



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE  
CABINET

Rruga e Durrësit, Nr. 23, Tiranë

Tel: 00355 42 26307 Fax: 00355 42 32002

No. 2313 Prot

Tiranë, on 16.04 2003

Dionyssis Kladis  
Secretary for Higher Education  
Chair of the Bologna Follow-up Group

**Honored Mr. Kladis,**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind interest shown with respect to the integration of the Albanian Higher Education into the European system. By taking advantage of this opportunity please do allow me to confirm once again the readiness and willingness on the part of the Ministry of Education and Science of Albania to develop an overall and comprehensive reform in the Albanian Higher Education, which will be primarily based on the Bologna Declaration. As it has already been brought to your kind attention, on 8 May 2002 the Ministry of Education and Science addressed to the Spanish Presidency of the European Union an official written request to sign up the Bologna Declaration, but unfortunately, this letter of request failed to get there. Based on the above, on 5 February 2003 we addressed to the Council of Europe another letter in which we put forward the same official request.

Notwithstanding these delayed practices, nowadays the Higher Schools in Albania have in a remarkable way proceeded smoothly with the implementation of the major orientations emanating from the Bologna Declaration as well as from other documents that have come along in this process, despite the fact that we have not signed yet the Declaration. This reality has found concrete expression in the current orientations typical of the reforming processes and programmes of the Albanian government. Our country has taken significant steps forward in legalizing and starting the implementation of the major instruments of the Bologna Declaration and the best university practices at the national level. To be more to the point, we have been able to accomplish the following:

1. With regard to the Quality Assurance System, the Accreditation Agency has been up and running.
2. In relation to the ECTS, the Ministry of Education and Science has decreed its introduction into the Albanian Higher Education (Minister Decree no. 164 dated 19.06.2001) and our universities have already started the work on its implementation.
3. In order to facilitate the student and intellectual staff mobility, Albania has ratified its adherence to the Lisbon Convention and the Ministry of



Education and Science is actually in the process of introducing the Diploma Supplement across the entire Higher Education Institutions.

4. Starting as of 2001, the Ministry of Education and Science has proceeded with the piloting of the first curricula of the structures in two cycles, in accordance with the best European experiences.
5. Since 1998, Albania is full member of the European network of information on Higher Education (ENIC).
6. In the newly created structure within the Ministry of Education and Science the Unit for the Recognition of Diplomas is presently functioning.
7. A wide range of effective measures has been taken to boost and enhance the financial autonomy of the universities and higher schools.
8. Concerning the participation of students in governing universities and higher schools, all the necessary legal room has been provided for the participation of students in the elections for the leading authorities at the Higher Schools (Rector, Dean, Head of Department) as well as for other representative bodies (Senate, Faculty Council) and the election of the representatives from the students themselves in these bodies and entities.

The cooperation of the Albanian universities with foreign counterparts as well as the development in particular of the regional collaboration among universities has been in the ascendancy in the context of the international cooperation. This has had a positive impact on the further qualification of the academic staff, the introduction of the new curricula, the institutional restructuring and the commencement of the process for the internationalization of the Albanian Higher Education Institutions.

The new elements of this development have been the following: the opening up and functioning of the university courses recognized by other foreign universities on the basis of similar curricula (Polytechnic University of Tirana, Agricultural University of Tirana, Higher School of Nurses); the opening and functioning of cross-university post-graduate schools, a product largely attributed to the cooperation among several Albanian Universities (University of Tirana, University of Shkodra, University of Tirana) as well as other foreign Universities; the inclusion of the Albanian Universities in the European cross-university network, whose impact has been reflected in many respects of other institutional developments.

Within this framework, I would like to point out that the organization in Tirana of the Conference "Reform of the Albanian Higher Education and the Bologna process" on 7-8 November 2002, hosted by both the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education and Science, has affected positively the whole processes undertaken on the basis of recommendations which are of considerable interest to us.

The Ministry of Education and Science considers the development of Higher Education Reform, on the basis of the principles of the Bologna Declaration and the adherence of Albania to this process, as an extremely significant element to the integration of Albania into the European Union, which in turn will facilitate this integration in other fields as well. To this effect, several other important steps are foreseen to be taken in the future such as:

1. Regarding the Quality Assurance, the current experience calls for the need of deepening and strengthening the Process of Evaluation and Assessment of Quality and Accreditation, as fundamental instruments in



diagnosing the System of Higher Education. This is made possible through a heavy reliance on the basis of the quality standards in teaching and research including the realization of oriented interventions, which are aimed at improving the entire system, or other special sideline elements attached to it in achieving a quality institutional development. The fulfillment of this target is closely connected with a better functioning of the Council of Accreditation, whose legal framework has already been established.

2. With regard to the design of the University system and the structure of curricula, in line with the previous steps already taken, the stage given over to the study of reforming the system, identifying the new architecture and structure of our university curricula will be completed by relying heavily on the experiences of other universities across European countries as well as by taking into account the peculiarities of our educational system and the needs imposed upon by the labor market, hence the number of profiles with two-cycle structure will be increased.
3. The introduction of ECTS into other Albanian courses and Universities will continue and the Ministry of Education and Science as such will decree the Diploma Supplements.
4. In support of further developments in the Higher Education Institutions, not only with the quantitative but also with the qualitative side in mind, the Ministry of Education and Science is working on making the necessary legislative changes, which are designed to ensure the financial autonomy and a far more effective management of the universities. The empowering of the role of universities as research, study, and counseling centers, the increase of the institutional space in running the secondary income resources will make the swift and quality institutional developments possible in all its respects. The more flexible utilization and use of the financial resources as well as the decentralization in managing these resources will contribute more significantly to the increase in the financial capacities for the development of teaching infrastructure and the scientific research as well as for a better material motivation of the teaching staff which will result in positive impacts on the quality of teaching and research processes. The cooperation of the Higher Schools with the local government as well as with the business community, whose success will depend largely on the level of awareness of the interested parties, will affect positively the development of these schools.
5. As far as the system of admissions to the Higher Education institutions is concerned, there exists the possibility of liberalizing the admissions to the public Higher Schools in those study courses and institutions where demand fits in with the holding institutional capacities. In order to ensure a more flexible system of admissions, work is currently being done to make all the necessary changes in the existing Albanian legislation on Higher Education.
6. The involvement of students in the reforming process of Higher Education constitutes an important element in ensuring not only a broad participation of all "actors" in this process but it also provides a guarantee for the democratization of inner life at the Albanian Higher Schools.
7. Within this year the Ministry of Education and Science will propose amendments to the Act on Higher Education, in order to pave the way for further changes for a more successful and quality realization of the

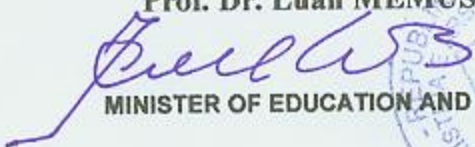
Reform on Higher Education under the framework of the Bologna process.

The Ministry of Education and Science along with the Higher Schools will remain open to and will appreciate every form of contribution and cooperation with the European Partners. In the coming years the University community would welcome very much the European specialized assistance with respect to:

- Reforming of the structure of system and curricula;
- System of assessing and evaluating quality and accreditation;
- A contemporary financial management of universities;
- Restructuring of the system of scientific institutions and a better integration of such institutions by means of teaching and technology transfer.

In line with the previous requests the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania kindly insists in its own request for signing up the Bologna Declaration.

Sincerely yours,

**Prof. Dr. Luan MEMUSHI**  
  
**MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE**

