

## **BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

**Final:** 9 May 2006

### **Notes:**

The deadline for submitting National Reports is **Friday 15 December 2006**.

BFUG members are encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template and return it to the Secretariat by email. Your report should not exceed **20 pages in length**, using Times New Roman font size 12. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. For any topic where there has been no change since 2005, please refer to your National Report for the Bergen conference.

Please attach your country's action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in London in May 2007.

This template has three sections:

- A. Background information on your Higher Education system
- B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements
- C. Current issues in Higher Education.

Elements that will inform the scorecard element of stocktaking are clearly indicated in the template.

Information for the stocktaking, including the scorecard element, will also be drawn from the Eurydice survey "Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe". These elements are also indicated in the template. Please use your National Report to supplement, but not repeat, your country's input to the Eurydice survey.

### **A. Background information on your Higher Education system**

#### **Details**

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### Main achievements since Bergen

<p>1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.</p>
<p>The most important legislative reforms in Slovenia took place before the Bergen conference; some instruments have been introduced even before Bologna Declaration was adopted.</p> <p>The Council for Higher Education has been operating as the accreditation body since 1994 and since 2002 under stricter criteria. In 1998 the credit system was introduced for postgraduate studies and then gradually extended to undergraduate studies. It became obligatory in 2002. In 1996 The National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission was established by the Rectors Conference, consisting of representatives of all higher education institutions, and since 2000 local student representatives, nominated by HEIs. From 2000 on higher education institutions are preparing self-evaluation quality reports, and from the year 2003, the commission collects and publishes them. A Diploma Supplement has been issued in Slovenia since the academic year 2000/01. From 2005/06 it is attached to each first-, second- and third cycle diploma and issued automatically free of charge in Slovene and in one of the official languages of the European Union. Act amending Higher Education Act, which provides the legal framework for the implementation of the new structure in accordance with the proposed Bologna patterns, was adopted in June 2004 (ASHEA 2004). The enrolment of students in the new structure that will be gradually implemented until 2009/10 has started in the academic year 2005/06.</p> <p>In June 2006, the National Assembly adopted the new Amendments and Supplements to the Higher Education Act (ASHEA 2006). Legislative novelties affect above all relations among the old and the new qualifications, change the quality assurance arrangements and provide financial resources from the state budget also for the second cycle after completed first cycle of studies. The National Assembly and the Slovenian Student Union challenged the Act, claiming that it is unconstitutional and filed constitutional complaints. The Constitutional Court decided not to withhold the implementation of the Act and is currently preparing its decision.</p> <p>In compliance with ASHEA, governmental Decree on the public financing of higher education and other university member institutions was adopted in December 2006.</p> <p>Instead of previously foreseen Quality Assurance Agency, the Council for Higher Education shall take over the responsibilities for the quality assurance system. As stipulated by the new ASHEA 2006, the responsibilities of the Council are extended to include the tasks of external evaluations as well. The Council will create a Senate for evaluations that will set up and guide the external evaluations procedures for higher education and higher vocational education institutions and study programmes.</p>

The law regulates levels of studies anew, using the proposed European Qualification Framework as a reference.

With the 2006 (June) Professional and Scientific Titles Act, the new titles shall be awarded on a completion of the Bologna programmes.

In 2005, three ministries (Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs) organised a national public consultation on European Qualifications Framework and prepared a report. Working group, composed of representatives of the three ministries and other stakeholders was established for the realisation of the national consultation. The group continued its work in 2006 in order to prepare a national qualifications framework.

## National organisation

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs
- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

Higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Three consultative bodies of the Government make professional decisions in their respective field of competence and/or give advice in policy-making and preparation of legislation in the field of higher education: the Council for Higher Education, the Council for Science and Technology and the Council for Student Affairs.

Only the Council for Higher Education had undergone some changes in its structure and responsibilities in the last two years. As stipulated by the new ASHEA 2006, the responsibilities of Council are extended to include the tasks of external evaluations as well. The Council is in the process of creating three senates (for accreditations, evaluations and habilitation) and thus extending its membership. The Senate for evaluations will set up and guide the external evaluations procedures of institutions and study programmes in higher education and higher vocational education.

The autonomy of universities and single higher education institutions is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and by the Higher Education Act. Higher education institutions are autonomous in managing their internal organisation and operations, selecting and electing the faculty and electing their internal bodies.

In compliance with the law and upon the consent of the Council of Higher Education, they design study programmes and decide upon their content, including enrolment conditions, selection criteria, and professional titles. Public

higher education institutions own and manage their own property. They receive funds from the state budget in block grants and distribute them according to the criteria adopted by the management board, taking into account official regulations and criteria determined by the Minister.

The Decree on the public financing of higher education and other university member institutions 2004-2008 (adopted in 2003) regulates the public financing of study and extracurricular activities, investment and investment maintenance and development tasks at universities and single higher education institutions established by the Republic of Slovenia, and the financing of certain tasks of national importance. The provisions concerning study and extracurricular activities and development tasks apply also to private higher education institutions with concession.

Public financing of study activities is defined as a lump sum. The funding formula for undergraduate studies is based, among others, on the number of students and graduates and the field of studies. No difference is made between academic and professional study programmes. Part time students pay tuition fees. Postgraduate students pay tuition fees as well, however, the state provides public funding for co-financing of these tuition fees. Faculties may apply to a Public tender for co-financing of postgraduate studies and if they that fulfil the conditions (among others, tuition fee must not exceed the one set by the state) 60-80 % of tuition fee for a student is paid from the public funds. Additional 9% of postgraduate students receive co-financing through a 'Young researchers' financing scheme that covers full tuition fee, part of material costs for student's research and a salary for the young researcher. Funds for investments and investment maintenance are allocated according to the multi-annual investment programme of higher education institution (to which Minister gives his/her consent), its annual investment programme and the adopted state budget.

### 3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

The Higher Education Act covers public and private higher education institutions, though to a different extent. Higher education institutions are universities, faculties, academies of art and higher professional colleges.

In the last two years the network of HEIs expanded; however, although the institutions were accredited, most of them don't perform any activities in the current academic year yet. The Council for higher education accredited four private institutions (1 faculty, 3 higher professional colleges) in 2005 and five private institutions (2 faculties, 3 higher professional colleges) in 2006. Two new faculties were established in 2005 and one in 2006 as new members of existing public universities. One public higher professional college (university

member) transformed into a faculty and one private faculty transformed into an university.

In the academic year 2006/07 study programmes are offered at:

three public universities

- University of Ljubljana with 57.657 undergraduate students (62,76 %),
- University of Maribor with 23.833 undergraduate students (25,94 %),
- University of Primorska with 5.394 undergraduate students (5,87 %),

and one private university

- University of Nova Gorica with 526 undergraduate students (0,57 %).

There are also seven private single higher education institutions (1 faculty and 6 higher professional colleges) in all major cities around Slovenia with 4.463 undergraduate students (4,86 %).

Thus, in the academic year 2006/07 the total number of students enrolled in old (3 to 4-year professional, 4 to 6-year university) and new (3 to 4-year first cycle) undergraduate study programmes amounts to 91.873. In professional higher education programmes there are 39.472 (42,96 %) students, in university programmes there are 52.401 (57,04 %) students.

The number of postgraduate students in 2006/07 is estimated to be similar to that in the last academic year. In 2005/06 there were 8.344 postgraduate students.

## Partnership

4. Describe the structure, which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

The second national team of Bologna Promoters was established in 2005/06. Members of the group are three academics and one student, selected by the Ministry through public tender. Their tasks include promotion of the Bologna Process, dissemination of information and counselling, and organisation of thematic seminars in co-operation with HEIs.

Two student structures deal (also) with the implementation of the Bologna Process at the national level: a working group of the Council for Student Affairs and Committee for Higher Education of the Slovenian Student Union. The role of governmental consultative Council for Student Affairs is to participate in drafting new regulatory frameworks and in discussing all issues that concern study and social conditions of students.

Committee for Higher Education of the Slovenian Student Union is tackling current HE issues, informing the students, communicating with HE partners,



organizing national and international conferences, seminars for students and HE partners in order to develop HE Area and foster partner cooperation. The Committee is also making content proposals in legislative procedures regarding the legislation related to HE.

Slovenian Trade Union for the Education, Science and Culture Sectors and its Trade union conference on higher education and science discusses and publishes statements on topical issues of the Bologna Process.

Employers' representatives are involved in the development of new Bologna study programmes.

Some co-ordination of the implementation of the Bologna Process can be found also at institutional levels. For example, the Student Organisation of the University of Ljubljana has set up a group of Bologna promoters, it organises Bologna events and runs projects dealing with different aspects of the Bologna Process.

5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

The representation of students in the governance of HEIs is ensured by higher education legislation (HEA, consolidated, OJ of the RS 119/2006, <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/ulonline.jsp?urlid=2006119&dhid=85795>, articles 21, 21.a, 22, 26). Students are represented in all important governance structures of HEIs: governing board of a university, senates (at least one fifth of members) and academic assemblies (at least one fifth of members). There are student councils in all HEIs that, among others, give their opinions on all matters concerning student rights and obligations.

Staff trade unions are not represented in the governance of HEIs. Representatives of staff are, however, members of the governing board of the university.

6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.

When preparing new Bologna study programmes HEIs must cooperate with employers. Namely, the Criteria on accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes set the following obligatory elements of an application for accreditation of a new study programme:

- evidence of fulfilling conditions for the realisation of practical training,
- information on graduates' employment possibilities,
- opinion of the branch Chamber of economy, competent ministry or other relevant associations of employers on the study programme.

Students' as well as employers' representatives participate also in the accreditation of new Bologna programmes through their representatives in the Council for Higher Education, its senates and commissions (HEA, consolidated, OJ of the RS 119/2006, articles 50 and 51).

The cooperation with employers is foreseen also in practical training of students in a working environment. By the Higher Education Act, practical training is a mandatory component of professional higher education programmes as are applied research projects in working environment within second and third cycle studies.

## B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

### Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.

Slovenia decided for gradual implementation of three-cycle degree structure that will be completed only by the academic year 2009/10. That influences the number/percentage of new study programmes and the number of students enrolled in these programmes.

From the academic year 2004/05 up to now the Council for higher education accredited 162 new Bologna study programmes: 72 first cycle, 83 second cycle and 7 third cycle programmes. Most of these programmes substitute former, old ones while approximately 20% of them are completely new ones.

95 out of 162 accredited new Bologna study programmes, running in the academic year 2006/07, represent approx. 22% of all study programmes. However, as most of the new programmes enrol students only in the first year of studies, the number of students enrolled in new first and second cycle study programmes is low.

In 2006/07 6,56 % of all students are enrolled in first cycle professional higher education programmes and 7,16 % in first cycle university programmes. Together that makes 13,72 % of all undergraduate students.

In 2005/06 13,8% of postgraduate students were enrolled in the new second cycle studies. (Data for the academic year 2006/07 are not available yet.)

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle students following structured doctoral programmes
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes
- are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies
- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

Anyone who has successfully completed the following programmes may enrol to third cycle:

- a second cycle study programme,
- a study programme that gives qualification in a profession, regulated by EU directives or, exceptionally, by national regulation, and amounts to 300 credits,
- an undergraduate study programme leading to a university degree (previous, still running programmes).

Graduates of old master's degree programmes offered until now shall have a possibility to transfer 60 credit points to new doctoral programmes.

The length of full-time doctoral studies is three years (180 ECTS).

As the introduction of new degree structure is gradual, HEIs so far focused on development of new first cycle and second cycle programmes. Thus, in the academic year 2006/07 the three universities offer only four new doctoral study programmes.

Old doctoral programmes that are still offered are all structured. Besides an independent research work they offer organised forms of study. In doctoral studies as third cycle studies the organised forms of study must amount to at least 60 credit points.

The interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral study programmes to different extent. The supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies are determined by the study programme.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

## Access<sup>1</sup> to the next cycle

9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

According to the legislation, a first cycle degree in appropriate professional field gives access to the second cycle. In case a student has a first cycle degree from another professional field, he/she must first complete study obligations that are essential for the continuation of studies in a second cycle programme. The study programme, according to the professional field, determines these obligations their amount that ranges from 10 to 60 ECTS. Candidates can fulfil the missing obligations during their first cycle studies, in training programmes or by taking exams prior to enrolment to the second cycle programme.

Second cycle study programmes define which professional fields provide appropriate or essential knowledge and thus, don't require the completion of additional study obligations.

A second cycle degree (including degrees of integrated study programmes with 300 ECTS) gives access to the third cycle.

The evaluation of the implementation of these legislative provisions is not possible yet as the enrolment of students in the new degree programmes started only in the academic year 2005/06.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

## Implementation of national qualifications framework

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<sup>1</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>2</sup>.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared; has a timetable for implementation been agreed?)
- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

The Higher Education Act stipulates that the HEQF be adopted by the Higher Education Council of the Republic of Slovenia. It is defined as a development tool for defining the aims and the basic principles of study programmes' design. In line with this, the higher education programmes' accreditation criteria require the programme designers to attach the level of the qualification to general learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and competences.

Another document, representing the foundation, relevant for development of the NQF is Regulation concerning classification of education and training in Slovenia. The authorities, responsible for education, training and labour market together with the national statistical office, developed this document jointly. Even though a purely statistical in function, in the structure it follows the principle of classification of learning outcomes according to the concept, structure and the criteria for classification follow the basic principles of the concept of lifelong learning and student oriented education and training. It encompasses learning outcomes as equal a criterion to any other, such as typical duration of studies or access requirements, exp.

The classification will start to be implemented from the 1 January 2007 and represents the first step towards further development of the NQF, in-line with the overarching QF for EHEA.

In 2005, three ministries (Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs) organised a national public consultation on European Qualifications Framework and prepared a report. Working group, composed of representatives of the three ministries and Centre for vocational education and training was established for the realisation of the national consultation. The group continued its work in 2006 in order to prepare a national qualifications framework.

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<sup>2</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

Since enrolment of students in the new structure has started only in the academic year 2005/06 they didn't graduate yet. That's why the percentage of those who intend to continue their studies into the second cycle is not yet available.

In principle, major problems in employment of graduates with bachelor qualification are not anticipated. Partly because the new professional study programmes do not differ much from the previous ones, above all but due to the fact that employers are involved in the development of new Bologna programmes. The amendments to the Civil Servants Act (December 2006) determine the first cycle qualification as appropriate condition for appointment to titles of the third and second career class (at least higher vocational education for the fourth career class). However, this qualification is new to the employers and the HEI, so the tendency is to perceive it as an intermediate degree and not as a whole cycle leading to employment or further studies.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>3</sup>

12. To what extent is your national system of QA already in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any deadlines set for taking action to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

The review of the compliance of the existing national QA system with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA is planned within the framework of the Operational programme for HRD proposed for the European Social Fund in the next programming period (2007 – 2013). A similar project proposal for the years 2007 – 2008 was developed also in the framework of a tender for bilateral assistance of the Switzerland to the new EU Member States. However, the realisation of the tender is currently postponed.

The National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission prepared the Criteria for monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality in the higher education institutions, study programmes, science and research, and in artistic and professional work in October 2004, taking into account the Standards and Guidelines. In 2006 it started first four pilot institutional external evaluations that will, among others, test the compliance of external evaluation procedures and criteria with the Standards and Guidelines. The results will be known in February 2007.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education<sup>4</sup>
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
  - internal assessment
  - external review
  - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

The quality assurance system includes:

- accreditations of institutions and programmes
- internal evaluation of institutions and programmes
- external evaluations of institutions and programmes

Accreditations are responsibility of the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia, established in 1994.

<sup>4</sup> higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

According to the new ASHEA 2006, the Council as accreditation body performs the following tasks:

- determines the criteria for accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes,
- determines the criteria for the design and accreditation of joint study programmes, wherein it shall apply the principles on establishing a European higher education space and other international principles and recommendations for the design of such programmes,
- determines the criteria for credit assessment of study programmes under ECTS and define minimum proportion of selection in study programmes,
- determines the criteria for transfers between study programmes,
- determines the criteria for recognising knowledge and skills acquired prior to enrolment in the programme,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions and their experts,
- provides professional opinions on compliance with conditions for the establishment or transformation of a higher education institution,
- gives consent for study programmes,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions and their experts,
- at least every seven years gives renewed consent for study programmes, taking into account the findings of self-evaluations reports and external evaluations reports.

According to the article 2 of the standing order Council performs its tasks independently.

Internal evaluations are the responsibility of higher education institutions. The National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (National Commission), composed of representatives of higher education institutions and students, assists higher education institutions in this task and complements their work. Higher education institutions have the quality assessment commissions that prepare annual self-evaluation reports. The system of self-evaluation and the methodology for self-evaluations was developed jointly by HEIs institutions and the National Commission. The National Commission collects institutional reports and publishes the annual national report that is presented to the public. It performs its activities according to the rules determined in cooperation with the senates of higher education institutions and criteria defined by the Council for Higher Education. The National Commission is a member of the CEE Network and participates in sessions of ENQA.

Thus, the external quality assurance so far included internal assessments and publication of results without external reviews. However, during the past years several higher education institutions had undergone international accreditations on their own initiative. These accreditations, of course, included also the external reviews. Some examples: CRE/EUA institutional evaluations of University of Ljubljana (UL) and University of Maribor (UM), international accreditations of institutions and / or study programmes of individual faculties (EQUIS accreditation of Faculty of Economics of UL, EAEVE accreditation of Veterinary Faculty of UL, sixteen FEANI courses at UM and twenty-nine at UL etc.).

In October 2004, the National Commission issued criteria for external evaluations in order to establish a national system of regular external evaluations. In 2006 it published a Guide for external evaluations and started first four pilot institutional external evaluations that will be completed in February 2007.

According to the new ASHEA 2006, the responsibilities of the Council for Higher Education are extended to include also the tasks of external evaluations. The Council will create a Senate for evaluations that will set up and guide the external evaluations procedures. A special unit within the Ministry of Higher Education will provide administrative assistance to the Council.

As evaluation body, the Council:

- monitors, assesses and assures the quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, their study programmes as well as research, artistic and professional work
- determines the criteria for monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, study programmes and research, artistic and professional work,
- co-operates with higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges and stimulates self-evaluations,
- co-operates with foreign accreditation institutions or bodies,
- organises training of external evaluation commissions,
- publishes reports on individual external evaluations and analyses them, prepares and publishes annual national reports.

The Senate for evaluations:

- collects and analyses self-evaluation and external evaluation reports,
- prepares expert basis for and conducts external evaluation procedures,
- nominates expert commissions for external evaluations of institutions and programmes,
- directs and reports on external evaluation procedures and stimulates self-evaluations of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges.

At the moment, the Senate for evaluations and the support unit within the Ministry are in the process of establishment (nominations of new members and appointment of new staff are under way). The system of external evaluations will operate at national level; it will cover all higher education institutions and include internal assessment, external review and publication of results as well as the peer review of the Council.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality

assurance:

- the governance of national agencies for QA
- as full members or observers in external review teams
- as part of the decision making process for external reviews
- in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
- in internal evaluations.

Students participate in all national bodies for QA and in internal evaluations. They will be involved also in external reviews once the regular system of external evaluations will be operational.

Students are represented in the Council for Higher Education as accreditation and evaluation body. The Government appoints members and president of the Council. Prior to the legislative changes in 2006, the Council had a president and fifteen members. Among them were three student representatives proposed by the Student Organisation of Slovenia in cooperation with the student councils of universities and independent higher-education institutions. According to the new ASHEA 2006, out of twenty members four are student representatives: one first cycle student, one second cycle student, one third cycle student and one student from a higher vocational college. The accreditation, evaluation and habilitation senates have nine members each, including one student representative.

Students are represented also in the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (three out of twenty-four members are students). They are members of quality assessment commissions at institutions and express their opinions on quality in student questionnaires that are carried out annually in all higher education institutions.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance
  - the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
  - the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
  - teams for external review, either as members or observers
  - membership of ENQA
  - membership of any other international network.

The international dimension is present in some aspects of quality assurance. The international experts don't participate formally in the governance of national bodies for QA. However, they are often members of expert commissions of the Council for Higher Education that evaluate the applications for accreditation. As

well, the international external evaluations and accreditations performed so far on the initiative of higher education institutions themselves were carried out exclusively by international experts. They will be involved also in regular external reviews and external evaluations of national QA agencies once the system will be implemented.

The National Commission is a member of the CEE Network and participates in ENQA conferences.

## Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

### Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
  - issued in a widely spoken European language
  - free of charge
  - automatically
  - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

In accordance with the Higher Education Act 1999 the Diploma Supplement is a part of each higher education diploma, issued by Slovenian higher education institutions. Diploma supplement is issued automatically in Slovene language and in one of the official languages of the European Union. It is issued free of charge.

The components of the Diploma Supplement form are suggested by the Council of Higher Education and determined by the minister, responsible for higher education. Slovenian Diploma Supplement corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

An update of Diploma Supplement form is currently being prepared to accommodate the changes in the Slovenian higher education system.

All students graduating in 2007 will receive a Diploma Supplement.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>5</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
  - applicants' right to fair assessment
  - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
  - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
  - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been ratified by Slovenia in 1999 and the respective legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents. Five main principles have been fulfilled by the Act on Recognition of and Evaluation of Education from 2005. The implementation of a new legalisation ensures a right to fair assessment of a foreign education and recognition in cases where no substantial differences can be proven. In case of a negative recognition decision, substantial differences are clearly demonstrated by the competent authority - education institution in case of recognition for a purpose for further education or the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in case of professional recognition. The accurate list of higher education institution and belonging study programmes is available on ministerial website.

The Education Recognition Unit at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology represents the Slovenian ENIC, which has been officially established by Act on Recognition of and Evaluation of Education but performed its activities already from 1993.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

The implementation of ECTS started in 1998 and became obligatory in 2002. Thus, all study programmes (old and new ones) are using ECTS in 2006/07.

There are altogether 91 study programmes of first (54) and second (37) cycle in the academic year 2006/07. That corresponds to approx. 22 % of all study programmes enrolling students in the academic year 2006/07.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>6</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Main topics of the Action Plan for Recognition are:

- improving the presentation of adequate, reliable and authenticated information on a national education system and higher education qualifications, the Diploma Supplement and other issues concerning recognition;
- co-operation with the Council of Higher Education as well as HEIs in the implementation of the criteria for assessment of prior learning, recognition of transnational qualifications, recognition of joint degrees and co-operation in the field of quality assurance.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

Please include:

- the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.

The criteria for recognition of prior learning are set in the Criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes that were adopted by the Council for Higher education as accreditation body in 2004. Thus, from 2004 onwards, they are part of the criteria for accreditation of study programmes.

According to the Criteria, HEIs recognise acquired knowledge, skills and

<sup>6</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

competencies that, what concerns content and requirements, fully or partly correspond to general or subject-specific competences, set by individual study programme. Knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by formal, non-formal and in-formal learning is taken into account.

Recognised knowledge, skills and competencies can be considered as an enrolment condition, if this is not set by law, as selection criteria in case of a limited number of study places or as completed study obligation. In the latter case, a completed study obligation must be evaluated and expressed in ECTS.

Thus, all HEIs must develop a system of the evaluation of student's knowledge, skills and competencies that relate to courses they offer. The results of the assessment serve for gaining entry to a formal programme, or count towards completion of the course. HEIs evaluate individual documented applications of students according to the provisions of their statutes and on the basis of the Council's criteria.

21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

Several legislative provisions were adopted with the aim to make the continuation of studies in different type of programme easier. After 2001/2002 a *vocational matura* and an additional exam in one of the *matura* subjects is an alternative to general *matura*, also granting admission to academic type of undergraduate programmes. With the introduction of the Bologna degree structure a first-level degree in appropriate professional field gives access to the second cycle and a second cycle degree in appropriate professional field gives access to the third cycle. Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning prior to enrolment in the study programme further increases the flexibility in entry requirements.

To increase the flexibility of their provision, HEIs increasingly implement flexible organisation of studies, distance studies, e-learning, individual consultation hours, tutorial system etc.

When developing new study programmes, HEIs are encouraged to implement modular structure of programmes. Still, so far only the minority of new accredited study programmes are composed of modules.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint<sup>7</sup> degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

The provisions for joint study programmes provided by Slovene and foreign HEIs were set in ASHEA 2004. They stated: Anyone completing all obligations under a joint educational study programme shall obtain a joint diploma citing all the higher education institutions participating in the provision of the study programme. A joint diploma shall be a public document. The participating higher education institutions shall determine the content and form of joint diplomas and appendices to diplomas. In addition, HEIs shall also take account of the criteria for the design and adoption of joint study programmes adopted by the Council for Higher Education. The Criteria of the Council for Higher Education (adopted in 2004) evaluate the following:

- accreditation of foreign partner institutions in their own country,
- adequacy of quality assurance, students enrolment, teaching languages, the content and form of Diploma and Diploma Supplement, etc.,
- adequacy of the part of the joint study programme offered by Slovene HEI,
- taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention,
- taking into account other international principles and recommendations on joint degrees, adopted within EU, the Bologna Process, Council of Europe, Unesco, OECD.

Slovene universities have interinstitutional agreements on implementation of joint study programmes and first such programmes have been accredited in early 2005. In 2006 the Council for Higher Education received also first applications for accreditation of study programmes leading to international joint degrees; they are currently being evaluated.

Slovene HEIs also participate in the Erasmus Mundus programme.

## **C. Current issues in Higher Education**

### **Higher education and research**

23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

<sup>7</sup> a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

According to the latest statistical data for 2004, 12.9 % of gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) was spent in the higher education sector. The distribution of GERD by sectors of R&D performance was as follows:

Business enterprise sector	67,0 %
Government sector	19,8 %
Higher education sector	12,9 %
Private non-profit sector	0,3 %
<u>Total GERD</u>	<u>100,0 %</u>

In 2004, 39.4% of public research was carried out in HEIs.

In all relevant national strategic development documents, there are several measures directed towards strengthening research co-operation between HEIs and government research institutes, as well as research cooperation between universities and government research institutes on the one hand, and the business sector on the other. The aim is to open universities to the needs of their environment and to increase support of the public research sector to innovation in enterprises in order to increase competitiveness of the national economy.

24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?

Since 1985, a very successful *Junior Researchers Programme* has been running in Slovenia, which has “produced” several researchers and significantly reduced average age of the researchers’ population in the country. Since great majority of graduates from this programme have traditionally remained in universities and government research institutes, a complementary programme of *Junior Researchers for the Economy* was launched in 2001 that is directed towards increasing the share of researchers with PhD engaged in the business sector.

### The social dimension

25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.

The prevailing public funding of higher education sector without tuition fees for first and second cycle full-time studies, the Government scholarships and student financial aid guarantee an open access to higher education.

20.2% of all students receive public funding support, in an average amount of EUR 186 per month. Most of them are state scholarships for materially deprived students (54%) and talented and gifted students (30%). Scholarships provided

by future employers amount to 12.5%, and those provided by (organised) foundations to 3%. Certain percentage of the basic scholarship represent special allowances for disabled students, students from families with minimum income, students with above-average study achievements, students coming from the most distant places from the study centres, students enrolling in under subscribed programmes, students from minorities, and student families. Scholarships are not taxed. One parent may claim a general, officially determined tax relief for children that are full-time students, as they are considered to be dependent family members.

All students receive subsidies for nutrition (meal coupons) and overall health insurance, while subsidies for housing (in student halls of residence and rented off-campus residential facilities) and public transport tickets are given to students fulfilling the forth set conditions.

According to the national survey *Evroštudent 2005*, numerous students (66%) undertake work provided by organised intermediaries, that is “student services”, to cover the costs of living during their studies. Such student income, not exceeding a yearly set amount (approx. EUR 6,677) is not taxed.

Special attention is paid to guarantee an equal access to higher education for students with special needs. They can enjoy special privileges concerning admission requirements (especially in cases of limited enrolment) and scholarship eligibility, they receive additional subsidies for housing, and provisions to insure their (physical) access to study and residential facilities have been made.

A new act on scholarships and student financial aid has been prepared that will come into force in 2007. The new type of financial aid (“combined scholarship”) will be formed from state and private funds (state – private partnership). More stimulative loans will be introduced, as well.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

The Employment Service of Slovenia at the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has taken up the initiative to organise the Guidance Forum that will help universities in Slovenia to strengthen their counselling and guidance services for the students and thus improve the retention rate. The founding of the Guidance Forum is based on the European Commission’s Communication on Lifelong Learning (2000). In December 2005 Slovenia hosted the trans-national conference “*National Guidance Policy Forums*”.

Student organizations that are members of Slovenian Student Unions are providing students with guidance and counselling services that involve legal

counselling, guidance on studies abroad, guidance on social network for students (accommodation, health care, social transfers, grants...), information on Bologna reform in Slovenia, information on extracurricular activities (locally and internationally)...

## Mobility

27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

Measures to increase the student mobility in the last two years focused on promotional activities. The outward mobility is well established, the opportunities of mobility programmes and scholarship schemes available for domestic students are fully used. Thus, the activities were targeted primarily towards foreign students. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the Centre for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes (CMEPIUS), three universities, several faculties and single HEIs prepared new promotional publications for foreign students. Publications present Slovenian higher education system and institutions, mobility opportunities and practical information. Numerous activities of different institutions were designed for foreign as well as domestic students. For example, CMEPIUS organised several international events like the genERAtion seminars and Erasmus contact seminar, published a bilingual brochure Mobility Opportunities for Young People, established an Internet forum for foreign and domestic students as well as ERACAREERS and ERA More portal etc. They published a new Erasmus brochure for Slovenian students. A public fund Ad futura, Science and Education Foundation of the Republic of Slovenia, maintains a Club, an Internet forum and annual colloquium for foreign students and researchers interested in study or research in Slovenia. They held the European Forum of Early Career Researchers in 2005 and organise yearly conventions for Slovene students studying abroad.

Slovenian Student Union and its members foster international co-operation and mobility, especially in SEE region by organising conferences and seminars.

They try to identify administrative barriers to mobility and find ways to reduce them.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

Any study abroad that is recognised as part of regular studies is regarded as study at a national HEI. All rights, linked with the student status in Slovenia, therefore remain unchanged. Three main types of national scholarships (state social scholarships, Zois merit-based scholarships and company scholarships), which amount to more than 90% of all scholarships available, are portable during the short-term mobility abroad. Students may also apply for these scholarships for the whole period of study abroad, when a chosen study programme is not provided at Slovene HEIs or when studying abroad is geographically more suitable. In all other cases the candidate has to prove that studying abroad will enhance his/hers employability and/or professional

expertise. In case of a company scholarship, the interest of the company is decisive.

29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward staff mobility
- any measures to increase outward staff mobility.

In the framework of structural funds and co-financing of international co-operation of HEIs, the Ministry provided incentives for networking of Slovene and foreign academic and other staff that should increase their mobility. Organisation of international conferences, seminars and workshops in Slovenia as well as participation of Slovene staff at foreign events should also have positive effect on outward and inward staff mobility. Some events, like seminars for Erasmus co-ordinators, became traditional.

### The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

The promotion of the EHEA took place during different activities of HEIs, student organisations, CMEPIUS, Ad futura and the Ministry, aiming at attracting foreign students, academic staff and researchers to Slovenia. For example, the Ministry prepared a publication on Slovene higher education and research system and institutions for the purpose of presentation of Slovenia at some future European Higher Education Fairs in Asian countries.

### Future challenges

31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.

The main challenges are:

- encourage and increase national and international mobility in tertiary education and research and between the two, adapt the criteria of habilitation of teaching staff,
- strengthen development of specific knowledge, skills and competences of **graduates**, relevant for innovation,
- create mechanisms for encouraging investment of business in education and co-operation between HE and industry, especially in the area of technical studies,
- encourage recognition of informal learning,
- further decentralise HE and create closer links to and responsibilities of regional economies in education, also through regional scholarship schemes,
- systematically increase quality of HE and quality assurance in HE (introduce regular external evaluations), in line with Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA,
- foster evidence-based policy-making,
- foster development of flexible study programmes and joint study

programmes,

- encourage introduction of learner-centred teaching and learning methods,
- develop the mechanisms of HE financing in favour of encouraging production of applied knowledge and connect financing also to quality indicators,
- develop HE strategies and changes with better cooperation of all HE partners.

Completed National Reports should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email no later than **Friday 15 December 2006**.

Please remember to attach a copy of your national action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Bologna Secretariat  
May 2006