



Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (secr@bologna2009benelux.org) no later than

1 November 2008.

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

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

Please complete your National Report in English using this template (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

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 April 2009.

Details

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Date	06.01.2009
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1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since the London meeting in 2007.

1. Approval of the new law on HE number 9741 dated 21 May 2007
2. Approval of the national strategy on HE from 2008 up to 2013
3. Constitution of the new Albanian BFUG, divided into four subgroups focusing on:
 - Curricula development and academic workload,
 - National Qualification Framework – NQF and Standards, Quality Assurance
 - Diploma Recognition, mobility, student information and social dimension,
 - National stocktaking report.
4. Organisation of seminars and workshops with European and regional experts on curricula development and National Qualification Framework.
5. Organisation of several meetings and workshops in view of disseminating the principles on which reposes the Albanian law on HE - very Bologna oriented.

The Ministry of Education and Science in co-operation with the other governmental institutions and Albanian HEIs has brought another climate in the reforming processes led in the country to its main goal, the real integration in the EHEA. More concretely:

- in all Albanian public universities and most of private ones the three cycles system of studies have been implemented following the scheme 3+2+3 (besides education in health areas, veterinary, etc.), leading to Bachelor (First Level Diploma), Master (Second Level Diploma) and PhD degrees. There are 3 formal groups of professional training and education at a) post maturity, b) post bachelor (Master of

First Level) and c) post master levels (Master of Second Level). Post doctorates are in view ;

- starting from the academic year 2008-2009 all Albanian public universities have adopted and running the new curricula of second and third cycle of studies according to Bologna Process. Curricula reform and establishing the ECTS at national level have made possible, from the legislative point of view, the mobility of students from one university into another within the country and their credits;

- efforts done to building-up the Internal Quality Assurance system have let universities, both public and private, to adopt structures and European experiences in the field. The Albanian Public Agency of Accreditation on Higher Education has been the promoter of several seminars and workshops in order to sensitise and train the actors of that process.

The Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education has been strengthened, enlarged and rendering, this way, its operativity more independent, transparent and open to the stakeholders and to the wide public.

More than 200 new study programmes from Public HEIs under Bologna scheme have been submitted, for the first time, to the process of preliminary evaluation performed by the Public Accreditation Agency; 106 out of 200 are active in 13 Public HEIs.

- The deep reform on admitting process into the Albanian HEIs through “State Matura” has been institutionalised as a real guarantee for equal opportunities.

- The overarching National Qualification Framework has been proposed by both experts and stakeholders of the area and it is very oriented to the European model in order to integrate it within the deadline of 2010. Very soon the NQF will be officially proposed to the Albanian authorities in view of transforming it in law.

- Free and democratic elections for student governance bodies and public university authorities took place at the beginning of the year 2008.

2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

1. As it has been evoked in the last national report, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is the state authority, responsible to the higher education and science in Republic of Albania. The following unit belonging to its structure is part of the Albanian stakeholders:

- DHEP (Directorate of Higher Education Policies) and DR (Directorate of Research) at the MoES.

Other higher education stakeholders are:

- APAHE (Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education - APAAL in Albanian language),

- Council of Higher Education and Science (CHES) as an advising body near the Minister of Education and Science and the Albanian Government. CHES formulates proposals about national strategies and programmes, about the orientation of the respective policies, the axis of national scientific development, the budget dedicated to the higher education and science, the way of determining criteria for awarding scientific degrees and academic titles, as well as preparing laws and by-laws of these areas.

- CATA (Commission of Academic Titles Assessment),

- RCAU (Rectors' Conference of the Albanian public and private Universities) is an autonomous and collegial organism constituted of highest leading authorities of the Albanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). RCAU performs activities of drafting and proposing strategies of evolution in the area of higher education and scientific research over the country.

2. The budget is allocated to the universities by the Ministry of Education and Science in co-operation with them. Before the budget comes into the power the Ministry of Education and Science invites the universities to deploy their needs and draft an estimated one. During the year 2008 the Albanian Government has allocated more funding means to the universities, than they had requested and will be the same for the year 2009. Starting from the year 2009 a new formula of budget allocation based on the performance and the needs is applied.

3. The universities enjoy the institutional autonomy and the academic freedom to decide about curricula development and changes as well as they have the right to elect their leading and governing bodies.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up ¹

Yes No

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

Ministry Yes No

Rectors' conference Yes No

Academic staff Yes No

Students Yes No

Staff trade unions Yes No

National Quality Assurance Agency Yes No

¹ A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

Employers Yes No

Other (please specify) _____

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group² Yes No

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

Ministry Yes No

Rectors' conference Yes No

Academic staff Yes No

Students Yes No

Staff trade unions Yes No

National Quality Assurance Agency Yes No

Employers Yes No

Other (please specify) _____

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

² A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

The number of students enrolling the first two cycles of studies according to the principles of Bologna Process during the academic year 2007-2008 was 60638 or 97,3% of the total number of full time students enrolling Albanian public universities. 9506 students have enrolled private universities; 8971 of which or 94,4% under Bologna scheme.

The new system of studies is extended over all disciplines and specialities in the Albanian HEIs, besides the Faculty of Medicine at Tirana University, the Faculty of Veterinary at Agriculture University of Tirana and the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning at Polytechnic University of Tirana.

Since the academic year 2005-2006, second cycle studies have started in the Department of Electronics at Polytechnic University of Tirana, area of Computer Science, Telecommunication and Electronics and in one Department of Agriculture University of Tirana. In the actual academic year all public HEIs started en bloc the second cycle of studies. A good effort is paid to converging study programmes and plans in the area of teachers' education at national level.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all³ students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 ⁴	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
89849	no data so far	no data so far

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country:

Normal situation: there is, nevertheless, a selection procedure of students having reached the first cycle qualification (due to the HEIs real capacity) to reach the second cycle of studies.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research

³ "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. *NB Students of ALL study fields are taken into account*

⁴ If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009

- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements⁵ apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

The third cycle of studies in Albania following Bologna principles is still at the very beginning process. The Ministry of Education and Science has undertaken a project of calling foreign expertise in the area of drafting standards and curricula for 3rd cycle of studies in all areas of Albanian HEIs interest. Nevertheless, the path of completing the PhD studies continues under the old scheme. Full time students usually complete PhD studies within three years of time.

- In a few cases there are doctoral subjects the students take, but, generally, the PhD period of studies is much more dedicated to the research programme, finalised with a PhD thesis.

- Ministry of Education and Science and HEIs supervise very carefully doctoral studies.

- Doctoral studies are part of the Albanian Qualification Framework, where Dublin descriptors as well as learning and skills outcomes are drafted in.

- By law, doctoral studies include 60 ECTS points of teaching activities.

⁵ E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

During the academic year 2007-2008, the Albanian Government undertook a deep reform over the public research institutes attaching most of them near the most reputed universities. This way, research and development process will be well related to the teaching activities performed at the HEIs.

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:

- percentage of GDP spent on research
 - from public funds
 - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
 - from public funds
 - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

The percentage of the Albanian GDP is still low in comparison to the Western European countries, but a firm initiative of the Albanian Government and the Ministry of Education and Science has been observed in the direction of funding research projects and infrastructure with public funds.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify:

Because the 3rd cycle of studies is still in its first steps following Bologna principles.

6. Access⁶ and admission to the next cycle

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

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

About 90 %.

⁶ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: "Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education."

b) any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify)

As mentioned, the second cycle of studies, in the sense of Bologna Process, started at national level during this academic year 2008-2009. This way, modalities for joining the second cycle had to be defined by HEIs themselves, but potentially all students with a first cycle qualification could have access in the second cycle with the exception of those students, who have chosen to be graduated in nursery.

There was a real debate on the modalities for reaching second cycle of studies: at the time being the weighted average mark has been chosen as an important indicator permitting this transfer.

However, very clear and transparent criteria of transferring students from one cycle of studies into the next and from one HEI into another are set by the academic senates of each HEI.

c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must:*

sit entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
complete additional courses	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
have work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

If the answer to the last point is yes, please specify what type of work experience is required:

d) any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies

No.

e) to which students the above special requirements apply (*please tick*):

all students	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
students of the same field coming from other HEIs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies (*please tick*):

entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
additional courses	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

Considering the HE area coverage is about 100%.

- b) any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle (please specify)

-

- c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

Still under debates to completely remove obstacles.

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

a) What measures are being taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications? Please include the most recent statistical data on the employment status of graduates of all cycles.

If your higher education institutions also provide professional bachelor programmes, please provide employability data for both types of bachelors separately

We are not in possess of any reliable data.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
Significant Some A little None
- accreditation/quality assurance
Significant Some A little None
- university governance
Significant Some A little None

c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes No In some cases

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes No In some cases

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

Procedures are not yet completely defined.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared⁷?

Yes No

Comment : there is an overarching proposed Albanian frame with 8 main levels.

b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

Yes No

Comment Generic descriptors have been drafted for all pre-university and university main levels.

c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes No

Comment

d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment In November 2008 the overarching QF has been the focus of a national conference with all Albanian stakeholders.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):

e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:

f) Are all formal arrangements/decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes No

Comment It is foreseen, in a few weeks, to formally approve the overarching Albanian QF by the Albanian authorities.

⁷ A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed (***please tick one***)

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation)
- There is significant progress on implementing the framework
- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed
- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation

Comment Albanian BFUG and Task Force (dealing with pre-university system of teaching) have already produced the draft of the overarching qualification frame in compliance with the EQF and the Albanian law on HE.

h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework ?

Completed Started, but not yet completed Not yet started

Comment

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes No

Comment

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Comment : There is a debate on the issue of professional training and education with regard to Master One and Master Two as it is foreseen in the Albanian QF in compliance with the law on HE.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)⁸

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG⁹ and national support for implementation

a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

Yes No Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) January-June

2009

b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

The Albanian QA institutions are:

- Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (PAAHE) and
- Council of Accreditation (CoA)

in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science

The quality assurance (QA) system of higher education in Albania is getting developed according to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). ESG for the QA in Transnational Education (Unesco) are the main international guiding documents for the daily activities of the agency.

The Agency has already performed a selfevaluation process; consequently its operativity, processes and procedures have been reviewed in the light of the ESG. This way, its transparency to the HEIs and to the public raised up.

Starting from 2009, process of external evaluation will take place; foreign expertise will also be called to become part of the external evaluation pannel.

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes No

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of these incentives: The budget of a given Albanian public HEI for the year 2009 can be increased if the internal quality assurance processes are in line with Bologna principles.

- Other measures

Yes No

⁸ <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf>

⁹ ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

If Yes, please outline these measures

d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

Most of the HEIs in Albanian, both Public and Private, have already in place elements of controlling, monitoring and reviewing their main activities. However, most of these elements are not part of regular, continuous or institutional structures which operate permanently in the HEIs.

PAAHE and HEIs are working together for drafting the main principles and criteria for strengthening and auditing the Internal Quality Assurance Systems in the HEIs. A number of seminars and workshops have been organised to a better understanding of it and to set common principles and criteria.

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites:

a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

The structure of an internal dedicated unit has been stated in each running HEI statute.

c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Additional information if necessary

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

The External Quality Assurance Institutions of Higher Education in Albania are:

- Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
- the Accreditation Council

in cooperation with the Council of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Accreditation Agency is responsible to the evaluation process of quality. This process is guided by clear requirements, criteria and procedures. Every HEI, subject to this process, is aware and priorly informed of. The results and reports on the evaluation are made public. The requirements, criteria and procedures are the same for both public and private HEIs. The Accreditation Agency is involved in every process of preliminary evaluation of any new study programmes of each type and level. Institutional and programme evaluation of new HEIs as well as institutional and programme evaluation in the frame of each accreditation process both first and periodical are also part of the Accreditation Agency agenda. The evaluation is strongly based on the expert involvement through peer review.

The Accreditation Council is a quasi-decision making body; its decisions and recommendations are based on the evaluation results and on the expertise of its members. The evaluation results and recommendations regarding the accreditation are not influenced by the parties (Ministry of Education and Science, Higher Education Institutions), because they have a balanced representation, so that none can influence the decision making process.

The Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Albania, which came into effect in July 2007, brought about several changes and improvements to Quality Assurance:

- The Internal Quality Assurance is already an obligation to the HEIs, but it should be in harmony with the external systems and should respect the academic freedom and the diversity of systems;

- In compliance with the European requirements, it clearly determines the institutions, sharing of responsibilities and areas of competences, processes, procedures and standards that lie in the foundations of QA;

- It guarantees the operational independence of the External Quality Assurance Institutions;

- It defines the parties that are involved and participate in the internal and external Quality Assurance, including both employers and students;

- It provisions preliminary evaluation and accreditation as part of the licensing processes of the private HEIs and for running new courses and issuing diplomas in the public HEIs;

- It guarantees the commitment of experts during the entire evaluation and accreditation processes, giving priority to professionalism and technical standards of the latter;

- It guarantees the involvement of foreign experts at all the Quality Assurance levels: evaluation, consultancy and decision making;

- The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education are the reference criteria to our system which is expected to get developed in compliance with them;

- It gives the HEIs the chance to select other European agencies operating in compliance with the ESG in the area of evaluating their academic and managing performance;

- It provides transparency and equal opportunities to receive information regarding the processes and results of Quality Assurance, including the publication of information to a broader public.

A number of changes have been applied to the External Assurance processes and evaluating institutions have been firmly encouraged to be in line with Bologna requirements in the area, sanctioned via ESG; other interventions in different parts of our system are planned to assure sustainable and consistent implementation of the ESG under the national circumstances and context.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes No

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education¹⁰

Yes No

If No, please specify which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| - self-assessment report | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - external review | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - publication of results | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - follow-up procedures | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

¹⁰ 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.

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes No

If **No** is there a date set for the review? Yes (please specify date January-June 2009) No

11. Level of student participation

From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

- a) in governance of national agencies for QA. Yes No In some cases
- b) as full members in external review teams Yes No In some cases
- c) as observers in external review teams Yes No In some cases
- d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews Yes No In some cases
- e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) Yes No In some cases
- f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes) Yes No In some cases
- g) in preparation of self-assessment reports. Yes No In some cases
- h) in follow-up procedures: Yes No In some cases

*Please add any additional comments, especially if students are **not** involved in any of the aspects:*

As a requirement of the Higher Education Law, students are represented in the Accreditation Council with 1 member out of 9.

12. Level of international participation

In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance

- a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance Yes No In some cases
- b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies Yes No In some cases
- c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers Yes No In some cases
- d) membership of ENQA Yes No In some cases
- e) membership of any other international network Yes No If **Yes**, please specify:

PAAHE is a full member of the International Quality Assurance Network (INQAAHE) since 2003 and a full member of CEE Network of QA Agencies since 2002 and renewed its membership in 2008.

Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects:



RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

100%

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- 1st cycle programmes Yes No
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes No
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes No
- remaining "old type" programmes Yes No Not applicable
- short higher education programmes Yes No Not applicable

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes No
 - *please specify the language* English
- issued free of charge for a fee
- issued automatically on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes No

Comment

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes No

Comment

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes No

Comment

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes No

Comment

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents¹¹ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Albania has signed Lisbon Convention and the Albanian Parliament ratified it on 06.03.2002. It came into the power on 01-05-2002. The recognition of diploma and certificates awarded by foreign HEIs and schools means the official recognition by the MoES of the education or training periods and qualifications obtained and assures equal opportunities with the education and training processes in Albania.

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: DHEP has drafted the guidelines and regulations to diploma recognition procedures. HEIs are, nevertheless, autonomous in defining the qualification recognition procedures. For further implementation of Lisbon Convention and other important documents, approved by the European Institutions, with the decision of the Minister of Education and Science of January 2006, a working group has been set up. It was composed by experts from the MoES, the HEIs and representatives from the business and civil society. In the basis of the recommendations of that group, MoES drafted and proposed a legislative frame with regard to an enhanced recognition procedure, which will diminish the execution time of the existing frame. It is to underline the fact that today exists a limited list of academic titles delivered by foreign universities, automatically recognised by the Albanian state. For the time being, the maximal delay for recognising an academic title is 90 days.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

¹¹ 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)

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Based on the bilateral agreements between two or more HEIs involved. The national plan for improving the process of diploma recognition has been written by the third subgroup of the Albanian BFUG. It gives a clear picture of the inventory:

- of the existing laws and by-laws in the area since the time when the MoES initiated that process,

- the bilateral agreements signed by the Albanian Government with foreign governments and revising criteria and procedures for diploma recognition in accordance with Lisbon Convention,

There is, as well, a part dedicated to the existing documents related to the plan for recognising joint diplomas and degrees and to the actual and future institutions, which manage the procedures of recognition.

iii) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The above-mentioned legislative frame guarantees the full recognition of qualifications, which do not have substantial differences compared to the certified ones.

Over the MoES website, there is a particular page entitled "Diploma Recognition", where one may find the laws and by-laws handling the whole process of recognition of first cycle degrees, the application forms as well as the list of applicants, who have to take the official recognition paper.

lii) demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level Not any case observed.

iv) provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice There is a dedicated section on the MoES website.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes No

If Yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **Not yet**.

d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS¹²

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes¹³ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100% 75-99% 50-75% <50%

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes¹⁴ in your country? Please tick one:

No In some programmes In the majority of programmes
In all programmes

c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system:

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes No

ii) what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits?

¹² Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

¹³ Except doctoral studies

¹⁴ Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: The BFUG and the Task Force (dealing with the pre-university learning outcomes) will publish very soon a paper in both Albanian and English language on that issue.

e) Are you taking any actions to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: There is an Albanian BFUG active subgroup dealing with that issue at both national and international level.

f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS.

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: By publishing and disseminating advanced national and international experiences.

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

a) Do you have nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL as a basis for access to HE programmes?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

Comprehensively Some A little None

Please describe the current situation:

17. Flexible learning paths

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

One of the most important achievements was undoubtedly the implementation of the "State Matura" over the pre-university system, so in the country pupils of secondary education took an external evaluation of their earned knowledge. Besides the positive impact, "State Matura" had an improving learning outcomes quality in secondary schools and it was of good help to lightening the procedures of admittance in HEIs by respecting the principle of equal opportunities.

The liberalisation of students admitted in some particular specialities among the Albanian HEIs has been implemented. This process takes place without over-sensitively touching the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation There is the fifth level of the NQF-EQF, first Master and Second Master studies (see in attachments the Albanian QF)

b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation

c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles

d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle

- e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?
 Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle

- f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups,

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees¹⁵

- a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes No

Does the legislation fully allow:

- i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

- ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

- b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

- i) joint degrees

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

- ii) joint programmes

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

- c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country

In the first cycle? None Little Widespread

In the second cycle? None Little Widespread

In the third cycle? None Little Widespread

¹⁵ A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

In the Law on higher education, the process of joint degrees keeps a particular place.

The study plans and programmes finalised with a joint degree are written by the HEIs, involved in the academic consortium, which offers the education or training.

The Law opens the doors to the possibility of establishing such kind of activity, always under the focus of Bologna Process. Actually, there are some initiatives, taken mostly by the private HEIs.

Although the existing law doesn't include them, two private universities, University of New York in Tirana and the University "Lady of Good Counsel", have established joint degrees with their partners. There are also three public universities, which have implemented Master studies:

- Tirana University in
 - 1) "Master European studies",
 - 2) "Master in economic studies"
- Polytechnic University of Tirana in
 - 3) "Master in enterprise management"
- Agricultural University of Tirana in
 - 4) "Master in veterinary medicine"

According to that draft of Law, only HEIs fulfilling academic standards are allowed to propose joint degrees.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

between 15 and 20.

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

Yes, by the Albanian Government since the year 2007.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

Yes. The Albanian Government decided to award "Excellency grants" to best national students involved in joint programmes, in particular mode those enrolling third cycle of studies.

MOBILITY

19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

All they can, but, unfortunately there is a big obstacle to a regulated mobility: VISA procedures are not yet as much lightened as it was promised by the European authorities.

b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: We are looking forward to that process.

c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: As mentioned above.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: All credits are officially recognised.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: By applying and drafting several projects in the area of teaching and research in the most popular European programmes.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes No

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants. Staff and student mobility in the country is some how difficult, as a consequence of the impossibility of grants and loans portability. The two main reasons of that are:

1. quite limited free mobility abroad (mostly in EU countries) for the higher education stakeholders - too hard to obtain a visa within the deadline of the projects or academic and research events,

2. still important life standard difference between Albania and western countries.

Nevertheless, the Albanian Government awards each year 1600 grants to the students belonging to families with a low economic income or families of policemen killed exercising their duty.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes No

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans. See above.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

The entire ongoing reform in the area of higher education and research, followed by a raising budget up to the regional and European standards and the process of liberalisation of HEIs would have an important impact on the EHEA attractiveness.

The curricula reform and three cycle study system to a market oriented education could render the Albanian education system attractive for bilateral or multilateral co-operation.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

A sustainable work mostly with our US and Canadian partners.

ii) promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

iv) intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

- Keep continuing with Bologna Process in line with European partners in the fields of :
 - Institutional autonomy and good governance of HEIs,
 - Curricula reform in accordance with NQF to fit with the EU standards,
 - Assuring a QA and a fair Accreditation system as a guarantee to the service rendered to the society,
 - Integration of the teaching process with the scientific research,
 - Diploma and prior qualifications recognition system and infrastructure,
 - Preparing the conditions for Long Life Learning,
 - Increasing student mobility and participation,
 - Giving higher education system a better social dimension,

.. so be part of EHEA within 2010.

PART II

TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension.**

The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

None.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

The Albanian Government, with a decision taken by the Council of Ministers in 2008, awards each year 1600 grants to the students belonging to families with a low

economic income or families of policemen killed exercising their duty. Both central and local public administration are in charge for implementing this decision under a well-defined scheme.

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

There is national action plan to achieve the approved Albanian strategy on HE.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?



IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

In September 2008 Albanian Government approved the national strategy on higher education over the years 2007-2013.
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ANNEX A

Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

Financial

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

Structural

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

Certain groups

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

Policy and practice

- explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
- carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
- evaluations/research of policies and practices
- monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B

Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare
- Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

- Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
- Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
- Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies

- Financial and legal advice for students
- Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
- Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C

Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not able to finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

- Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

- Stakeholder involvement

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?