

bologna process

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1. Main achievements since Berlin

1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms

By way of sublegal acts the organization of the first cycle studies in some pilot branches/courses of study has been finalized in accordance with the 'Bologna Declaration'. In parallel, standards for the academic structures have been compiled, organization of university curricula on the basis of credits has come into play, reflection of credits on the grade report/transcript has materialized, the supplemental diploma has accordingly occurred, election to the students' governing body have taken place, introduction of a novel concepts on the teaching load of pedagogues has been instituted, the benchmarks for the institutional evaluation and standards on quality assurance in higher education have been created.

2. National organisation

2.1. Give a short description of the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their competencies (For example, do higher education institutions report to different ministries?)

The State Authority of Higher Education in the Republic of Albania is the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES). It exercises its own activity mainly through the Department of Higher Education and Diploma Recognition at MOES and through the Agency of Accreditation of Higher Education. MOES approves the official wording of diplomas to be issued by the Higher Schools for those study courses subject to recognition to the accreditation process. The establishment of the new study courses and creation of the departments is done on the basis of a decision taken by the senate body attached to the Higher Schools, after getting the final formal say by MOES on meeting the standards already set. The immediate economic impacts incurred on their opening are to be borne by the Higher School. The state, in considering the budget earmarked for the Higher Public School, takes due notice of its existence, after the outcomes of the institutional evaluation and the accreditation of the Higher School. The closing down of a course of study or the departments is done by MOES after obtaining the final word by the Council of Accreditation. The opening up of the Higher Schools and faculties is done under a decision of the Council of Ministers on the basis of a proposal coming from MOES. Their closure is done by the Council of Ministers on the basis of a proposal made by MOES after receiving the final thought on the matter by the Council

of Accreditation. The criteria, the ways of its functioning, and procedures pursued in granting the licenses to opening the non-public Higher Schools are determined by law for higher education and other sublegal acts issued by the Council of Ministers. The President of the Republic appoints the rector who has been declared a winner from the elections held at the higher schools, while the Minister of Education and Science appoints the deputy rector and the chancelar of the higher schools, on the basis of a proposal attributed to the rector. MOES is responsible for conducting the economic-financial auditing of the public higher schools, in full compliance with the relevant legislation. MOES enacts the orienting administrative structure of the higher schools at all levels. MOES is responsible for determining the number of jobs for the teaching staff, as well as the classification and the number of jobs for the non-teaching administrative staff, the helping staff to fill in the libraries and other delivery services of the public higher schools.

The Committee for Scientific Qualification, established by the Council of Ministers, approves of the classification of the academic staff at higher Schools. The number of jobs for the administrative and academic staff are to be gotten by way of a competition. MOES determines the teaching scientific norms of the academic staff. The entrance/admission quotas at Higher Schools, with regard to the full-time system, are proposed by MOES and officially approved by the Council of Ministers. In determining the quotas, MOES has to ask in advance for the opinion of the Higher Schools. Admission to public higher schools is being done on the basis of competition (entry exams), when the number of candidate entrants is much higher than the quotas already being set.

The way about how the entrance competitions are administered is determined by MOES, after consulting first the Rectors' Conference. MOES officially honors the execution of legislation at the Higher Schools. It is entitled to repeal any act issued by the senate of higher schools or by the rector, when these turn out to run counter to the law. In extreme cases, when the rector repeatedly violates the legal/sublegal act or the statute of higher schools, the Minister of Education and Science calls up the early elections, after asking first the opinion of the Senate.

Competences of MOES, DHEDR, ACHE are determined by legal and sublegal acts.

2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure

(For example, number of public/private universities/other HE institutions or numbers/percentage of students in public/private sector. To what extent are private and State higher education institutions covered by the same regulations?)

Higher Education Institutions operating in the Republic of Albania include:

a) Public Institutions

1. University of Tirana
2. Polytechnic University of Tirana
3. Agricultural University of Tirana
4. "Luigj GURAKUQI" University of Shkodër
5. "Aleksandër XHUVANI" University of Elbasan
6. Universiteti "Eqerem ÇABEJ" University of Gjirokastrë
7. "Fan S. NOLI" of Korça
8. "Ismail QEMALI" University of Vlora
9. The Academy of Arts, Tirana
10. The "Vojo Kushi" Academy of Physical Training and Sports Tirana

* The legal and sub-legal acts, on the basis of which is embedded the activity of the Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Republic of Albania consist f:

1. Law for Higher Education in Republic of Albania
2. Statute of Higher Schools
3. Higher Schools Regulations
4. Decision of Council of Ministers

Number of enrolled students at the Public Higher Schools in the Republic of Albania is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. in the full-time system | 41935 studentë |
| 2.in part-time system | 18328 studentë |

b) Non-public institutions include

1. Higher School "New York University" Tiranë
2. Higher School "Luarasi" Tiranë
3. Higher School "Marubi" Tiranë
4. Higher School "Zonja e Këshillit të mirë" Tiranë
5. Higher School "UFO" Tiranë

In these higher schools students major in: Law, Economics, Medicine, Stomatology, Cinematography.

The number of students already enrolled in these schools accounts for 944

* The legal and Sub-legal acts, on the basis of which is embedded the functioning of the non-public higher education institutions in the Republic of Albania include:

- 1.Law for Higher Education in the Republic of Albania
- 2.Decision of Council of Ministers

2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country

(National Bologna group, thematic working groups, composition and activities, stakeholder involvement)

In Albania the Steering Committee intended to oversee the implementation of "Bologna Declaration" has been set up with representatives coming from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, universities, civic society and business. The Steering Committee has developed a working plan for the period 2004-2005 entitled "approximating the albanian higher Education system to European one according to the requirements of the Bologna declaration". In the meantime other sub working groups have been created to review closely the financing system of the higher schools, the teaching hour load, and the arrangement of the studies in cycles. Within the working plan the main tasks to be fulfilled with 2004-2005 in mind have been set out accordingly; they are concerned with the quality assurance, teaching hour load, the financing system, implementation of ECTS, reorganizing the course of study in cycles, the diploma supplement, the academic recognition of diplomas obtained in

the higher schools overseas, the student governing body the student's card. All the relevant decisions are adopted in close cooperation with the higher schools.

3. Quality assurance

The following questions have been included in the template at the request of the Working Group on Stocktaking.

3.1. National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

The Agency of Accreditation for Higher Education was established in 1999. It consists of a technical structure adequately trained over the past years through various projects. The importance attached to the creation of such an agency is safely confirmed by a special decision of the Ministry of Education and Science. As such, the Agency of Accreditation is a public institution responsible to the Ministry of Education and Science. It has compiled a set of standards and procedures on the internal and external evaluation of the universities. A special branch or an institution of higher education should be accredited within 4 academic years.

In addition to its technical staff, the Agency of Accreditation is made up of the Council of Accreditation, which is appointed by the Council of Ministers at the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Science. It is composed of 9 high profile professionals in the field of the Albanian higher education, science and economy, with holding scientific titles attached to their names. One member on the council should be a representative of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Chairman of the Accreditation Agency is appointed by the Council of Ministers.

The Agency of Accreditation has already conducted the evaluation of nursing course of studies, represented in almost 6 universities. This evaluation has extended to Civil Engineering in the Polytechnic University as well. On the basis of the findings of these evaluations, the Council of Accreditation has taken the appropriate decisions which have been passed over to the Ministry of Education and Science as well as to the Universities. During this academic year there has started the evaluation and accreditation process of diplomas in the teaching domain too.

3.2. National quality assurance systems should include a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.

Describe the system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, if any.

The National System of Quality Assurance could otherwise be an accreditation system. Up till now, the full accreditation or certification has not been carried out, since the accreditation structures are quite new. As of the past year and onwards, the comparative evaluation regarding certain courses of study (branches) has been duly conducted and all resulting tasks have been set out. Thus a conditional accreditation has been realized. If the new courses of study already exposed to these evaluations do not live up to the standards in relation to the deadlines as set, the titles of the diplomas ascribed to these courses will not be recognized.

3.3. National quality assurance systems should include international participation, co-operation and networking.

Are international peers included in the governing board(s) of the quality assurance

agency(ies)?

The Agency of Accreditation has been working closely with foreign partners in order to compile the evaluation standards. At this point in time no foreign specialist has ever taken part in evaluations already conducted. Our legislation does not bar the cooperation and participation of foreign specialists in the evaluation and accreditation procedures.

Please add any general comments, reflections and/or explanations to the material on quality assurance in the stocktaking report.

4. The two-cycle degree system

The two-cycle degree system is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

The extension of the system to the two cycles of study, the university and graduate system, is into its third year of implementation at the universities and our higher schools; at the Agricultural University, at the Polytechnical university. With the signing of the "Bologna Declaration" in september 2003, it should be noted that its application has been effective in certain pilot courses of study during the academic year 2004-2005 in 6 higher schools. During the current academic year it is being implemented for the first time in the Lower level and the pre-schools lower level, in nursing and in the journalism courses of study at the university of Tirana, as well as at several branches at the university of Shkodra with a 3 year lifespan for the first cycle of study. The higher schools are making efforts towards extending this implementation to all branches with the coming academic year 2005-2006. Naturally speaking, several areas of study with regard to mathematics, architecture, construction, and veterinary are to be excluded. In order to oversee the functioning of the study system working teams have been set up with the view to previewing the curricula in a new light. In addition, in order to realize it, several activities such as workshops, seminars, training sessions have been scheduled to take place with the involvement of the academic and administrative staff. How about the second cycle? Could we safely state that work is being done on this level in parallel to the first level and efforts are being made to identify the institutions to offer this level.

5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

The Lisbon Convention has already been ratified by our country. On the basis of the law for higher education, under a special decision of the Council of Ministers, starting as of the academic year 2004 – 2005, the Department of Higher Education and Diploma Recognition at MOES, has initiated and instituted the process of recognizing diplomas and corresponding certificates obtained overseas.

The legal basis with reference to this process include:

1. Law for Higher Education in Republic of Albania
2. Decision of Council of Ministers Vendimi i Këshillit të Ministrave .
3. Regulation of Minister of Education and Science

During the academic year 2004 – 2005 the diploma supplement has duly been effective.

The legal basis to guide this process are Law for Higher Education and the sub-legal acts issued by MOES

6. Doctoral studies and research

6.1. Give a short description of the organisation of third cycle studies

(For example, direct access from the bachelor level, balance between organised courses, independent study and thesis)

The third cycle, that is the doctoral studies, are organized by the high quality universities and their duration varies from 3 to 5 years. Only the candidates who have gained the diploma Master at home or abroad have a right to be admitted to such studies. The same goes for those who have a Master diploma equivalent to the ones obtained at home. This recognition of the diplomas obtained abroad is done by the institution that runs the doctoral programme. The candidates who have a bachelor degree can't be admitted to doctoral studies. They have to complete first the Master programme prior to being engaged in doctoral studies.

For those who have pursued a second cycle programme, which is not equivalent to the Master Programme, can attend supplemental courses to the programme. The aim of the doctoral studies is to qualify pure specialists, through writing up a doctoral thesis, which should be done in an independent manner and should be purely qualitative in nature. The topic of the dissertation is being selected on the basis of the priority areas predetermined by the universities and research institutions.

Qëllimi i studimeve doktorale është kualifikimi i specialistëve, nëpërmjet përgatitjes së tezës së doktoratës, me aftësi për të kryer, edhe në mënyrë të pavarur, veprimtari cilësore akademike dhe kërkimore shkencore.

The work in progress to write up the thesis should be led by two leaders with the title "prof" or "prof assoc" and is overseen by an individual programme, by the department of the University, where the candidate has been registered.

The defense of the thesis is done in front of a jury consisting of 5 persons, where 3 should have the title "professor" and members from outside the institution.

There are several criteria that should be taken into account in evaluating the content of the thesis. They relate to the personal contribution given by the candidate, to the values and solutions offered and the comparison drawn with similar fields in the advanced countries.

The candidate, who fails in the thesis, has a right to start working back on it and submit it for redefense after 1-2 years.

The funding in this type of study may come from various sources: such as state budget, personal contributions given by the candidate and other financial sources.

6.2. What are the links between HE and research in your country?

(For example, what percentage of publicly-funded research is conducted within HE institutions?)

All of the scientific research institutions are responsible to the Academy of Science. The Universities organize their research in their own research centers, through plans and programs as well as through the research projects they realize jointly with foreign partners.

The research efforts are funded by the state budget, from the funds available through the national programs of MOES, from various national and international programs and other sources.

7. Mobility of students and staff

7.1. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of students from as well as to your country (For instance funds devoted to mobility schemes, portability of student loans and grants, visa problems)

With regard to the mobility of students, all the legal framework has been created to allow for the transfer of studies from outside our education system, that is from a European country to Albania, by undertaking the equivalent process of teaching programs and plans, as well as the transfer of studies within our education system. The main factors attributed to this could cover: quality of the university curricula which is pretty close to the international one, introduction of new courses on the basis of the cooperation projects, qualification of the academic staff and the creation of an up-to-date legislation in compliance with the "Bologna Declaration".

In the framework of creating chances for student and teaching staff mobility the agreement between the Republic of Albania and 9 other European countries has been approved in principle (CEEPUS II) and all the necessary procedures are underway in order to bring to light such agreements.

7.2. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of students from as well as to your country

In our country the way has been paved for the recognition of diplomas and incomplete courses of study as well. Each academic year, our higher schools receive students who want to carry on their studies which were started in schools overseas. The procedures for recognizing incomplete courses of study are organized by the higher schools on the basis of the regulations drafted by MOES. The number of students to be admitted is determined by a decision of the Council of Ministers. This decision allows for quotas to be distributed to foreign students who want to be educated in Albania. The foreign students fall in two categories: a. students coming from countries with which we have cooperation agreements, b. foreign students who come of their own choice.

7.3. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of teachers and staff from as well as to your country (For instance tenure of appointment, grant schemes, social security, visa problems)

By way of programs and TEMPUS project professors have had further training and qualification in their own fields in other countries. The number of professors trained through TEMPUS has hit high numbers. This in turn has contributed to long-term sustainable relations among these institutions. The financial cost for travel and other expenses remains to be an issue for us.

Our higher schools have a legal possibility to bind cooperation agreements with their counterparts overseas and to create chances for mutual exchanges with other European institutions. Over the past two years the universities have negotiated visa arrangements with the accredited embassies in our country. This has proved useful in the mobility process of the academic staff, but there is a long way to go to accommodate the young teachers as well.

7.4. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of academic teachers and staff from as well as to your country

There are no legal hurdles for the shifting of the home or foreign staff. The albanian pedagogues can easily obtain a visa in cases when they file with the various foreign embassies invitation letters sent by the host institutions. Profesors with titles are equipped with two year visas depending on the agreements in place with various partners. This is a right enjoyed by the members of the senate as well. In other cases the Ministry for Foreign Affairs acts as an intermediary for such agreements to be signed. There are come sporadic cases when visas are refused by some embassies. This is a rare occurrence.

8. Higher education institutions and students

8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions

Is autonomy determined/defined by law? To what extent can higher education institutions decide on internal organisation, staffing, new study programmes and financing?

On the basis of Law for Higher Education, the public higher education is guaranteed and funded by the state as well as other legitimate sources. Universities do enjoy an academic freedom in the teaching process and in the scientific research. The academic freedom is concerned with respecting and honoring opinions, ideas, methods and in guaranteeing freedom, creating thinking in teaching and research, in compliance with the relevant plans and programmes. Public universities do enjoy an institutional autonomy as well. In this context, the university elects its own governing bodies, the academic and administrative personnel, defines the area of teaching and the scientific research. The university budget is an item on its own in the budget intended for education and is closely administered in accordance with the legal acts. The University has a right to offer up services in areas that relate to the implementation of the practical aspect of teaching and scientific research and to raise its own funds which could be used for its own needs.

The university is entitled to bind agreements and to sign up memberships to international associations and organizations or other entities which help further the development of higher education. The tasks and obligations of the school personnel are determined by the statute and the inner regulations of the respective units. The positions for the academic and administrative personnel are won on the basis of competition administered by the higher schools themselves.

8.2. Describe actions taken to ensure active participation from all partners in the process

Decisions in higher schools are taken by the Council of Faculty or the Senate of University. The decisions taken by the Ministry of Education and the Council of Ministers are taken after consultation and the submission of proposals by the higher schools themselves. Decisions such as this could include students' admission to higher schools, changes in legislation, decisions in reforms etc.

8.3. How do students participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions and at the national level?

(For example, participation in University Governing Bodies, Academic Councils etc)

Students have a right to elect and be elected in all the leading bodies of higher schools. They have a right to organize themselves in nonpublic students' associations. Students of Higher Schools elect the student governing body which is a nonpublic representation structure by the students themselves. The students governing body guarantees the participation of students in

decision making process at the level of faculty and higher school. It selects its own representatives in the council of faculty and the senate of higher schools. The student's governing body stands for and defends the wide-ranging interests of students on various academic, administrative problems or services by students. Elections to the students' governing body are held on the basis of a regulation drafted by the students. The rector in each higher school provides the right conditions for the election process and the functioning of the students' governing body.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

9.1. Describe measures which promote equality of access to higher education

By getting to know the immediate social impacts incurred by any type of reforms in both content and form, in particular those reforms related to Higher Education which in turn bear a relation to "market economy" in particular and the global market in general, a series of complex measures have been instuted in the form of legal and financial one, which undoubtedly have had an impact on the social dimensions resulting from the Bologna Declaration. These are thought to be of significance and useful in rapid and overall development of higher education in order for it to be prepared to better face up to the challenges in the market economy, to help it solve complex issues of the prospective.

The curricula reform, the extension of studies in the form of two cycles the cutting down on the traditional timing to better adjust it to the dynamic development of the country has brought along issues and problems. These problems have been delat with by way of opening up new university courses of study, establishing the part-time system and offering other new services at the universities. This has been coupled with improvments in legislation and the adding up of statutes and regulations which see to the overall functioning of universities.

As far as the admission to higher schools is concerned we have witnessed no inequality in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, age and other any related factor. Higher education is a public good up for grabs for all those who have in possession a high-school leaving certificate and who intend to carry on with their higher studies.

10. Developments in lifelong learning

10.1. What measures have been taken by your country to encourage higher education institutions in developing lifelong learning paths?

Life Long Learning has long been considered a top priority of Higher Education. All of the legislation in higher education in 1999, Act No. 8461, dated 25.02.1999 "For Higher Education in Republic of Albania" (altered) has been drafted in such a way as to help all those persons with desires and possibilities to study at any given age in order for them to match up their skills to the market economy needs by gaining further qualifications. In order to realize this, admission quotas have been awarded for second choice courses of study, which are carried out without any competition against a tuition fee due to the institution, which varies on the basis of the branch or the faculty chosen. What is more, to this picture we could add in the part-time system which has been in effect since the academic year 2003-2004. This system operates in such courses of study: teaching, economics and informatics . This system is being frequented by a considerable number of candidates. Furthermore, in the higher education system there exists "Education in distance" which has

been applied to the branches of mechanical engineering, electricity and electronics. Distance education has been extended to postuniversity courses in the area of economics and libraries.

10.2. Describe any procedures at the national level for recognition of prior learning/flexible learning paths

Admission to the part-tiem system are administered by the higher schools while the admission quotas are set by MOES after filing in the requests put forth by the higher schools. In general, the quotas have been liberal by nature and admissions at some place have been done without competition. The diploma obtained at this schooling system enjoys the same status with the one obtained in the full-time system.

11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

11.1 Describe any legal obstacles identified by your country and any progress made in removing legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and/or joint study programmes

There are no legal hurdles whatsoever. Act No. 8461, dated 25.02.1999 "For Higher Education in Republic of Albania" altered into Act No. 9120, dated 28.07.2003 "For some additions and changes in Act Nr. 8461, dated 25.02.1999 for Higher Education in Republic of Albania" is fully stating the possibility provided in terms of common programs and diplomas as well as their recognition. According to article 7/e in the context of institutional autonomy " The Higher school is entitled to bind agreements with other foreign higher schools and cooperations in the teaching-scientific process, as well as for the qualification of its personnel. By contrast article 43 states the recognition and equivalentation of certificates, diplomas and degrees. With specific reference to this law " the forms of recognizing and rendering equal the certificate, diplomas and degrees obtained abroad at the higher education institutions is done on the basis of acts passed the Council of Ministers, by faithfully honoring the international agreements and the conventions where Albania is a signatory.

11.1.1. Describe the extent of integrated study programmes leading to joint degrees or double degrees

Even though the legal basis does exist, yet it has been noticed that concrete initiatives at achieving or realizing common studies and diplomas are few in number. At the public education there are no common programs at the university level, while in the non-public institutions two concrete initiatives have come to the surface with the New York University of Tirana and the Catholic University "Zonja e Këshillit të Mirë". The two universities are successfully using the universities programmes of their respective counterparts in USA and Italy. When it comes to the postuniversity level is relatively rich. The Faculty of Economics at the University of Tirana offers three "master" programmes with foreign universities. 2 go for the American universities and one with a European university. The programme " Master in European economical studies" which has started during the current academic year is a programme which is being realized in Germany and Rumania and is staffed from both the foreign professionals (70%) and domestic ones (30%). The programme "Master in European Studies" which is offered by the University of Tirana is being built on the basis of a cooperation with several European universities (the Catholic University of Leuvenit, University of Granada, Aristotel University of Thessaloniki, University of Bonn, European Central University in Hungary) and an

international accreditation is at the core of the efforts taken. There is a cooperation with France for an on-line programme that issues postuniversity diplomas for european studies. A much better consolidated experience to be brought in is that of the Polytechnical University for the university diploma of the third cycle "international diploma on management" in the area of administering and managing the enterprises. This diploma is being issued by IRGAE of Bordo (Institut Régional de Gestion et d' Administration des Entreprises) and university of "Montesquieu Bordeaux IV" France. This diploma is recognized at both the national and international level (FNEGE network). In the meantime the New York University of Tirana has initiated a common postuniversity programme with an austrian university.

11.1.2. How have these programmes been organised? (joint admissions, mobility of students, joint exams, etc.)

The procedure pursued in organizing these programmes is based on models which are in use at the universities with which we have cooperations already signed. The common thread we share lies in: teaching plans, teaching programs, in the admission procedure of students, in the evaluation procedures and manners, in the pedagogy and student mobility.

11.2. Describe any transnational co-operation that contributes to the European dimension in higher education

There are a number of cooperation programmes that contribute considerably to the creation of european dimension in higher education. The TEMPUS programme, the Stability Pact programme, the CARDS programme, The Phare programme, and many other bilateral agreements inked between the albanian universities and the foreign counterparts. Ka disa programe bashkëpunimi që i kontribuojnë dimensionit evropian në arsimin e lartë: The best indicators of the development of european dimension are supported by: learning european foreign languages at the university level: english, french, italian, greek, the students and pedagogues' mobility, the exchange of information and experience on two-sided matters for the higher education systems of the member states of EU, the launching of common scientific studies, encouraging long distance education, the drafting of european systems of credit transfer, piloting the diploma supplement, participation in european networks for higher studies and scientific research.

The Ministry of Education and Science has set the restructuring of Higher Education System high on its agenda. In this process the efforts to create the common Higher Education Area have been intensified over the past 10 years and the contribution of donor countries and our regional partners has been quite considerable. Mention should be made of some initiatives at regional level and european one as well with the view to establishing the european dimension in higher education.

We could highlight the importance of the assistance consistently provided by the Italian and Swiss governments in this regard. The italian efforts have been solid and significant in helping create new and modern higher education courses in the Agricultural University, the Polytechnical University and the High School of Nursery .

The contribution of the Swiss partners has been made in terms of creating the special pedagogy course at the University of Vlora. In this way the addition of the new courses and the further upgrading of the university curricula will align our universities with other modern universities in western countries.

11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension

(For instance foreign language courses, European themes, orientation towards the European labour market)

The European dimension is best reflected on the way of conceiving and drafting the curricula and the teaching programs/syllabus. The higher education curricula at the university level reflects on the European dimension on a number of ways: through learning the European foreign languages; through the various teaching subjects including geography, history, legislation, policies, economy, literature, culture, European values, through dealing with special themes on the current affairs of European integration; through orientation towards the European labor market; through the European literature (texts, monographs, magazines). At the postuniversity level it is realized through the special programs "Master in European Studies" and "Master in European economic studies" which are offered by the University of Tirana, by way of the on-line program "Master in European studies" in cooperation with France; through the postuniversity program on international relations and diplomacy offered by the higher nonpublic system; through the handling of various topics, the current European affairs and the European experience in various subjects; through the European literature. "European dialogue", "European forum" and "Internship in European institutions" constitute the three elements of the program "Master in European studies" that best reflects the actual practical European dimension.

12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

12.1. Describe actions taken by your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA

The demands stacked against higher education are pretty huge. In order to better respond to them, the quotas have almost doubled. At the same time, the curricula have been thoroughly reviewed and a number of other courses of study have been opened to respond to the changing demands of the labor market. The state investment in higher education has increased considerably in order to upgrade and bring one level up the teaching conditions and the living status of the students.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

The government will pay close attention to the further development of university education. By way of setting up a national committee in helping draft the higher education policies the government intends to encourage and support a number of undertakings in higher education such as:

- a) approving a package of laws that boost the financial autonomy of universities;
- b) both a quantitative and qualitative change in the curricula, subject structures in order to improve and bring our universities in line with the universities of European countries;
- c) changes in improving the teaching process and by giving priority to the development of the undertaking spirit and the independent work of students;
- d) introducing the credit system, the diploma supplement and the student mobility as well as organizing studies in two cycles;
- e) diploma recognition;
- f) increasing the competitive capabilities of the nonpublic higher education against the

public ones;

f) development of the effective forms with tangible improvements to the postuniversity system, paving the way to the more effective forms of further qualification;

g) improving the accountability of the higher education institutions in the process of evaluation and accreditation;

h) the kickoff of cooperation of the institutions responsible for quality assurance with the counterparts in the foreign countries;

i) the reorganization of studies at the doctoral level;

j) encouraging and ensuring the student and teaching staff through participation in programs and various cooperation projects with other universities in Europe and in the region;

k) increasing and encouraging the participation of students in the decision-making and the management process of students in the higher education;

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

On July 2003 the Law no.8461 “ On the Higher Education in the Republic of Albania ” was amended by the Parliament of the Albania. The amendment intended to pave the way to the implementation of the restructuring of the higher education in our country on the basis of study cycles. During 2003 a Central Group functioned in the Ministry of Education and Science for the implementation of the reform in the higher education.

As a result of the work in groups and sub-groups the amendment of the law was possible along with the compilation of regulations by the Ministry of Education and Science, in order to put into practice the requirements stemming from the “ Declaration of Bologna ” . During the academic year several diplomas have started to function, built up under the system 3+2. They are in the field of teaching and nursing. During the academic year 2004-2005 the Albanian Universities are reviewing the curricula in order to begin a new scheme of diploma in the other fields. At the same time the universities, in July 2004 , were asked if they did have the possibilities to begin the new scheme as of this academic year, if so, they could propose it to the Ministry of Education and Science for final approval.

In addition to the above-mentioned courses of study, the University of Tirana commenced the implementation of the new scheme in the Journalism branch, too, with the University of Shkoder in the field of economics sciences and in psychology. The above-mentioned courses as well as some new branches that were opened during the academic year 2004-2005, officially commenced the new scheme this academic year, but some other branches had commenced it three years before as a result of the realization of a governmental collaboration between Albania and Italy. These branches have been up and running and function in the field of electrical engineering and agricultural sciences.