offering any mechanisms or frame for realisation of the procedures of the Student Parliament. In order to implement their decisions, to have their opinions adopted or to implement their initiatives the Student Parliament often depends on the established interpersonal relationship between the executive bodies (chancellor, dean, and director) of higher education institutions and the management of the Student Parliament. Also, a possible problem for the Student Parliament at this moment is a political interference with the work of the Student Parliament.

In certain higher education institutions Student Parliaments introduced amendments in 2002 and 2004, defining themselves as student associations. However, in the majority of higher education institutions, Student Parliaments were constituted by the authorities of higher education institutions during 2007 and 2008, in accordance with the current Law on Higher Education, which had been adopted in 2005.

AN OVERVIEW: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES REGARDING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE EU AND SERBIA

By providing an overview of student participation in the higher education systems of Flanders, Portugal and Germany on the one hand, and Serbia on the other, a conclusion can be drawn that there is a certain positive shift in the right direction in Serbia and that a lot of things have been done in the past few years. Students are officially involved in all segments of the higher education process. The legal framework in all the systems analysed here unequivocally advocate students' right to proper education. Legal frameworks define students' rights, conditions of studies and offer a lot of possibilities for students' further development. The issue of competences as well

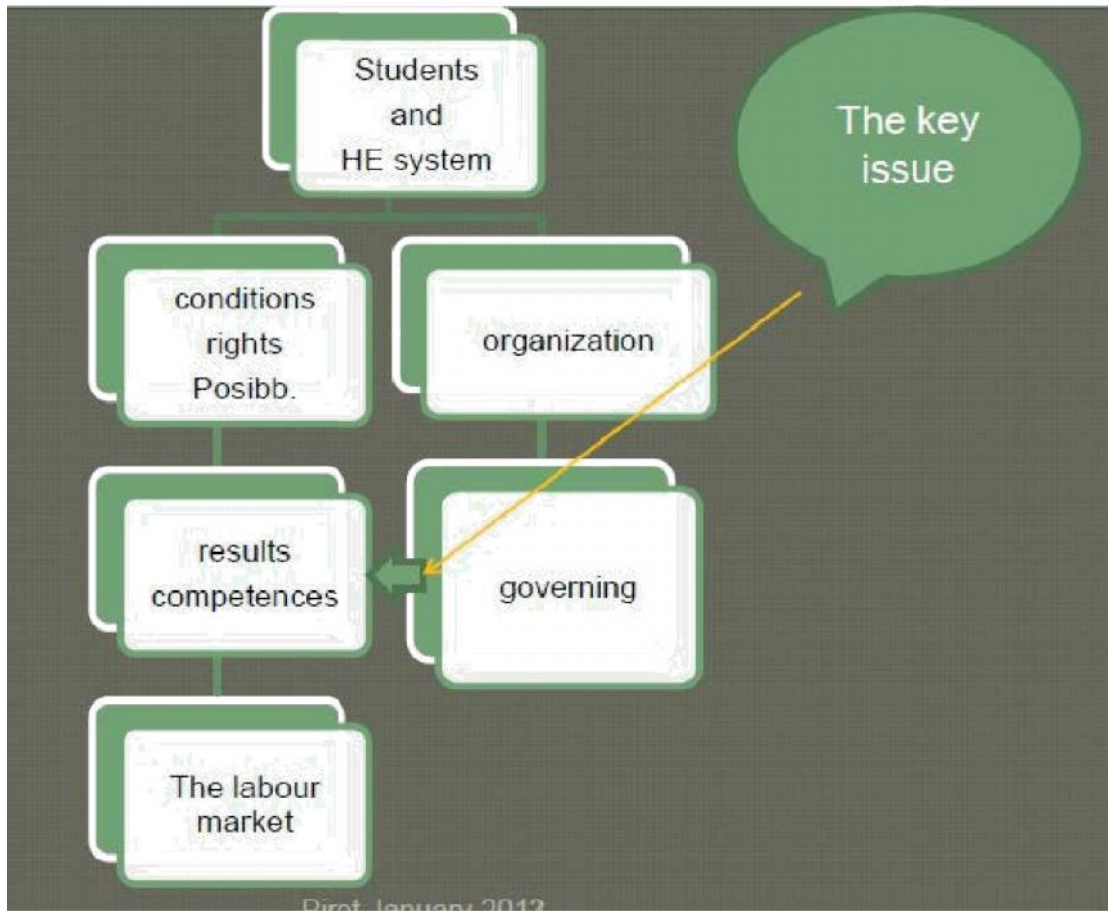


Figure5. A student in the system of higher education

as the results of the study process and the position of graduates on the labour market are those areas in which student organisations and representatives have a lot of space for further development and improvement. In fact, from the perspective of student organisations in some of these areas very little progress has been achieved in Serbia, as there is a kind of resistance and inertia on either sides, i.e. both on the part of students, higher education institutions and the labour market.

Some further analyses have shown that in all of these systems students unions are independent from the governments, political parties, religious organisations, etc. Student unions are free to develop their own statutes and internal regulations, to elect their governing bodies, to manage and administer their own patrimony and elaborate their own activity plans. Legal frameworks define the students' right to financial support, to develop their activities in pedagogical, cultural, social and sporting areas. One of the major roles of student unions are promotional activities in various areas. They also offer social support, provide services and perform and promote different cultural, recreational and sports activities, cooperate with universities and city administrations.

The regulations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) encourage the involvement of students in the external quality assurance processes of its member agencies. In all of the aforementioned systems, the students are included in internal and external evaluation processes. Moreover, students pose as a very important part of the quality assurance process. We can conclude that those guidelines of the Bologna Process regarding student participation achieved the greatest success in the area of quality assurance.

Different levels of technological and economic development of the analysed systems influence the procedure of application, as well as the amount of state benefits in various areas such as student finance/grants, accommodations, university gastronomy service, social care, counselling, etc. However, generally speaking, one can conclude that in all analysed systems students are fully recognised members of the academic community. They are encouraged to take full participation in this continuous process. Student participation in the production of knowledge and research needs to be regarded as extremely valuable. Student participation in the process of quality assurance is steadily increasing, but still a lot more needs to be done: student participation in profession/field accreditation, full transparency of quality assurance procedures and the assurance of visibility of the the results of quality assurance procedures. There is a lot of space for improvement regarding the national policies and legislative frameworks concerning tools for student participation, because student participation requires full involvement in setting the agenda, voting and implementing all issues concerning the academic community. Student participation needs to be implemented in all decision making mechanisms at all levels.

Student organisations need to assure professional representation, representativeness of their structures and democratic internal procedures, as well as continuity and an efficient transfer of knowledge. Student representatives need to provide information to students and encourage diversity within their own structures. And we have to be aware all the time that”...student-centred learning requires a culture change and is essential for student participation, as the participation starts in the classroom” [2].

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CHAPTER THREE

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN RESOURCES

MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: SERBIA AND THE EU

INTRODUCTION

The results of the implementation of the Bologna principles in its broadest sense imply that all partners are equal in the educational process which encompasses the academic community, the labour market as well as local, regional and national institutions. A contribution to the academic community as a key parameter in this process can be observed through the contribution of students, teaching and non-teaching staff. The role of teachers and students, as well as their contribution to the efficiency of the teaching process, is the subject of daily analyses and research [1]. These analyses and investigations have provided a framework for further development and the basis for achieving better results. The quality of studies, the level of acquired skills and knowledge, the goals and outcomes of study programmes, various policies, quality procedures, the issues of teachers' competences and further improvement, a student load, the active role of students in all aspects of teaching are just some of the questions which are placed in the focus of the analyses. As a result of these analyses and studies various sets of standards, procedures, directives, rules, etc. have been designed with the aim of improving the situation in regard to these issues and with the aim of creating a unified approach to the European higher education area.

Human resources development concepts and their systematic implementation reflect the need for a unique European higher education area. Thus, the need for further improvement in this field is vital for a wide range of issues. It is well-known that every organisation has three types of general resources: physical, financial and human. The most critical one is, without a doubt, the issue of human resources within an organisation. Human resources have been proved to be the nucleus of organisational resources in which motivation is a central and vital component and a key contributor to job satisfaction of an employee.

The phrase *human resources management* has become very frequent, even indispensable, in the work of higher education institutions. Human resources management is a discipline that deals with a versatile approach to the problem of human resources management in a facility - demand planning, engagement and optimal scheduling, managing, motivating and protecting, etc. This area in

general is a way to connect the optimum material and human resources which institution possesses with the aim of achieving optimal results. Taking into account the peculiarities of higher education as a specific area extremely important for the development of each country, in the development of human resources special attention should be paid to the respective political contexts, procedures and practices, specific requirements of career management, specific working conditions, the attractiveness of jobs, skills and competence, demographic trends etc. The Bologna Process has been largely involved in these problems. Specific standards and procedures have contributed to creating order in this area. The degree of success in solving these problems is in correlation with a successful implementation of the Bologna Process.

Through the analysis of the situation in this area in Belgium, Portugal and Germany on the one hand and Serbia on the other, we have tried to reach the definition of a unique course of development of human resources management in higher education in the following period. On the basis of the analysis we seek to reach certain conclusions, to show the perceived correlation and thus provide the assessment of the real progress in the Bologna implementation, as well as to see how much we have really done in the process of our reform of the higher education.

HUMAN MANAGEMENT RESOURCES IN SERBIA

Various problems in the field of human resources in the higher education in Serbia are partly systemic and partly the result of various staff issues. The legal framework regulates the broad base in this area, and the specific features related to certain areas are regulated by the statutes of the institutions. Institutions are the formal employers of both academic and non-academic staff.

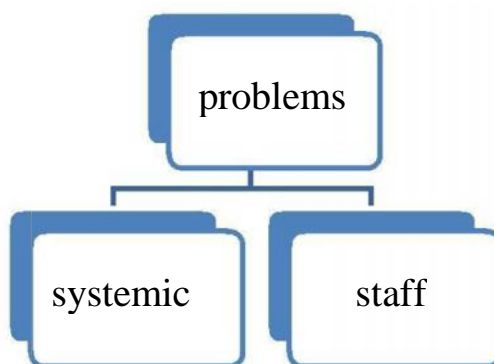


Figure1. The problems of human resources in the Serbian higher education system

The status, conditions of engagement, the income level, and the criteria for promotion of teachers are defined by the legal framework, especially by the Law on Higher Education and the Labour Law. The teaching staff in higher education institutions are persons who perform e

educational, scientific, research and artistic work. The term teachers, in terms of this Act, implies teachers, researchers and staff.

Teacher titles in the Serbian higher education institutions are: a lecturer, a professor of professional studies, an associate professor and a tenured professor. Teachers within the rank of a lecturer or a professor of professional studies can teach only at the level of vocational studies. An assistant professor, an associate professor and a tenured professor have the ability to teach at all levels of studies. The General Act of an independent higher education institution may establish other titles of teachers (teacher of a foreign language, skills, etc.).

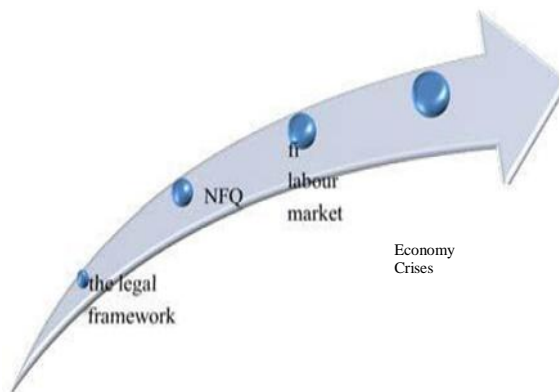


Figure2. Systemic problems from the viewpoint of human resources management in the Serbian higher education system

A teacher may be a person who holds a professional, academic, or scientific title, as well as an aptitude for teaching. A lecturer can be a person who has obtained a Master's or a Specialist degree. A professor of professional studies can be a person who has the academic title of a Doctor of Science or Arts. The titles of a lecturer and a professor of professional studies in the field of arts can be assigned to a person who has higher education of the first degree and recognised artistic works. Regarding the world of art, there are corresponding specific skills defined by special provisions within the law. An institution makes an announcement of employment opportunity and assigns teaching positions within specific areas according to the general regulation of the university. A person elected to the position of a lecturer, assistant professor and associate professor obtains the title and is employed for a period of five years. A person elected to the position of a professor of professional studies and who has been assigned the title of a tenured professor becomes employed for an indefinite period of time. The head of an institution or an executive officer of a higher education institution signs a contract with the person elected. The method and procedure for employment and for acquiring teaching positions are regulated by the General Act of an independent higher education institution. When selecting someone for the position of a teacher, institution considers the following elements: an assessment of scientific results, research or artistic work, an assessment of one's involvement in the development of teaching and other activities at an institution of higher education, an evaluation of the results of educational work, as well as an evaluation of the results achieved in the provision for scientific - or art - teaching staff [1].

The evaluation of the research work results is in compliance with the conditions defined for specific scientific fields. The assessment of the results of engagement in the development of

teaching and other activities and the assessment of the results achieved in the provision for scientific-educational, artistic or teaching staff is provided by the higher education unit in which the teacher teaches. In assessing the results of one's pedagogical work the institution needs to take into account the opinions of students, according to the General Act of an independent higher education institution [1]. It is possible for an institution to hire teachers from other independent institutions of higher education outside Serbia, in the role of a visiting professor. Exceptionally, in case of need, an institution can hire a visiting professor or a distinguished artist for the purpose of instructions in the field of arts. The rights and obligations of the person appointed to the position are regulated by a contract of engagement, drawn under the conditions stipulated by the General Act of a higher education institution. A person elected to a scientific position in the manner and according to the procedure prescribed by the law which regulates the activity of scientific research can give courses at a level of doctoral studies in accordance with the Law and the General Act of an independent institution of higher education.

The employment policy of a higher education institution is based on the real needs of the educational process (optimal and cost effective manner). Teachers and staff, as a rule, are employed full-time, in accordance with the General Act of a university. Teachers and assistants who teach clinical subjects are employed full-time, with the possibility of dividing the time spent on a higher education institution and the appropriate public health institution [1].

The excerpts from the Act define and deal with the issues that are relevant to the teaching staff. However, these regulations did not take into account the initial problems, such as age structure, the problem of brain drain, the economic situation and political influence, decades of isolation, the problems of financing, etc. The necessary number of teaching staff is specified by the norms and standards. It can vary, depending on the scientific field of the study programmes. The situation with non-teaching staff is still vague. The problem of permanent contracts, the provisions of the employment contract, and collective contracts that trade unions and the higher education institutions signed with the Ministry of Education and the Government of the Republic Serbia on the one hand, and the age and resistance to the introduction of new technologies, lower basic salaries and benefits, on the other, contributed to the closure of this group within the field of higher education.

Taking into account the number of non-teaching staff within these institutions that are the direct result of nepotism, as well as of pressures and impact, especially in smaller communities, we can conclude that this is a multi-dimensional problem [2]. However, the core problem is the tightness of the process of employment of non-teaching staff in the higher education of the Republic of Serbia. This means that there need not be an official announcement of employment opportunity and that the employment of non-teaching staff can be a matter of the governing body of an institution, which according to certain criteria (not necessarily prescribed by the law) signs a contract with a person [2].

From a management point of view, the Law was much more precise and has clearly defined the responsibilities of the management bodies (College Council, Faculty Council), executive officer (chancellor, dean, and director), professional bodies and higher education institutions. Competences, management procedures, rights and obligations, as a part of the responsibility of each authority in question are clearly defined.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN BELGIUM

As we have already mentioned in our previous reports, in Belgium (Flanders), public higher education institutions had formerly been strictly regulated and controlled by the Government. Higher education institutions now have greater institutional autonomy, even in financial matters. This has resulted in a considerable increase in the responsibility of these institutions for institutional policies, as well as in closer involvement of staff and students in institutional governance.

The starting points in the analysis of the human resources management within the higher education system in Belgium are related to the structure of employment in their higher education, as well as to the politics, election and monitoring progress relating to quality assurance. Both teaching and non-teaching staff (administrative and technical staff) perform their obligations according to clear and precise legal framework. Numerous teaching and non-teaching staff is recruited in accordance with the standards that enable smooth and efficient actualisation of a teaching process. The mission and vision of an institution, on the one hand, and important financial aspects on the other, are crucial for determining the number of staff. The management of teaching and administrative staff, as well as the crucial role they should play in the process of institutional change is still a rather unexplored area. The process of defining salary scales is based mainly on legislation and other official documents.

In accordance with its mission, an institution should seek educational innovation and wish to actively participate in scientific research and to render services to society. The main tasks expected from academic staff are described by the legislation or by any other binding official regulation. Concrete tasks linked to a specific post are normally laid out in the employment contract and are formulated at institutional level. The largest part of the staff are situated between the age group of 45 to 60 years old, which means that in the years to come university colleges will very soon face a big challenge in the renewal of the staff. This analysis confirmed that in Belgium, as well as in most European countries, women are generally under-represented amongst the academic staff. Women are particularly under-represented in the highest age group, which usually includes a relatively high proportion of staff in the most senior academic posts (3). Given their relatively recent accession to academia, women are strikingly more present in younger age cohorts and less advanced career positions in most countries.

In Belgium system (Flemish community), the Special Research Fund of universities encourages behavioural change within the institutions by providing financial incentives based on the number of new female appointments to tenure positions [3]. On the other hand, statistical evidence shows that there are more academic staff members in older age groups than in younger age groups (4). A very high percentage of staff in the oldest age group may lead to a shortage of qualified personnel in certain subject areas due to massive retirement in a relatively short time period. Moreover, older academic staff are expensive: they have advanced in their careers and salaries and therefore cost more to employ.

Institutional autonomy with regard to staff policies is limited. Due to the fact that senior academic staff have tenure, job opportunities for younger academics are scarce. As the academic staff members get older, many will retire in the next few years. However, this is a slow process. As a result, higher education institutions are sometimes permitted to offer early retirement options for senior academic staff (age 60 instead of 65). Meanwhile, the increase in external research funding leads to more frequent appointments of junior staff. Senior staff must be paid from the operating grant and therefore cannot exceed the number of junior staff. To give some leeway to the universities, the Government has made provisions so that junior staff members who have a PhD are allowed to teach. Further increases of public funding will lead to an increase in the number of tenure positions [3]. The selection of the staff is entrusted to the departments and central services. The head of a department or service sets up a selection team. The selection consists of a pre-selection based on the examination of the application file and an oral part. The selection committee will evaluate the professional qualities of the candidates with respect to the specified function, the motivation and interest in the field. Such measures provide the opportunity to reward outstanding research/teaching performance with special compensations or incentives, or via performance related salary system. These criteria may also be of particular importance to staff recruitment.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN PORTUGAL

In Portugal not a single statute regulates a teaching career or human resources management in general. There are few main laws to regulate the issue of human resources. For non-teaching staff these laws define and regulate the linking regimes, career and remuneration of public employees defining, in addition, the legal regime applicable to each functional mode of constitution of the legal public employment relationship.

Total number of employees in public higher education institutions in 2010 was 39.869, 67% of which belong to university sector and 37% belong to polytechnic sector. From the viewpoint of career groups, there is 59% of teaching staff, 39% of non-teaching staff and 2% of researchers. Here we have a slightly different situation in terms of gender representation, because in Portuguese higher education system 53% are female and 47% are male. Also, with respect to age structure one

could notice almost the right balance between the groups of 25-45years (50%) and 45-65 years (59%).

The processes of admission, selection and promotion are done according to the Law and institutional statutes. All admissions are decided upon in a "surgical" fashion, according to the financial constraints. The process of teaching staff recruitment is done by means of public announcement. The main categories of teaching staff in public universities are a tenured professor (*catedrático*), an associate professor and an assistant professor. In public polytechnics, the main categories are assistant - category soon to be extinguished or, according to the law, intended only for teachers with Bachelor or Master degree engaged only part-time (less than 60%), an associate professor (required PhD degree or specialist title and the entrance for this career is done through qualifications competition, i.e. documental tendering), a coordinator professor (required PhD degree obtained for more than five years or a specialist title and the entrance to the career is done through qualifications competition, i.e. documental tendering), a senior coordinator professor (required PhD degree and the title of aggregate). This category is equivalent to a full professor at the university career [6].

It is also important to mention the general division of teaching staff into two main categories: tenured teachers, i.e. teachers with a contract of indefinite duration, and visiting lecturers/professors, i.e. teachers with a one-year or a two-year contract, which can either be renewable or not, either full-time or part-time.

The number of places among the academic staff in public universities and polytechnics is regulated in detail by the Government. The procedures and criteria for academic careers are set out in the Law 448/79 of November 1979. Three major policy issues concerning academic staff is a significant effort that has been put into increasing the proportion of the academic staff holding a doctorate. The Law on Higher Education requires that 50% (fifty percent) of the teaching staff hold either doctoral or a specialists degree (a title based on the recognition of ten years in a certain profession). Starting from 2009 the new academic career statute requires that professors in Portugal hold a doctoral degree to begin their career. Presently, all of the polytechnic institutes offer support for their academic staff in order for them to acquire the doctoral degree.

The issues concerning non-teaching staff are regulated by a law which defines and regulates the linking regimes, the career and remuneration of public employees. In addition, it defines the legal regime applicable to each functional mode of constitution of the legal public employment relationship (LVCR)¹⁹ and establish the Integrated Management and Performance Evaluation System in Public Administration (SIADAP)²⁰ [6, 7].

¹⁹ Regimes de Vinculação, de Carreiras e de Remunerações

²⁰ Sistema Integrado de Avaliação de Desempenho da Administração Pública

In polytechnic systems there are three main categories of non-teaching staff:

- senior technical staff - the access is made through public tender and requires a Bachelor degree
- administrative staff - the access is made through public tender and requires at least twelve years of education
- operational staff - the access is made through public tender and requires at least six years of education

The recruitment of the non-teaching staff is also done by means of public tender evaluated by a selection panel in three steps: a) a knowledge test; b) curricular evaluation; c) professional selection interview. Today, within the Portuguese higher education system, there is about 26% of non-teaching staff [7].

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN GERMANY

The statistics in German higher education system makes a difference between the full-time employed staff, regular staff and part-time employed staff. Within the first category there are four main types of staff: professors (comprising seven ranks in total), teachers for special tasks, researchers, and lecturers and assistants. In addition to regular staff there are three types of part-time staff: visiting and retired professors, lecturers and research assistants. [8]

Professors at vocational colleges need to demonstrate particular achievements in applying or developing academic or scientific knowledge and methods resulting from at least five-year long professional experience. It is required that at least three out of five years are spent outside the higher education sector [8]. Other requirements are a degree from an institution of higher education, teaching ability and particular aptitude for academic work, which is usually demonstrated with the doctoral degree (or a particular aptitude for work in the creative arts) [9].

Professors perform the duties relating to science, the arts, research and teaching. Their duties also include participating in study reform activities, academic counselling and the administration of the higher education institution, as well as in holding examinations. Professors are usually appointed by the Ministry responsible for the matters of science in a particular province as civil servants with limited or unlimited tenure, though they can also be taken on as salaried employees [9]. The extent of teaching commitments of a full-time academic staff is expressed in units. Each unit stands for at least 45 minutes per week for the period when lectures are held during the semester. On the other hand, there were reforms initiated by the Government concerning the staff structure, staff remuneration and employment conditions that were highly debated and strongly opposed. These reforms had an aim to tackle certain current problems. Those problems were: a long duration of the qualification for scientists, the lack of autonomy for post-doctoral researchers, the age of starting professors, and the lack of (quality and efficiency) incentives in the academic salary structure [10]. Generally speaking, the academic staff can be divided into following groups:

professors, junior professors, scientific staff, doctoral staff. The recruitment requirements for professors are as follows: a degree from an institution of higher education, teaching ability, particular aptitude for academic work which is usually demonstrated by a doctoral degree (or a particular aptitude for work in the creative arts, depending on the requirements of the post), additional academic achievements or particular achievements in the application or development of academic or scientific knowledge and methods mastered in professional experience of at least five years, of which at least three years should have been spent outside the higher education sector. There are specific requirements for particular fields of study. For example, in educational science and subject-related didactics in teacher training only those persons who have at least three-year experience of teaching in schools should be appointed as professors [9]. The requirement for an appointment of a junior professor is a degree from an institution of higher education as well as teaching ability. Particular aptitude for academic work is usually documented by a doctoral degree (or a particular aptitude for work in the creative arts). The recruitment requirement for scientific staff is a university degree. Teaching staff performs the duties relating to science, the arts, research and teaching. Teaching staff duties also include study modernisation activities, academic issues and the administration of the higher education institution, etc. Professors are usually appointed by the Ministry responsible for science in a particular province as civil servants with limited or unlimited tenure. They can also be taken on as salaried employees. Scientific staff are civil servants or salaried employees who are responsible for academic services. This includes transferring specialised knowledge and practical skills and instructing students in the use of scientific methods. Scientific staff can also be entrusted with the independent research and teaching tasks. In cases where it is necessary to impart mainly practical skills and knowledge, such duties can be delegated to what are known as teaching staff for special tasks [9].

The extent of teaching commitments of full-time academic staff is expressed in units. Each unit stands for at least 45 minutes per week for the period when lectures are held during the semester. New improvements are achieved by new regulations. These regulations are specified for different staff categories. Also, these regulations imply that professors and scientific staff at vocational colleges are generally expected to teach more than those at universities [9].

If certain functions and responsibilities are taken on, teaching commitments can be reduced. For example, if managerial functions are performed within the higher education institution or research and development work is undertaken at a vocational college it is possible to reduce teaching hours. Recent changes in human resources management imply a new salary system for staff at higher education institutions. The two crucial elements of the new system are: emancipation of salaries at universities and vocational colleges and performance-related pay [8, 9].

All newly appointed professors start with new professorial categories (W2 and W3). Various provinces have differently implemented the new federal law. In some provinces newly appointed professors are not allowed to receive performance bonuses in the first years, whereas in others they can receive these bonuses immediately [9]. The head of a higher education institution is either elected from among the professors belonging to it or those elected from the outside of the

institution. In the second case, the candidate appointed should have successfully completed four to five years of higher education studies and provided evidence of a successful career of several years in a responsible position in educational or judicial administration, art, science or management [9]. The head externally represents the institution. His/her responsibilities comprise administration, finances, institutional development, a development of the study courses on offer, the implementation of evaluation, staff management and public relations. If the head is elected from among the group of professors, they may continue with teaching and academic research. The head of a higher education institution has temporary civil servant status and is employed by the province concerned. The official title of the person appointed is either *Rector* or *President*, depending on the legislation of a province and the statute of an institution.

CONCLUSION

The European higher education area is primarily organised at national and regional levels. The main feature of this area is high degree of heterogeneity. It is logically reflected in the manner of organisation, governance and operating conditions, including the status and conditions of employment and recruitment of the teaching staff and researchers [10].

The primary activities of a higher education institution have been increasingly centralised within the institutions, with new lines of reporting and new rules and procedures for academics to ensure the quality of the higher education institution – primary processes – teaching and research. In many cases this has led to a further rationalisation of higher education institution – decision-making structures and in many cases also has implied putting in place new „hierarchies“ in which institutional leadership holds a central role.

This analysis shows that Serbian system of higher education is going in the right direction, but there is always a place for improvement. The focus of the analysis has been put on the staff structure, staff distribution, gender breakdown, teaching staff functionality, selection and promotion policy, mandates analysis, the evolution of staff structure and the issue of salary.

Generally speaking, in all four systems we have noticed similar problems. The structure of staff shows that we are about to face big challenges in the future. The structure of staff, gender balance and the acquired level of competences are the areas which demand permanent work. The problem of aging is common to all four systems. More than 50% of the staff belong to a category (45-65 year) with strongly marked gender imbalance. There is a large gap between the massive need for administrative professional staff and the present small level of attention, and this should lead some institutions to pay more attention to *the other staff*. Without the work of technical, secretarial, accounting, financial administration, and service/maintenance personnel, the higher education institutions could never function. Higher education institutions need the administrative staff for more reasons than one.

The recruitment processes for academic staff in all four systems follow the minimum

qualification requirements imposed by the state, while additional criteria have been set by the institutions in countries where the recruitment is organised. The criteria prescribed by the institutions are often presented within statutes or regulations, in an attempt to increase transparency of the recruitment procedures.

With respect to qualification levels, the lower level is a Master's degree for junior teaching positions and a higher level is a PhD degree for senior academic persons. The main problems relating to the staff career management at higher education institutions in Serbia are often connected with the static nature of the job. Furthermore, the lack of training possibilities, as opposed to an awareness of the importance of training, also presents a serious issue. The Serbian staff received the largest amount of staff training in the framework of international projects. Moreover, in all four systems there is almost a common model of the staff salary at public higher education institutions whose framework was set up by the state. This framework allows the institutions the freedom to implement a reward protocol and additional payments or benefits, according to their own policies and available funds. The calculation of salaries is based on the years of working experience and the academic title obtained. The part that differs usually concerns additional responsibilities, above average performance (whether scientific, teaching, or international projects), or simply extended working time.

The general conclusion is that a little attention is paid to the recruitment requirements, motivation skills and training of administrative and technical staff. The main questions remains why should the administrative and technical staff be excluded from the core operations of institutions and why, when talking about the human resources of an institution, the main or exclusive focus is put on the academic staff? It is obvious that administrative and technical staff give significant contribution to the modernisation of institutions. This staff category should not be ignored when discussing human resources management in public higher education institutions.

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CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE EU AND SERBIA

INTRODUCTION

The term quality assurance refers to "...systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement". Accreditation is an evaluation of an institution or a programme which aims to ascertain that both institution and programmes meet threshold standards and qualify for a certain status [1].

According to the Lisbon Process, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in Europe is one of the three main goals [2]. That has more or less been achieved in the period until 2010. The quality assurance procedures became an integral part of the teaching profession. Surveys, analyses, evaluation, self-evaluation, accreditation, procedures, action plans, strategies, corrective measures, Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), and The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) are some of the most used terms in higher education systems all over Europe in the last decade.

In higher education, the term quality assurance refers to all the policies, ongoing review processes and actions designed to ensure that institutions, programmes and qualifications meet and maintain specified standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure. In this respect, quality assurance primarily provides institutions and stakeholders in higher education with a guarantee that quality is being achieved (i.e. accountability). Quality assurance also has a function of enhancement and improvement of higher education system, institution, or programmes.

Historically speaking, everything started in the Berlin Communiqué in 2003. The Ministers of the Bologna Process signatory states were invited by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) through its members and in cooperation with the EUA²¹, EURASHE²², and ESIBÕ, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies. The reports have been backed through the Bologna Follow-Up Group in 2005 [3].

Quality assurance in higher education is a universal term today. All over the world there is

²¹ The European University Association

²² European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

an increasing interest in quality and standards, which is connected with a rapid development of higher education. The main aim of Europe is to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy). The realisation of that aim is based on the power and quality of European higher education. Thus, European higher education institutions need to demonstrate that they take very seriously the quality of their programmes and that they are willing to put into place the means of assuring and demonstrating that quality. The initiatives and demands, which are springing up both inside and outside Europe in the face of the internationalisation of higher education, demand a response [4].

Quality assurance has two main segments: internal and external quality assurance. The standards for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions are based on the quality assurance policies and procedures, on the procedure of monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes and awards, on the assessment of students, improvement of learning resources, development of strong information system, involvement of students in the realisation and monitoring of procedures and permanent availability of all necessary information from the higher education institution domain of work [5]. The standards for external quality assurance of higher education are prescribed by official documents proposed by the legal bodies. The standards are based on the results of the internal quality assurance procedures, development of external quality assurance processes, on determining the criteria for decisions and reporting, the ability to define the follow-up procedures, publish periodical reviews, create and perform system-wide analyses, etc.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BELGIUM (FLANDERS)

Quality assurance presents the basic condition for good and reliable higher education. This statement is incorporated in the Belgium higher education system through: University decree (1991), University Colleges decree (1994), Structural decree (2003). The Government oversees quality assurance and active governmental policy. Common to the entire European Higher Education Area, the quality assurance system consists of three parts: an internal part, an external part and the part where the formal decision is taken. Internal quality assurance is ensured by the educational institution itself, whereas the external quality assurance starts with a self-assessment and is subsequently implemented by external experts. Accreditation implies that educational programmes meet certain minimal quality requirements for higher education.

The introduction of the accreditation obligation – in the Netherlands and Flanders in 2005 – has had a stimulating effect on the development of internal quality assurance in educational institutions. All aspects connected with the process of accreditation are in jurisdiction of the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). The NVAO is the independent bi-national accreditation organisation set up by the Dutch and Flemish governments, whose primary goal is to provide an expert and objective judgment of the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders. The NVAO's scope of work includes the following

activities: recognition of new higher education institutions, institutional audits in which the NVAO assesses the institutional quality assurance system, initial accreditation of new programmes (i.e. programmes that aspire to offer a recognised degree), accreditation of programmes that already offer a recognised degree, assessment of distinctive (quality) features of programmes and institutions at the request of the relevant institution, publication of decisions (and officially recognised degrees) in the NVAO database, internationalisation activities related to quality assurance in higher education, etc.

The aim of the institutional quality assurance assessment is a full implementation of the proposed standards. The object of the institutional quality assurance assessment is to determine whether the Board of an institution has implemented an effective quality assurance system, based on its vision of the quality of the education provided, which enables it to guarantee the quality of the programmes offered.

There are five proposed standards in the procedure of institutional assessment. Regarding each of these five standards, the audit panel gives a weighted and substantiated judgment on a three-point scale: meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard. The audit panel subsequently gives a substantiated final conclusion on the question of whether an institution is in control with regard to the quality of its programmes. This judgment is also given on a three-point scale: positive, negative or conditionally positive.

The standards cover a vision of the quality of the education provided by an institution, an adequate policy of quality assurance, the output of realisation policy, the policy of improvement, the organisation and decision making structure.

The realisation of the institutional audit is in charge of an audit panel. The audit panel is composed of at least four members, including one student. Furthermore, the panel commands administrative, educational and audit expertise, it is acquainted with developments in the higher education sector at home and abroad, and it is authoritative. One of the members with administrative expertise will act as the chair, and the panel is independent (its members have no ties with the institution to be assessed over at least the past five years).

The assessment process starts with an executive consultation between the management of the institution and the executive board of the NVAO. This consultation focuses on the institution's organisational structure regarding the education it provides. Based on this consultation the NVAO draws up an "accreditation portrait", which is communicated to the institution and audit panel. The third step concerns the critical reflection written by the institution. This reflection needs to provide information on all five standards. In order to verify the information stated in the critical reflection two site-visits will take place.

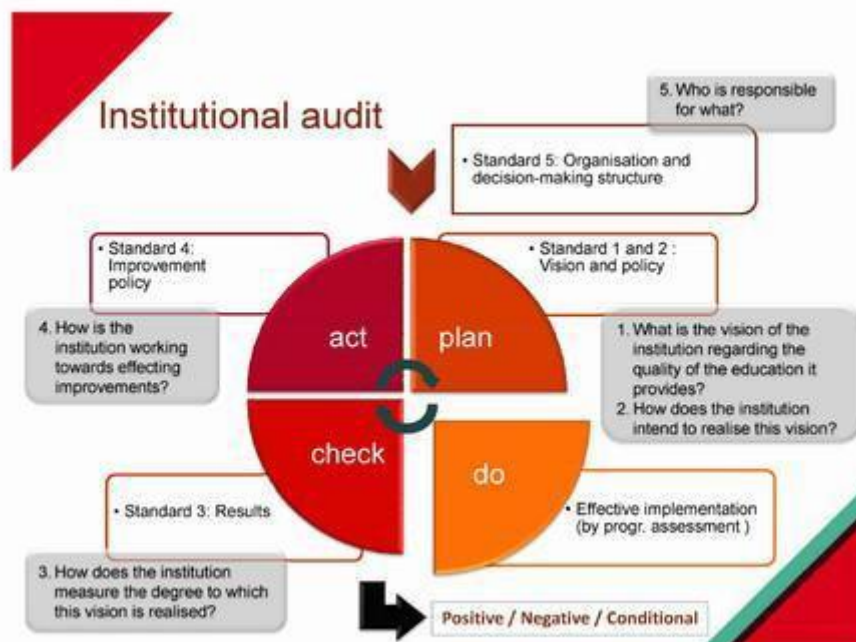


Figure1. Procedure of Institutional audit in Belgium HE system

For each of these five standards, the audit panel gives a weighted and substantiated judgment on a three-point scale: meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard. The audit panel subsequently presents a substantiated final conclusion on the question of whether the institution is in control with regard to the quality of its programmes. This judgment is also given on a three-point scale: positive, negative or conditionally positive. The institutional audit assessment procedure includes convening and appointing an audit panel, two site visits, an advisory report and the NVAO decision.

Initial accreditation relates to the assessment of the potential quality of the programme including, when possible, a focus on achieved quality. The initial accreditation procedure consists of three consecutive steps: the programme proposal, the external assessment and the initial accreditation. The first step in the initial accreditation procedure is the programme proposal. The institution is responsible for the proposal and therefore assembles a dossier regarding the proposed programme. The programme proposal contains a full description of the programme and it is done according to the proposed standards. The second step in the initial accreditation procedure is the external assessment. The NVAO convenes an assessment panel that will be responsible for the external assessment of the programme. The assessment panel assesses the potential quality of the proposed programme and whether the programme fulfils the criteria of the initial accreditation framework. The panel follows the assessment framework (which contains all the standards) and the assessment rules as laid down in the initial accreditation framework. The external assessment

focuses on learning outcomes. The panel writes down their (objective) findings, (subjective) considerations and conclusions in their assessment report. The report contains an explicit proposal to the NVAO to take either a positive or a negative initial accreditation decision. The third step in the initial accreditation procedure is initial accreditation decision. The NVAO evaluates the assessment report and the overall conclusions expressed in it. This means that the NVAO verifies whether the programme has the potential to offer generic quality or not.

The process of accreditation concerns those programmes that already award (nationally) recognised degrees. These programmes are included in the official register of the relevant country (i.e. the CROHO²³ in the Netherlands or the Higher Education Register in Flanders). Accreditation relates to the assessment of the quality of the programme and focuses on learning outcomes and it consists of three consecutive steps: the self-evaluation, the external assessment and the accreditation. The first step in the accreditation procedure is the self-evaluation. The institution and/or the programme are responsible for carrying out a self-evaluation of the programme(s) concerned. This process is concluded with a self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report contains a description and evaluation of the programme. The second step in the accreditation procedure is the external assessment by a panel of experts. Those experts will be responsible for the external assessment of the programme. They use the relevant assessment framework to assess the quality of the programme. The external assessment focuses on learning outcomes. The panel writes down their (objective) findings, (subjective) considerations and conclusions in their assessment report. The third step in the accreditation framework is the accreditation itself. The institution submits an application for accreditation of a programme to the NVAO. The NVAO uses the evaluation criteria in the accreditation framework to evaluate the assessment report and the overall conclusions expressed in it, the panel composition and the methodology used. This means that the NVAO verifies whether the programme offers generic quality or not.

Subsequently, the NVAO takes an accreditation decision and lays down its findings in an accreditation report. Finally, the panel's assessment report and the NVAO's accreditation report (including the accreditation decision) are published by the NVAO. The decision of the NVAO could be: a rejection of the report or an additional assessment, either positive or negative.

Regarding the internal level, the quality management system (quality assurance provisions) covers all areas including teaching, research, administration and management. The most important thing for this type of quality assurance procedure is the creation of a realistic and qualitative strategic plan, which is framed by policy objective and supported by policy documents, policy plans of department and service and all that has to be followed by an action plan for the realisation of a strategy. Policy objectives are focused on attractive education, personal guidance research and development (R&D, engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship). This objective will enable a

²³ Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs (Central Register of Higher Education)



successful stimulation of talents, internationalisation and cooperation in all European higher education fields. Starting from the general principles of Bologna, the student role in quality assurance procedure is inevitable.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PORTUGAL

Quality assurance of higher education in Portugal has been based on the Higher Education Evaluation Act (act 38/94), which was passed by the Parliament in November 1994. The law was closely developed in cooperation with the Council of Rectors of Public Universities (CRUP) and forms the backbone of what is in Portugal widely termed “the contractual system” [8].

In Portugal all Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes need accreditation in order to be recognised as higher education programmes and to be able to award recognised degrees. This accreditation is given by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (A3ES). The mission of the A3ES is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of Portuguese higher education through the assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study cycle [9].

The main objective of the A3ES is to promote the improvement of the performance of higher education institutions and their study programmes and to guarantee the fulfilment of the basic requirements for their official recognition. This objective is pursued through the assessment and accreditation activities carried out by the Agency, and through the promotion of an internal quality assurance culture within higher education institutions [9].

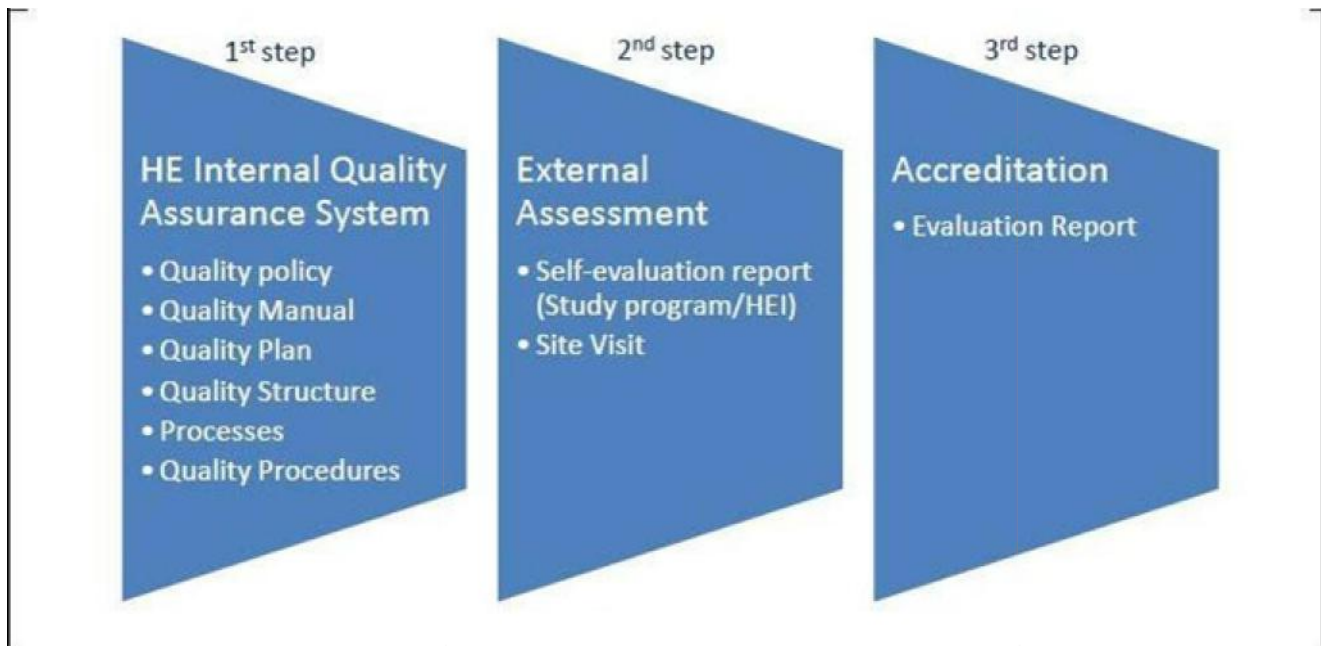


Figure2: Quality Assurance procedure in Portuguese Higher Education system

Accreditation is aiming at the realisation of one or more specific study programmes, and each higher education institution must be accredited for all study programmes it operates. The accreditation procedure starts with a submission signed by the head of the interested higher education institution, or in the case when an institution is not public, of the respective founding body.

The submission of accreditation must contain the following elements: identification of the interested higher education institution, identification of the (organic) unit in charge of the programme to be accredited, characterisation of an educative, scientific and cultural project within which the study programme to be accredited is integrated, identification of the study programme to be accredited and the academic degree it confers, characterisation of the study programme to be accredited, indication of the main scientific area of the study programme, the number of the ECTS credits necessary for a degree, indication of the normal duration of the study programme, indication of the curricular structure and syllabus, indication of options, branches or other organisational forms of alternative routes that eventually are available through the study programme, identification of academic staff members allocated to the study programme, synthetic curricula of academic staff members allocated to the study programme, identification of the facilities within which the study programme is to be realised [9], description and evidence of other material and human resources indispensable for assuring the level and quality of education in the study programme to be accredited, considering the academic degree it confers, the SWOT analysis, etc.

The Management Board passes the electronic forms for submission of the accreditation demand that specifies the elements referred to previously, and defines the elements that the interested higher education institution must provide. At any moment, the Management Board, the project coordinator or the external assessment team may demand that the interested higher education institution provide the original documents certifying the elements referred to previously, giving the institution a reasonable period to do so [9].

Each accreditation procedure has a manager appointed by the Management Board, either through an individual or a generic decision. The project coordinator is responsible for instructing the accreditation procedure, unless the Management Board decides to retain the instruction. Without detriment of the issues previously stated, the Management Board may retain the competency for realising specific instruction acts or formalities without retaining the management of the instruction. While retaining the management of the instruction, it may ask the project coordinator to undertake some specific instruction acts or formalities.

The submission could be preliminarily turned down if the detected deficiencies are not overcome or if the lack of requirements for accreditation is evident. Once the external evaluation report is completed, the interested higher education institution is listed to the probable orientation of the decision of the accreditation procedure. The decision on the accreditation submission may be favourable or unfavourable and the favourable decision may be conditioned to the adoption by the interested higher education institution of determined quality assurance measures, within a reasonable period of time. In case of an unconditional accreditation decision a preliminary hearing of the interested higher education institution may be waived. The decision on the accreditation submission falls within the legal capacity of the Management Board and it could be favourable or unfavourable. A favourable accreditation decision implies the authorisation to initiate the operation of the accredited study programme in a higher education institution and the recognition of the degree it awards. The accreditation is valid for a five-year period. In case the conditional accreditation is transformed into full accreditation, the period of conditional accreditation is taken into account when calculating the period established in the previous number. For every procedure of accreditation, re-appreciation, renewal and revision taxes are due.

The procedure of assessment is focused on the quality of the performance of higher education institutions and the quality of the study programmes leading to a degree of a licentiate, master and doctor. The assessment may deal with relevant cross performance parameters of sets of higher education institutions or of study programmes. The assessment of the performance quality of a higher education institution implies the assessment of all study programmes in operation. The assessment procedures evaluate the efficacy of the internal quality assurance procedures of education institutions. The assessment is obligatory for all higher education institutions and it must occur every five years. The assessment is performed by external assessment teams composed of independent experts. The team is composed of three to five members, depending on the complexity of the assessment tasks to perform, and must integrate the participation of experts from foreign or international institutions. The composition of the external assessment teams is determined by the

Management Board that appoints the respective presidents. The assessment consists of the assignment of a qualitative qualification based on relevant aspects of the performance of the higher education institution and of the study programme. The aspects to be considered in the assessment are materialised by taking into account the nature of the higher education institution and that of the study programme, from among the following thematic areas such as: objectives of the study programme, internal organisation and quality assurance mechanisms, material resources and partnerships, qualification and allocation of the academic and non-academic staff, characterisation of the students, teaching and learning environment, teaching objectives, curricular structure and syllabus, organisation of the curricular units, teaching and learning methodologies, the results of academic, scientific, technological, artistic and other activities, proposals for performance improvement actions, etc. The qualitative classification is expressed using the references “satisfies”, “satisfies partly” or “does not satisfy” [9].

Once the evaluation tasks are completed, the external assessment team will draft a preliminary report containing qualitative qualifications, recommendations, a proposal for a decision on accreditation, and a proposal for quality assurance measures to be imposed on the interested higher education institution. The report is translated into English. The decision about assessment falls under the legal capacity of the Management Board. The decision of the Management Board may express total or partial agreement with the proposals of the evaluation report. From the conclusive decisions made by the Management Board on the assessment and accreditation procedures there is an appeal to the Appeals Council. When deciding on an appeal, the Appeals Council may confirm, revoke, change or replace the decision of the Management Board.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GERMANY

The process of accreditation, established in German higher education system in the nineties, ensures quality in higher education teaching and studying, enhances student mobility and provides students, employees, as well as higher education institutions with a reliable orientation and improved transparency regarding the Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes.

German Accreditation Organisation²⁴ is an independent organisation responsible for accrediting agencies and, in certain cases, it is in charge of accrediting degree programmes. More precisely, it serves to fulfil the following tasks:

1. Accreditation and re-accreditation of accreditation agencies by granting them a time-limited entitlement to accredit study courses through the award of the Foundation's seal.
2. Compilation of both common and specific structural guidelines of the provinces into binding guidelines for the accreditation agencies
3. Regulation of minimum requirements for accreditation procedures including the

²⁴ Deutscher Akkreditierungsrat

prerequisites and limits of bundled accreditations

4. Monitoring of accreditations undertaken by the accreditation agencies

Since 1994 various structures have been established for supporting both internal and external evaluation and these now cover institutions of higher education in all sixteen German states. Meanwhile, a two-tiered system, which combines internal and external evaluation, is widely applied in Germany [11].

For Bachelor s and Master s study courses, the Standing Conference has adopted accreditation as an instrument of quality assurance, which is functionally separate from the state approval of study courses. As with all other study courses, the state approval refers to guaranteeing fundamental financial means for the study courses to be set up and the inclusion in the higher educational planning of the respective land. In contrast to this, the objective of the accreditation is to guarantee standards in terms of academic content, the maintenance of structural guidelines, as well as to determine professional relevance of the degrees with the aim of ensuring quality in international competition and create transparency for international collaboration. In the system of accreditation, the state assumes the responsibility for higher education studies through structural requirements for study offers, which guarantee the equivalence of qualifications and the possibility of exchange with another higher education institution. Observance of structural requirements is a pre-requisite for the accreditation of a study course. They form the basis for the accreditation process. The state legislation determines to which extent accreditation is a pre-requisite for the state approval of a new study course. It is essentially performed by an external peer review. Periodically, the study courses are re-accredited.

In December 2007, the Standing Conference decided to enhance the accreditation of study programmes through the implementation of a system accreditation scheme according to which the internal quality assurance system of an entire higher education institution is assessed for the quality of its learning and teaching. The responsibility for quality assurance in terms of the given criteria is thus transferred to a higher education institution. The subject of the assessment is whether the higher education institution provides a quality management system which ensures the implementation of these criteria or not. System accreditation aims to reduce the administrative burden of higher education institutions and to accelerate certification.

Generally speaking, accreditation is an evaluation based on agreed standards, resulting in a formal, public recognition of a programme (or an institution). It is a democratic, transparent process resting upon self- and peer assessment for improvement of an academic quality and public accountability. There are two complementary procedures. First and foremost, there is an evaluation procedure consisting of a self-evaluation of the applicant, plus the on-site inspection and the report of the evaluator group. This is followed by the accreditation procedure in which a relevant expert team (an accreditation agency possessing the license from the Accreditation Council) analyses and discusses the self-report and the evaluators' recommendation.

Regarding the internal level, as in previous cases the quality assurance system (quality assurance provisions) covers all areas including teaching, research, administration and management. All higher education institutions have a perennial strategy for continuous quality improvement, which is monitored continuously by means of an operational quality circle. Any further development of programmes is continuously monitored through annual strategy meetings with the governing body of one's institution. Another important quality assurance process is the institution-wide evaluation of all teaching and learning activities, which includes individual course interviews, surveys of whole degree programmes and alumni surveys. Each study course is evaluated at least every other semester. The survey of the whole degree programme is conducted every two years and is designed for continuous improvement with respect to the concept, the organisation and the quality of student service. The continuing education of the teaching staff is supported by offering a wide range of activities for the improvement of didactic skills. Additional quality assurance measures are not mentioned here due to space limits.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SERBIA

After the constitution of the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) in 2006 and adoption of a set of standards, procedures and guidelines for self-evaluation and external evaluation of higher education institutions, the CAQA has completed the first round of accreditation of all higher education institutions in Serbia (both institutional and study programmes), conducted the external quality control of higher education institutions and started the second accreditation round. It is important to note that the review process in Serbia is dual: accreditation and external quality control. These comply with the national legislation and, according to the report of the ENQA review panel, they are also in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines. These achievements mean that the quality assurance system has been established in Serbian higher education according to the best European practice. However, the effects of these activities have not yet been thoroughly analysed [12].

Quality assurance policy presents one of the biggest achievements of the Bologna Process in Serbia. The success is based on the well established rules and regulations, standards and procedures of external quality control in higher education institutions.

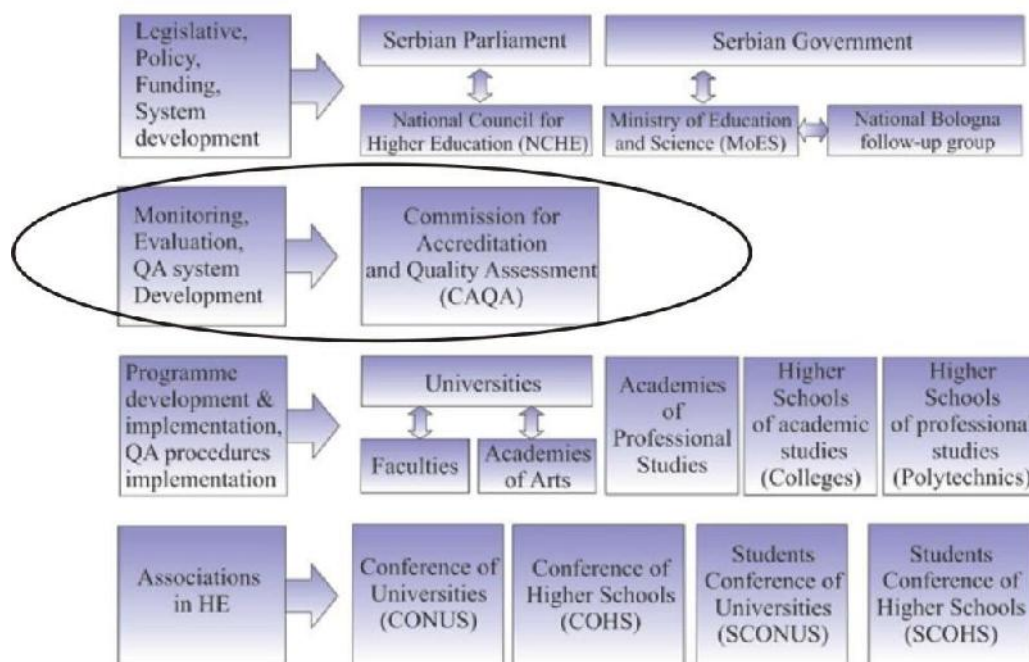


Figure3. The position of the CAQA in the Serbian higher education system

The procedure of external quality control in a higher education institution is launched by the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. The Commission follows its annual plan of action, according to special instructions by the National Council of Higher Education and upon an application filed by an independent higher education institution or the minister in charge of higher education affairs. The application for external quality control is submitted by a professional body on behalf of an independent higher education institution. The application for external quality control should contain the data about the applicant and the rationale [13].

The accreditation request is supported by the following data and documents such as the name, seat, responsible person (rector, dean, administrator, secretary), incorporation act and operating licenses, study programmes carried out in the higher education institution, self-assessment report, an action plan for the current and the following year and an operating report for the previous year, data about the students, data about the policy of admission, criteria and ranking of the admitted candidates, data on the teaching staff, data about the textbooks, data on the library and IT facilities, data about the premises and equipment, deeds of ownership/lease, proof of urban development status, area, structure of premises and technical equipment (number, age), balance sheet and profit and loss account for the previous year, financial plan for the current and next year, and financial report with the sources of funding and allocation of proceeds.

The Ministry inspects the completeness of the accreditation request. In case of incomplete documents, the Ministry notifies the applicant to complete the file within eight days from the date of serving the notification. In case the applicant fails to proceed as per notification of the Ministry, it will be deemed to have had given up.

The Commission forms a fact-finding sub-commission. At least two members of the sub-commission come from the corresponding education scientific, and/or artistic field. Each reviewer analyses the documents and appraise: whether the self-assessment was carried in conformity with the standards of self-assessment and quality assurance of higher-education institution, were the standards of self-assessment and quality assurance met in full, in part or not, if the areas of activities of the higher-education institution were satisfactory, partially satisfactory or unsatisfactory in terms of quality. The sub-commission establishes the facts of relevance for the decision about the accreditation request by means of direct inspection of the work of higher education institution. This inspection is to be announced fifteen days in advance of the visit. After the direct inspection, the sub-commission compiles a report with the quality assessment of the relevant higher education institution. Along with the report of the reviewers and the report of the sub-commission the draft proposal for accreditation is finalised and the Commission is furnished with it within two months from the direct inspection of the work of a higher education institution. The accreditation decision is taken when more than half of the Commission members vote in favour.

The decision of the Commission could be:

- accept the accreditation request and grant the Accreditation Certificate
- reject the accreditation request and issue the decision denying accreditation

The Commission may postpone the decision-making on accreditation and warn the higher education institution in terms of the quality of work of the higher education institution or a study programme, stipulate the deadline for elimination of the weaknesses, and issue relevant conclusion.

The founder of a higher-education institution may file a complaint contesting the denial of accreditation with the National Council of Higher Education (hereinafter: National Council) within 30 days of the date of the receipt of the decision. The National Council rejects the complaint if it finds it groundless, untimely or signed by an unauthorised person. The National Council rejects the complaint if it finds that the procedure for accreditation had been properly applied and the decision taken in compliance with the law and the present Rules and Regulations.

If the National Council finds defects in the accreditation procedure it may:

- annul the decision of the Commission and decide on its own on the accreditation request based on the facts found by the Commission;
- annul the decision and order the Commission to repeat the accreditation procedure, in whole or in part.

The National Council may ask the Commission, in the complaint process, to supplement the data of relevance for the decision-making. The decision of the National Council is final.

Regarding the internal evaluation, a higher education institution has to follow up standards prescribed by the National Council and do the best to fully comply with them. The higher education institution establishes its own Commission for Quality Assurance on an internal level which needs to prepare the action plan in the context of prescribed standards. The members of the Commission are representatives from among the teachers, associates and non-teaching staff and students. The

Commission for Quality Assurance on an institutional level prepare a quality assurance strategy which has to be approved by the School Council. The higher education institution approves clear and comprehensively formulated strategy of quality assurance of the teaching process, management of the higher education institutions, teaching activities and conditions for work and study. The report is accessible to the public. A higher education institution implements in practice the established strategy for quality assurance and to that end takes necessary measures to realise the strategy for quality assurance and eliminate the observed irregularities. The higher education institution particularly monitors the quality of teaching, examinations, the success of students and studies on the whole, the quality of textbooks and take special measures for eliminating the observed deficiencies.

Students have an active role in the process of approval and realisation of the strategy for quality assurance. The assessment of the quality of the teaching process is of special significance and it is carried out by means of students' polls.

Self-assessment is an integral part of the strategy for quality assurance and it is carried out in the intervals of maximum three years. The students' assessment of the quality of the teaching process is taken into account in the self-assessment.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Analysing the presented quality assurance procedures in the EU partner countries (Germany, Portugal and Belgium) on the one hand, and Serbia on the other, we can confirm the above motioned conclusion that the biggest achievements of the Bologna Process are precisely in this area. The presented procedures showed a lot of similarities within various systems of higher education and showed that the European area of higher education is quite unique in this respect. The success in quality assurance is a key factor for successful implementation of all aspect of the Bologna Process. A general conclusion which can be derived from the analysis is that the quality assurance procedures became an integral part of the teaching profession i.e. an integral part of higher education. Nowadays, it is impossible to imagine higher education without quality assurance procedures.

The observed and analysed higher education systems have adopted accreditation as an instrument of quality assurance, which is functionally separate from the state approval of study courses. The accreditation process is comprised of two processes: the accreditation of institutions and the accreditation of study programmes. Quality assurance has two main segments: internal and external quality assurance.

All these systems passed through almost the same procedure of quality assurance implementation. The issues of quality assurance in higher education systems are based on the legal regulations and their implementation on a national level, which is under jurisdiction of the official

bodies (the NVAO²⁵, the A3ES²⁶, Akkreditierungsrat, the CAQA). All official bodies are independent and their mission is to ensure the policy of quality assurance in higher education and contribute to its advancement. All these official bodies are members of ENQA.

Generally speaking, the quality assurance system consists of three parts: an internal part, an external part and the part where the formal decision is taken in all observed systems. The object of the institutional quality assurance assessment is to determine whether the Board of an institution has implemented an effective quality assurance system. The quality assurance culture in the presented higher education systems is not a new category. All systems have a tradition in quality assurance policy but in the last decade it has acquired a desired shape and form. Quality assurance policy is implemented at all levels and in all areas of interest with the purpose of the development of higher education. All higher education institutions in the observed systems have developed its quality assurance procedures according to the proposed standards. Everyone is involved in the process of quality assurance: teaching staff, non-teaching staff, the management of an institution, students, partners from work fields, local authorities (some aspects), ministries and others.

The number of standards varies from one country to another, but they cover the same area of interest. In Belgium the higher education system standards cover: a vision of the quality of education provided by an institution, an adequate policy of quality assurance, the output of policy realisation, the policy of improvement, organisation and decision-making structures. In Portuguese higher education system standards cover: the nature of a higher education institution and that of a study programme, internal organisation and quality assurance mechanisms, material resources and partnerships, qualifications and allocation of the academic and non-academic staff, characterisation of students, teaching and learning environment, teaching objectives, curricular and syllabi structure, organisation of the curricular units, teaching and learning methodologies, the results of academic, scientific, technological, artistic and other activities, proposals for performance improvement actions. In German higher education system, the proposed standards cover the areas of teaching, research, administration, management, etc.

The quality assurance policy within Serbian higher education system is defined by fourteen standards which cover: study programmes carried out in a higher education institution, data about the students, data about the admission policy, the criteria for and ranking of the admitted candidates, data on the teaching staff, data about the textbooks, data on the library and IT facilities, data about the premises and equipment, the deeds of ownership/lease, the proof of urban development status, the area, the structure of premises and technical equipment (number, age), balance sheet and profit and loss account for the previous year, financial plan for the current and next year, and financial report with the sources of funding and allocation of proceeds, etc.

²⁵ Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie)

²⁶ Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education

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CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE EU AND SERBIA

INTRODUCTION

The process of globalisation on the world stage has affected almost all aspects of our lives. Technological development, demographic trends, and the brain drain from one end of the world to another, are all facts of life looking for the reaction of higher education.

Modern world is in transition from the industrial era into the information and communication era, commonly known as an educated society. Such a society requires a different kind of learning that leads to employment opportunities for the individual. Learning towards employment means developing the ability to find, keep and change jobs or generate self-employment. These skills enable vertical and horizontal mobility of the worker in the labour market and their adaptability to changes in technologies and new forms of work organisation. This statement clearly indicates the responsibilities of higher education. The mechanisms which are needed for the fulfilment of obligations of the higher education are related to its internationalisation. The internationalisation strategy is a feature of a modern higher education institution. The existence of an internationalisation strategy represents an important indicator for progression in institutional internationalisation. The vast majority of higher education institutions have indicated that their institutions have a dedicated strategy in place or consider internationalisation in other strategies. Today, the international dimension of higher education in Europe has become more central on the agenda of European and national governments, institutions of higher education and their representative bodies, student organisations and accreditation agencies.

Long-term strategic objectives of the EU education and training policies are: making lifelong learning and mobility a reality by improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training, etc.

On the other hand, the Bologna Process succeeded in attracting the highest attention in public discourse, and different aspects of internationalisation, i.e. globalisation continued to be relatively high on the agenda as one of the major issues pursued in the Bologna framework.

The Bologna Declaration involves various actions relating to a system of academic degrees that are easy to recognise and compare. It also includes the introduction of a shared diploma supplement to improve transparency. This system is based essentially on two cycles: the first cycle geared to the labour market, lasting at least for three years, and the second cycle (Master),

conditional on the completion of the first cycle. There is also a system of accumulation and transfer of credits of the ECTS type used in the exchange scheme, mobility of students, teachers and researchers, elimination of all obstacles towards the freedom of movement, cooperation with regard to quality assurance, the European dimension in higher education, increasing the number of modules and teaching and study areas where the content, guidance or organisation has a European dimension [1].

Europe has around 4 000 higher education institutions, with over 19 million students and 1.5 million staff. Some of the European universities are among the best in the world, but their overall potential is not being fully realised. Curricula are not always up-to-date, insufficient number of young people attend universities, and insufficient number of adults have attended universities. European universities often lack the management tools and funding to match their ambitions. Europe remains an attractive destination for mobile learners with a stable share of around 45% of internationally mobile student population, a population which is expected to grow from around 4 million today to 7 million by the end of the decade. The key factors of internationalisation in higher education point to a broad range of international dimensions in higher education. Physical mobility, notably of students, academic staff and occasionally administrative staff as well, is obviously the most visible international activity, recognition of study achievements across the borders, international orientations and attitudes, “global understanding”, growing empathy with other cultures, etc. To these themes we have to attach a similarity or heterogeneity of national systems of higher education and the fact that internationalisation is a major argument for any reform.

Internationalisation is expected to serve peace and mutual understanding, quality enhancement, a richer cultural life and personality development, the increase of academic quality, technological innovation, economic growth and societal well-being. On the other hand, internationalisation in higher education has been viewed as one of the synonyms for quality, the most positive thing in modern higher education world. The international activities at higher education institutions have been linked to specific teaching and research activities, dispersed in the institution and diverse as far as the foreign partners and the type of activities are concerned. This approach gave results. Numerous studies have shown that areas where improvements have been made are the area of communications (language skills of students and staff), funding and financing, strategic planning, and internationalisation at home.

The demand for training possibilities related to the enhancement of competences for the international workplace has increased. More teaching staff members recognise their own potential weaknesses and plan professional development activities to address these. At an institutional level, this has been an incentive to develop more and more varied training options aimed at enhancing language and intercultural competences.

In the sphere of responsibilities of national governments with respect to education and training systems, individual universities organise their own curricula which are directed by the national laws and standards. The challenges facing higher education are similar across the EU and there are clear advantages in working together. That is why the international dimension became a



key factor in developing higher education in general.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE IN THE EU

Generally speaking, the internationalisation in higher education systems includes the following: student exchange, staff exchange, international projects, information and expertise exchange, cultural and academic flow regardless of the borders. There are several related initiatives to help make qualifications, experiences and skills better appreciated and recognised more easily throughout the European Union. The aim is to allow greater access to learning or employment opportunities in different countries and encourage greater mobility for individuals, businesses and other organisations.

The European Union ECBAC partners (Belgium, Germany, Portugal) have more than a decade-long experience. They have a well-established structure of international relation offices based on a clearly defined mission and vision. The promotion of European and international cooperation is one of the pillars of their mission. These institutions participate in a whole range of European education projects, both as coordinators and as partners.

All these institutions have established their international offices. Within their international offices there is a coordinator appointed whose job is to deal solely with the matters of internationalisation. In most cases, those institutions created an international teaching and research environment for all students, as well as modern international curricula with the emphasis on the development of international competences. The research and research results are projected to meet international standards. These higher education institutions enable people from all over the world to work, study and live together in an atmosphere of respect and equal access to information and facilities. Furthermore, all interested parties from outside the higher education area can be included as partners for sustainable cooperation. Through preparation of graduates for global market, higher education institutions increase the competition on educational markets, instigate potential demographic changes, encourage networking. All analysed systems are characterised with an increasing number of outgoing students. The increasing number of outgoing students is up to 50% while the increasing number of incoming students goes as far as 20%. These parameters are encouraging and they speak in favour of further efforts that these institutions can make to improve their international strategy. However, better results are limited by specificities of national strategies and politics.

Positive results in international cooperation of the EU ECBAC partners are based on unique European politics (mission, vision, standards, etc.), and numerous programmes and networks.

The ERASMUS²⁷ is the most successful student exchange programme in the world.

²⁷ European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

Each year more than 230,000 students study abroad owing to the ERASMUS programmes. It also offers the opportunity for student placements in various enterprises, university staff teaching and training, and it funds cooperation projects between higher education institutions across Europe. In the following tables we present certain important figures relating to ERASMUS.

TABLE1. ERASMUS STUDENT AND STAFF EXCHANGE FROM 2000 TO 2012

Country	Erasmus student exchange		Erasmus student exchange	
	incoming	outgoing	incoming	outgoing
Germany	288498	234655	34088	36749
Belgium	64879	68087	12414	10930
Portugal	52912	62917	8351	14762

Table 2. SHARE OF OUTGOING ERASMUS STUDENTS IN THE TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Germany	1,15%	1,24%	1,18%	1,18%	1,31%
Belgium	1,37%	1,48%	1,49%	1,53%	1,53%
Portugal	1,30%	1,43%	1,44%	1,55%	1,69%

Table 3. ERASMUS BUDGET FOR MOBILITY ACTIONS

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Germany	43.119.712	49.187.225	47.564.000	48.585.000	50.588.000
Belgium	9.324.813	10.158.956	10.064.000	10.430.000	11.150.000
Portugal	9.632.231	10.966.000	10.858.000%	11.154.000	11.774.000

The ERASMUS grants are designed to cover a part of additional costs of travelling and living abroad. The ERASMUS students do not pay tuition fees at their host institutions abroad. The ERASMUS budget for mobility actions is divided up into 32 national ERASMUS budgets according to a set distribution key. In each country, national agencies allocate the funds at their disposal to higher education institutions. Respective national agencies can decide to give higher grants to fewer students (as it is the case, for example, in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Turkey) or to give lower grants to more students (as for example in France and Italy), but has to respect a ceiling for grants set by the European Commission for every country of destination. The National Agency allocates funds to applicant institutions based on factors such as past performance and amounts requested. The institution can then decide on the exact monthly grant it pays to students (and the weekly or daily rate to staff) within a range set by the National Agency, which differs from one country to another. Various sources of other co-financing at national, regional and local level can complement the ERASMUS grant given by the European Union.

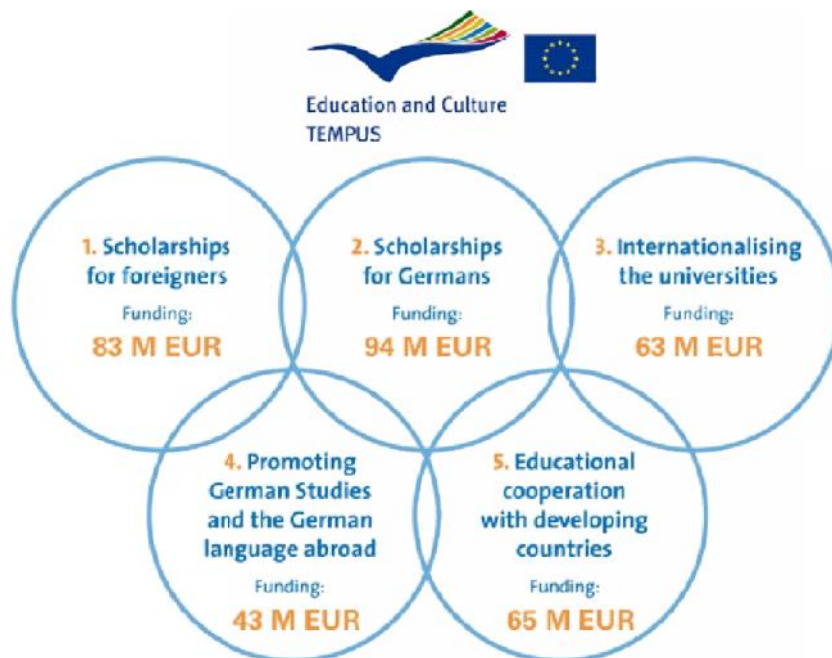


Figure 1. Contribution of DAAD to developing internationalisation in higher education

National agencies are encouraged to increase monthly grants for vulnerable students. The presented data in the tables above clearly show absolute dedication to the realisation of the proposed aims.

On the other hand, networking in the past period made a significant impact on the development of international cooperation. One of the good examples of networking is a DAAD²⁸. The German Academic Exchange Service is a publicly funded independent organisation of higher education institutions in Germany. Each year the regional branch offices of DAAD, its information centres and their professors around the globe provide information and financial support to over 67,000 highly-qualified students and faculty for international research and study. This service offers support for members of various programmes and projects.

The ERASMUS mobility projects, the ERASMUS Consortium and Leonardo da Vinci projects take up a leading role in the promotion of social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and personal fulfilment by encouraging mobility of students and graduates within a European Lifelong Learning Programme, an auspicious context based on transparency and recognition of qualifications of the participants.

On the other hand, Tempus is a programme of the European Union which supports a modernisation of higher education in the partner countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region, mainly through university cooperation projects on the positive experience of the EU higher education institutions. This programme has a great impact on the development of international cooperation of the higher education institutions in the partner countries. Many of the higher education institutions in partner countries established the first contact with similar intuitions from the EU precisely through Tempus programmes. These programmes aim to promote voluntary convergence of the higher education systems in the partner countries with the EU developments in the field of higher education. It is done on the basis of promoting the reform

²⁸ Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (German Academic Exchange Service)

and modernisation of higher education in the partner countries, enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education, making it more visible to the world of work and society in the partner countries, increasing the capacity of higher education institutions in the partner countries and the EU, in particular their capacity to cooperate internationally and to continually modernise themselves, fostering the reciprocal development of human resources and enhancing mutual understanding between the peoples and cultures of the EU and the partner countries. These programmes enable students and professors to gain necessary experience which is very important for understanding the essence of internationalisation in higher education.

Table 4: The number of applications submitted per country for the period from 2011 to 2013

COUNTRY	2013			2012			2011		
	Number of applications: country is a coordinator	Number of applications: country is a partner	Number of applications: country's involvement expressed in percentages	Number of applications: country is a coordinator	Number of applications: country is a partner	Number of applications: country's involvement expressed in percentages	Number of applications: country is a coordinator	Number of applications: country is a partner	Number of applications: country's involvement expressed in percentages
BELGIUM	21	119	13%	16	91	13%	4	44	8%
GERMANY	115	376	40%	117	285	42%	103	215	41%
PORTUGAL	17	152	16%	8	94	14%	9	64	12%
SERBIA	44	103	11%	26	59	9%	27	74	14%

The programme is funded on an annual basis by the various financial [Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance - IPA](#), [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument - ENPI](#) and [Development Cooperation Instrument](#). Priority themes under Tempus are defined around the main components of the EU higher education modernisation agenda and are therefore structured in the building blocks: Curricular Reform, Governance Reform, Higher Education and Society.

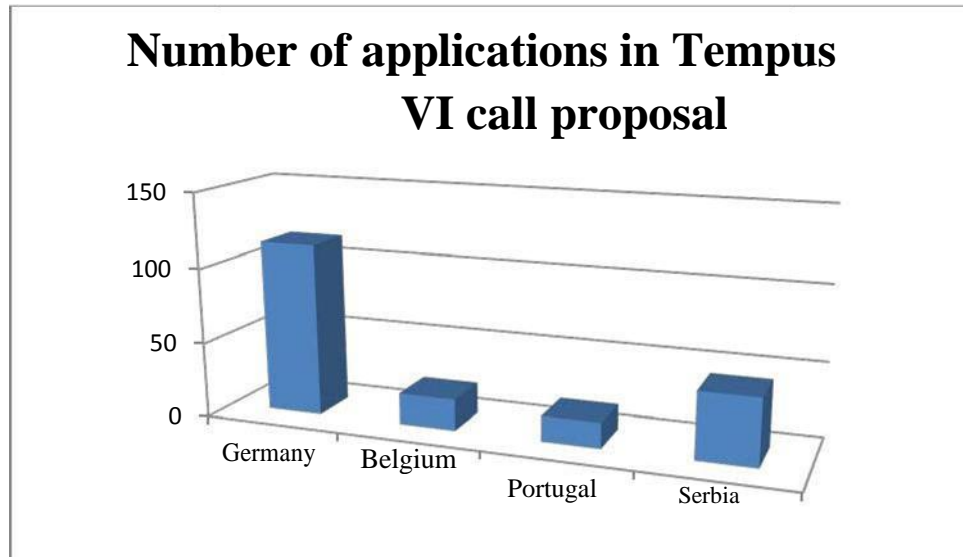


Chart1. Number of applications in Tempus VI call proposal

All projects are in accordance with the strategy outlined in relation to the development of skills and qualifications of students and graduates through contact with new higher education institutions, new technologies and new contexts of work, enhancing their academic and professional improvement, which would give them a higher level of employability and competitiveness in the European labour market. Furthermore, even greater impact in the process of internationalisation development higher education institutions can make through the EURASHE. The EURASHE is the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education that offer professionally oriented programmes and are engaged in applied and profession-related research within the Bologna cycles. In fact, about 1400 higher education institutions in 40 countries within and outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) are affiliated to the EURASHE. The Association is present mostly through national associations of higher education institutions or individual institutions, such as universities, colleges and universities of applied sciences, as well as through other professional associations and stakeholder organisations active in the field of higher education.



VARIOUS ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICE IN SERBIA

International cooperation presents a great challenge for the Serbian higher education system. The mobility of Serbian students has been promoted and funded through several national and international funds. These funds were set up by the Government. It is governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Two calls for applicants have been organised so far: scholarships to study in the EU were awarded to 97 students in 2008 and to 155 students in 2009. The funds also support talented students who study in the country. Inter-university cooperation is promoted by the activities of the National Council for Higher Education.

Aside from the aforementioned programmes and initiatives, like Tempus, the Framework Programme and Erasmus Mundus, higher education institutions also participate in the Campus European Programmes and the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies. Almost all universities and many colleges in Serbia have established bilateral cooperation with the EU countries, the USA, Canada, Asia and other regions. This cooperation is focused mainly on the mobility of students who come to Serbia to do their research and partly through the delivery of teaching processes, sometimes as joint or double degrees.

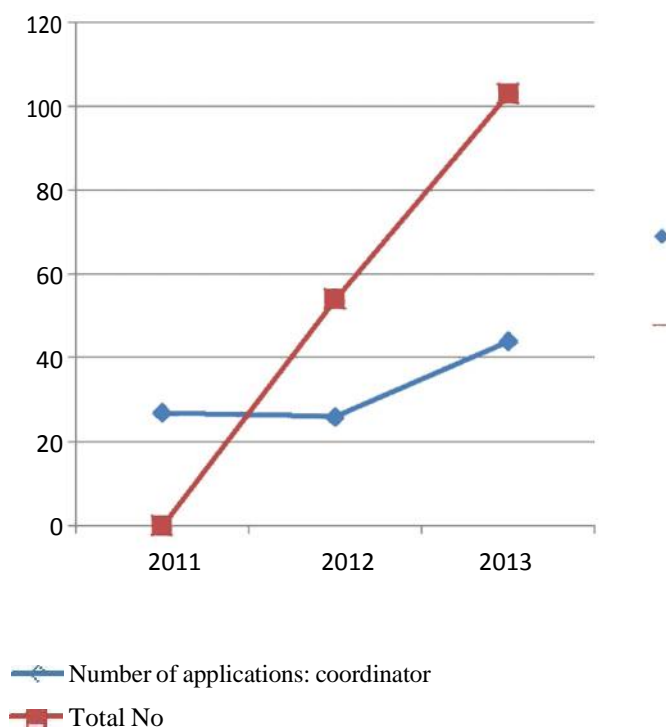


Chart 2. Involvement of Serbian HE intuitions in the 4th, 5th and 6th Tempus proposals

The Republic of Serbia has also signed more than forty bilateral agreements related to higher education with countries from different regions, half of them members of the EU. The issues of mutual interest, such as bilateral student exchanges, mostly at a postgraduate level, the exchange of lecturers and education, as well as the exchange of publications are the most common topics contained in these agreements. One of the bigger contributions to the internationalisation of Serbian higher education area presents also a membership in many European higher education societies like the EURASHE. The EURASHE commits itself to cooperate with international bodies, national authorities, higher education institutions and external stakeholders in defining the learning outcomes that will constitute a universal European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The EURASHE initiates discussions and projects to explore the possibilities for sector- and/or profession-specific approaches in this context. The EURASHE assists its members to ensure that the principles of qualifications framework are understood, reflected in the institutional policy and fully implemented into curricula. The Conference of the Universities in Serbia (CONUS) and the Conference of the Academy of Vocational Studies in Serbia, (KASSS) are the two representatives of Serbian higher education associations who are members of the EURASHE and as such take active participation in the EURASHE activities.

CONCLUSION

International openness in higher education needs to stimulate global awareness and a true feeling of global society and global responsibility among graduates and within the higher education sector as a whole. Present-day problems are worldwide and cannot be solved in a definite geographical area like the EHEA, but require a global platform for global solutions. Moreover, the creation of the knowledge society requires global awareness and responsibility, and higher education institutions can play an important role in consciousness raising and in finding solutions through internationalisation of programmes and study environment. The meaning of international cooperation in higher education area has strongly been intensified during the last decades owing to rapid developments in scientific communication. Economic, political and intra-scientific factors also influence international collaboration links among individual countries. Cooperation at the EU level and in a wider European framework has already facilitated the development of a high level of comparability, compatibility and exchange among the higher education institutions and systems of the European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process, programmes such as *Erasmus*, *Tempus*, *Erasmus Mundus* and *Marie Curie*, and transparency tools such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) have helped the EU national higher education systems to achieve a significant degree of intra-European internationalisation. The internationalisation is a rising process with a global dimension.

Effective strategies should also include the development of international curricula, strategic partnerships, finding new ways of delivering content, and ensuring complementarity with broader national policies for external cooperation, international development, migration, trade, employment, regional development, research and innovation. Obviously, the research results of international scientific co-operation are reflected in the documented scientific communication as international co-authorship links in scientific publications.

From the point of view of mobility participants (students, staff), the period abroad enriches their education, professional knowledge and skills, but it also helps them in their personal development, enables them to overcome social marginalisation and stimulates their active citizenship. Upgraded skills lead to enhanced employability. From the perspective of the staff, especially teachers, a period abroad is also beneficial in terms of professional development, enhanced career prospects and sustainable European networking.

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