



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Ministry of Education and Science
S k o p j e

“REVIEW OF THE COUNTRY ACHIEVEMENTS”

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS
EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

(Nadezda Uzelac – MoES – Higher Education Unit - International Department)

Skopje, May 2003

1. Brief description of the higher education institutions:

- The **“St Cyril and Methodius” University** in Skopje, is founded in 1949 and today represents a family of twenty-four faculties, ten institutes and other institutions. Over 35,000 students from Macedonia are enrolled at all faculties, around 1500 teaching and scientific staff and associates are engaged in the teaching, educational and scientific process at the faculties.

Over 80,000 students have acquired their Bachelor degree; over 3000 candidates have obtained their master’s degrees while around 2000 became doctor of sciences.

The growing inter-dependence among international academic communities and the urgent need for establishing new forms of creative cooperation as well as the tempo of the global education innovations have led to inclusion and participation of the University in the all possible European education programs.

- The **University “St.Kliment Ohridski”** in Bitola, is founded in 1979 as an association in which was included the higher educational and research institution from South-Western part of Macedonia located in the cities: Bitola, Prilep and Ohrid. The University consist 5 Faculties, and 11 research institutes, University Library and Student Residence.

More than 9000 students are studying in the educational system of the University and 180 teaching staff is engaged in the educational process.

Following its own opinion that education and research are unique alternatives for better future and progress, this relatively new association is trying to improve the education and research process by transforming the existing qualities and promoting new ones which should be compatible with those of well developed education systems. Thanks to its flexibility as well as its developing orientation the University realizes its growth gradually.

- The **South-East European University** in Tetovo, is founded on 2001. University has enrolled about 1500 students and 91 teaching staff. The University estimates that by 2003 it will be enrolling 2400 students. The SEE University embraces a European, international and modern orientation, while being committed to the Albanian language and culture. The University becomes an integral part of the educational system of a country and aims to achieve academic excellence by international standards.

The University is socially committed and open to all students on the basis of equity and merit, regardless of their ideological, political, cultural and social background. The University is also committed to the Albanian culture, language and population, while defining itself in a broad international perspective and in a multilingual approach to teaching and research. The University seeks to fulfill its mission within the framework of the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Macedonia and in accordance with European and international best practice in Higher Education.

2. The Ministry of Education and Science:

The Ministry expressed deep interest and concern and is welcoming the reform objectives in the Bologna Declaration, Prague communiqué and associated follow-up processes. As elsewhere in the Europe, the Bologna Process in Macedonia is accepted as continuous process and not one-time achievement as well.

The Ministry of Education and Science and Higher Education Institution in Macedonia has introduced a policy for modernizing education that corresponds to the goals of the Bologna Declaration. The main objectives of the transformation process in Macedonian Higher Education in short are: Modernization, Diversification, Mobility and Attractiveness of the whole Higher Education System.

As already mentioned, the Republic of Macedonia thanks to the Ministry of Education and Science has improved and is still hardly improving the relations with the European and worldwide educational community. In the same time the Ministry of Education and Science and Higher Education Institutions are working in building up effective strategies in implement European Recommendations and Conventions in the Higher Education System in Macedonia. The Ministry of Education and Science, throughout the Informative Centre on Higher Education Recognition and Mobility, as the main source of the information on Higher Education in Europe and world-wide, promote the European dimension in Higher Education in Macedonia and support European co-operation in higher education, especially in the field of recognition of higher education qualifications, accreditation and quality assurance, as well as mobility of students, graduates and professionals.

The Ministry strongly supports internationalization of activities in higher education area and all processes of reforming the Macedonian Education System in line with the Bologna action lines and notably the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the adoption of system based on two cycles or bachelor's/master's structures and establishment of a system of credits.

The Republic of Macedonia has been signed the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region in 1997 and also has ratified the Convention in March 2003.

The Ministry is accepting he both documents as the documents with the main common characteristics: co-operation and trust between national educational systems and between higher education institutions in Europe.

The Macedonian ENIC Centre has very good co-operation with the higher education institutions in the country and outside as well as with the other ENIC/NARIC centers.

3. Legal and policy framework for Higher education:

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia grants autonomy to universities and institutions of higher education.

The Law on Higher Education emphasizes university autonomy, and open access by qualifying students on the basis of a competition for available places. There is now a quota system whereby a specific percentage of places are allocated to ethnic minorities. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia determines the number of available places funded by the State, but institutions may accept additional paying students according to their capacity and license. Studies may be full or part time, or by distance learning. Diplomas and titles are specified in the Law.

Undergraduate, first degree, Bachelor's or equivalent studies last from 4 to 7 years, while "professional" higher education, short-term may last less than 2 years. At higher vocational schools, undergraduate studies last from 1 to 3 years.

Graduate, after the first degree studies, e.g. for a Master's degree or for post-graduate vocational degrees, are organized by semester, with a minimum of three semesters for a Master's degree. They are based on a credit system. Doctoral (PhD) studies can be undertaken after a Master's degree or equivalent level of education, including publicly defended thesis. Doctor of Sciences (PhD) studies last a minimum of two years and include a thesis.

4. Quality assurance:

The Law on HE devotes several sections to issues of quality assurance and recognition of diplomas and degrees. The main requirements are for the licensing of a HEI by a Licensing Board, and the periodic evaluation of management, financing, academic and other activities such as research. The latter is to be accomplished through self and external evaluation and joint quality assessment of the academic staff by the Higher Education Agency of Macedonia. Apart from assuring the quality of the education given to students at university level to students at university level, the quality assurance mechanisms are aimed at attaining European and international standards, and are mainly focused on curriculum development and staff evaluation. There are also plans for introducing a credit transfer system and greater modularization of the curriculum to make the system more flexible. However, financing mechanisms are still based on quantitative rather than qualitative criteria.

5. Financing of Higher Education:

The Law on HE states that the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia adopts the HE Activity Program for Macedonia with the advice of Inter-University Conference. The Program is valid for 4 years, but a financial plan is adopted every year and is revised yearly in connection with the adoption of the budget for the coming year.

A HE Activity Fund has been created within the Ministry a 15-member Management Board with academic, student and ministry representation manages the Fund. This chapter has not been enforced and the Ministry is undertaking the amendments with alternatives in the part of the finances of HE.

The development and financing of public needs and interest within HE and funds for the HE institutions established by the state is intending to be regulated by the Higher Education Activity Programme. Also private HE institutions may be supported by the HE Activity Programme. Student financing will be strongly taking into consideration. The HE Activity Programme is planned to be proposed by the Government upon previous opinion from the universities and adopted by the Parliament for a period of 4 years.

The implementation of the HE Activity Programme will be, according to the law, the responsibility of the National HE Activity Fund, to be managed by a Management Board consisting of 15 professors and recognised experts.

HE institutions will be provided with financial resources by foreign and legal entities and other income from various sources, including tuition from individuals. The law is expected to underline the need for a transparent book-keeping and that the income and allocation of such resources must be reported to the Ministry responsible for HE.

The immovable property and other assets of a private HE institution are the ownership of the founder. Probably the same principle will be applied to state institutions, i.e. that the ownership for immovable property would be with the Government.

6. The Universities and institutions:

Higher education institutions in Macedonia are united in two universities. Each of these sub units of the two state universities tends to consider it a separate higher education institution, while in reality Macedonia has only two state higher education institutions. This lies at the heart of HE reform.

The Bucharest seminar (ref. introduction) pointed out that the current organisation of universities as weak federations of legally autonomous faculties hinders the effective implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process. Universities are considered to be responsible partners in the Bologna Process; if they have no influence over their faculties, they don't have the necessary responsibility. It may also be argued that faculties as independent legal entities within the university can not be reconciled with university autonomy as this must mean that the university has responsibility and steering power for all activity within the university.

In the Macedonian law, faculties and other entities within a university are defined as institutions of higher education with the status as legal entities, i.e. legal entities within legal entities. Otherwise the relations between the universities and its faculties are not defined.

The Macedonian law is going to be changed, giving the university the responsibility for its faculties and all other constituent parts. The law will provide for delegation of decision-making powers within the university so that faculties within their allocated budget can decide on their teaching and research and take care of their internal management. Higher vocational schools (polytechnics/colleges) and art academies will either remain higher education institutions *outside* universities.

The language of instruction in universities is Macedonian but the national languages other than Macedonian are also used and the formulations regarding the language in which education is provided will be changed in accordance with the adopted general policy on language question, in line with the Framework Agreement of September 2001.

Opening of the SEE University was an effort to ensure the academic program and language that would meet the specific needs of the Albanian community in Macedonia.

A "world language" will be also used as a language of instruction.

7. Students:

The Law on HE sets conditions for higher education entrance and students' rights and responsibilities. The latter includes the right to study part-time simultaneously at more than one institution and the right of transfer from one study programme to another. Both of these make higher education more flexible and adaptive to changing needs.

The two universities announce an open competition for university entrance in daily newspapers, in spring each year. The announcement sets out the basic enrolment policy for the year: the number of students to be admitted, criteria for admission, percentage of students from national minorities, enrolment of part-time students, paying students, foreign students, and dates and deadlines for examinations.

In recent years, the available numbers of places at HE level have not been completely filled. The largest number of students enrolls in humanities, medicine and arts. The overwhelming majority of students take longer than normal time set for completing their degree. This raises the question whether students, especially fee-paying ones, find it necessary to have part-time or even full-time jobs, or whether other factors, unemployment, military service – play a role.

8. Issues and barriers in Higher Education:

- Higher education across Europe is undergoing important changes. The Bologna Process and its associated follow up processes will have a profound effect on the way in which higher education is provided, organized, financed, quality-controlled and certificated. It is essential that Macedonian higher education aligns itself very firmly with these developments, and takes an active part in the design and implementation of European models of higher education reform.
- Today, at the beginning of the new century, at the entrance of the new coming times built upon a knowledge-based society, time of the “market economy” and issue of the trade in higher education, the three universities in Macedonia are facing the large challenges in bringing the higher education process in a truly European level.
- The changes in the Law on HE that are undergoing in Macedonia will emphasize the establishment of high standards and quality in higher education. This ambitious goal can be achieved, if it is supported by good organization, coordination and dissemination networks. Such support is crucial.
- The increased autonomy of HEIs in Macedonia is undeniably a positive development. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that accountability is also built into the system, to protect equity of access and to align the curriculum with the developing economy of the nation. Financing mechanisms that are qualitative rather than quantitative would be one of the ways to promote reforms in faculties that no longer respond to the needs of students and the labor market, and to ensure that pre-service teacher training reflects educational reforms and policies relating to schools.
- Adequate funding of public universities is a major challenge for the government. HEIs should be allowed to retain the revenues they obtain through entrepreneurial activities, and these should be encouraged further by appropriate incentives. The present incrementally based method of funding HEIs should be replaced by a normative, criteria-based system that provides incentives for revenue generating activities.
- The high drop-out rate and extended time taken by many students to complete their studies are signs of inefficiency, and could be improved in part by a uniform Matura examination that would allow schools to prepare their students more effectively for university studies.

- Content of training should be linked to educational reform and policies and should be efficiently organized to allow trainee teachers easy access and information, e.g. through distance learning opportunities.
- Introduce more choices in higher education courses for students, especially more inter-faculty and inter-disciplinary study programs. These choices should be linked to employment demand in local, national and European labor markets, and could include shorter professional studies.
- Improve applied research in highly needed fields, especially in sectors closely linked to the reform process: education, social affairs, economics, governance and administration, information and technology.
- The future universities in Macedonia are going to be a centre of education, training and research and student-friendly. The universities of teachers, researches and students should be created an intellectual atmosphere in which, besides training, preparing for intellectual life and passing on values they will determine and be intrinsic parts of university life. This will take place not only at classes, consultations and practice lessons but also at dormitories, sports grounds and student group.
- Students and academic staff in Macedonia have to accept each other as partners in the process of building higher education. The work has to include discussing and active involvement of students who take an interest in their future. Students should be organized in democratic student bodies in HE institutions, to ensure participation at every level.

APPENDIX 1:(Marija Cenevska, UKIM – Skopje)

“St. Cyril and Mathody University” - Skopje:

SS Kiril and Metodij University is actively following the Bologna Process , fully accepting the Bologna Declaration as its strategy. As a policy document the University has published the booklet "SS Kiril and Metodij University” on the European road".

The University of “Ss Kiril and Metodij” adopted the **Bologna Declaration as it’s strategy** in which the following priorities are included:

- Development and securing the **academic autonomy**
- Introducing **European Credit Transfer System**
- Harmonization and **compatibility of the study programs** with the EU model of university
- System of Quality assurance with **evaluation and accreditation** of the higher education institutions and study programs
- Student and academic staff **mobility**
- **Competitiveness** at home and abroad

We expect:

- **Higher efficiency** in studying
- **Compatibility** with the EU higher education programs
- University degree **recognition** in Europe
- **Employability encasement** of the Macedonian graduates at the European labor market

Quality assurance-an overview

The Higher Education Law, adopted in August 2000, introduced an European approach in quality assurance practices by applying evaluation procedures and accreditation of the higher education institutions. In accordance with this law, a quality infrastructure has been built. Within this system, the QA practices at the university level have been further pursued by self-evaluation procedures and quality improvement actions. Based upon the results from the Self-evaluation report, the Higher Education National Evaluation Agency further carries out the external evaluation, involving local and international experts. Taking in consideration the Evaluation Agency Report, The Accreditation Board confirms or deprives the accreditation of the institution. The accreditation serves a base – parameter for funding the higher education institutions.

Within this system the main goal of all the participating parties is quality improvement of the higher education institutions, the study programs and the higher education in the country.

The Higher Education Evaluation Agency and the Accreditation Board are autonomous institutions and present reports to the Parliament, Government and the relevant Ministry.

The main achievements - outcomes in the evaluation process

The expert team consisting of 14 members from Macedonia, two from the Quality Assurance National Agency of France and one from the National Quality Agency from Netherlands have elaborated the documents necessary for quality evaluation of the higher education institutions. These documents have been already adopted and approved.

Training team consisting of two members from Macedonia, France and Netherlands, have organized four work-shops where 200 participants (academic staff, students and administration) have been trained for performing reevaluation and external evaluation procedures and practices.

As well, the process of self-evaluation at all the 36 higher education institutions at the two state universities, SS Kiril and Metodij and St. Kliment Ohridski, has been already completed. Currently we are in a process of external evaluation with already selected four experts from Macedonia and one expert from abroad for each field of evaluation.

Benchmarking, standards, and performance indicators in higher education

Within the higher education of Macedonia on a national level have been adopted two major documents:

- Rules for standards and normative regulations for establishing higher education institutions and education, Ministry of Education and Science.

- Guidelines for quality assurance of higher education institutions and academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia

On the level of Inter-University Conference the following documents have been adopted:

- Guidelines for evaluation and basic evaluation procedures of the universities
- Criteria for acquiring academic titles

With the ***Rules for standards and normative regulations for establishing higher education institutions and education*** are defined the requirements each higher education institution should fulfilled:

- criteria for academic staff selection and election and the required workload
- space
- teaching methods
- laboratories and organization of the education process
- professor-student ratio within the group

With the ***Guidelines for quality assurance of higher education institutions and academic staff*** are defined the procedures for external evaluation and self-evaluation, segments which are under the evaluators monitoring; required criteria for positive evaluation; the size and the form of the report on external evaluation and self-evaluation.

The ***Guidelines for evaluation and basic evaluation procedures of the universities*** provide information on the concrete actions of the evaluation, segments, and the specific issues of the university, faculty, study program and the report formulation.

Institutional Quality Assurance: Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation in the higher education of Macedonia has been introduced for the purpose of:

- continual quality improvement
 - acquiring accreditation which will enable eligibility for government funding of the institution

The self-evaluation is performed by 5-7 members team from different fields and one representative from the administration and the students. In the process of reevaluation participate all the employees by answering the assigned questionnaires. This way provides direct documentation for each faculty, all the employees, the space, working conditions, teaching methods and the results from the teaching and research.

The Guidelines for evaluation contains the models for student's questionnaires asking for their opinion and evaluation of the teaching process and the behavior and relations of the teaching staff towards the students. Within this process a SWOT analysis is used for evaluation of all the all segments of the higher education institution:

- mission
- strategy
- study programs
- academic staff
- students
- logistics- facilities
- funding

The self-evaluation report is a critical analysis of all the segments of the higher education institution performances and contains recommendations for quality improvement on internal and external level. The report normally contains 25-35 pages; it is transparent and is published at the institutions publications. It is also translated in English language to be used by the external experts for the purpose of the external evaluation.

Institutional Quality assurance: External evaluation

In accordance with the Law on Education, the external evaluation is performed by the Evaluation Agency of the Republic of Macedonia. The Agency consists of 9 professors from different fields of science. The Evaluation Agency elects Standing Commission of 18 members, i.e. three members from each of the six scientific and research fields.

The Standing Commission elects experts for external evaluation for each of the higher educational institution. They are responsible for analyzing the self-evaluation reports, make visits and talks with the management of the institutions, academic staff, students, logistics-facilities, space and other related resources and finally write a report in accordance with the available documents on quality assurance and the situation within the evaluated institution. Their report should assert the findings of the self-evaluation report and to give recommendations for quality improvement on internal and external level.

Integrating standards and Performance Indicators, Self-evaluation and External evaluation, From Quality assurance to Accreditation

Within the higher education institutions the basic documents regulating the activities in the process of education and research are: Statute, Rules and regulations for studying, election and promotion in academic titles, conferring the masters and doctoral degrees, etc. These documents provide framework for quality assurance system, and all the activities should be done within their scope and framework of

regulations. The internal self-evaluation is aimed to verify whether the planned activities and defined responsibilities are fulfilled. If not,

Measures are undertaken for their improvement and correction. In this way the quality cycle is finished, and another cycle of faults correction, begins. Each new cycle brings quality improvement.

The objective of the external evaluation is to make an impact out of the institution to the Ministry of education and science and other institutions related and responsible for education to undertake further measures and action for quality assurance.

Quality Assurance and Development of study Programs The Central European University

The harmonization of the curriculum and study programs of the two state universities with the European universities is a process which started in 1988 by introducing the TEMPUS program which will cover Republic of Macedonia by the year 2006. So far, have been completed 57 JEPS, now courses have been opened, interdisciplinary studies are introduced: European studies on undergraduate and graduate level, Ecology and environment protection and Quality management on postgraduate level, Public administration, informatics and other fields.

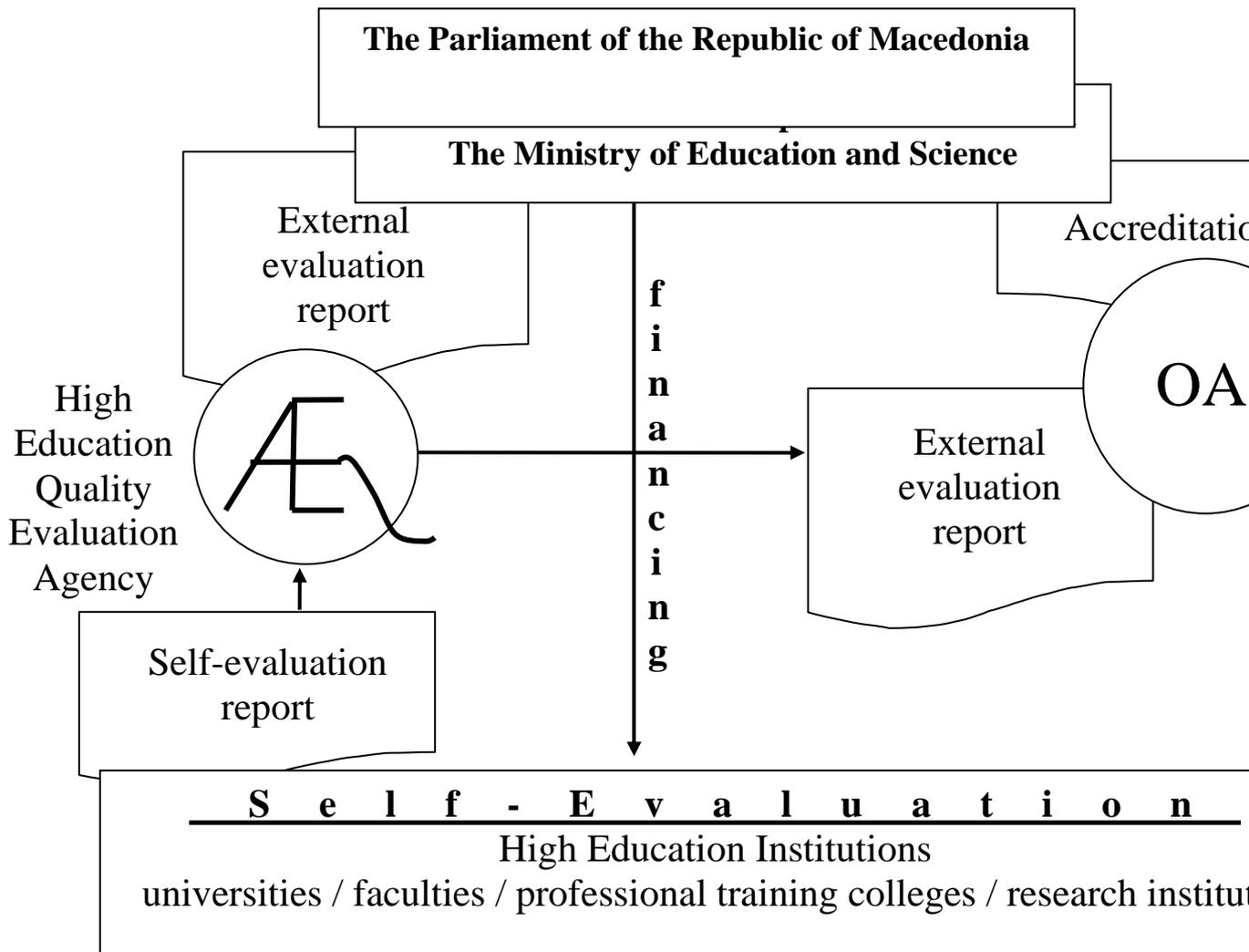
Development of Study Programs: Study Credits and their Transferability

European credit transfer system was introduced at the end of 2001 by organizing 3 workshops with local and experts from abroad. It was initially applied at two faculties and currently is implemented at 10 faculties. Within the TEMPUS projects for curriculum development and institution building the harmonization was made by the credit system.

However, this process is rather slow and it will take time for full implementation.

Quality Assurance

Overview



Documents at **national level:**

- Rules of standards and normative regulations for establishing higher education institutions and education- Ministry of Education and Science
- Guidelines for Quality assurance of higher education institutions and academic staff in the Republic Macedonia- Higher Education Quality Evaluation Agency

Documents at **Inter-University Conference level:**

- Statute of the Inter-University Conference
- Guidelines for evaluation and basic evaluation procedures of the universities
- Criteria for acquiring academic titles

Documents at **University level:**

- Statute of the University
- Regulations on the high education
- Regulations on criteria on under-graduate enrolment
- Regulation for organization of post-graduate and doctoral studies
- Regulations for ECTS
- Criteria for election in academic, teaching, scientific and research title

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ECTS is accepted as system for studying improvement
- Organized three workshops for application of ECTS
- Introduced at 12 faculties and will be further developed and accomplished in the next period
- ECTS is introduction in major changes:
 - responsibility and care of the teaching staff for the students' results
 - awareness of the students that they are not learning for degree but for knowledge
- TEMPUS program 1998-2006 for curriculum harmonization
- Already completed 57 JEPS
- Curriculum harmonization- complex process which requires time and full engagement of all the academic staff
- Possibilities: rationalization of curriculum and syllables
- These two processes are taking place simultaneously.

OUTCAMS:

- Development of the universities within of the education system by the model "Supervision of the Government" in which the universities autonomy is guaranteed.
- Preserving the autonomy is one of the major accomplishments acquired with the signing of the Magna Charta Universitatum in Bologna in 1988 signed by the 454 rectors from the EU universities and Macedonian universities as well.
- The complementary process of education and research is not a new process for the Macedonian higher education institutions, it continues and is firmly interconnected
- With the shift from ex-cathedral education to ECTS, a higher level of efficient is expected
- Mobility of students and academic staff of the universities within the country and the EU region
- Recognition and validation of the degree certificates
- Higher level of employability of within the EU market
- Competition at home and abroad

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Agency of the Republic of Macedonia

The Agency has been established in December 2000 in accordance with the Higher Education Law from August 2000.

Aims and tasks:

- quality improvement of the higher education institutions and teaching staff in the Republic of Macedonia;
- information on quality in the country and abroad;
- Benchmarking – evaluation.

The Agency **consists** of 9 members, professors from different scientific fields, 18 members of the Permanent commission and members from the Experts commission which elected for external evaluation purposes.

The Agency is an **autonomous** institution.

The evaluation and accreditation system is performed according to the following scheme (fig. 1).

The Agency is using the following **documents**:

- Higher Education Law;
- Standardization and normative regulations for establishing higher education institutions and higher education procedure;
- Guidelines for quality assurance and evaluation of higher education institutions and academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia;
- Self-evaluation report of the higher education institutions

Working principles of the Agency

The Agency applies the following principles:

- **transparency** of its work and the application of the external evaluation procedures, information on the web page;
- **cooperation** with the universities, Ministry for education and science and the Government for building up measures for quality improvement;
- **responsibility** in performing the activities in an objective and honest manner;
- **accuracy** within the time frame, preparation of external evaluation visits, adoption and sending reports;
- **Comparability**- the Agency is following the EU trends for quality and cooperates with the European evaluation agencies.

Working procedures:

The Agency has adopted working procedures which include:

- working sessions and meetings convening;
- rights and responsibilities of the President, Agency members and the Permanent commission members;
- Professional code of the Agency in pursuing its aims and tasks.

The Professional Code of the Evaluation Agency

Higher Education Quality Evaluation Agency of the Republic of Macedonia is autonomous.

It evaluates the higher education institution (university/faculty/higher education/scientific institution accredited for education) on the basis of self-evaluation report written by the institution that seeks accreditation and provides recommendations for quality improvement and further development of the institution.

The process of evaluation, in accordance with the international quality evaluation standards is based on four principles: autonomy, self-evaluation, external evaluation and public report.

The President, members of the Agency and members of the Permanent Commission at the Agency are obliged to uphold their responsibilities of external evaluation in a professional manner. In addition, they:

- will perform objective evaluation and according to Higher Education Law and the Guidelines for quality assurance and evaluation of higher education institutions and academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia;
- will cooperate with the representatives of the higher education institution in process of evaluation;
- will not give information of the evaluation results which contradict the Agency's rules;
- will regularly attend the meetings;
- will study the scheduled issues and have their own independent opinion;
- Will accept and enforce the decision reached on the basis of the majority members.

Quality evaluation of the higher education institutions

The problem for carrying out qualitative evaluation of all higher educational institutions within the University frames is directly connected to the questions of quality of the university activities i.e., of mechanisms of the quality control, whether they are used and how they are integrated in the UKIM policy. In addition, the term "control" implies the mechanisms for quality assessment of the main fields of the UKIM activities at national level.

For the first time in the system of the higher education in Republic of Macedonia, the institution "evaluation - external evaluation, self-evaluation and system of quality assessment of the academic staff" has been included in the legal regulations. However, this significant issue is set within the UKIM frames as one of the main goals of the new contents of UKIM changes earlier on the bringing of the Law.

The Higher Education Evaluation Agency of Republic of Macedonia carries out the external evaluation as well as collective quality assessment of the academic staff of UKIM and its faculties. The realization of the external evaluation is regulated by the Guide for providing and assessment of the higher educational institutions and the academic staff brought by the Higher Education Evaluation Agency. The evaluation of universities in Republic of Macedonia is carried out according to the Guide for unified evaluation bases and evaluation procedures of the universities brought by the Inter-university Conference of Republic of Macedonia.

The Ss. Cyril and Methodius University's self-evaluation report has been already prepared, and UKIM has submitted a request to be included in the EUA program for universities' external evaluation for 2003.

The UKIM faculties have already finished their activities for self-evaluation and their self-evaluation reports are submitted to the Agency. The Agency every five years shall evaluate the state and activities of the higher educational institutions, and based on that, it will submit its proposals to the Accreditation Board to lengthen or deprive the accreditation. Based on the quality assessment of the higher educational activities and academic staff as well, the Agency proposes measures for their improvement. Mints, the students as main participants in the teaching and educational process take part in all forms of managing through their students' associations at the faculties and UKIM as well. They take part in the faculties' managing bodies (the Dean's Board and the teaching and scientific board), the UKIM bodies (the University Senate, the Rector's Board) and all UKIM commissions. The students also take part in the commissions for self-evaluation as well as evaluation of UKIM and its faculties. In the self-evaluation process, students through questionnaires and some other ways participate in assessment of the overall activities of UKIM and its faculties. Pursuing the efforts for strengthening the position and role of the student, for the first time at UKIM the institution "student attorney" has been established. Further, the Book of rules for the student attorney's work has been brought, and the University Senate has elected the first student attorney.

In compliance with the legal regulations, the UKIM students have significant rights and opportunities to participate in all processes, and they are UKIM main factor. However, in the up-to-now practice, the UKIM students insufficiently realize their role in the key questions when their participation is talked about. They do not participate in procedures for carrying the study programs, quality assessment of the academic staff, election of the teaching, scientific and managing staff etc. The program goal – the student' being the central subject in the higher education process due to the passive attitude of the students themselves as well as the inappropriate engagement of a part of the academic staff and the administration, slowly proceeds.

Development of instruments and standards for quality assurance in the higher education

The realization of essential principles of the entry policy will be continuously carried out through an equal approach to the higher education based on the intellectual abilities guaranteeing social equity regardless of the religious and political affiliation, as well as the sex of the candidates; objective criteria related to the quantum of knowledge gained in the secondary education and the quantum of knowledge shown at the entry exam; and transparency as well. In that direction, important endeavors have been taken in order to improve the faculties' curricula. The last two years passed in the spirit of "processing" of these problems at each faculty. The process of the study programs' (curricula') concord is in progress towards their compatibility to the European ones. Somewhere it has been already

finished while somewhere the study programs' accreditation is in progress. Thus, in future the UKIM students will be able to study same as their European colleagues.

The study programs' modernization process will continue in the following directions:

- ❑ providing mechanisms for quality assessment of teaching and educational activities of the faculties, study programs and academic staff;
- ❑ introduction of the credit-system in studying procedure that implies flexibility and dynamics of functioning for providing validity and recognition of diploma as well as recognition of parts of the education (exams, semesters) in order to get a mobile student, and dynamic and flexible system of studying at the same time;
- ❑ persistent observing of the criteria for grouping the teaching disciplines into obligatory, elective and facultative by determining their proportion as well as determining of one-semester and two-semester subjects ;
- ❑ determining the types and number of departments, studies and study groups according to the standards for staff profiling and international qualifications of occupations;
- ❑ observing the legal regulation for engagement of the teaching staff and students in order to increase the studying efficiency and quality;
- ❑ Determining programs for profiling new types of highly qualified staff by promoting interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies.

The entire process for curricula modernization, advancement of the postgraduate and doctoral studies i.e., their growing into genuine regular studies as a higher extent of continuance or upgrade of undergraduate studies, will be carried out coordinately with further improvement of the legal regulation. It means enabling a creation of conditions for construction of a new system of doctoral studies from the present individual studies coordinated by mentor into a teaching for candidates with clearly

In accordance with the legal regulations, the statutes and other dock nominated elements of research fields, determined duration of studies as well as determined timing procedure for preparation of the dissertation.

Quality

The issues of quality of the university activity i.e., the mechanisms of quality control, are one of the UKIM basic functional elements. For the first time in the higher educational system in Republic of Macedonia, the institutions – external evaluation, self-evaluation and system of quality assessment of the academic staff are introduced in the legal regulations.

During the period 2002-07, UKIM should build mechanisms that will enable increase of the quality of the university activities in all domains:

- The self-evaluation reports of UKIM and its faculties should provide valid information about undertaken measures for improvement of the quality of teaching.
- The students' proposals given in the evaluation procedures should be implemented, and to find mechanisms for stated weaknesses at all levels not to be repeated.
- To build mechanisms of quality assessment and control of the academic staff at the UKIM level.
- To build mechanisms for UKIM impact on the pedagogical dimension as a qualitative element of the staff abilities. Namely, in cases when students negatively assess certain professors or associates, UKIM should have mechanisms for undertaking measures and activities for surpassing such assessments;

- To find possibilities for personal motivation of the teaching staff. Here, the following question is raised – why they should pay particular attention or spend time for improvement of the teaching methods when the practice shows that the academic values and financial effects depend more on the research activities than the teaching ones.
- To diminish the number of students in the enormously large students' groups at separate faculties that represents an obstacle for quality of teaching.

OPERATIONAL PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

| | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------|
| academically based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECTS introduction • progress and innovation of the study programs • introduction of contemporary teaching and learning techniques • internal and external quality evaluation • strengthening of the scholar research • staff and student's exchange • realization of mutual scientific and research projects at national and international level | all institutions |
| based on source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining the entry policy • building financial strategy • establishing compatibility to the educational strategy of the state • progress of the university information system • building a marketing strategy • analysis of the educational needs • human resources (training of the teaching staff and the management-structure, defining the personnel policy) • maintenance and developing of the surrounding | all institutions |
| based on activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faculties and institutes • analysis of material and technical needs • developing support services | all institutions |

The student – a central subject in the educational process

The UKIM preferential task is change of style of the educational process, by which the student will become the central subject. The University should be transformed into an institution that gives positivistic funds of knowledge and opportunities for creation. UKIM has to offer methodologies how to learn and how to use the learned in life. It will be a longer way and goal of changes as well, carried by new teaching norms. The most significant task for elimination of the small flux of students and shortening of duration of studying is the studying regime change. Thus, the goal will be obtained the student's being a creator of dynamics of changes will be enabled. The obstacles for repeating the year, registering semesters and signatures will be surpassed. In that manner, the new model of studying based on the credit-system as a new unit of measurement of the student's burden conceptually changes the whole system of studying. This will drastically increase the flux from one to another study year. It will have large flexibility and proximity to each student as an individual. Depending on the faculty massiveness, somewhere it will be more successful while somewhere less.

In that direction, UKIM requests from faculties to carry out the following tasks:

- more active and creative inclusion of students in almost all fields of the university living;
- to support students in their involvement in the European students' structures, associations and processes;
- maximal inclusion of students in the university organs and bodies, and their active participation in debates and bringing university decisions as well;
- creation of "mobile" student within the ECTS frames;
- making necessary conditions for inclusion particularly of talented students in scientific and research work as well as in projects and providing possibilities for presentation of their scholar results;
- stimulation and awarding of the best students;
- providing study stays for talented students at universities and other scholar institutions abroad;
- development of students' cultural and artistic activities;
- concern for improvement of the students' standard;
- Support of the students' organization for participation in activities of the European students' structures and associations.

APPENDIX 2 (prof. Violeta Panvska, UKLO – Bitola)**I N F O R M A T I O N****For the activities concerning the Bologna Declaration, realized at
The University "St.Kliment Ohridski "- Bitola**

The University *St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola* since 1998 has started to realize many activities confirming its declaration for implementation of the European dimension concerning the institutional development of the higher education in the Republic of Macedonia. During these five years important goals have been achieved and this process of activities is continuing.

The University and its member-institutions have initiated this process by participating in the Phare programs, which were denoted to the reforms in higher education. In 1998-2000 the University took place in the realization of Phare Multi Country Project in which the fundamental point was European dimension of institutional quality management. The experience acquired in the process of realization of this project has contributed the university cadre to improve their abilities for strategic management and planning.

The University *St.Kliment Ohridski- Bitola* has comprehended the importance of a fundamental university document, so in this period was design the Strategy for University Development (1999-2003) and the University Senate has accepted it.

The Strategy for University Development includes the basic values of Bologna Declaration and it points out the direction of Bologna starting process as: quality assurance of higher education, evaluation of study programs in higher education, quality assurance of higher education institutions as well the university academic and administrative staff, the implementation of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), student and staff mobility, interuniversity cooperation etc.

During 1998 both Macedonian universities have participated in the realization of Phare Multi Country Project, titled as *Quality Assurance in Higher Education*.

The University *St Kliment Ohridski -Bitola* has appointed the Faculty of Economics in Prilep as a pilot-institution and there were realized self and external evaluation activities for improvement of education quality in general. The project results and their implementation were attended and carried out by experts from foreign institutions. It should be mentioned that the experience acquired during the dissemination and implementation of the project goals was very valuable for preparation of the coming Law for Higher Education and the entire university legislation in terms of quality issues in particular.

The realization of the Phare Tempus Project *Quality Assurance Systems for Higher Education in the Republic of Macedonia-1999* has made the best impact to further university activities for transformation and reforms of the existing education process.

In the context of the support of a consistent approach to Bologna process it should be underlined the participation of the University in Phare Tempus Projects especially in

Joint European Projects, Regional and Networking Projects by whose realization were provided preconditions for faster reforms in higher education.

The project cooperation between our University and those of EU countries and the exchange of experiences have encouraged the staff participants of the higher education institutions to start reforms and to implement some goals in their own institutions making the Bologna process closer to our education system.

The effects of the project cooperation are evident. Namely it means that the first steps in Bologna process are already done and it should continue in the next years.

The institution building for modernization of public administration and public policy in Macedonia represents a Joint European Project, which is already realized, and its study programs are designed according to EU standards and for the first time the ECTS is implemented at our University.

As a result of another JEP the establishment of ECTS is in the process of implementation at the Faculty for Technical Sciences -Bitola at the Department for Traffic and Transportation (as a pilot- institution and coordinator of the Project).

The Project team has already published a Guide and a Handbook in which are given all characteristics of the ECTS, so they will represent useful books of instructions for the other university member-institutions.

The implementation of ECTS was a subject of large discussion at the four Seminars which were denoted to this important issue of Bologna process and the participants of both State Universities have taken part contributing the better approach of ECTS.

The Joint European Project for *Management with Universities in the Republic of Macedonia*, also is in process of realization and it supposes further contribution in providing compatibility within EU University management. The implementation of these project goals means additional approach to Bologna process as well.

Having in consideration the activities that are in connection with the principals of Bologna Declaration, the University St.Kliment *Ohridski-Bitola* has proceeded the self-evaluation at its member-institutions during 2002. The process of an external evaluation will continue in 2003.

The Law for Higher Education (2000) has played an important role by improving the reforms in higher education system in our state. This Act has provided a wider space for more rapid transformation of the higher education institutions and the universities themselves.

The new Law has obliged the Universities in the Republic of Macedonia to denote intensive activities for providing better quality of study programs, the curricula, the proper accreditation, self and an external evaluation of university institutions and academic staff.

In accordance with the Law for Higher Education, the accepted values of Bologna Declaration as well the contemporary needs for progress and development of higher education, the University St. *Kliment Ohridski- Bitola* has adopted a few important documents as the following:

- ◆ Strategy for Development of University *St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola* (1999-2003);
- ◆ Instruction for Evaluation and Evaluation proceedings at the Higher Education Institutions at the University *St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola*;
- ◆ Book of Regulation for common bases in organizing post-graduate and doctoral studies;
- ◆ Book of Regulation for common bases in organizing under-graduate studies;
- ◆ Study programs for implementation of ECTS at some elected higher institutions at our University.

The above numbered documents will enable a legal base for implementation of certain segments of Bologna process as the following:

- ◆ Issues connected within the systems for quality assurance and accreditation of the higher education institutions;
- ◆ Support of academic and student mobility;
- ◆ Restructuring of the existing study programs and curriculum development with implementation of ECTS.

Attending the statement for further participation and activities in various EU projects, the University will continue to acquire new experiences to facilitate the Bologna process in its member-institution, at the same time focussing its attention to the following points:

- Promotion and intensifying the student, academic and administrative mobility;
- Diploma recognition;
- Creating conditions for establishment of professional and academic diploma;
- Diploma supplements
- Module development, courses and study programs leading to joint diploma with Foreign universities;
- Establishment of distance learning and
- Establishment of long life learning.

The University *St. Kliment Ohridski-Bitola* will do its best to implement the European education values incorporated in Bologna Declaration in purpose to make possible its sooner Europeanization in the wider sense of the word. The Bologna process has already started and the challenge for the Macedonian Universities remains expecting coordinated activities.

APPENDIX 3: *(prof. Lulzime Nuredini – Mehmedi, SEE-Tetovo)***“THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY” - TETOVO****About the University:**

In the spring of 2000 the High Commissioner for National Minorities Of the OSCE initiated discussion on the foundation by international Donors of a new university in the Republic of Macedonia. Following The adoption of a law on higher education by the Parliament of the Republic which allowed both the establishment of universities by Non-State founders and mainstream teaching in the Albanian Language, detailed planning began in late 2000. Building commenced In March 2001 and the South East European (SEE) University opened Six months later with about 900 students. By October 2002 the number Of students had increased to 2250, with 115 academic and 65 support Staff.

The University is a unitary institution with five Faculties: Law, Business Administration, Public Administration, Communications Sciences and Technologies, Pedagogical and Methodological Training. It also has two other academic units (the Language Centre and the Computer Centre) which both serve the University as a whole and are also developing short courses and distance learning programmes as ‘Higher schools’.

SEE University is playing a leading role in the development of Modern higher education in the country and in the Southern Balkans. The University is the first in the Republic of Macedonia to teach mainstream subjects in the Albanian language. However it has a Policy of flexible usage of languages, providing courses also in the Macedonian language. All students learn the English language (and, optionally, in French or German languages) to facilitate teaching in English by international and visiting academic staff. This is particularly important for those wishing to enter careers for which English is the international language of communication.

The start-up phase of SEE University’s development has been made possible through donations from OSCE countries and the EU of some €36m. Part of the US contribution is committed to a three year Collaboration agreement with Indiana University which provides Support in faculty and curriculum development. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia donated land for the campus which is on a Greenfield site of 20 hectares just outside Tetovo in the western part of the country The University occupies purpose-built accommodation, including two large lecture halls, nearly 30 teaching rooms, staff offices, two state-of-the-art computer centres, a library and residential accommodation for 450 students.

The University's IT system is connected to the Internet by satellite uplink providing opportunities for video-conferencing and high-speed data transfer.

According to Macedonian law the University is classified as 'private' to distinguish it from the 'public' institutions which receive direct State funding, As a consequence tuition fees are generally higher than those charged by public universities to students who do not obtain a State-funded place. A financial assistance programme is available to improve opportunities for access to under-represented groups. It is anticipated that as the University expands from the start-up phase of its development, within the framework of higher education provision in the Republic, it will be eligible for partial State funding.

The Law on Higher Education requires all higher education institutions to submit to processes of licensing and accreditation to assure quality of academic provision (including a verification of the academic qualifications of teaching staff) and, in the case of 'private' institutions, financial viability. The University has complied fully with these requirements and all its programmes are accredited by the State. All courses are modular and follow the pattern of the European Credit Transfer System.

SEE University now seeks to develop solid links with other academic institutions to promote exchanges of information, staff and students and to enhance the quality of its academic programmes. Formal collaboration agreements have been signed with the University of Nantes, the University of Angers and the University of Prishtina. It also offers an ideal location for academic staff wishing to carry out research in the Balkans and opportunities for younger staff wishing to take the first steps in an academic career.

The University places a high value on providing its students with a fulfilling education in their chosen discipline. But, in addition to giving all undergraduates a solid academic foundation, the university also offers practical career advice and support so that graduates can use the knowledge and skills they acquire at SEE University to make the most of opportunities that life presents.

The Mission of the University:

The Mission of the University is enshrined in its deed as brought by its founder. Accordingly the University ensures at all times that its activities will:

- Be socially committed and open to all students on the basis of equity and merit, regardless of their ideological, political, cultural, and social background;
- Be committed to the Albanian culture, language, and population, while defining itself in a broad international perspective and in a multilingual approach to teaching and research;

- Offer a broad spectrum of courses in the socio-economic disciplines and sciences, underpinned by strong transferable skills training and research attuned to current academic developments;
- Develop permanent and continuing education continually and selectively position its academic offerings in the wider social context and engage in constant dialogue with its environment
- Develop and promote research in its academic fields of activity;
- Aim to be an enterprising higher education institution fostering the social and economic applications of its activities;
- Create a stimulating environment for its staff and provide them with opportunities to develop their abilities to help the Foundation at Tetovo to fulfill its mission.

The University wide course evaluation is used by students to assess the academic quality as the basic condition for relevance to employability, for comparability, mobility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area.

Students have the right to complain about the quality of the teaching or other facilities of the University; such complaints shall initially be made to the Head of Faculty or equivalent officer with further appeal to the Council whose decision shall be final. Rules elaborating these procedures shall be made by the Board on the proposal of the Council.

Students may be removed from registration by the Senate for failure to make adequate progress in their studies. An appeal may be made to a Committee appointed by the Board or its Bureau whose decision is final. Rules elaborating these procedures shall be made by the Board on the proposal of the Senate.

The University's Course curriculum is organized according to the European Transfer Credit System. In ECTS, 60 credits represent the workload of one academic year of study and one credit refers to 30 hours work, including lectures and other forms of instruction as well as independent work at home. Intended to facilitate student mobility and inter-university cooperation, it is a tool designed to increase transparency in higher education across Europe. Indeed, the recognition of studies and diplomas is a prerequisite for the creation of an Open HE Area of education and training where students and teacher can move without obstacles. Simply put, if a student wishes to transfer from one university to another, he/she must be able to clearly demonstrate what he/she has done at the previous institution. The institution to which the student transfers must have clear picture of the work the student completed in each course. This picture is the syllabus. The syllabus lays out the content of the course, the week to week assignments, the studied texts, in short, it tells anyone concerned what the student has studied and presumably learnt. The syllabus is also one of fundamental building blocks of the Diploma Supplement, as document attached to HE diploma aiming at improving international "transparency" and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It is designed to provide a description of a nature, level, context, content and status of the studies. Accordingly, the syllabus is a fundamental point of reference for the DS. Without detailed information about the content of the study program, the DS becomes meaningless

According to the General University Policies and regulations at the **South-East European University**, students, whether existing or potential, should expect to receive fair and equal treatment when applying as members of the university which is committed to work with diversity in a wholly positive way. Students are expected to support this policy actively. The University pursues an open admissions policy, subject to certain restrictions as set out below. The University can not admit more students than its capacities permit. In the event that the number of qualified applicants exceeds the University's capacity, the University will commence a process of selection. Priority will be given to the applicants belonging to underrepresented groups in higher education in the republic of Macedonia and applicants that may indicate special suitability to an academic program offered by the university. All applicants are required to sit for an English language placement examination.

Accordingly, the SEE University embraces a European, international and modern orientation, while being committed to the Albanian language and culture, with multilingual approach to teaching and research. The University is an integral part of the educational system of the country and aims to achieve academic excellence by international standards.

The SEE University is the private institution where students have the obligation to pay the annual tuition fee. In order to assure equal access of the students the university has established the need based grants for students who would otherwise be unable to enter the institution.

According to the Statute of the University, there shall be a student organization to which all students may belong. An assembly of members shall be the supreme decision-making body of the student organization. The student organization shall elect, in a free and fair manner, representatives to bodies as provided in the Statute and to act in its behalf in relations with the University authority. Students also have the right to form associations for any purpose permitted by Law.

The Students' Union shall be cooperating with the Student Unions of Macedonia.

The university requires that students be the opportunity to evaluate teacher instruction in the form of course evaluations.

In that sense, suitable forms of evaluation by students of institution constitute an important part of the academic process. The on-line student evaluation form provides students with an opportunity to share their thoughts on the courses they have taken. The main purpose is to provide academic staff with hints on improvement.

Student evaluation of teaching is used for a comment on an instructor's ability to communicate clearly, the extent and level of the instructor's course preparation or for instance how sensitive and respective the instructor is to difficulties students may be having in the course.

APPENDIX 4 :(*Aspasija Hadzisce, “TEMPUS” – Skopje*)**The role of the international cooperation in strengthening the Macedonian institutions on the way to the European Area of Higher Education, with emphasis to the TEMPUS cooperation**

In the efforts for closer integration into the European Higher Education Area, the countries of South-East Europe - and in that context the Republic of Macedonia - have been continuously encouraged and supported by relevant international institutions, organizations, and associations. The European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES, the European University Association, the World Bank, the Open Society Foundations, the Enhanced Graz Process under the Stability Pact, as well as some EU Member States, have developed partnerships and are currently running numerous activities and actions.

The variety of actions differs in aims and complexity. Starting with awareness raising activities (e.g. the Council of Europe and EUA Seminar on the Bologna Process that was held in Skopje in February 2003, the Seminar organized under the Tempus Programme in December 2001 etc), continuing with numerous projects in different fields, and coming to very complex projects, relevant for the development of the region as a whole (e.g. the UNESCO-CEPES project, with EU/Stability Pact funding, for development of SEE capacity in governance and management of higher education.

Having recognised Tempus as a strong instrument for support to the country higher education institutions to take an active role in the establishment of an EHEA as outlined by the Bologna Declaration, the Macedonian authorities and the European Commission, for the years 2002 and 2003 adopted the following priorities:

- ◆ Support to curriculum development projects for development of content, teaching methodologies and structure of university studies and study programmes in accordance with the Bologna Declaration, and in particular development of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes.
- ◆ University management projects supporting: optimisation of the faculty–university relationship - promotion of an integrated university of which faculties are constituent parts; reform of university governance, management and finance; introduction and strengthening of mechanisms of strategic management at higher education institutions; reinforcing the skills and capacities of the management and the administration of the university; strengthening of student associations and student services; development of quality assurance systems; establishing closer relations with enterprises and civil society through technology and knowledge transfer, fundraising, public relations and marketing.

The importance of the cooperation with higher education institutions, organisations and associations from the EU, but also with ones from the CARDS region, has been recognised as valuable. Some examples of the contribution to the Bologna process are given below:

Establishment of a system of credits

The efforts of the Macedonian universities for development and introduction of credit systems comparable with the ECTS have been supported by majority of the recently completed or on-going Tempus projects.

- The most significant example is the completed university management project for implementation of a credit transfer system comparable with the ECTS at the University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, and in particular, at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Bitola.
- The first pilot credit transfer system at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” was developed with a project for restructuring the training and retraining system for teachers and trainers in the reformed VET system.
- A complex university management project in biotechnologies with participation of the universities in Skopje and Bitola, addressing: preparation for student mobility with introduction of credit transfer systems, innovations of educational methodologies, development of quality assurance systems, as well as strengthening of university-enterprise cooperation is in a process of finalization.

Promotion of mobility and strengthening student participation

Intensive East-West and West-East mobility is immanent to Tempus activities. Be it East-West or West-East mobility (over 230 grants have been awarded to academic staff, administrative staff, ministry officials since 1996), or massive motilities of academics, administrators and students in framework of the Joint European Projects and the Compact Measure Projects.

The best illustration for strengthening of mobility of young people and academic staff in the CARDS region would be the currently running project for postgraduate studies in the field of Earthquake Engineering, involving students from Albania, Croatia and the Republic of Macedonia. Synergy with the DAAD financed postgraduate studies project has been achieved, bringing together students from the three above mentioned countries, but also students from Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Serbia and Montenegro.

Involvement of students in the Joint European Projects, and in that context, promoting student mobility will be Tempus priority in the coming years.

It is worth mentioning that, since 2002, Tempus has opened a possibility for representatives of students associations to participate in the Individual Mobility scheme, too.

Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance

Rising of quality of higher education and development of quality assurance systems have been given highest priority both by the national authorities and by the Macedonian academic community. The country achievements are result of intensive international cooperation realized in framework of a project of the Inter-University Conference supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of France, the Nederland's, the Open Society Foundation and other donors. The experiences and some relevant instruments developed with Tempus projects in Poland and the Czech Republic were combined in framework of this project. The completed self-evaluation of the universities is followed by the on-going preparatory activities for organization of external evaluation. The

recently started project financed by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will bring international expertise in the process.

The contribution of two Tempus Compact Measure Projects for quality assurance that were financed in 1997 and 1998 could be mentioned, too. Besides the motivation of many academics to work on development of quality assurance instruments, the results of the project were useful for the preparation of the Law on Higher Education that was adopted in the year 2000.

Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education

Having signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement, the Republic of Macedonia pays special attention to development of the European dimensions in higher education. Support to development of modules, courses and curricula with European content, orientation and organization provide: the European Commission (e.g. 52 Tempus Joint European projects), the Council of Europe, as well as some EU Member States through bilateral projects.

Examples of the Tempus support to the development of the European dimension and for strengthening the capacities of the higher education sector to play the key role in the stabilisation and association process are given below:

- The regional Tempus cooperation started in the year 1998, with a project for development of common curricula and teaching materials in Law and Economics courses at the universities in Skopje (the Republic of Macedonia) and at the universities in Tirana and Skodra (Republic of Albania). Sustainability of the cooperation established with this project was supported with a new Tempus project on EU institutions, law, history and human rights, widening the partnership with involvement of the University in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Hercegovina).
- The support to development of Euro dimension in accounting education, resulted with improved undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Economics of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”-Skopje and in development of a certification programme.
- A postgraduate programme in European Integration targeted at civil servants was established with a Tempus project financed in the year 1999.
- The first interdisciplinary studies in public administration at the University “St. Kliment Ohridski”-Bitola, developed with a Tempus project, started in the academic year 2001/02.
- The University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” is finalising a project for establishing interdisciplinary European Studies.
- The recently finalised project for postgraduate studies in international management, incorporating distance education could be a basis for development of regional cooperation.
- The efforts for harmonisation of the curricula of the regulated professions have been supported with two Tempus project at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”-Skopje. The project for improvement of veterinary education is in a process of finalisation, and a running project covers the restructuring of medical studies.

Lifelong learning

The Macedonian authorities and the academic community have recognized the necessity for developing various forms for lifelong-learning. The opening of the universities to the wider community and addressing the current needs of the society has been supported with Tempus projects. Some examples are given below:

- a) The urgent needs for providing different forms of training courses for public administration employees and civil society building have been covered with several projects:
- Regional project with participation of universities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Macedonia for training of judges with a view to develop a “European judge”.
 - Advanced training courses to fight organised crime. Short courses with different modules are provided to public administration officers in the field of interior, customs public prosecutor, judges etc.
 - Short courses in the field of agro-economics developed and run for civil servants in the field of agriculture.
 - Establishment of a training centre for assessment of pressure equipment, providing training to administration and technical personnel.
- b) Technology transfer centres
- A technology transfer centre in chemical and textile engineering was established at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”, providing opportunities for benefiting from different forms of life-long learning courses.
 - A project for establishment of a Croatian centre for technology transfer in biotechnology and in applied economics for the countries of South-East Europe, involving universities from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Macedonia is currently running.
 - The Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” is developing an office for international technology transfer.
 - The Faculty of Fine Arts of the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” is finalising a project for developing partnerships with public and private companies for production of handmade paper.

University governance and management

Strengthening university governance and management have been Tempus priority since the opening of the Programme in the year 1996. Besides the achievements in some areas, the universities are facing the difficult and, in many cases, painful work for institutional restructuring and transformation. The key step to re-define the university-faculty relation, accompanied with strengthening the university management capacities, student services etc. will remain the focal point of the institutional restructuring in the coming years.

Closer cooperation and implementation of intensive mobility schemes, similar to the EU Socrates-Erasmus Programme, can rely on institutional partnerships, which can function properly only if the partner institutions have developed good functioning management structures and relevant offices. Some examples of the Tempus support to improvement of university management are given below:

- A recently finalised project co-ordinated by the University “St. Kliment Ohridski”-Bitola, involving the universities in Bitola and in Skopje, covered important aspects of university management. An application for a Joint European Project aiming at continuation of the activities for improvement of university management has been submitted at the end of the year 2003. This application involves the three Macedonian universities: the ones in Skopje and Bitola, as well as the South-East European University in Tetovo.

- A feasibility study for distance education systems followed by three projects involving the universities in Skopje and in Bitola, supported development of models and pilot functioning of: virtual classrooms, virtual laboratories and virtual libraries.
- Two projects for improvement of the library information systems have been realised. One of them is a regional project with the University of Novi Sad from Serbia and Montenegro.

Areas which have not been sufficiently covered, and which are very important for the Bologna process are:

- Providing courses in foreign languages (English, or other languages attractive for students) is to be seen as a vehicle for boosting student and academic mobility predominantly in the region of South-East Europe, but also in the wider context. In this aspect, the best example is the recently established South-East University in Tetovo, incorporating in the educational process Albanian, Macedonian and English language.
- Development of joint-degrees has not been recognized yet by the higher education of the South-East European countries as a vehicle for developments towards the European Higher Education Area.
- Linking of the on-going reform of the vocational education and training (two Tempus projects in synergy with the VET system have been financed), the diversification of the higher education in the country (by providing different forms for professional education and for lifelong learning), with development of a system for accumulation and transfer of credits.

Needless to say that coordination and synergy of the internationally supported activities underpinning the efforts of the SEE countries, and the CARDS region involving the Republic of Macedonia in particular would be crucial for the dynamism of the process of joining the EHEA.