

bologna process

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1. Main achievements since Berlin

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

In vast majority higher education institutions (further “HEIs”) in the Czech Republic have finished restructuralisation of study programmes and let them accredit. In parallel traditional long Master’s study programmes still continue before the accreditation expires but no new students are accepted any longer. The long Master’s study programmes can be provided, according to our legislation, only if the nature of the programmes requires so - in reality there are medicine, dentistry, veterinary med., pharmacy. This means in 2004/05 most fresh students were admitted into Bachelor’s study programmes.

2. National organisation

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

Parliament of the Czech Republic has two Chambers. Each Chamber has a committee for educational matters:
 Chamber of Deputies - Committee for Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
 Senate - Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions
 Responsibility – approval of the state budget including its part for higher education, approval of a legal norm

Czech Government composed of ministers responsible for relevant ministries (among them Minister of Education, Youth and Sports)

Responsibility – proposals of legal norms and budget regarding education, approval of basic national strategic documents.

In the sphere of human resources and research, the Government of the Czech Republic established three advisory Councils:

1) Research and Development Council - in particular clarifies long-term principle trends and proportions of the progress of research and development.

2) Government Council for Sustainable Development initiates and supports strategic

dimensions in governmental practise and provides co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of strategic aspects.

3) Government Council for Human Resources Development - the main task is to initiate, coordinate and secure co-operation among central state administration authorities, local government bodies active in the area of human resources development, employers' unions, trade unions and other legal entities and natural persons operating in the field of human resources development.

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (further "Ministry")
Responsibility – decision making power in the field of education.

Accreditation Commission, an independent expert body, composed of 21 members, appointed by the Czech Government. There is a possibility to establish working groups (discipline oriented).

Responsibility

- to express the expert statements on study programmes, procedures for appointment of associated professors and professors, state permission for the establishment of private HEIs
The accreditation and state permission are awarded by the Ministry only if the expert opinion of the Accreditation Commission is positive.
- to foster the quality of higher education and evaluates all aspects of educational and research, scientific, developmental, artistic or other creative activities of HEIs.

Representation of HEIs consists of two bodies:

- a body composed of the members of academic communities of HEIs delegated by their representative academic bodies – The Council of HEIs;
- a body composed of representatives of HEIs -The Czech Rectors' Conference.

Both bodies include representatives of public, private and state HEIs, the Council of HEIs has its student Chamber. According to "The Act no. 111/1998 Coll. (amended and consolidated) on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Some Other Acts" (further "Higher Education Act") the Ministry and the representation of HEIs discuss proposals and measures that have a significant impact on HEIs. Representation of HEIs deals with fundamental matters regarding higher education. It cares for pushing ahead interest of HEIs in the public life and in negotiations with state and non-state bodies of the Czech Republic (especially with the Ministry), it recommends (together with other important organisations) members of the Accreditation Commission. The Representation presents its statements and recommendations to the Ministry.

The Representation Commission is a body consisting of the wider range of higher education stakeholders – there are representatives of the Czech Rectors Conference, Council of HEIs (incl. representation of students), representatives of registrars and trade unions. This body serves as an important advisory body to the vice-minister for research and higher education especially in the issues regarding the state budget.

2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure

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

At the present time (1 January 2005) 64 HEIs belong to the Czech higher education system.

There are 25 public institutions, 2 state HEIs (one military and one police), and 37 private HEIs.

All study programmes leading to an academic degree have to be accredited. The HEIs can be of university or non-university type. The only difference is that HEIs of non-university type cannot provide doctoral study programmes, all HEIs can provide bachelor and master study programmes.

From all HEIs

- 24 public and 2 state (military and police) HEIs are of university-type.

- all private HEIs (37; mostly relatively or even quite new) and 1 public HEI (established in 2004) are non-university type institutions. The activities of the state institutions are partially regulated by the legislation of the respective ministries, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior. Private HEIs are a new phenomenon in the Czech higher education system enabled by the Higher Education Act.

According to the statistical data of 2003/04 there were approximately 275 000 higher education students. There were about 257 000 students studying at public HEIs, 13 000 students studying at 37 private non-university type HEIs and state HEIs (military and police institutions) had about 5 000 students.

The structure of public HEIs

Character of HEI

Universities (multi-field)	10	
Technical universities (multi-field)	5	
Technical universities (specialised)		1
Veterinary universities	1	
Universities of economics	1	
Agriculture and forestry universities		2
Universities of the arts	4	
Non-university type HEIs	1	

The term „higher education” as used in the Bologna process corresponds in the Czech context with the whole tertiary sector. As can be seen from the picture in Annex 1, the Czech tertiary sector evolves alongside that of the HEIs also that of the tertiary professional schools. They provide tertiary professional studies, a more practically oriented type of education, lasting mostly three years. These studies lead to the Diploma in different subjects, e.g. in economics, in social sciences, etc. This diploma is not academically equivalent to the bachelor degree. There are also examples that both a diploma from a tertiary professional school and a bachelor academic title at a HEI are recognised as the same professional qualifications (e.g. nurseries and midwives). There is an intention that the future tertiary professional schools will not provide only three year programmes but also shorter professional courses lasting only one or two years. See Annex 1, The Structure of the Czech Tertiary Sector.

All HEIs are subject to the same regulations – the Higher Education Act and the same accreditation procedures. The exception is in funding of education. (In case of state funding of research and development the conditions are equal.) The private institutions gain their finances namely from tuition fees, only in a very limited ways they are state funded. The state and public HEIs are financed primarily from the state. (In accredited study programmes if performed in the Czech language there are no tuition fees at public and state HEIs)

2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the

Bologna Process in your country

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

The National Bologna Group has been established before the Berlin conference. At present it consists of 12 academic experts. It involves HE managers -rectors, vice-rectors, deans, experts (in the field of ECTS or DS implementation), ENIC/NARIC representative and students. It is co-ordinated by the Czech representative in the BFUG (the director of Higher Education Department of the Ministry). Many of the academics are in parallel members of the Council of HEIs, the Czech Rector's Conference or Accreditation Commission. Each of them is responsible for a certain area (quality assurance, structured study programmes, recognition, ECTS, DS, internationalisation etc.)

There has been/will be a series of seminars organised. They serve as a platform for discussing the hot issues and space for sharing good practices as well as space for warning before the less successful practices. Some topics for illustration: How to implement the DS - technical as well as methodological aspects, "joint degrees" and joint diplomas, 3-cycle structure of studies, student participation in HE governance and quality evaluation, quality of HEIs and their financing etc.

The members of the team also provide consultations for HEIs upon their request. They in parallel are the members of the Bologna Promoters Team (the EU project under the Socrates programme).

There was a web-site on Bologna established www.bologna.msmt.cz. At present it is in Czech, the English version has been developed

3. Quality assurance

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

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

Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

The quality assurance system in the Czech Republic includes self evaluation, external evaluation and accreditation (based on previous evaluation). The Higher Education Act determines that any HEI (public, private, state) has to regularly provide its internal quality evaluation and to specify details of the process in its internal regulations.

The duties of the Accreditation Commission are given by the Higher Education Act; the procedures are regulated by the Statute of the Accreditation Commission (new Statute is valid from 28 July 2004). (See also 2.1.).

The Accreditation Commission fosters the quality of higher education and evaluates all aspects of educational and research, scientific, developmental, artistic or other creative activities of HEIs.

Any higher education study programme (provided by a public, state or private institution) has to be accredited. The accreditation is awarded by the Ministry only if the expert opinion of the Accreditation Commission is positive.

A positive expert opinion of the Accreditation Commission is also necessary in the case of the state permission, the license enabling the establishment of private HEIs and the appointment of docents (associate professors) and professors is only possible on the basis of awarded accreditation as well.

Accreditation Commission gives its opinion further to

- establishing, abolishing etc. of faculties of a public HEI;
- determination of the type of a HEI (university/non-university)

A very important concern of the Accreditation Commission is the overall quality of higher education. Since 1992, the Accreditation Commission has conducted a peer review and a comparative evaluation of faculties in related fields of study. After 1988 the duty of accreditation of all study programmes was given by the Higher Education Act and later on the period of restructuring the study programmes came into existence. We believe that this period when Accreditation Commission was taken by those duties is coming to an end, the process could be now stabilized and it is expected that Accreditation Commission will now concentrate again on external evaluation, comparative evaluation and related activities connected with external evaluation procedures.

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

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

As mentioned above, according to the Higher Education Act, all types of study programs are subject to accreditation. The award of accreditation to a study program is a task within the competency of the Ministry, which involves state agreement with the way the program is to be delivered, including the right to award respective academic degree. In the case that a study program is not accredited, no applicants can be admitted, no lectures and no examinations can be held, and no academic degree may be awarded.

Accreditation is granted by the Ministry on the basis of an expert evaluation and following statement (yes or no) of the Accreditation Commission. This evaluation should consider both the content of the study program and the state of preparation (personal and material) of HEI or other educational institution to deliver the program. A study program (and its broader personal and material aspects) is evaluated by a permanent working group of the Accreditation Commission. The evaluation concentrates on three basic aspects: qualification of the teaching staff, quality of the study programme offered, and standards of academic and research activities. Working group expert opinion is then submitted to the Accreditation Commission for final judgement. The Ministry is bound by the Higher Education Act not to award accreditation in the case of a negative evaluation of a study programme. In the case of the positive standpoint of the Accreditation Commission the Ministry is bound by an explicit list of grounds on which it may refuse to award accreditation.

Accreditation of a study program is awarded for a limited period of time, maximally for twice the standard length of the programmes. In the case of doctoral study programmes, accreditation should not be awarded for more than ten years (usually it is awarded for 8 years).

A HEI or a unit of such an institution may carry out procedures for habilitation (*venium docendi*) and procedures for the appointment of professors only on the basis of accreditation. A similar mechanism to that used for study programmes also applies in the case of these procedures.

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

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

At present there are 3 members of Accreditation Commission coming from foreign universities. Otherwise, there is no rule concerning the international experts.

Since May 2001 the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic is a member of ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). The Czech Republic belongs to the founders of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN). This network became officially established in Vienna, in 2002. At present the vice-president of Czech Accreditation Commission is the president of CEEN. The Czech Accreditation Commission is also a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE). The Accreditation Commission plays also an important role within the accreditation process of the Czech medical faculties in the United States, being a partner of National Committee on Foreign Medical Evaluation and Accreditation (NCFMEA).

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

4. The two-cycle degree system

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

100% of HEIs have implemented two-cycle studies replacing the long traditional Master's study programmes - see 1.1

5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

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

The Czech Republic has ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2000. Its principles are already part of the Higher Education Act. Implementation has been improving even if there are still some examples of practices which cannot be considered as good ones. The HEIs are competent authorities for recognition of study periods or full qualifications gained abroad. The same applies if a student comes from a different Czech institution. If the recognition is not awarded there is a possible appeal to the Ministry. The Ministry is a competent authority only in case of international bilateral agreements about automatic recognition

Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is listed among the documents on studies in a study programme and documents certifying graduation in a study programme in the Higher Education Act. The Higher Education Act states that the Diploma Supplement will be issued to every graduate on request. In 2004 a group of experts from HEIs, ministry, ENIC/NARIC and national Diploma Supplement coordinator prepared documentation to help Czech institutions to meet the demand of the Berlin Communiqué – to issue the Diploma Supplement for every graduate in 2005. This is available at the web of the Ministry (www.bologna.msmt.cz). The Diploma Supplement was recommended to be issued in bilingual form as it is supposed to serve as a transparency instrument for academic purposes, employment in the Czech Republic as well as abroad. It will be issued by institutions together with the diploma, signed by the dean/rector according to the particular practice. At some institutions (e.g. the VSB-Technical

University Ostrava) all graduates got together with their diplomas bilingual diploma supplements already in 2004.

In case of joint degrees it is recommended to follow the UNESCO/RE Lisbon Recognition Convention related text: Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees. “The DS issued with a joint degree should clearly describe all parts of the degree, and it should clearly indicate the institutions and/or study programmes at which the different parts of the degree have been earned”.

6. Doctoral studies and research

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

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

A doctoral study programme has a standard length of three years. A necessary condition for admission to a doctoral study programme is completion of studies in a Master’s study programme. It is not possible to enter the doctoral studies after the Bachelor’s study programme.

Doctoral study programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activity in the field of research/development, or independent theoretical and creative activity in the field of arts. The doctoral study is completed with a state doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation. These are to prove the ability of independent activity in the field of research/development, or independent theoretical and creative artistic activity. The dissertation must contain original and published results or the results accepted for publication.

Graduates of doctoral study programmes are awarded the relevant academic degree (Ph.D.) Studies within the framework of doctoral study programmes are monitored and evaluated by a Specialist Board appointed in compliance with internal regulations of the HEI or its part that has the corresponding study programme accredited. The study programmes in the same field of study may be evaluated by a common Specialist Board, if such an agreement is made among several HEIs or their parts. The chair of the Specialist Board is chosen from its members on the basis of their voting.

There are minimum standards settled by the Accreditation Commission concerning the content, staff and information technologies, literature and study materials.

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

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

According to the Czech legislation all levels of study programmes (incl. Bachelor’s) include to certain extent research, development, artistic, or other creative activities. The extent, of course, differs significantly. A Bachelor’s study programme makes direct use of all new contemporary knowledge and methods whilst including, in the scope required, theoretical findings. Master’s study programmes are aimed at acquiring new theoretical findings based on current scientific knowledge, research and development. It is required to master the application of these findings and develop abilities for creative activity. Master’s programmes in the field of arts are aimed at challenging artistic training and the development of artistic talent. Doctoral study programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activity in the field of research/development, or independent theoretical and creative activity in the field of arts.

There is specific financial support for research training and research careers, especially of doctoral students, post doctoral students and young scientists.

The total public money devoted to research and development is almost 0,6 % GDP, HEIs received in 2004 around 0,15 % GDP, the same amount was for the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The Academy of Sciences participates at educational activities of HEIs, namely in teaching and guiding doctoral students. Thus it is possible to say that for educational activities (incl. research & development) 0,3 % of GDP was devoted to research & development activities.

7. Mobility of students and staff

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

Outgoing

The support provided for student mobility abroad is oriented mainly at students of public HEIs. It is usually connected to an international academic programme, bilateral and intergovernmental agreements and/or agreements of HEIs on their direct bilateral or multilateral international co-operation. The scholarships can also be awarded to free-movers on the basis that the hosting HEI accepts the applicant and the sending HEI recognises his/her studies when he/she returns. There are scholarship programmes of the Ministry.

There are particular programmes which are co-financed from national sources – e.g. Socrates Erasmus. In this case there are limitations given by the rules of the programme. There is also a scheme developed by the Ministry (within the Programmes of Development, established and financed by the Ministry) which supports outgoing students if there is a bilateral agreement between two faculties/HEIs or on the basis of free movers as described above. This programme does not have any geographical and discipline regulations. Except the bilateral intergovernmental agreements the selection of candidates is the responsibility of a sending HEI. There is no student support for full study abroad, except for getting a grant from a foundation. For those who do not realise the whole program abroad a combination of above mentioned possibilities is an opportunity.

There is also indirect support (e.g. tax reduction for parents) and social payment of social and health insurance for students who study abroad and the HEI is a recognised one.

Problems

- limitation of financial sources – mobility is not cheap and costs of living in most countries are higher than in the Czech Republic
- lack of understanding (of students) that only part of expenses could be covered by the grant (this understanding has been improving)
- lack of interest in mobility of the students, namely at technical HEIs
- some people are still afraid going abroad, partly still because of the language - it has been improving again

Incoming:

Certain support is possible under the Programmes of Development (established and financed by the Ministry). At most institutions there is still lack of more comprehensive strategy to attract foreign students – connected also with not sufficient number of study programmes

accredited in foreign languages, mainly English. However, also the programmes in foreign languages can be developed under the Programme of Development.

There are examples of very good practice – e.g. most faculties of medicine, artistic HEIs, some faculties of engineering.

The number of foreign students grew between 1999 and 2003 from approx. 5 500 to 14 500. The Ministry has been starting a discussion about a strategy (interconnected with a more general discussion on internationalisation of Czech higher education) to attract foreign students.

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

see above 7.1.

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

The support provided for teacher mobility abroad is oriented mainly at public HEIs. It is usually connected to an international academic programme. There is e.g. a massive co-financing under Socrates Erasmus programme. Mobility is also supported under research grants gained at national level. It has been more and more considered an organic part of academic as well research activities. In spite of a lot of improvement there are still language problems, especially among older generation.

In case of incoming / outgoing teachers there are language problems. They concern the ability of our professors to teach in a foreign language as well our students' knowledge of languages. The situation has improved significantly but it still needs some more time. And it is not only a problem of our country but also of other countries in Europe. Our teachers had this experience e.g. in Southern Europe but surprisingly at some institutions in the north as well.

Mobility of teachers is still only a kind of complementary part of teaching activities. It is also interconnected with financial sources. Most HEIs lack planning in this direction. The discussion on new developments in internationalisation of Czech higher education (see 7.1.) will also include teacher mobility in both directions.

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

No measures at present - except what is mentioned above (7.3.)

8. Higher education institutions and students

8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions

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

The following academic liberties and rights at HEIs are guaranteed by the Higher Education Act:

- a) Freedom of science, research and artistic activities as well as making the results public;
- b) Freedom of instruction, namely its openness to variety of scholastic theories, scientific and research methods and artistic trends;
- c) The right of learning that includes free choice of study specialisation within the framework

of study programmes as well as freedom of expressing one's opinion during lecturing;
d)The right of academic community members to elect their representative academic bodies;
e)The right to use academic insignia and hold academic ceremonies.

According to the Higher Education Act the self-government competencies of public HEIs include in particular the following:

- a)Internal organisation;
- b)Stipulation of the number of applicants admitted to studies, conditions of admission to studies and decision-making during entrance proceedings;
- c)Design and implementation of study programmes;
- d)Organisation of studies;
- e)Decision-making re students' rights and duties;
- f)Objectives of scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activity and their organisation;
- g)Definition of legal terms between an employer and an employee; stipulation of the size of the academic staff and the number of other personnel;
- h)Performing procedures for obtaining "venium docendi" (habilitation) and procedures for the appointment of professors;
- i)Co-operation with other HEIs and legal entities; international relations;
- j)Constitution of independent academic bodies at a HEI if not stipulated otherwise by the Higher Education Act;
- k)Economic management of the HEI and assets management in compliance with special regulations;
- l)Evaluation of study-related fees.

Organisation and activities of public HEIs are subject to their internal regulations. The same applies to the status of the academic community members. State authorities may interfere with the activities of public HEIs only on the basis of the law and within the law and in the manner provided for in the law.

According to the Higher Education Act the bodies of the faculty have the right to make decisions and act on behalf of the public HEI in the following issues pertaining to the faculty:

- a)Design and implementation of study programmes;
- b)Objectives and organisation of scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activity;
- c)Relations between an employer and an employee;
- d)Procedures for obtaining "venium docendi" (habilitation) and procedures for the appointment of professors in the extent stipulated by the Higher Education Act;
- e)International relations and activities;
- f)Constitution of independent academic bodies of the faculty and internal organisation of the faculty, if not stipulated otherwise by the Higher Education Act;
- g)Utilisation of allocated financial means;
- h)Supplementary activities and utilisation of resources generated from these activities.

There could be other issues in the Statute of the public HEI which entrust bodies of the faculty to make decisions.

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

There are no special actions taken. At institutional as well as national levels academic community is forced to be active already by the provisions of the Higher Education Act. Furthermore according to the Higher Education Act the Minister and the Representation of HEIs discuss proposals and measures that have a significant impact on HEIs
See also 2.1., text concerning Representation of HEIs and the Representation Commission.

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

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

In the Czech higher education legislation students are equal partners. This part of our legislation is considered one of the most progressive in Europe.

At the institutional level the legislation guarantees a high number of student representatives in Academic Senates (one third to one half of the elected senators). Thus it is possible for students to influence the development of and important decisions at particular HEI. Main tasks of an Academic Senate include namely:

- upon a recommendation of the Rector, to make decisions on any change concerning the number and kind of parts of HEI;
- to approve internal regulations of the HEI and its parts
- to approve the budget of the HEI presented by the Rector and supervise the deployment of financial means of HEI;
- to approve the annual report on activities and the annual report on economic management of the HEI presented by the Rector;
- to approve evaluation of the HEI presented by the Rector;
- to approve Rector's proposals for nominating or dismissing members of the Scientific Board and the Disciplinary Commission
- to approve conditions of admission to studies in the study programmes that are not provided by individual faculties;
- to resolve upon proposals for nominating or dismissing the Rector;
- to approve long-term goals in the area of the main activities of the HEI and their annual updates.

Another important action of students is their participation at the evaluation activities at particular HEIs.

At the state level students are represented by the Students' Chamber of the Council of HEIs. The Students' Chamber gives support to and monitors the research and creative activities of students, takes part on preparation of and research for important national documents concerning HE legislation, national strategies for HE (e.g. the Higher Education Act and its Amendment No.147/2001 Coll., The National Programme of Education Development in CR - "White Book", The Statute of Council of HEIs, Guidelines for admitting foreign students to HEIs in CR, Requirements for PhD studies etc.)

Representatives of the Students' Chamber also participate in the Representation Commission - the advisory body to the vice – minister and forum for negotiation of important decisions including primarily budget allocation. See 2.1

As students really have important role in our higher education system they themselves feel necessity for their professionalisation, i.e. to gain better knowledge in legislative matters, management of institutions as well as project management, European developments etc.. One

of the ways how they think they could achieve it is their project of the Academic Centre of Student Activities launched at the Brno University of Technology. Since 2002 the Academic Centre of Student Activities operates in the whole territory of the Czech Republic. Its main aim is to contribute to “education” of student senators, to equip them with good knowledge and to help them to become equal and responsible partners –not only according to the legislation but also in reality.

See <http://www.acsa.vutbr.cz/main.php?lng=EN&dst=maint.html>.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

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

The equality of access is primarily given by the Higher Education Act. There are special programmes to promote access to higher education for different groups of handicapped (socially as well as physically).

10. Developments in lifelong learning

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

Legislative bases for lifelong learning paths are stipulated by the Higher Education Act. For example a study programme at any level (Bachelor’s, Master’s or Doctoral) can be accredited as daily studies, distance studies, or a combination of these. All three forms are equally recognised and the form is a compulsory part of accreditation.

The HEIs are free to introduce programmes of lifelong learning which do not necessarily lead to an academic degree. They usually lead to a certificate. The institutions are free to decide about the content and curricula. There is a variety of such courses provided by our HEIs. The Ministry, by the help of supporting programmes as well the Programme of Development, motivates the HEIs to provide education which is required by practice. (E.g. programmes for education of teachers, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs different requalification programmes etc.)

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

Flexible learning paths given by the form of a study programme (see 10.1.) lead to an academic degree automatically – they are part of the accreditation of a study programme.

The present legislation (the Higher Education Act) enables recognition (for academic purposes) of prior learning gained outside the HEIs. It is in the responsibility of a receiving HEI. However, there are no special procedures at national level elaborated. In practice this does not work.

11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

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

In the Czech Republic there are joint degree programmes as well as double degree programmes. The joint study programmes have been developed at all three levels – Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral. There is no specific national legislation; however, the contemporary one enables development of joint degrees. There is no central monitoring but there are clear signals that these programmes have been developed. The NISA University is an excellent example of a joint degree study programme. It is a joint programme between three HEIs from three countries. The Wroclaw University of Technology in Poland, the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic and the Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz - University of Applied Sciences in Germany. In co-operation of these three partners a 6-term Bachelor's study programme on "Information and Communication Management" has been developed and started in the academic year of 2001/2002. The 1st year is realised at the Technical University Liberec, 2nd year at the Wroclaw University of Technology and the 3rd year at the University of Applied Sciences of Zittau/Görlitz (FH). The first graduates were in academic year 2004/05. See <http://www.neisse-uni.org/>. Czech HEIs also participate actively in Erasmus Mundus. For the academic year 2006/07 there will be 3 Czech HEIs participating in selected Erasmus Mundus Master Courses.

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

The programmes are not monitored centrally. The Ministry serves namely as a consultant in legal matters. The Ministry has also created certain incentives under the Programmes of Development to enable financial support of this type of programmes. See 1.1.

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

See above 11.1. - dependent on individual arrangements and agreements among participating HEIs.

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

The common European “pillars” of EHEA have been emerging. There are:

- 1) Legal standards for recognition given by the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts (all 3 from 2001 and 2004) and their real implementation
- 2) Emerging overarching framework of qualifications
- 3) European model in quality assurance co-operation
- 4) Synergies between education and research & development/ EHEA and ERA

In these cases the key policies should be agreed at European level, the frame created and then implemented nationally with full recognition of national modalities within the given frame.

Generally could be said that any transnational co-operation contributes to the European dimension in higher education. The example of joint-degree programmes could be mentioned. There are two concrete examples – the NISA University and Erasmus Mundus programme described in 11.1. However, there are more examples of good practice that could be found.

11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension (For instance foreign language courses, European themes, orientation towards the European labour market)

The Ministry does not have full evidence on the development of mentioned types of study programmes. Design and implementation of study programmes is one of important self-

government competencies of our HEIs. The Ministry supports within the Program of Development e.g. creation of foreign language study programmes as well as programmes with European themes. Czech institutions also participate in CD projects under Socrates-Erasmus programme and we expect them to take the opportunity offered by EU in programmes for which we were not eligible till 1 May 2004 – e.g. Tempus or programmes of co-operation with countries in north and Latin America, Australia, Asia etc. The latter is very important as this can contribute to understanding of European reforms and consequent recognition of European degrees outside Europe.

12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

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

The development which follows the principles of common European Higher Education Area as described above, further improvement and systemic work on implementation of the common European frame and especially national implementation are themselves contribution to the attractiveness of the national higher education systems and consequently to the attractiveness of European Higher Education Area as a whole.

The Czech Republic implemented these principles in its legislation already in 1998 (in the Higher Education Act). The modernisation of the Czech higher education system together with the assurance of traditional quality of higher education which the Czech institutions have been providing is our contribution to the attractiveness of EHEA.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

The national priorities correspond to the European ones. We would like to focus on implementation of the basic pillars as well in correspondence with 13.2. other aspects of the Bologna Process.

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

At present we have been working on the long term strategy of the Ministry in the field of higher education development. This important document (required by the Higher Education Act) should be annually updated. The long term strategy is also elaborated (and annually updated) by each HEI. It enables the state to introduce funding mechanisms creating incentives and motivation for institutions to implement changes. The total amount of state funding is next to the type and financial requirements of study programmes, the number of students, and the results achieved in educational, research, developmental, or other creative activity also dependent on a long-term strategy of a public HEI and the Ministry. The new long term strategy will cover the period 2006-10.

The strategy is elaborated hand in hand with another important document - the Reform of the System of Higher Education in the Czech Republic based namely on the reform of state funding mechanism. It will introduce the output indicators and step by step balance their ratio with the input indicators up to current time solely used in the formula funding. It will also support further the development of a certain kind of contract between the state and respective HEI based on the agreement of the institutional and state long term strategies as the supplementary mechanism to the formula for the state budget allocation. This should provide

more sustainable development for a longer period. The Reform aims by means of the innovation of the mechanism of public money allocation mainly to the improvement of

- access to higher education
- long lasting under financing of HEIs
- quality of education and research and the employability of graduates and competitiveness of Czech HEIs as its consequence
- social situation of students.

The reform is supposed to bring more state money into the higher education system. In parallel it should increase the effectiveness of spending the state funds. Consequently we expect that the Reform will lead to the development of strong points and minimising of weak points of HEIs and thus enable a certain "profilation" (realised by evolution) of the institutions".

It is expected that the OECD project „Thematic Review of Tertiary Education“ in which the Czech Republic has been taking part will provide the national authorities with the recommendations helpful for the above mentioned materials (especially for their updates).