

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

### NATIONAL REPORT ON HIGHER EDUCATION: 2005 – 2007

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

##### Details

Country	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
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##### Main achievements since Bergen

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.
<p>Over the past two years in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), some significant shifts have been recorded in the implementation of the Bologna Process. The biggest credit for this goes primarily to the public universities in BiH and the international community (first of all the Council of Europe, the European Commission in BiH and the Austrian Development Agency).</p> <p>As of this year, at all public universities in BiH, the implementation of the first cycle has started in compliance with the Bologna principles. The curricula have been reformed and adjusted to the two-cycle system of study; two models have been most often used: 3+2 and 4+1, depending on the university or the study group. Some faculties and universities had started the implementation of the first cycle as early as in the 2003/04 academic year, and next year we will be expecting the first generation of students bearing the title of Bachelor of Science. The universities have completed preparations for issuance of a diploma supplement for the generation of students that are to graduate in compliance with the innovated study programs.</p> <p>The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has been introduced for all the new study programs. Preparations are underway at some universities for institution of the structural doctoral study program in the duration of three years.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The drafting of the Report was based on the data received by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH through questionnaires and information gathered directly from public universities and competent ministries of education in the entities and cantons in BiH.

Under the Austrian Development Agency project, the Unit for Collecting and Providing of ENIC/NARIC information has been established.

A number of international projects have been started aiming at assisting BiH in accomplishing the objectives stated in the Bergen Communiqué:

- Quality assurance (TEMPUS project and the Joint Council of Europe and the European Commission in BiH Project „Strengthening Higher Education in BiH“);
- Recognition of qualifications and study periods (Austrian Development Agency and the Joint CoE/EC Project);
- National qualification framework (Joint CoE/EC Project).

Article 15, of the Law on Ministries and Other Administration Bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, states that the Ministry of Civil Affairs is competent for the duties and tasks in the competency of Bosnia and Herzegovina as pertaining to establishment of the basic principle of coordination in activities, harmonization of plans of the entity administration bodies and definition of the strategy at an international level in the area of science and education.

To this aim, after the initial Draft Law on Higher Education in BiH was not adopted at the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH in May 2004, the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH proceeded with drafting of the new Draft Law on Higher Education in BiH. The Working Group was formed, consisting of one representative each from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and the entity ministries of education, four rectors of the public universities in BiH, and two professors of the faculties of law in BiH, which completed the new proposed Law in May 2006.

One can say that this Draft Law integrates the core principles in the area of higher education as established or being established in the European higher education area. Starting from the universal principles of non-discrimination and right to education, the law governs the principles of autonomy of universities, integrated university, mobility of students and academic staff, formation of state bodies in charge of higher education, and the like. The mandatory issuance of diploma annexes, a higher education divided into three cycles, the ECTS, and establishment of the quality assurance system are prescribed in this Law as a single obligation for the higher education system in the whole of BiH.

At its session held on early June 2006, by majority of votes, the Council of Ministers of BiH supported the Draft Law on Higher Education in BiH and forwarded it to the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH for further procedure. The members of the Constitutional Law Committee of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH could not reach consensus on that the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina should have competency in the area of accreditation and licensing of higher education institutions, and sent a negative opinion on the Draft Law to the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, which practically also meant that the Law was rejected again.

Given the political inhibition for the state to establish a system of higher education recognized in Europe on the one hand, and the goals set forth that need to be met by 2010 on the other hand, the universities in BiH have found themselves in the situation that they can no longer wait for adoption of the Law at the state level, and they took some activities on their own initiative on the path of reforms pursuant to the Bologna Principles. Such a move

by the universities had its reflection on the legislations of the entities (the Republika Srpska – RS, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – FBiH, which are the constitutive administrative and territorial units in BiH) and cantons (administrative and territorial units in the composition of FBiH), in terms of change of existing or adoption of new laws on higher education, which according to the Constitution of BiH is in their competency after all.

On July 19, 2006, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the new Law on Higher Education in RS.

On the other hand, eight of the ten cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have adopted their respective laws on higher education. The laws have been adopted in the Tuzla Canton, Sarajevo Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Bosnian Podrinje Canton, Una-Sana Canton, West Herzegovina Canton, Posavina canton, and Canton 10 (Livno).

Thus, although there has been a period of several years in which a law could not be passed that would transfer the area of higher education onto a higher level and govern the higher education system in BiH in a single and high quality manner, introducing the principles and institutions for implementation of all the objectives arising from the Bologna Process, nevertheless there is the legal authority in place in BiH for partial implementation of the Bologna Process.

## National organisation

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

Pursuant to the current laws and regulations, all the activities in higher education are conducted in compliance with the entity (in RS), that is, cantonal (in FBiH) laws on higher education. The role of the state Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH is to coordinate these activities between the entities.

In early 2005, the Rectors' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed. This body, composed of the rectors of all public universities in BiH, them being 8, has provided a strong encouragement and impulse for implementation of reforms in the area of higher education.

Within the Education Department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Unit for Collecting and Providing of ENIC/NARIC Information was formed, and the staff was hired and trained. This department is to grow into the Center for Information and Recognition (which is basically the ENIC/NARIC of Bosnia and Herzegovina), following adoption of the Law on Higher Education in BiH.

The new Law on Higher Education of the RS envisages formation of new bodies: Rectors' Conference of the Republika Srpska, Center for Information and Recognition, and Council for Quality Assurance and Development of Higher Education. Given that the Law has only recently come into effect, formation of these bodies is still underway.

Separate regulations govern the Police Academy of the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Higher Schools of the Interior of the RS, and the Police Academy of the State Border Service.

Financing of the higher education institutions is largely provided from the entity or cantonal

budgets.

The text of the state Law on Higher Education, Part III – Institutions in the Area of Higher Education, provides that:

- The Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH should be responsible for implementation of the Law on Higher Education and for coordination and development of the higher education in BiH, upon consultations with other competent ministries;
- An agreement should be reached among the universities to establish the Rectors' Conference of BiH. The Rectors' Conference establishes and represents the common interests of the universities in BiH, and establishes cooperation with the institutions in the area of education in BiH;
- The Center for Information and Document Recognition (CIP) should be established as an autonomous administrative organization in charge of information and recognition affairs in the area of higher education, under the Convention on Diploma Recognition in Higher Education (the Lisbon Convention);
- The Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance should be established as an autonomous administrative organization in charge of setting the criteria for formation, merging and closing of higher education institutions, accreditation and licensing of higher education institutions, the format and general contents of diplomas and diploma supplement, and the quality system.

It also provides for a broad institutional autonomy that the universities in BiH have never had so far.

The university bodies envisaged are the steering board, the senate and the rector. The responsibility for operations of a licensed higher education institution is on the steering board of the university or higher school. The steering board may have from seven to eleven members, of which one third shall be proposed by the founder. The senate of the university shall appoint and dismiss the members of the steering board for a four-year period, in a public and transparent procedure, including the public competition procedure being used for nominations.

The senate of the higher education institution as the supreme academic body consisting of the representatives of academic staff and students is responsible for academic issues at the higher education institution. The senate passes the statute and other general enactments of the higher education institution, adopts curricula for undergraduate and post-graduate studies, elects the rector and vice-rector of the university, that is, the principal of the higher school, and the like. At least fifteen per cent of the senate members shall be students, representing students from each cycle. The number of the members, the composition and the method of work of the senate shall be established in the statute of the higher education institution.

The legal entity status and the institutional autonomy understand that each licensed higher education institution has full legal entity status on such issues as regulated in the Law. Any funds received from the budget, any proper revenues, education fees collected or funds from other sources shall belong to the higher education institution and shall be expended in compliance with the law, statute, and the financial plan adopted. The buildings of licensed higher education institutions are inviolable.

The aforementioned principles are also contained in the new Law on Higher Education of

RS, whilst in the laws of the cantons (with the exception of the Law on Higher Education of the West Herzegovina Canton), the degree of autonomy of universities is somewhat lower in terms of autonomous selection of rectors and deans, and broader powers have been granted to the steering board.

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

In BiH, there are eight public (6 in the FBiH and 2 in the RS) and 6 private universities (1 in the FBiH and 5 in the RS), and 11 private faculties and higher schools (3 in the FBiH and 8 in the RS). Under the public universities in BiH there are a total of 96 faculties and academies, and 5 high schools. Some 95% of the total number of students study at public universities in BiH.

The licenses for opening and operations of universities and faculties are issued by the competent ministries of education in the cantons in the FBiH, that is, in the RS.

In the previous system of higher education in BiH, which was identical to the system in effect in all of the countries of former Yugoslavia, the university was a lax association of higher education institutions having a strong legal entity status. There has been a strong tendency in terms of change of such status of universities. In the FBiH, two universities have been fully integrated, as regulated in the appropriate laws of those cantons – a legal integration of the faculties and institutes has been completed at the University of Tuzla and the University of Zenica. Thus, the faculties, centers and institutes at these universities are organizational units in the composition of the universities. The departments are fully integrated according to the principles of formation for scientific areas (the Frascati, CERIF, Unesco criteria) and all the members of the university are served.

Article 156, of the Law on Higher Education of the RS, envisages integration of the higher education institutions in the RS (the University of Banja Luka, and the University of East Sarajevo) no later than by October 1, 2007.

Article 10, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH, states that the higher education institutions in BiH are universities and higher schools. The term „university“ is limited to the higher education institutions involved in teaching and research work, offering the academic degrees of all of the three cycles, and offering the studies in at least five study groups. The term „higher school“ is limited to higher education institutions accredited for issuance of diplomas and degrees of the first cycle and offering the first degree studies in at least one study group.

Articles 20 and 61, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH envisage integration of all of the higher education institutions (integrated universities) within one year from the date when the Law comes into effect.

## Partnership

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

In BiH, there is the Higher Education Working Group / the Bologna Committee for BiH (HEWG). The Ministry of Civil Affairs, the responsibility of which is to coordinate the higher education in BiH and to submit reports to the Bologna Follow Up Group on the developments related to the Bologna Process in BiH, co-chairs this Working Group, jointly with the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe provides the secretarial and financial

support.

The members of the working group, in addition to the representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and the Council of Europe, are the representatives of the Conference of Education Ministers in BiH, BiH representatives in the Bologna Follow Up Group, BiH representatives in the Committee for Higher Education and Research at the Council of Europe, representatives of the Rectors' Conference of BiH and all public universities in BiH, representatives of student organizations, representatives of internationally funded projects (WUS, TEMPUS, SUS, NIP FP6) and international donors (Austrian Coordination Office, German and French Embassies), and the representatives of the international community in BiH (European Commission, OSCE, OHR, and World Bank).

The mandate of this Working Group is information sharing on higher education, legislation, current and new projects, and establishment of new bodies in higher education. A special focus is on monitoring of development of the Bologna Process in BiH, and supporting of its introduction into BiH. The working group may make recommendations on the issues related to higher education.

Also, upon the initiative from the European University Association (EUA), HEWG, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, the BiH Team of Bologna Promoters has been formed. The members of the Team are the representatives of public universities in BiH and student organizations, and the Team receives assistance from the representatives of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and the entity ministries of education.

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

Article 58, of the Law on Higher Education of the RS, states that the steering board shall have between 7 and 11 members, of which at least one third shall be appointed by the founder, and the rest have been supported by the senate of the higher education institution, and that at least 1 member of the steering board shall be elected from among the students by the students' parliament of the university or higher education institution. Article 62, of the same Law states that at least 15% members of the senate shall be students, who are representatives of the students from each cycle elected by the students' parliament of the university or higher education institution.

The laws on higher education in the cantons of the FBiH envisage various degrees of participation of academic staff in the steering bodies of the higher education institutions: at least one third of the members of the steering board from among the teachers (Sarajevo Canton, Tuzla Canton, Posavina Canton), 3 of 7 members come from among the teachers (Zenica-Doboj Canton), and one half of the members from among those as proposed by the senate (West Herzegovina Canton). The participation of students in the work of the senate is foreseen in the law (Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton) or in the statute or regulations of universities (other cantons).

All these laws and/or statutes of universities envisage participation of students in the appropriate expert bodies of universities, scientific and teaching councils of faculties, quality boards, ECTS boards, etc.

The students' representatives are also involved in development of university publications, such as the Freshmen Guide, Information Package, ECTS Guide, as well as in development of normative documents, quality system procedures, etc.

Article 15 of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH states that the steering board shall have between 7 and 11 members, of which at least one third shall be appointed by the founder, and the rest shall be appointed by the senate of the higher education institution in compliance with the statute. Article 16 states that at least 15% of the senate members shall be students, who represent the students from each cycle.

None of the aforementioned laws on higher education envisage participation of trade union members in steering of universities or higher education institutions.

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

Activities are underway on preparations for the beginning of functioning of the Scientific and Technological Park (STP), which could commercialize the scientific and expert results obtained at the University in Zenica. The STP project envisages an entrepreneurship zone in the area of the Metallurgy Institute in Zenica, where the STP would be the incubator of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the University would have the coordination role.

In the Republika Srpska, the Public-Private Sector Partnership project is under preparation.

## B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

### Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

The implementation of the principles contained in the Bologna Declaration as pertaining to the duration and organization of studies has begun differently at various universities in BiH.

All of the universities have begun the implementation of the first cycle. This year, the University of Tuzla and the University of Banja Luka have admitted the fourth generation of the 1st cycle students, the University of East Sarajevo the third generation, the University of Sarajevo, the University of Mostar, and the University of Zenica the second generation, the University of Bihac the first generation, and at the Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar, at two out of eight total faculties only the curricula are in compliance with the Bologna Principles. At this, one should have in mind that, with the exceptions of the Universities of Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar, and Bihac, there are also differences present at various faculties within universities in terms of beginning of implementation of the Bologna Principles.

Broad application is in place of two models of study organization: 4+1 and 3+2. The studies of medicine and related sciences are organized by the system 6+0, some technical faculties apply the system 3.5+1.5, and some faculties apply the system 3+1+1, that is, 5+0.

The existing legislation in BiH (in the RS and the cantons in the FBiH) states that the 1st cycle study shall be valued with 180 – 240 credits, and the 2nd cycle study with 60 – 120 credits.

Of the total number of students in BiH, the largest number of them have been involved in the

undergraduate study (1st cycle), more than 90%. At some faculties and universities, particularly the newly formed ones, there is no post-graduate study organized yet (that is, the 2nd cycle study). Preparations for establishment of the 2nd cycle in compliance with the new curricula have been initiated at all universities, and given that at the majority of universities, the generations of students studying in compliance with the innovated study programs of the 1st cycles have only started, an increase in the number of students of the 2nd cycle is expected in the forthcoming years.

Currently in BiH, 35 – 40% of the total number of students included in the 1st and 2nd cycles have been studying in compliance with the Bologna Principles.

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

At the universities of BiH, there are no organized doctoral studies, but it is still based on completion of doctoral dissertations by the candidates for PhD titles. It is understood that the doctoral candidates have acquired the requisite experience during preparation of the master's thesis (which is mandatory in order to proceed with completion of the doctor's thesis), and they are expected to provide individual contribution to expertise in the given area through independent research.

An exception is the University of Mostar, which has since the previous academic year organized currently the only interdisciplinary doctoral study program, which includes structured lectures and independent research for the doctoral students.

An initiative has been started at the majority of public universities for organization of doctoral studies, and specific actions have been proceeded with, which should result in recommendations in the area of organization and establishment of structured doctoral studies at universities. Although the tradition of higher education and scientific research work at some universities and faculties is longer than 45 years, more human and material resources are needed for development of doctoral studies.

Article 5, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH, stipulates that the third cycle leads to the academic title of doctor or an equivalent, it lasts for three years and is valued with 180 ECTS points. Similar legal provisions can also be found in the laws on higher education of the RS and the cantons of the FBiH.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Access<sup>2</sup> to the next cycle

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

All of the qualifications of the first cycle (undergraduate studies) acquired at all public universities in BiH enable direct access to the second cycle (post-graduate studies), and all of the qualifications of the second cycle allow for direct access to the third cycle, that is,

<sup>2</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

drafting of the doctoral thesis.

The Decision of the senate of the University of Banja Luka provides that the holders of qualifications of the previous undergraduate studies in technical sciences, whose education lasted for 5 years, have direct access to the 3rd cycle. There are 10 of such qualifications. At other universities, there is no possibility for direct access to the 3rd cycle without successful completion of the 2nd cycle and defense of the master's thesis.

Also, there are examples at the University of Banja Luka where additional courses need to be passed as necessary for the transfer in-between cycles within the same subject area, such as: transfer from the textile to the chemistry department, from the mining to the chemistry department, from the chemistry to the biology department, or from the production to the energy department, and the like. In order to remove these obstacles, the University of Banja Luka is planning to organize multi-disciplinary studies with the common range of as large number of subjects as possible within the common areas.

At some universities, there is a broad possibility of movement between the first and second cycles of various subject matter areas.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

#### Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>3</sup>.

According to its commitments undertaken under the Bergen Communiqué, Bosnia and Herzegovina started working on development of the national qualification framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the Joint EC/CoE Project „Strengthening Higher Education in BiH“, the Working Group for development of the National Qualification Framework of BiH has been formed . The group involves participation of the representatives of the MCA, entity ministries of education, representatives from all public universities in BiH, the representatives of students, and international experts.

So far, the Working Group has drafted the preamble and the goals of the NQF, as well as the draft descriptor for the 1st and 2nd cycles of studies. The next meeting of the sub-group working on establishment of the descriptors for the 1st and 2nd cycles will be held on December 15, when the final variant is to be established. The NQF shall fully be in compliance with the principles of the EHEA, but just as any other NQF it shall have its specific and recognizable qualities.

It was planned that the results of this Working Group, as well as the results of other working groups under the Project (see answers to questions 12, 16, and 17), be presented at the joint meeting of all the working groups in February 2006, and the Steering Board of the Project<sup>4</sup> provide its approval for the proposed qualification framework by April 2007.

<sup>3</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

<sup>4</sup> The Steering Board of the Project is chaired by the Minister of Civil Affairs of BiH, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Commission in BiH, and Special Representative of the General Secretary of the Council of Europe in BiH, and the members of the Steering Board are the Minister of Education and Culture of the RS, Minister of Education and Science of the FBiH, and all rectors of the public universities in BiH.

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

It is very difficult to answer this question, because the existing statistics on employment and persons seeking employment administered by the employment agencies/bureaus (at the entity and state levels) does not correspond to the factual status. A large number of graduated students do not report to employment bureaus but they get employed directly by employers, and there is also „black labor market“, and it is almost impossible to track their further movement after graduation. According to the data available from the Labor and Employment Agency of BiH, of the total 510,325 registered unemployed persons, 8,806 of them have a higher education (at least 1st cycle of higher education completed).

A number of schemes have been started in the Federation of BiH for employment of interns with higher education degrees who are first-time job seekers. The funds for implementation have been provided by the Government of FBiH and the governments of individual cantons, and the projects last one year each. Over the last two years, these programs involved participation of some 1,000 young persons with higher education.

In the Republika Srpska, the scheme has been started for employment of volunteers for highly educated young people up to 35 years of age in the administrative bodies of the RS.

These projects are not only limited to students who have graduated in the 2005/06 school year.

Some universities also offer assistance to graduated students.

The Business Start-up Center has been established at the University of Tuzla, providing training to the students of the final years of study on entrepreneurship (business planning). During the one-semester training, based on their own ideas for starting businesses, students draw up their business plans, and the Business Start-up Center finds the grant funds for allocation to the best students to implement their business plans and start up their own businesses. This program annually involves the participation of 40-50 students, and 5-10 of them start up their own firms.

At the technical faculties of the University of Zenica, regular analyses are made as to the percentage of employment among graduates, employment positions, monitoring of progress in the profession, and specifically through various polls, alumni-days, post-graduate studies, life-long learning (LLL), talks with employers, ministries, trade and professional chambers (for instance, medical chamber of the canton, association of employers, association of welders, etc.).

In the practice so far, few students opted for continuation of education at a post-graduate study. The reason also lies in the fact that not all the universities in BiH offer post-graduate studies (2nd cycle studies). In the forthcoming years, a change of such a situation is expected, as well as an increase in the number of 2nd cycle students, given that all the universities have proceeded with designing the second cycle programs.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>5</sup>

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

The standards and guidelines and procedures for internal and external quality assurance are currently being elaborated in compliance with the ENQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and within the Joint CoE/EC Project „Strengthening Higher Education in BiH“.

Under the above mentioned Project, the Working Group for Quality Assurance has been formed, whose work involves participation of the representatives from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, entity ministries of education, all public universities in BiH, student organizations, and international experts, and which works on drafting of the BiH standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the translation was provided of the document of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education „Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“, and it was distributed to the universities and competent ministries.

The documents to be drafted by the Working Group are expected to be approved by the stakeholders in April 2007. They will serve as the basis for all universities in the country for internal evaluation, in line with the same standards and guidelines, to be conducted by the centers for quality assurance at all universities in BiH.

Under the TEMPUS Project „Strengthening of Quality Assurance in BiH“ (JEP\_19074\_2004), upon the initiative of the World University Service of BiH – SUS BiH, and the World University Service of Austria – WUS Austria, following Bergen, Centers for Quality Assurance were established at all public universities. This activity was additionally supplemented and strengthened through the WUS Austria project „Structural Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education“, financed with the assistance of the Government of Liechtenstein and the Austrian Development Cooperation. In addition to institution building, both projects are also aimed at capacity building through training of university quality assurance coordinators and their capacitating for implementation of the internal quality assurance process at their respective institutions. In the next two project years, all the universities in BiH will establish their respective quality assurance procedures and develop and publish quality assurance guidelines. The quality assurance teams formed at the universities involve participation of the representatives of academic staff, students and university administrations.

At some universities, the implementation is underway of the Development and Implementation of Quality Assurance System Project according to the ISO and ENQA standards, under which numerous quality assurance procedures have already been developed, the quality policy has been defined, as well as its mission and vision, a large number of seminars have been held, a number of staff have been trained who received internal quality

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

audit licenses.

For more than 10 years, each year a research/expert conference has been organized with international participation (Quality 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007), and it has been co-organized by the University in Zenica (BiH), University of Erlangen Nuremberg (Germany), and the Quality Association in BiH.

Although establishment of the national quality assurance system may only be expected after adoption of the state law on higher education, it can be concluded that through participation and involvement in a number of projects, implemented by various international organizations in BiH jointly with the domestic institutions, progress has been made in BiH over the past two years.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

The current quality assurance policy in BiH is currently based on the entity Law on Higher Education in the RS, and the cantonal laws on higher education in the FBiH, given that the Law on Higher Education of BiH has not yet been adopted.

However, two initiatives are preparing the grounds for establishment of a national assurance system:

- One of the components of the joint CoE/EC „Strengthening of Higher Education in BiH“ project is elaboration of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance and elaboration of the road map for their implementation with the relevant stakeholders,
- Drafting of the Law on Higher Education in BiH.

Article 47, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH envisages formation of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance. Article 51 cites the competencies of the Agency in the quality assurance area:

- Establishes and publicizes norms determining minimum standards in the area of higher education;
- Provides advice and information on the issues within its mandate to the parties with legitimate interest;
- Establishes quality system and standards, analyses quality, provides recommendations for removal of omissions in the quality of studies and higher education institutions;
- Represents BiH in international organizations in charge of quality in higher education.

Article 52 states that the work of the Agency shall be regulated in a statute approved by the Council of Ministers of BiH. The Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance is managed by the Director, who, just like his deputies, after the public competition announcement, is elected by the Steering Board of the Agency. The Steering Board of the Agency consists of 10 members, of which three each from the constitutive peoples and one from among the Others. The Steering Board consists of at least 50% of full university professors.

The new Law on Higher Education of the RS (Articles 116 – 121) envisages establishment of the Council for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, which would function only at the level of the Republika Srpska and encompass all the higher education in this entity. The Council consists of 11 members from among the university professors, top scientists or artists, and the composition should as a rule reflect the composition of constitutive peoples and ethnic minorities. The representatives of students and higher education institutions may take part in the work of the Council without the right of decision making (Article 118). The members of the Council shall be appointed by the Government of the RS upon the proposal of the Ministry of Education, through a public competition. The formation of this Council is at an initial stage.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

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

Given that the national quality assurance system in BiH has not yet been formally established, it is not possible to provide exact data on the level of student participation in the bodies of the national quality assurance system. The text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH mentions the right of participation for students in providing the rating on the quality of higher education (Article 39.).

In drafting of the standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance, under the „Strengthening Higher Education in BiH“ Project, participation has also been provided for the students' representatives as equal members of the Working Group.

The students have also taken part in teams for internal quality assurance formed by the universities in BiH.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

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

See answers to questions 12 and 13.

There is no membership in the ENQA or another network for quality assurance, since the Agency has not been formed yet.

### Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

All public universities in BiH have established the design and content of the diploma supplement, in compliance with the ones recommended by EU/CoE/ UNESCO. There has

been no massive issuance of this document in BiH, because the majority of universities have started implementing the new study programs in the academic 2005/06 year.

The diploma supplement is currently issued:

- At all the faculties of the University of Tuzla, in Bosnian or English at the choice of students;
- At the Faculties of Economy and Architecture of the University of Sarajevo, for all students, in Bosnian and English, free of charge;
- At the University of Mostar, upon student request, in Croatian and English, and free of charge;
- At the Mechanical Faculty and Faculty of Information Technologies of the „Dzemal Bijedic“ University of Mostar, for all students, in Bosnian and English, and free of charge
- At the Universities of Banja Luka and East Sarajevo, it has been planned to issue first diploma supplements in 2007, for all students, in Serbian and English, and free of charge, and at the University of Zenica in 2008, and at the University of Bihac in 2009 (once the first generations studying in compliance with the Bologna Principles have completed studies).

The Unit of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH for Collecting and Providing ENIC/NARIC information, under the Joint CoE/EC Program, works on development of the prototype diploma supplement to be in use at all the higher education institutions in BiH, which will be fully in compliance with the document recommended by EU/CoE/UNESCO.

Article 138, of the Law on Higher Education of the RS, envisages mandatory issuance of diploma supplement, specifically upon the request of the diploma holder, in one of the official languages in use in BiH, and in English.

Article 19, of the Law Amending the Law on Higher Education of the Tuzla Canton, as of May 31, 2005, provides for the obligation to issue diploma supplement to university diplomas for all there study cycles. The proposal of design and contents of the diploma supplement is established by the senate of the university in compliance with the rules of the university.

The Law on Higher Education of the Sarajevo Canton, Article 53. j, envisages mandatory issuance of supplementary certificate on the study – diploma supplement, to be defined in a separate regulation passed by the Minister upon the proposal of the University.

The Law on Higher Education of the West Herzegovina Canton, Article 57, foresees issuance of supplementary certificate on the study, certifying which examinations have been passed and with which grade, and with the data on the curricula volume and contents. The content of the diploma and the supplementary certificate on the study shall be governed in the statute of the University.

The text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH, Article 55, states the obligation to issue diplomas and diploma supplement by each accredited higher education institution in BiH. According to Article 50, the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance is responsible for the format and general content of the diploma and diploma supplement issued by the accredited higher education institutions.

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>6</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention on 17.07.2003. The Convention was ratified by the BiH Presidency on 19.11.2003. (BiH Official Gazette No. 15/03) after both chambers of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly had voted in favour it.

Legislation:

Since the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, several legislative reform initiatives in higher education were launched. These include the above mentioned drafting of a state level higher education law as well as initiatives at the levels of entities and cantons.

Despite some progress at entity and cantonal level, the existing legislation regulating recognition issues is largely based on the traditional principles of nostrification. Specific procedures for academic recognition are not stipulated by law.

Recognition practice:

For the above mentioned reasons the recognition criteria and procedures and criteria are not yet in full compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts.

Information provision and (national) structures:

Despite the mentioned obstacles, progress has been made in the area of information provision and the set up of relevant services and structures.

Within the Education Sector of the Ministry of Civil Affairs the “Unit for Collecting and Providing ENIC-NARIC Information” has been established and developed since June 2005; with the support of the international community (salaries and technical assistance by the Austrian Development Agency, national and regional trainings, study visits to Estonia and Finland, technical assistance and international mentoring as well as organising the drafting process for the National Action Plan by the Council of Europe and the European Commission).

The Unit’s activities and projects so far:

- systematic collection of relevant legal documents, regulations and bilateral agreements
- systematic collection of information on the higher education,
- active participation information exchange and activities of the ENIC-NARIC network,
- regular update of the country profile on the ENIC-NARIC website,
- regional networking,
- inclusion of relevant information on the Ministry’s website,
- extensive contributions to the National Action Plan,
- information provision for universities in BiH.

Furthermore, since August 2005 concerned staff of all public universities in BiH as well as

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<sup>6</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

students attended several training courses and presentations on the practical implications of the ratified Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary texts for academic recognition in BiH (in the frame of two joint EC/CoE projects).

Through these activities a team of BiH experts on academic recognition is emerging which will facilitate the implementation of the relevant legislation in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary texts, as soon as the draft law on state level is adopted.

Under the Joint EC/CoE Project „Strengthening Higher Education in BiH“, the Working Group for recognition of qualifications has been established, consisting of the representatives of educational authorities in BiH, representatives of higher education institutions in BiH, representatives of students and international experts. The Working Group has developed the National Action Plan for improvement of practice in the area of recognition, in line with the structure of the Guidelines for Development of the National Plan.

In accordance with Lisbon Recognition Convention and the ENIC/NARIC Code of good practice for information provision the draft of the state level law on higher education foresees the establishment of a Centre for information and recognition in the area of higher education, i.e. a BiH ENIC centre. The centre's foreseen functions are *inter alia*:

- the collection and update of information on education systems and qualifications;
- advisory functions;
- ensuring adequate, reliable and authentic information.

The future BiH ENIC centre should by all means have its own web portal, since this would encompass its full transparency in the country and abroad while also facilitating access to information. In this transitional period, until the BiH ENIC centre is established, information on higher education in BiH and higher education institutions are available on the web site of the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs and the web sites of higher education institutions.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

Introduction of the ECTS at the universities in BiH was at the same time an occasion for reformation of the curricula, to implement new, more modern contents in them, to harmonize the curricula structure with the Bologna Process (one-semester subjects). Also, the credit system being established at the majority of Bosnian-Herzegovinian university also has an accumulation component, allowing the students to select subjects and accumulate credits. The transfer component has not yet been fully implemented and the mobility of students is at a low level, partially due to the visa regime and the poor social and economic status.

A strong impulse for introduction of the ECTS into the Bosnian-Herzegovinian universities was provided by the EU Tempus Project «Introduction of the ECTS at BH Universities» (JEP – 18041 – 2003), whose consortium includes all the Bosnian-Herzegovinian universities, and several universities from the EU. In addition to the large significance in staff training and transfer of knowledge towards the Bosnian-Herzegovinian universities, this project also involved development of the forms for the basic ECTS documents (study agreement, forms for incoming and outgoing students, etc.).

The higher education in BiH is organized in three cycles, specifically in the Federation of BiH pursuant to the cantonal laws on higher education, and in the Republika Srpska pursuant to the Law on Higher Education in the RS, in the following manner:

- *The first cycle* leads to the academic title of completed undergraduate studies (bachelor degree), acquired after at least three or the longest of four years of study, valued with at least 180, or, up to 240 points - ECTS. An exception is the study of medicine, which in the first cycle is valued with up to 360 ECTS points.
- *The second cycle* leads to the academic title of master or equivalent, and lasts for one or two years. It is valued with 60, or 120 ECTS points, in the way that in the sum with the first cycle it constitutes 300 ECTS points.
- *The third cycle* brings the academic title of the doctor of sciences for a specific area or equivalent, and lasts for at least three years, and is valued with 180 – 240 ECTS.

Each subject from the study curricula is expressed in a number of ECTS points. Transfer of ECTS points may be done between various study programs. The criteria and requirements for the transfer of the ECTS points are regulated in the statute of the higher education institution, that is, in the agreements of higher education institutions. The sum of 60 ECTS points corresponds with the average total involvement of students in the number of forty hours in one working week during one school year.

Based on the information compiled during 2006 through the questionnaires supplied to the universities, some 42% of the study programs at all universities in BiH use the ECTS. It is important to note that the higher education institutions from the medical group are also in an intensive process of preparation and drafting of the study programs expressed in ECTS credits, in order to prepare for the next phase of the Bologna Process. All new study programs use the ECTS and in the forthcoming years they will fully replace the study programs with the previous forms of valuation of student's workload. The current existence of two systems of valuation is caused by the fact that the students who have started studies under the previous curricula that were in effect before introduction of the studies in line with the Bologna Principles were allowed to complete the studies in line with the previously applicable regulations and principles.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>7</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Yes. See Annex (BiH NAP).

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)
Recognition of prior learning
20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.
In the organization of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, Institute for International Cooperation of the German Union of Higher Public Schools (IIZ/DVV), regional Office in Sofia and the Office in Sarajevo, and the OSCE Mission in BiH, in September 2006, in Sarajevo (BiH), the International Conference was held titled "Life-Long Learning and Adult

<sup>7</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

Education – key factors for the economic and social recovery in Southeast Europe”. The first International Conference on life-long learning in Southeast Europe was held in Skopje in 2003. At this conference, all the ministers of education in Southeast Europe signed the Declaration on Life-Long Learning, constituting the foundation of development in this area, while at the same time containing the guidelines necessary for effective work of the competent institutions.

At the conference in Sarajevo, the participants were divided into three working groups addressing the following respective topics: "Adult Education – Trends and Issues in Europe", "European Qualification Framework and Quality in Life-Long Learning", and "Life-Long Learning in Legislation – the Status Quo vs. Future Challenges", which was followed by an analysis of the tasks completed as arising from the aforementioned Declaration, and definition of future measures to be undertaken, in order to make adult education an integral, legally regulated segment of the overall education system.

After EU agreed, during European Council meeting in Thessalonica in June 2003, to open participation in Community Programs to the Western Balkan countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina has recognized the importance of this opportunity and successfully started with preparatory activities. With that regard the BiH authorities agreed to implement a Twinning Light Project for BiH with overall objective to prepare BiH institutions to participate in the Community Programs: EU Action Programme in the Field of LLL (2007-2013) and Youth in Action (2007-2013). The project started in November and will last for 10 months.

Next to this, a few initiatives mainly related to promotion of the LLL concept have taken place. The most recent one was 7. Lifelong Learning Festival that took place in 2006 in Sarajevo. The event was organized by NGO Amica EDUCA Tuzla.

Life-long learning at some faculties in BiH has existed over the past 40 years, and this used to be called permanent education. For a long number of years, various forms of LLL have existed in the forms of seminars, courses, practical sessions, attestations (for instance, for pedagogical advisors, teachers, certified inspectors, welders, process equipment managers, and the like), providing additional knowledge and skills. These seminars and courses did not use to have ECTS points, but only appropriate certificates, while the intention is now to translate this into ECTS points and test the grade, so as to allow recognition of subjects at some of the study cycles.

In March 2006, a group of domestic and international experts, supported by the OSCE Mission in BiH and the German Union of Higher Public Schools (IIZ DVV) developed the document "Strategic directions for development of adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina“. This document is a contribution to the education reform developments through at least two significant ideas which make up its axis:

- 1.the educational perspective of a new type (any institution, any business, cultural or administrative environment is a space for learning), and
- 2.the idea of "a knowledge-based society", where all knowledge is treated as a "good" placed on the market and broadly available to everyone

This took into consideration that BiH is a signatory of many international agreements on education mandating the state to implement specific education standards in the country (International Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the European Convention on Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental

Freedoms, Lisbon Convention on Diploma Recognition, participation in the Bologna Process...), and to comply with several qualities:

- availability for all population strata
- accessibility for all, without discrimination
- acceptability of contents and forms of work from the standpoint of the needs of trainees
- adjustability to the society and individual needs.

The adult education strategy defines the content of activities within a fixed period and space and the holders of individual roles in this process (ministries, educational institutions, and individuals). The first and foremost step in institutionalization of adult education in BiH is drafting of the legislation that would bring order into a plethora of existing creative developments in this field. The strategy envisages:

- That during the next year the Draft Framework Law on Adult Education should be developed, and during 2007/2008 the laws at the entity and cantonal levels, and the level of the Brcko District, with by-laws and amendments to the Law on Agencies.
- That by the end of 2007, the Department for Life-Long Learning and Adult Education should be established at the agency/agencies for education, as well as the Andragogy Center that would institutionally strengthen the adult upbringing and education
- That during 2007, steps should be undertaken in contacts with various state system institutions in order to secure financing, tax exemptions, compilation of statistics and integration of all education levels, starting from the pre-school to higher education, from formal to informal one.
- That during 2008, special effort should be made on development of programmatic bases for adult education in BiH, which understands definition of standards for work of andragogy institutions and certification of institutions, creation of the database on the supply and demand in the domain of adult education, creation of education models for expert development, drafting of the strategy of expansion of literacy among and education of the socially deprived groups, strengthening of the network of institutions for information and counseling in the area of adult education, and permanent work on the concept of life-long learning festival as an event of multiple significance.

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

See answer to the previous question.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

The legal provisions governing the higher education and work of the higher education institutions in BiH recognize joint degrees and allow for organization of the joint study programs at higher education institutions.

The legislation of BiH contains no obstacles for implementation of the study programs

jointly with the foreign partner higher education institutions.

Article 34, of the Law on Education in the RS, envisages organization of the study programs for acquisition of the joint diploma, and Article 139 describes the procedure of issuance of joint diploma and diploma supplement. The closer provisions on the organization of study programs may also be found in the Law on Higher Education of the Tuzla Canton (Article 20b), and on issuance of joint diploma and diploma supplement in the Law on Higher Education of the Sarajevo Canton (Article 53. j, paragraph 2).

The largest number of the current joint programs in BiH is at the level of the 2nd cycle (post-graduate study). At the Center for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies of the University of Sarajevo (BiH), four joint masters' programs have been organized, and the partners have been the University of Bologna (Italy), London School of Economics (UK), University of Belgrade (Serbia), University of La Sapienza in Rome (Italy), and at the Faculty of Economy of the University of Sarajevo (BiH) in cooperation with the Delaware University (USA), the joint MBA post-graduate program has been started.

Jointly with the Electrical Engineering Faculties of the University of Novi Sad (Serbia), and the University of St. Kiril and Metod in Skopje (Macedonia), the Electrical Engineering Faculty of the University of Tuzla has conducted a joint post-graduate CEFES program. Following successful completion of the program, the joint diploma of the three universities is issued.

Four universities in the region: the University of Tuzla (BiH), University of Kragujevac (Serbia), University of St. Kiril and Metod in Skopje (Macedonia), and the University of Maribor (Slovenia) have established the joint network within which they wish to harmonize the studies of informatics and the English language, and start some joint programs.

In May 2006, the University of Mostar (BiH), the Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar (BiH), and the University of Granada (Spain) organized the first summer school in Mostar (Mostar Summer School), which may serve as the basis for establishment of joint programs. The further directions of the aforementioned trilateral cooperation go towards establishment of an international university center in Mostar (Mostar International University Centre). Also, the intention is for all the three aforementioned universities, in cooperation with the University of Bologna (Italy) and the University of Oulu (Finland) to start a joint post-graduate study in the area of environment and European integration.

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

#### **Higher education and research**

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

The scientific research work has always been an integral part of functioning of the universities in BiH. Due to the post-war consequences such as destruction of the strong business research centers and institutes, destroyed scientific research network, weakening of the overall economic circumstances in the country, to the modest extent it exists today, the scientific research network is organized and exists mainly at universities.

An important encouragement for the scientific research work at the universities has been enabled through the project „National Contact Point for Framework Projects in B&H - NCP FP BiH”. The project is implemented by the World University Service of BiH (SUS BiH). The project has been supported by the Government of the Republic of Austria through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Open Society Fund of BiH, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH.

The activities of the NCP FP BiH are primarily directed towards promotion of participation of the BH researchers and research organizations in the Seventh European Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration – FP7. The activities directed towards the BH scientific research community (academic institutions, industry, small and medium-sized enterprises), among other things also include provision of consultation and information related to FP7, organization of information days and workshops for the participants and proponents of projects, provision of information in current invitations for application of projects, and submission of all relevant information. Inclusion into regional and international projects and networking of the BH researchers with the EU scientific research community (EU RTD) falls in the segment of activities directed towards the international community.

EU FP 6 Project “South-East Europe Research & Education Network SEEREN2”, project no. FP 6 – 026748 is a project the goal of which is focused on development of scientific infrastructure. The project foresees that in the 30-month implementation period new generations of segments of the GEANT network for Southeast Europe should be formed aimed at allowing access to leading technologies and services to be available to the overall research and educational community and all scientific sectors, without discrimination between the users and stakeholders in Southeast Europe, all aimed at the future reduction of the «digital divide» which still alienates the major number of the Southeast Europe countries from the rest of the continent. The project will consolidate the network and the services according to the European infrastructure and the end users into a single European Research Area (ERA). The project consortium includes Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The project in its current phase is mainly focused on Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, because the other states have developed national research networks. The key short-term goal is to establish-revitalize the national academic and research network BiHARNET on the DF (optical) infrastructure, and at the 1Gbps speeds, allowing connection of the so designed network onto the GEANT segment of the South-East Europe Research and Education Network.

In terms of improvement of the overall situation in the scientific research sector, one also needs to mention that the Ministry of Education of the FBiH, Ministry of Science and Technology of the RS, and individual cantons in the FBiH (primarily the Sarajevo Canton, Tuzla Canton, and Zenica-Doboj Canton) provide the funds (a public invitation once per year) for scientific research projects and financial support for completion of masters' and doctoral theses.

In July 2002, in Tuzla, at the Conference titled „Science, Research and Competitiveness for the Future“, the representatives of all Bosnian-Herzegovinian universities, BiH Academy of Science and the competent ministries adopted the Declaration on the Position of Science in BiH, which invited for passing of the Framework Law on Scientific Research Activity at the BiH level, called for allocation of 2% of the GDP for science, for establishment of Young Researcher project, for intensification of the scientific research projects at universities, and

research and development projects within businesses. This Declaration, adopted by several academicians, rectors and ministers, initiated that the economy of knowledge becomes the chance for development and the strategy of progress for BiH.

The Government of the Sarajevo Canton has also initiated the project for development and establishment of an on-line registry of researchers and scientific research institutions, that grew to become a project at the FBiH level. In the RS, activities have also been undertaken to develop and establish a database on scientific workers and scientific institutions.

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

Basically, some 75-80 % of doctoral candidates continue their research careers. The majority of them are found at the universities, whilst few of them (some 10-20 %) are found in the business environment of the universities (factories, ministries, health care system, etc.)

However, it is difficult to accomplish a „research career“ if we have on mind the situation explained earlier prevailing in this sector. The number of scientific research projects implemented beyond higher education institutions is small, so some prominent individuals build the opportunity for scientific research careers by taking part in international projects implemented in other European states.

Further improvement of the scientific research work is one of the strategic priorities of all universities in BiH, so to this aim a number of activities have been undertaken to ensure staffing, modernization and procurement of equipment, building of appropriate infrastructure, and starting of several strategic scientific and development projects, particularly in the function of securing of the younger scientific generation and in line with the market demands.

## The social dimension

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

Article 7, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH, as well as in the relevant laws at the entity and cantonal levels, states : „Access to higher education in BiH shall not be restricted, directly or indirectly, on any actual or assumed basis, such as sex, race, sexual orientation, physical or other disability, marital status, skin color, language, religious affiliation, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, affiliation with an ethnic community, property, birth, age, or some other status.“

The ministries of education at appropriate levels participate in the costs of student education. On average, ministries participate in the costs of education fees for some 60% of newly admitted students (full-time students, that is, students who study with support of the ministries) regardless of their social or economic situation. For two categories of students – self-financing or parallel students (full-time students paying for all costs of their education) and part-time students (students who study and work), there are no support programs available from the competent ministries. Students who study with the support of ministries pay for administrative costs and the costs for issuance of index.

For special categories of students (children of killed or demobilized veterans, children who are victims of war, children of war disabled veterans, students with poorer financial status), some ministries of education, ministries of veteran issues, social protection and labor at

various levels of entity and cantonal governments, and the authorities at the local levels, ensure free education either through full exemption from the costs of studies or by granting monthly or annual stipends.

The Decision of the Council of Ministers of BiH formed the Board for the Romas, who constitute the largest ethnic minority in BiH, which has been working since mid-2002 affiliated with the Council of Ministers of BiH. The Group on Educational Needs of the Roma and Other Ethnic Minorities has developed an Action Plan on Educational Needs of the Roma and Other Ethnic Minorities, and this plan was adopted by the entity and cantonal ministries of education in mid-February 2004. The educational authorities of BiH have, among other things, committed to develop a flexible implementation plan to be applicable on the whole territory of BiH, for inclusion of all children coming from ethnic minorities (in particular the Romas) into the educational system. Some cantonal governments and non-governmental organizations have granted one-time and annual stipends for the Roma children who have completed secondary school, in order to assist them to integrate into the higher education system.

Over the recent years, a project has been implemented at the University of Sarajevo and the University of Tuzla aimed at ensuring the conditions for studying for persons with special needs. All the university and faculty buildings have received entrance ramps, toilets and elevators for disabled persons. On the campus of the University in Banja Luka, the Center for Assistance to Disabled Students has been opened, and each such student at the beginning of education receives one mentor – a professor or assistant lecturer from the University.

The Dzemal Bijedic University has been cooperating on this issue with the Service for Persons with Special Needs of the University in Bologna, the EducAid association from Rimini and with the Pedagogical Institute Mostar. Under the Project, the Center for Documentation and Innovation has been opened to serve as an information center for the inclusion area. The result of this cooperation will also be the organization of the international congress in BiH for students with special needs next year.

Article 48, of the text of the Law on Higher Education in BiH, states that the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance is competent to provide recommendations on the lowest scholarship fees for all students at (universities and higher schools) high school institutions, aimed at having the lowest scholarships be balanced throughout BiH, and to provide recommendations on the bodies competent for education related to one or more schemas for financial support to students, including definition of the elements of students' standard. A similar provision on the competency of the Council for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance is contained in Article 119, of the new Law on Higher Education of the RS.

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

In order to remove the economic obstacles for successful completion of studies, some competent ministries grant a number of stipends for students with social needs through public competitions (Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton).

The second category of students receiving stipends or financial assistance from the competent ministries are students accomplishing extraordinary results during studies (Sarajevo Canton, Republika Srpska, Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Una-Sana Canton).

Also, the children of killed or demobilized veterans, children victims of war and children of war disabled veterans are included in various stipend programs.

At the senior years of study, most often under the requirement of an appropriate average of grades, it is possible for students paying for their own studies to transfer into the category of students studying with the support from ministries.

The competent ministries also co-finance accommodation and food for students at student dormitories.

Some universities provide stipends for the best students from their own funds, and bear the full amount of scholarship fee for the post-graduate and doctoral studies.

## Mobility

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

Given the fact that the organization of studies according to the Bologna Principles has not yet been fully established in BiH, nor has it been implemented at the BiH level in a single and harmonized manner, there are still some obstacles in place in terms of intensive mobility of students, both internal and external one.

Nevertheless, the mobility of students does exist and it is mainly oriented towards foreign universities, whilst the main obstacles to intensification of such mobility are the non-existence of the program of financial support for mobility, and a still rigorous visa regime for the citizens of BiH.

International mobility of students and teachers from BIH is implemented through the various mobility schemes offered to BIH by international organization and individual countries. Since 1997, BIH have been participating in TEMPUS programme which offers mobility grants for students and professors. So far, within the programme, 800 students and 1200 teachers from BIH have utilized the mobility grants. In regard to the student mobility, students had the opportunity to spend short period of studies, 3 to 6 months, at the EU universities at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Many foreign organizations, such as the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD, and foreign embassies in BiH, offer stipends for all levels of study.

In order to promote bilateral mobility, the following has been done:

- Some universities have published bilingual publications on study programs and study requirements for the faculties in their composition, and the publications are also available on the web,
- Participation in student exchange programs Socrates, Erasmus Mundus,
- Numerous bilateral agreements have been signed with the universities in the region, in the EU, USA, Canada, and other countries,
- All offers from foreign universities, stipends, government programs and programs of other countries are available at the offices for international cooperation at the universities, on the web-pages of universities, as well as on the web-page of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs ( <a href="http://www.mvp.gov.ba">www.mvp.gov.ba</a> ) which includes the Department for International Scientific, Technical, Educational, Cultural and Sports Cooperation.
28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.
<p>Every year, the Ministry of Science and Technology of the RS, Ministry of Education and Science of the FBiH, and the ministries of education of some cantons, announce public invitations for grants to finance post-graduate studies, completion of masters' and doctoral theses.</p> <p>All citizens of BiH are entitled to apply, and the funds are granted even in the case when applicants study outside BiH or work on the masters' or doctoral degrees at institutions outside BiH. The funds granted via such invitations are most often only sufficient to finance completion and publication of the masters' or doctoral theses.</p>
29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.
<p>Due to the fact that over the past ten years in BiH the number of higher education institutions has been doubled, but this has not been accompanied with an adequate increase in the number of teachers, the teaching staff has a large degree of internal mobility because they are also hired at other public and private higher education institutions in BiH.</p> <p>BiH participation in TEMPUS programme also paved the way for the mobility of teachers. Most of the teachers mobility have been related to the teachers training in the content, structure and teaching methodologies in certain defined subject areas. Apart from this, several Tempus projects resulted in the development of joint degrees programme which allowed the exchange of teachers from and to BiH. These joint degrees are developed at Master level and have been recognized by the participating institutions from BiH and EU.</p> <p>Even in this segment, there are certain efforts and indications that exemptions will come about for specific categories of population (students and teachers). There are also initiatives at the level of the SEE region to facilitate mobility of the teachers within the region.</p>

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

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.
<p>In order to incorporate the higher education of BiH into the European higher education area, in addition to the current reforms processes underway in the country, organization of seminars and workshops, web presentations (web-sites of universities) and publications on the opportunities for studying at universities have also been used to promote the benefits and attraction of the EHEA. The universities in BiH have cooperated with the universities in the USA and Canada, thus promoting the European values of higher education.</p> <p>The Unit of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH for Collecting and Providing ENIC/NARIC information in BiH has taken active part in the work of the networks ENIC (<i>European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition</i>), NARIC (<i>National Academic Recognition Information Centres</i>), and MERIC (<i>Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres</i>). The employee of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH has been appointed the first lady president of the MERIC, and one of her priorities is cooperation of the ENIC and NARIC networks on the one side, and the MERIC network on the other side. Although activities are basically aimed at improving and facilitating of the recognition</p>

process, they by all means also include the promotion of the EHEA, that is, cooperation with other parts of the world in the area of higher education.

### **Future challenges**

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

One of the basic challenges and preconditions for comprehensive reforms of the higher education in BiH is adoption of the Law on Higher Education at the state level.

The main obstacle for adoption of the Law is of conceptual nature, and it is reflected in lack of consensus in attitudes and platform for passing of the Law on Higher Education in BiH. In addition to the issues of financing, a separate problem is establishment of state-level institutions that would be mandated for licensing and accreditation of the higher education institutions in BiH. According to the opinions coming from the Republika Srpska, the state-level Law on Higher Education should only prescribe standards, and to leave the legal and institutional support to reform of higher education to be administered at the existing levels of administrative authorities. On the other hand, the delegates in the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH from among the Croatian people advocate for organization of higher education at the state level exclusively, which would also entail the financing. In the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the competency for higher education is at cantonal levels, which is a narrow and unfit form of higher education administration and financing. Therefore, the most prevalent requirement in FBiH is to have higher education organized at the state level. So far, no solution could be found that would reconcile the varying positions and in essence two differing concepts of the higher education reform.

Adoption of the law and institutional reform are not a solution for all problems, but by all means they constitute a significant step ahead in facing all of the challenges brought about the reform of higher education in BiH. The main challenge is creation of the BiH higher education area with a joint strategy to adapt teaching and reasearch to the changing needs of society, to promote academic research and knowledge transfer, and to be/remain competitive on an international level.

Also, implementation of the reform within the universities themselves (integration of universities), complete and comprehensive introduction of the ECTS, and financing of higher education institutions and all other elements of the Bologna Process are among the major challenges and upcoming activities.