



GREEK PRESIDENCY OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

FOLLOW-UP GROUP OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Review of achievements and plans in relation to the goals of the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué

1. Review of up-to-date achievements

After the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the higher education institutions in the Republika Srpska began to work toward modernisation and reforms in conformity with the European and the world's principles governing the function of higher education. By reason of the lack of our own funds and the funds from the Republika Srpska budget and an insufficient level of education, our institutions have relied, since the very beginning of the process, on international aid provided within the projects funded by various international organisations and a number of individual countries. All those projects have been directed to various aspects of reform and modernisation of the organisation and functioning of higher education institutions in the Republika Srpska, in view of European and international trends. The Education Ministry and the Republika Srpska Government have monitored and endorsed those activities.

The most important contribution in that respect has been made through Tempus projects. A considerable number of Tempus projects, which involved the participation of the universities and faculties from the Republika Srpska, concerned reconstruction, modernisation and improvement of the quality of higher education and higher education institutions. Within those projects, co-operation was established and maintained with the partner universities and faculties within the European Community, which led to the acquisition of new knowledge about the directions of the development of higher education, organisation and creation of the European space for higher education. Among other international projects, which were equally important, are PHARE Multi-Country Project and the projects funded by the governments of a number of developed countries, such as, for instance, Finland, Norway, Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and the USA. Since the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, all the activities on higher education reform in the Republika Srpska have been conducted mainly in compliance with the objectives defined in that Declaration.

The implementation of the World Bank's Education Development Project began in 2000. The project is funded by the World Bank's credit funds. The Project also contains a component which covers higher education. Within that component, some very important activities are in the process of being implemented. They focus on modernisation, increased quality and an institutional development of higher education institutions, on the principles of the Bologna Declaration.

In the course of 2000, the Higher Education Co-ordination Board in Bosnia and Herzegovina (HECB) was formed within the Education Development Project. As of today, HECB comprises the rectors of all seven Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the representatives of the academic communities at the Entity level, appointed by the responsible Ministries. The Republika Srpska representatives and the Republika Srpska Education Ministry have taken an active part in the process of forming the HECB and its activities taken thus far. The seat of HECB was registered in 2002 in the Republika Srpska. It formed its Secretariat as an administrative unit. Sub-committees have been formed with the HECB, entrusted with specific tasks. Thus, we have the Bologna Process Sub-Committee; the Legal Framework Sub-Committee; Grant Sub-Committee. HECB was granted accession to the European University Association (EUA) in 2002.

The HECB work has been mainly successful. Numerous initiatives have been launched and many activities have been taken toward higher education development in accordance with the European processes, with a view to our higher education institutions joining the European space for higher education. HECB has given its unanimous support to the objectives contained in the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué, as well as in the Lisbon Convention. All of its activities are undertaken in that direction, towards implementing the Bologna process and the objectives set in the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué in Bosnia and Herzegovina. HECB representatives are members of the Working Group for Higher Education Quality and Modernisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, formed by OSCE. The Working Group is working in co-operation with the Council of Europe, OHR, and other international and domestic organisations involved in higher education. The Working Group is working on the documents pertaining to the higher education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. HECB representatives also take part in the Working Group tasked with drafting the Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. HECB's Bologna Process Sub-Committee has considered and issued guidance for implementation of the Bologna Process in BiH. The Legal Framework Sub-Committee has explored the needs and made framework recommendations for amendments to the higher education legislation in BiH.

The Republika Srpska academic community has become well-informed through all those activities and gained the necessary and needed experiences in relation to the objectives of the higher education reform, the Bologna Declaration, the Prague Communiqué and Lisbon Convention. Students are also involved in all the activities. In this way, support to ongoing reforms and the Bologna process has been ensured and provided by both the professors and students. Some faculties, as pilot faculties, have worked on introducing of diploma supplements and applying of the credit transfer system in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The Republika Srpska Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture also support fully the implementation of the Bologna process and all the objectives set in the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republika Srpska has established a separate Bologna Process Commission, tasked with monitoring and implementing the Bologna Process in the Republika Srpska.

A new Law on University is in the process of being drafted in the Republika Srpska. It should include all the principles, objectives and recommendations contained in the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué and the Lisbon Convention. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Government of the Republika Srpska fully support those principles and objectives and their inclusion in the new law.

2. Plans for future activities

The plans of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republika Srpska in relation to the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué are orientated to the reform of our system and higher education institutions, in compliance with the Bologna Declaration and to a practical implementation of its objectives in the legislation and practical work of our higher education institutions. We have expressed best our intentions and plans in the document titled A Message to the Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Education Reform, signed by the Republika Srpska Education Ministry at a meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), held on November 21, 2002, in Brussels. The document reflects the pledges which the Education Ministers of both Entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina presented publicly and adopted in the presence of the highest authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council member states. That Education Reform Plan is a comprehensive document stipulating the objectives of the reform and is directed to the activities required for their implementation. One part of that document refers to modernisation of higher education and its increased quality. It is a basis of our activity plan in relation to the objectives of the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué. We shall mention here the basic objectives and the activity plan for higher education. The Bologna Process Commission formed within our Ministry is working on a detailed elaboration of that plan for eventual implementation.

Basic objectives

These are the basic objectives of the modernisation of higher education and implementation of the Bologna Process in the Republika Srpska.

Improvement of the quality of higher education and research in BiH, a significant increase of the number of people joining higher education and insurance of the overall participation of our universities in the European space for higher education, through:

Granting independence to the universities in the decision-making process and insurance of responsibility for all who take part in the process, the quality of education they offer, assurance of the wellbeing of students, standard, research activities, a professional development of the staff and rationalisation of administration and management

Improving the quality of teaching process and learning at the universities, with a view to achieving standards which are in harmony with the European practice.

Promoting scientific and research work which will improve a scientific and teaching process and support a comprehensive social and economic development.

Implementation plan

This is a detailed review of the activities which will be taken within the implementation of individual objectives of modernisation of higher education and implementation of the Bologna Process in the Republika Srpska.

1. Granting independence to the universities in the decision-making process and insurance of responsibility for all who take part in the process, for the quality of education they offer, wellbeing of their students, standard, research activities, a professional development of the staff and rationalisation of administration and management

Integration of the universities by granting a status of a legal entity exclusively to the university as a whole, including the faculties and other academic units within that legal entity.

Granting the overall responsibility for the university budget management to the central body which makes decisions of that university

Professionalization of university administration and advancement of professional ability of their management

Insurance of institutional participation of students, academic and non-academic staff in internal decision-making processes.

Support to the universities in the development of strategic plans harmonised with the new laws on higher education.

2. Improvement of quality of teaching process and learning at the universities with a view to achieving standards which are in compliance with the European practice.

Support to the universities in the implementation of the reforms mentioned further down in the text and establishment of a system for reporting on implementation of these objectives:

Reform of the curricula, scientific and teaching processes with a view to promoting an active participation, critical thinking and analysis, creativity and adjustability, using modules and methodologies which also include distance learning.

Attraction of more senior students and promotion of lifelong learning and advancement, via strengthening of the relevance of the curricula against the labour market, supplemental training or re-training, with a stronger emphasis on practice and implementation; developing studies which will last shorter, offering numerous possibilities for part-time studies.

Increase of the number of students who complete their studies successfully within a defined period of time, in relation to those who do not complete their studies.

Strengthening of infrastructure at the universities, especially accommodation and services for students who come from the areas outside the area of the university.

Establishment of public and transparent mechanisms for quality insurance, including the procedures for periodical external evaluation of the universities.

3. Promotion of mobility of students and academic staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.

Support to the universities in the following reforms, including the signing of the Bologna Declaration (September 2003) and the signing and ratification of the Lisbon Convention (by April 2004) – in accordance with the BiH Council of Europe post-accession requirements – and establishment of the system of reporting on the implementation of these objectives.

Establishment of the system of equivalence for academic titles acquired at the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the European practice.

Introduction of an explanation as a diploma supplement at all universities.

Acceleration of introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) with a view to completing the process for most academic programmes.

Introduction of a procedure for enrolment, evaluation and issuance of diplomas to students which will be open, transparent and reliable.

Assurance that enrolment in a university is regulated through a system of acquiring a diploma upon completion of a secondary school (passing a secondary school leaving examination etc.) which will be recognised under the Lisbon Convention.

4. Promotion of science and research work which will improve scientific and teaching process and support the overall social and economic development.

Strengthening of scientific and research work via allocating at least 2% of the public budgetary funds to research activities, new laws on scientific and research work and insurance of tax facilities for individuals and institutions involved in the scientific and research work.

Improvement of learning and teaching quality at the universities and their increased contribution to cultural, economic and social development, strengthening of scientific and research work of student and teaching staff via an open approach to the mentioned sources of funding and allocating funds via an open competition, devoted exclusively to the research projects within a new system of higher education funding.

A successful implementation of the above mentioned objectives and planned activities is conditioned by the adoption and implementation of a new legislation for higher education at all levels as soon as possible, which will be based on the best European practices.

Framework plan for modernisation of higher education and implementation of the Bologna Process

	ACTIVITY	DEADLINE
1.	<p>Granting independence to the universities in making decisions and insurance of responsibilities for all who take part in the process, for the quality of education they offer, wellbeing of their students, standard, research activities, professional development of the staff and rationalisation of administration and management.</p> <p>Integration of the universities by grating a status of a legal entity exclusively to the university as a whole, including the faculties and other academic units within that legal entity.</p> <p>Granting the overall responsibility for the university budget management to the central body which makes decisions of that university</p> <p>Professionalization of university administration and advancement of professional ability of their management</p> <p>Insurance of institutional participation of students, academic and non-academic staff in internal decision-making processes.</p> <p>Support to the universities in the development of strategic plans harmonised with the new laws on higher education.</p>	<p>December 2005</p> <p>July 2004</p> <p>July 2004</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>July 2004</p> <p>December 2004</p>
2.	<p>Improvement of quality of teaching process and learning at the universities with a view to achieving standards which are in compliance with the practice in Europe.</p> <p>Support to the universities in the implementation of the reforms mentioned further down in the text and establishment of a system for reporting on implementation of these objectives.</p> <p>Reform of the curricula, scientific and teaching processes with a view to promoting an active</p>	<p>December 2005</p> <p>December 2003</p> <p>July 2006</p>

	<p>participation, critical thinking and analysis, creativity and adjustability, using modules and methodologies which also include distance learning.</p> <p>Attraction of more senior students and promotion of lifelong learning and advancement, via strengthening of the relevance of the curricula for the labour market, supplemental training and re-training, with a stronger emphasis on practice and implementation; developing studies which will last shorter, offering numerous possibilities for part time studies.</p> <p>Increase of the number of students who complete their studies successfully within a defined period of time, in relation to those who do not complete their studies.</p> <p>Strengthening of infrastructure at the universities, especially accommodation and services for students who come from the areas outside the area of the university.</p> <p>Establishment of public and transparent mechanisms for quality insurance, including the procedures for periodical external evaluation of the universities.</p>	<p>July 2005</p> <p>December 2005</p> <p>July 2005</p> <p>December 2004</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Promotion of mobility of students and academic staff in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.</p> <p>Support to the universities in the following reforms, including the signing of the Bologna Declaration (September 2003) and the signing and ratification of the Lisbon Convention (by April 2004) – in accordance with the BiH Council of Europe post-accession requirements – and establishment of the system of reporting on the implementation of these objectives.</p> <p>Establishment of the system of equivalence for academic titles acquired at the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the European practice.</p>	<p>December 2006</p> <p>December 2003</p> <p>December 2006</p>

	<p>Introduction of an explanation as a diploma supplement at all universities.</p> <p>Acceleration of the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) with a view to completing the process for most academic programmes.</p> <p>Introduction of a procedure for enrolment, evaluation and issuance of diplomas to students which will be open, transparent and reliable.</p> <p>Insurance that enrolment in a university is regulated through a system of acquiring a diploma upon completion of a secondary school (passing a secondary school leaving examination etc.) which will be recognised under the Lisbon Convention.</p>	<p>July 2003</p> <p>July 2004</p> <p>July 2004</p> <p>July 2006</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Promotion of science and research work which will improve scientific and teaching process and support the overall social and economic development.</p> <p>Strengthening of scientific and research work via allocating at least 2% of the public budgetary funds to research activities, new laws on scientific and research work and insurance of tax facilities for individuals and institutions involved in the scientific and research work.</p> <p>Improvement of learning and teaching quality at the universities and their increased contribution to cultural, economic and social development, strengthening of scientific and research work of student and teaching staff via an open approach to the mentioned sources of funding and allocating funds via an open competition, devoted exclusively to the research projects within a new system of higher education funding.</p>	<p>December 2004</p> <p>December 2003</p> <p>December 2004</p>