



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

1 November 2008.

April 2008

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

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

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

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

Details

Country	Lithuania
Date	18/11/2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Rimvydas Labanauskis Department of Higher Education Division of University Education Chief Specialist

	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania
Email address	rimvydas.labanauskis@smm.lt
Contributors to the report	National Bologna Follow-up Group

1. Main developments since London 2007

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

Law on Science and Higher Education is being discussed (with various stakeholders) and expected to be approved by the Parliament in some few months. The draft encompasses a legal framework which currently is determined by 2 laws: the *Law on Science and Higher Education* (approved in 1991, new edition – since 2002, last amended in 2007) and the *Law on Higher Education* (approved in 2000, last amended in 2008).

A *Long-term Strategy for Science and Higher Education System* has been initiated according to the assignment by the Government (August, 2008).

Strategies for the EU Structural Funds within the period of 2007–2013 include measures in the area of higher education according to the *National Programme for Higher Education Development, Programme for Integrated Science, Higher Education and Business Centres (“Valleys”), Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010, as well as Researcher Career Programme*.

Access and admission between the first and second cycles is regulated by the *Description of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes*, which was amended in 2007.

National Program of Education for Sustainable Development for 2007–2015 was approved by the Government in October 2007. It covers all levels of education including higher education.

The *Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre* was established in April 2007 to ensure an efficient strategic management of the respective fields.

Forum for Quality in Higher Education was established in October 2007 involving representatives of HEIs, associations of students and employers as well as governmental institutions which are responsible for the development and implementation of higher education policy.

2. Partnership

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

Since 2004 the implementation of the Bologna Process in Lithuania has been supervised by the national Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG). It is responsible for coordination of the related activities as well as for preparation and validation of national reports. The national Bologna Promoters' Group, which was reorganized into Bologna Experts' Group (BEG) recently, works in cooperation with the BFUG. In April 2008, the BEG action plan for the period 2008-2009 was approved by the BFUG.

Members of the BEG currently are active in developing specific projects according to the Bologna Action Lines, for example, the project for implementing ECTS at the national level.

- a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up ¹
- Yes No
- b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) _____ | | |
- c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group²
- Yes No
- d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) _____ | | |

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

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

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Composition of Bologna promoter's group was defined according the recommendations set by European Commission. Other representatives such as staff trade unions and employers are not included in the BFUG and in the BEG formally. Nevertheless, it is common to involve them into discussions related with the quality of higher education, new developments and the perspective of labour market as well as financing mechanisms and related social issues.

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

A majority of study programmes (96.1 %) are organized according to the regulations for the first and second cycles.

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

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 ⁴	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
(2007/08) 200119	(2007/08) 192 315*	(2007/08) 96.1 %

* Excluding students in the integrated studies.

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

Some specific programmes (Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Odontology, particular Law studies) are delivered as integrated (continuous) studies. According to the *Law on Higher Education*, integrated studies are defined as continues studies leading to the second cycle qualification.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

Please include:

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

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

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

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

- In general, all full-time doctoral candidates are involved into structured programmes which include both taught courses and research. However, in specific cases when a candidate carries out a research in his/her workplace, there is a possibility to replace the taught courses by an equivalent examination.
- The duration of full-time doctoral studies normally consists of 4 years.
- Teaching activities (conducting seminars or laboratory work, delivering lectures) are included in some programmes. Quite often doctoral students take part in the national/international research projects related with the topic of dissertation. There is a possibility to choose optional courses according to the student's interests and/or related with the development of transferable skills (e.g. foreign language, pedagogy, etc.).
- Mandatory supervising and assessment procedures are prescribed by the *Regulations on Doctoral Studies* (2001). A doctoral student usually has a supervisor (researcher in a corresponding field). Upon completion of studies, doctoral theses must be presented for the Doctorate Council which consists of 5 members. To acquire a relevant qualification a candidate should defend the theses in public.
- Doctoral studies are linked to learning outcomes; These studies are included in the designed but not yet approved National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- Transferable skills, particularly research skills, are integrated into doctoral studies. Nevertheless, interdisciplinary training should be further developed.
- In doctoral studies, a workload of taught courses only is measured by credit points. It consists of 20 (minimum) national credit points which correspond to 30 ECTS.
- Doctoral candidates have a status of *student*.

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

Comment: Currently the *Development Concept of organization and financing of the third cycle* is on the preparation in the Ministry. After the adoption of the *Concept the Regulations on Doctoral Studies* (2001) will be revised. The new version of the Regulations will encompass all the above mentioned aspects of the third cycle.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

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

Activities in R&D are concentrated mainly in universities and state research institutes. There are 17 state and 18 university research institutes in Lithuania. Therefore, app. 70% of research personnel could be attributed to the higher education sector. It should be noticed that they usually combine teaching and research activities. A process of identification of national excellence centres for particular research topics was implemented in 2007–2008. The majority of such centres are established by universities or in cooperation with universities. Colleges are involved mainly in applied research initiated by the particular enterprises.

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

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

The *Programme for Integrated Science, Higher Education and Business Centres* (“Valleys”) was approved by the Government in 2007. Currently, visions of 5 valleys are developed and evaluated both by national and international experts, HEIs are a part of all valleys; implementation programmes of 3 valleys are already approved by the Government. The national *Centre for Science Communication* to be established at the Vilnius University will ensure knowledge transfer among R&D partners; particular measures for developing human resources for R&D and innovation also will be implemented in the period of 2007-2013 with the assistance of EU Structural Funds according to *Researcher Career Programme* (2007).

- Percentage of GDP spent on research (in 2006): from public funds – 0.473%; from private funds – 0.215%; from abroad – 0.115%.
- Total annual national research expenditure (in national currency LTL): from public funds – 387.6 mil LTL; from national private funds – 175.9 mil LTL; from abroad – 94.3 mil LTL.
- Percentage of research carried out in HEIs in terms of funding is 31.9% (universities – 24.8%, university research institutes – 7.1%).
- Doctoral students are getting a fixed monthly scholarship either from the budget of a university or state research institute (in the case if the third cycle study programme is provided by the state research institute). Additional funds for doctoral studies, particularly for research, can be received from the Lithuanian State Studies and Science Foundation and Lithuanian Science Council.

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

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify:

Although there is no national system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates, there are attempts by HEIs to keep contacts with them. It should be also noticed, that a significant part of doctoral graduates continue research at the same HEI.

6. Access⁶ and admission to the next cycle

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

Access and admission between the first and second cycles is regulated by the *Description of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes*, which was amended in 2007.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

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

100 % first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle, however according different conditions: 1) Bachelors (university graduates) can enter second cycle directly; 2) Professional bachelors (college graduates) must take supplementary bridging courses.

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

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

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

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

To have access to the second cycle professional bachelors should have work experience which duration and character is defined by the particular university.

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

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

all students	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

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

students of the same field coming from other HEIs Yes No

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

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

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

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

All graduates of master's studies and integrated studies could be admitted to the third cycle with the exception of the specialized professional studies.

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

Specialized professional studies because not sufficient amount of credits in order to correspond Master's qualification.

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

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7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

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

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

To enhance employability of bachelors various measures are important such as involvement of employers into *Committees of Study Programmes*, establishing agreements with enterprises/institutions for professional practices, establishing Career Centres at HEIs where information and consultations on career planning are available, organizing Career Days, Fairs, etc. Involvement of students into applied research requested by various enterprises also provides opportunities for future career paths.

In a broader scope, the *National Programme for Professional Counselling within the Education System* was approved in 2007 by the Minister of Education and Science. It covers career development issues both before and within higher education. Efficient professional counselling should contribute to higher employability of HEI graduates.

According to the data of September 1, 2008 at the Labour Exchange Office were registered 1373 HEI graduates (3.2% of total) including: 768 graduates of universities, both I and II cycle (2.5% of total university graduates) and 605 graduates of professional bachelor qualification (5.0% of total college graduates). However, at the same time there are free workplaces available. Most probably, in solving this problem better informing about workplaces and relevant qualifications is needed.

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

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

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

Yes No In some cases

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

Yes No In some cases

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

Recruitment procedures in the civil service are unified following the regulations by the *Civil Service Department* under the *Ministry of Interior*. Qualification requirements are defined by the job description for a specific position. It could correspond either to bachelor or master qualification.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared⁷?

Yes No

Designed National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Lithuania (but not yet approved) is overarching national qualifications framework. It integrates the qualifications provided by the vocational education and training, higher education, as well as the qualifications acquired through informal and non-formal learning. This framework is smoothly compatible with the European Qualifications Framework both by its structure (8 levels) and by the definition of the contents of qualifications levels. The last three levels of NQF will correspond to three cycles in HE.

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

Yes No

Currently, academic qualifications according to the fields of study, which are being awarded by the Lithuanian HEIs, are regulated by the specific documents for the first, second and third cycle.

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

NQF was discussed with representatives of all education levels including HEIs, employers as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and subordinate institutions.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Yes No

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

Currently, a working group for preparing a *Law on Qualifications* is organized at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour involving representatives of all interest groups.

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

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

A scope of implementation NQF and related procedures should be clarified by the *Law on Qualifications*.

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

Completed Started, but not yet completed Not yet started

In designing levels 6-8 of the NQF the EHEA framework was considered.

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes No

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

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

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

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

Yes No Not yet, but such a review is planned

(Please specify time)

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

By the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, a group of national experts evaluated Lithuanian HE system against to ESG criteria in 2006/07. Suggestions for the improvement of national regulatory framework for QA were formulated. For example, the *Rules for Assessment of Research and Higher Education Institutions* have been revised and approved.

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

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes No

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

Yes No

Financial measures for improvement of HE quality up to 2013 are included into the *National Programme for Higher Education Development*.

• Other measures

Yes No

Some measures have been taken for enhancing independence of national quality assessment agency. Human recourses for external QA also were developed.

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

Yes No

⁸ <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

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

Operation of internal quality assurance system is one of criteria in a new-established methodology for external institutional assessment of universities. Survey of students' opinion concerning quality of education was carried out in 2008 as a baseline for gathering evidence of internal QA improvement.

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

QA systems are established or emerging in all HEIs. Universities are more diverse in developing their internal quality assurance strategies and procedures in comparison with colleges. Usually, the tasks for quality enhancement are integrated into the strategy of the HEI, but are not formulated as specific QA strategies. Some universities are in process of developing such strategies.

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

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

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

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

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

HEIs have different units responsible for internal approval, monitoring and review of programmes and awards.

Before starting a new study programme an internal approval of it by the relevant bodies (the Senate – in the case of university, the Academic Council of the College) is necessary.

Internal monitoring and review of the study programmes varies in different HEIs.

For example, in some universities a *Committee of Study Programme* is the main responsible body. It is common that a representative of social partners and students are members of such committees. The content of study programmes is usually revised every year. In colleges study programmes are monitored by the respective *Advisory Committee*. Faculties provide self-evaluation reports and on this basis programmes are updated and adjusted to labour market needs.

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

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

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

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

According to the *General Requirements for Study Programmes (2005)*, learning outcomes are an obligatory component of programme description. However, Dublin descriptors for the cycles were not included explicitly. Innovative methods for student assessment in relation with corresponding teaching/learning methods are being developed by the initiative of HEIs. Particularly, projects financed by EU Structural Funds made an important contribution in improving pedagogical qualification of staff.

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

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

All HEIs are publishing information about the study programmes (web sites, catalogues, brochures, leaflets); besides, a national *Open information, Counselling and Guidance System AIKOS* provides a comprehensive information on Internet (www.aikos.smm.lt).

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

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

The *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* was founded by the Ministry of Education and Science in 1995 as an expert institution. The *Centre* implements the external quality assurance policy in research and higher education.

The main function of the *Centre* is to assist HEIs to ensure quality and to permanently improve it through:

- quality assessment of research and higher education, provision of guidance for HEIs on self-analysis recommendations for quality improvement;
- evaluation of the qualifications concerning higher education;
- provision of information on higher education systems and recognition of qualifications.

The Centre organizes:

- assessment of new study programmes (first and second cycle);
- assessment of running study programmes (first and second cycle);
- assessment of research quality for the purpose of granting right to start doctoral studies;
- institutional assessment of research and higher education institutions;
- assessment of applications for establishment of new Higher Education Institutions;
- assessment of R&D;
- assessment of higher education textbooks (for the purpose to award the best textbooks).

The Centre also does some other irregular assessments (eg. assessment of research excellence centres).

The key stages of external quality assesment are:

i) preparations for external assessment (expert group formation, announcement to institutions under assessment, expert training, analysis of self-assessment report);

- ii) site visit (announcement of schedule of site visit, meeting with staff (administration, teaching), students, graduates, stakeholders, observation of facilities);
- iii) preparation and publication of an assessment report (draft assessment report, comments on draft report by an institutions under assessment, final report, consideration of report at advisory body and decision-making; publication of assessment report).
- iv) follow-up (improvement; re-assessment after defined period).

The Centre has five advisory bodies:

- Council of Experts for Quality in Higher Education;
- Assessment Council for Research and Higher Education Institutions;
- Committee for Selection Higher Education Textbooks for Awards;
- Appeal Commission for Study Programmes;
- Appeal Commission for Research Assessment.

The main function of the advisory bodies is to give recommendations and advice the Centre regarding issues concerned with the functions of the Centre, to submit proposals to the Ministry of Education and Science. In addition, there is an appeal procedure foreseen for all decisions made by the Centre.

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

Yes No

If **No**, please specify:

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

Yes No

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

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

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

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

Yes No

If **No** is there a date set for the review? Yes (please specify date 2010) No

¹⁰ Higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

11. Level of student participation

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

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

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

- a) The director of the *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* is appointed by the Minister but not by Board. Until the Board is not established there is no possibility for students (and others as well) to be involved in governance of *Centre*. In the draft of new *Law on Science and Higher Education* such a board of the *Centre* is foreseen. The board will appoint director of the *Centre*. Involvement of students in the composition of the board is foreseen.
- b) Students are involved in external review teams as full members in cases when a team of national experts is composed.
- c) Status of observer for students in external review teams is not foreseen.

12. Level of international participation

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

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

If **Yes**, please specify:

- b) The *Centre* has applied for a review organized by ENQA. The review is planned in 2010.
- c) The assessment of study programmes organized by the *Centre* is being carried out by national and international external review teams. The majority of study programmes have been assessed by international teams. The teams are composed of 5-6 experts. Only one member of such team is national expert. Others are from different foreign countries.
- d) ENQA granted the *Centre* a status of candidate member of in 2008.
- e) The *Centre* is full member of the *International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education* (INQAAHE) and *Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education* (CEE Network).

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

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

- a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:
- 1st cycle programmes Yes No
 - 2nd cycle programmes Yes No
 - 3rd cycle programmes Yes No
 - remaining "old type" programmes Yes No Not applicable
 - short higher education programmes Yes No Not applicable
- b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes No
 - please specify the language English
 - issued free of charge for a fee
 - issued automatically on request
 - corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
 - a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

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

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

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

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes No

The *Lisbon Recognition Convention* and the main principles and instruments for recognition are fully in force in the Republic of Lithuania. The main concepts of the *Lisbon Recognition Convention* and subsidiary documents are consistently transferred into the national legislation.

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

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes No

The national document of *Regulations on the Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Giving Access to Higher Education and Higher Education Qualifications* (2005) identifies authorized institution (*Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education*) which carries out procedures for recognition and also provides a possibility to take supplementary courses or to pass qualifying examinations to validate some part of education including non-formal one. Procedures of appeals are defined as well. *Regulations* are supplemented defined by

¹¹ Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

orders by a director of the *Centre* to establish operational framework for recognition and organization of supplementary courses. These orders are intended to be regularly updated according to changing assessment conditions.

A package of comprehensive practical information for applicants was prepared in 2007.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes No

The Law on Higher Education (2000) and the General Requirements for Joint Study Programmes (2006) provide legal basis to implement Recommendation of Recognition of Joint Degrees at the national level (see also 18).

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

Yes No

Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education follows the *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*. *The Law on Higher Education (2000)* and the *Order on Establishment of Higher Education Institutions and Issuance of the Licences to Provide Studies* approved by the Government in 2003 provide legal basis for implementation of the *Code*. (see also 21).

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes No

The assessment of foreign qualifications concerning higher education is centralized in Lithuania, i.e. it is performed by the *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education*. Decisions regarding academic recognition are made by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania based on the Centre's assessment decision.

The Regulations on the Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Giving Access to Higher Education and Higher Education Qualifications ensure fair assessment at the national level. Assessment is based both on information provided by applicant and by the respective HEI as well as by relevant legal bodies (e.g. ENICs and NARICs, Ministries, etc.). The *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* organizes procedures of assessment. There is also a possibility of appeal envisioned in the case both of assessment and recognition decisions.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes No

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education follows procedures of recognition if no substantial differences in learning outcomes, content and duration according to the *Regulations on the Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Giving Access to Higher Education and Higher Education Qualifications* and operational framework. However, a definition of substantial difference should be further clarified, and it is expected in the new-established *Rules for Assessment of Higher Education Qualifications* (currently drafted).

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

Yes No

There are 3 types of conditions leading to negative decision:

a) qualification is evaluated as not comparable to any qualification;

b) qualification is evaluated as comparable to specific qualification, but there is a requirement of supplementary courses or equivalency examinations;

c) qualification is evaluated as comparable to a different qualification that was indicated by an applicant.

In the case if a result of evaluation process negative decision, a written explanation (supplement to the assessment statement) is provided to applicant including information on steps taken for the assessment of the qualification, reasons and legal basis of the negative decision, as well as a possibility to submit an appeal.

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

Yes No

The main information on HEIs and programmes is provided in Lithuanian and English on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science as the *Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS)*. Reference on AIKOS is provided on the web site of the *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education*.

Annual publications on studies, degree programmes and research opportunities are prepared by the *Ministry* and the *Centre*. (see also 21)

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes No

The *Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* is acting as the Lithuanian ENIC in recognition and information as follows:

- assesses foreign qualifications concerning higher education for the purpose of further study and the academic recognition, also for the purpose of labour market;
- issues statements on the completed studies in the Republic of Lithuania for the people going abroad;
- provides information¹² on the status of national and foreign higher education institutions and their study programmes, national and foreign education systems and awarded qualifications, relevant legislation, etc. (both in printed and electronic versions);
- presents information on Lithuanian education system for the new-created UNESCO Portal on HEI¹³ and for other international information sources (both in printed and electronic versions);
- participates in various international initiatives such as study visits¹⁴, joint meetings¹⁵, projects¹⁶ seminars and fairs;
- participates in the development of legal acts¹⁷ concerning assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications in the Republic of Lithuania.

¹² The information is provided in an official way (like official information letters, information presented in a website of the Centre) or in non-official way (like letters sent by e-mail or information provided by the phone).

¹³ http://portal.unesco.org/education/admin/ev.php?URL_ID=57606&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

¹⁴ [UK NARIC Research Visit](#) (2008) took place in Vilnius, Lithuania.

¹⁵ Annual Joint Meetings of the Baltic States ENIC/NARIC's. The last meeting (2008) took place in Vilnius, Lithuania.

¹⁶ The last project, in which the Centre as Lithuanian ENIC participated, was the NARIC Survey on Substantial Differences. The project team consisted of the NARICs of The Netherlands (Nuffic, project coordinator), the United Kingdom, Lithuania and Norway.

¹⁷ The Centre has worked the draft instruction concerning the academic assessment of foreign higher education qualifications. Such instruction will describe the procedure and the criteria of the academic assessment in more detail and clear way than is described by the *Regulations on the Assessment and Academic Recognition*. The Centre

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

Currently a survey about the current situation concerning education recognition issues is initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science. It is expected that analysis of the survey results will lead to an amendment of national legislation and operational framework in line with Lisbon Recognition Convention.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS¹⁸

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes¹⁹ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

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

All HEIs use ECTS for mobility purposes as a credit transfer system. According to the new *Law on Science and Higher Education* which is currently on debate in the *Seimas* (Parliament), the national credit system will be replaced with ECTS.

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes²⁰ in your country? Please tick one:

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

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

According to the *Law on Higher Education*, a study credit is defined as “a unit for measuring the scope of studies, equalling forty conditional student work (academic, laboratory, independent, etc.) hours” which corresponds one week workload. “The average volume of one-year full-time studies shall be 40 credits (1600 hours) For example, according to the *General Requirements for Study Programmes* (2005), first cycle study programmes consist of 140 – 180 credits (for bachelors) or 120-160 credits (for professional bachelors), the second cycle study programmes consist of 60-80 credits.

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes No

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

1 national credit is equal to 1.5 ECTS credits.

participates in the study aiming to analyze and improve the present practice of the assessment and academic recognition of foreign secondary education and higher education level qualifications.

¹⁸ Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

¹⁹ Except doctoral studies

²⁰ Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

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

Yes No

Two national projects: for the study fields' benchmarks and for introduction of ECTS as a national credit system are currently in preparatory stage and are expected to start in 2009. Clarification in understanding of learning outcomes and corresponding trainings will be an integral part of the projects.

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

Yes No

A national project on implementation of ECTS in Lithuania currently is in preparatory stage and is expected to start in 2009. A methodology to be prepared will include also methods for measurement and checking of student workload.

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

Yes No

Special trainings and publications related with ECTS for HE staff are envisioned according to the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010*.

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

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

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

Yes No

Within the system of formal education, recognition of study periods is provided according to the order of the Minister of Education and Science *On the Procedures of Recognition of Study Periods* (2003). It determines procedures for recognition of study periods by HEIs in order both to provide access to studies (except to the first year studies) and to transfer accumulated credits including results of studies in HEI abroad, at another Lithuanian HEI, and according to another study programme at the same HEI.

Procedures for recognition of non-formal or in-formal prior learning are not established yet. A set of background documents was prepared in 2007 within the project *A Competence Centre: Preparation for Evaluating and Recognizing Competences Acquired in Non-formal and Informal Education* (Vytautas Magnus University).

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

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

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

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

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

Comprehensively Some A little None

17. Flexible learning paths

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

According to the *Law on Higher Education* HEIs have a right “to establish their own procedure of studies. At the same time “students shall be entitled”: <...> “to select a study programme, teaching staff (when that same subject is taught by several teaching staff members), or study according to individual study programmes”; “to discontinue and renew studies in accordance with the procedure established by the statute”. Optional courses (both alternative and free-choice) are part of study programmes.

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

A number of projects financed by EU Structural funds were implemented to develop courses/programmes for distance learning. The development of innovative study programmes also is expected according to the *National Programme for Higher Education Development* in 2007–2013.

As a financial incentive, individual consultations provided by teachers are a paid as a part of job.

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

Yes No

In the case of optional courses within a cycle there are no entry restrictions. In the case of entire study programme, entry conditions are defined by the order of the Minister of Education and Science *On the Procedures of Recognition of Study Periods* as well as by internal rules of a particular HEI (see also 6.1 c). A possibility of attending bridging courses or bridging studies (in the case when professional bachelors enter II cycle) could be mentioned as a measure of widening participation. Establishing procedures for recognition of non-formal or in-formal prior learning would enhance accessibility of higher education.

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

Yes No

There is an option of part-time studies (both evening and extramural); distance learning currently is a fast developing field; individual consultations are a part of learning process as well.

e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes No

Some stand-alone projects are being implemented, but not finished yet.

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

In 2006/2007 there were 38.2% of part-time extramural and 6.0% of part-time evening students of total number of students; in 2007/2008 there are 40.0% of part-time extramural and 6.1% of part-time evening students of total number of students.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees²¹

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

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes No

Does the legislation fully allow:

i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes No

The order of the Minister of Education and Science *On the General Requirements for Joint Study Programmes* (2006) provides legal basis to award joint degrees at higher education institutions. This is applied to the first and the second cycle study programmes only in the cases of joint programmes involving foreign HEIs.

ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

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

i) joint degrees

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

ii) joint programmes

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

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

²¹ A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

In the first cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>
In the second cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>
In the third cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>

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

Some study fields of the joint programmes: Ecology and Environmental Studies, Public Health, Political Sciences, Sociology.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

Up to 20 joint programmes with HEIs abroad, comprehensive data is not available because joint programmes are included in the common register of the study programmes.

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

Amendment of the general requirements for joint programmes currently is in process; particularly a case of joint study programmes and corresponding degrees provided by the Lithuanian HEIs will be legitimated.
Financial incentives are foreseen according to the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010*.

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

MOBILITY

19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

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

The *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010* was approved by the Government in July 2008. Objectives of the *Programme* include the promotion of the EHEA common tendencies within Lithuanian higher education system, increasing international exchange of students and teachers as well as improving its quality, and encouraging academic partnerships.
Since 2006 higher education institutions are co-financed by allocating budget for mobility grants for outgoing students and encouraged to receive more incoming students. Also HEIs receive financing from national budget for creating study programs and course modules taught in foreign languages.

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

Yes No

It is included into the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010*.

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

Yes No

In the Erasmus programme a significant supplementary funding from the State Budget is provided to all participating institutions: universities and colleges, both state and private. Complimentary funding from national budget for implementation of Erasmus programme is increasing both to increase the number of outgoing students and staff as well as amount of grants.

Ministry of Education and Science has cooperation agreements with more than 30 countries. For the organization of competitions for fellowships for studies and scientific positions abroad for Lithuanian citizens, and fellowships for studies and scientific positions for admitting foreigners to Lithuanian HEIs the budget was increasing in 2008.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes No

Study periods abroad are recognized according to the order of the Minister of Education and Science *On the Procedures of Recognition of Study Periods* (2003).

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Receiving universities provide accommodation: usually there is given option to choose accommodation between dormitories and hostels or to help to find private apartments if the proposed options do not satisfy the requirements of student or staff.

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

Yes No

Lithuanian State Studies and Science Foundation provides loans for part-time studies under treaties and international agreements.

Lithuania joined new international education programmes such as Nordplus (since 2007) launched by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes No

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes No

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

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

21. Implementation of strategy

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

Some core areas of the Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process are covered by the objectives of the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010* (2008), i.e. promotion of the EHEA common tendencies within Lithuanian higher education system, increasing international exchange of students and teachers and improving its quality, encouraging academic partnerships, and promotion of Lithuanian higher education in Europe and globally.

Lithuanian HEIs participate in international programmes such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus. Coordinated projects of before mentioned programmes of Lithuanian HEIs and projects where Lithuanian HEIs are partners are co-financed from national budget.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

Lithuania has provided all the necessary information for creating developing new European web portal „Study in Europe“ (<http://www.study-in-europe.org>)

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

Ministry of Education and Science takes part in the project of *European Higher Education Fairs* (EHEF) initiated by European Commission – in Thailand (2006), Malaysia, China and Vietnam (2007), and Philippines, Indonesia, India (2008).

As well Lithuania takes part in NAFSA exhibition annually and Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project stated and supported by European Commission.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Ministry of Education and Science has cooperation agreements with more than 30 countries, approximately 1/3 part of these agreements are established with partners outside of EHEA (China, Colombia, India, Israel, Mongolia, Philippines, Turkey, Ukraine, United Mexican States, USA, Uzbekistan). For the period of 2008-2010 particularly cooperation with Australia, Japan, USA, China and India is noticed in the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education*.

At the same time there is a number of bilateral agreements at the level of HEIs for cooperation in organizing student and staff exchange, common study programmes, conferences and other events. Participation of IHEs in international projects and networks will be promoted and financed by EU Structural Funds according to the *National Programme for Higher Education Development*.

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

European Association of International Education (EAIE) seems to be an important platform for promotion of EHEA at the political level. The Ministry of Education and Science as well as IHEs are active participants of the EAIE annual conferences sharing experiences and ideas with the 'external' partners.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

Improving of recognition system is included into implementation measures for the *Programme for Promoting Internationalization of Higher Education in 2008–2010*. A survey about the current situation is initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science.

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

Legal and methodological basis is created by the *Law on Higher Education and Order on Establishment of Higher Education Institutions and Issuance of the Licences to Provide Studies*.

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

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes No

According to the *Law on Higher Education*, higher education establishments of other country in Lithuania may provide study programmes which were evaluated (accredited) according to the national evaluation (accreditation) system of that country. For study-related activities a license is necessary; it could be received by the procedure established by the Government for this kind of service. For example, the Bialystok University (Republic of Poland) was licensed to establish its branch in Lithuania since 2007.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

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

Activities according to the Action Lines of Bologna Process are being implementing in Lithuania. The main provision for the future is to continuously assess the implementation of corresponding measures and to concentrate efforts on achieving quality criteria. On the other hand, a systemic approach, emphasizing interlinkages of the Action Lines as well as connections with other national and EU policies should be promoted. Particular attention should be paid to a social dimension as a horizontal theme.

The main challenge in long-term is related with the development and implementation of the *Long-term Strategy for Science and Higher Education System* including rethinking the role of

HE for social change and enhancing competitiveness. Achieving of effective functioning of “knowledge triangle” (studies – research – innovation) should be a part of the process.

SOCIAL DIMENSION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

STRATEGIES

Social dimension represents an integral part of the strategic documents on higher education in Lithuania:

- *Law on Higher Education* (2000, last amended in 2008);
- *Strategic Provisions for Development of Education in Lithuania in 2003–2012*;
- *Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010*;
- *National Programme for Higher Education Development* (2007).

It refers mainly to accessibility of higher education and promotion of life-long learning as well as social justice in education (measures to promote equal opportunities) in order to achieve the reduction of social exclusion and poverty in a broader scale.

Law on Higher Education

Under the *Law on Higher Education* HEIs have a right “to establish their own procedure of studies” (art.9). At the same time “students shall be entitled: <...> to select a study programme, teaching staff (when that same subject is taught by several teaching staff members), or study according to individual study programmes”; “to discontinue and renew studies in accordance with the procedure established by the statute” (art.49).

Law on Higher Education also defines conditions of support provided to students (art.62) and administering of loans (art.63). According to the *Law* students of the first and second cycle may receive State loans to pay tuition fees, to cover living expenses and for part-studies under treaties and international agreements. Loans for tuition fees are available equally for all students, for the rest types of loans disadvantaged/disabled persons have a priority, i.e. persons from families which could get a financial support in line with the criteria of *Low on cash social assistance for low-income families (single residents)* orphans (at least without one of his/her parents) and disabled persons.

The period of loan repayment starts in 2 years after the completion of studies and shall be related to the monthly income of the persons to whom the loans have been granted; persons may be exempted from loan repayment upon their social situation.

Full-time students of the first, second and third cycle may receive grants and scholarships on a competitive basis according to the rules defined by the Government.

Strategic Provisions for Development of Education in Lithuania in 2003–2012

The Strategic Provisions for Development of Education in Lithuania define the long-term goals for development of education, the means for achieving these goals, as well as establishes the key quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

Among measures of implementation of the *Provisions* in ensuring socially fair conditions there is mentioned special attention to the representatives of ethnic minorities, flexible and efficient system for supporting students (loans, scholarships, hostels) as well as expanded opportunities

for life-long learning (variations in learning time and speed, distance/part-time learning, transition to modular and accrual learning, relevant entry requirements, etc.).

Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010

One of the objectives of the *Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010* is of the support for students. Implementing of this plan includes these legal acts and their changes:

- 1) Two Government resolutions on *State Support for the Third Cycle Students* were adopted in the end of 2007. According to these resolutions national scholarships for the third cycle students increased up to 40 %.
- 2) The Government resolution on *Scholarships for the First, Second and Continuous Cycle Students of State HEIs* set up the increasing of *social* scholarships in 3 times in 2008.
- 3) The number of *Nominal Scholarships of the Presidents of the Republic of Lithuania* was increased from 6 to 30 in 2008.

National Programme for Higher Education Development

In the period of 2007-2013, EU Structural Funds in relation with higher education are managed according to the aims and objectives of the *National Programme for Higher Education Development* including the objective of increasing accessibility through the implementation of innovative forms of studies. Expected actions cover introducing of innovative methods and flexible learning paths to meet special needs of particular groups of labour market or socially sensitive groups. Developing and implementation of the system for recognition of non-formal prior learning is also included into actions under the *National Programme for Higher Education Development*.

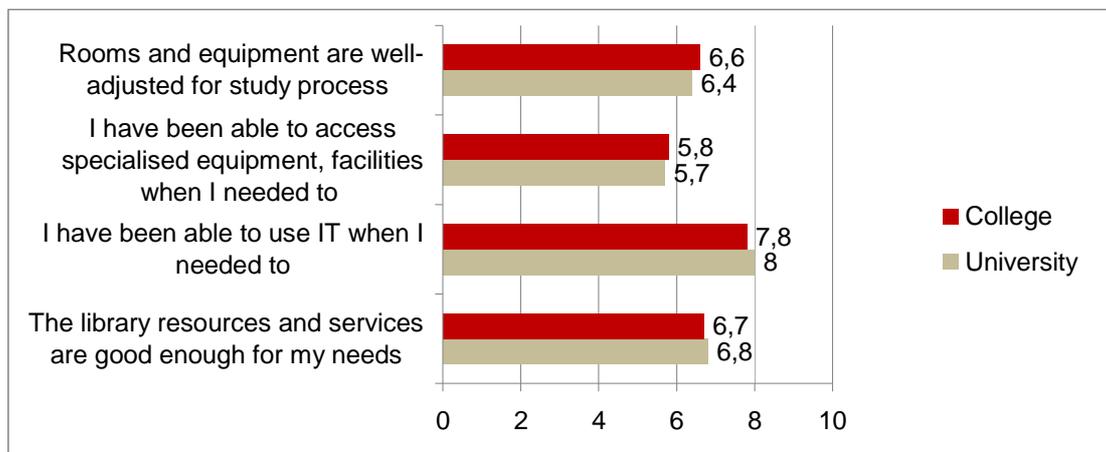
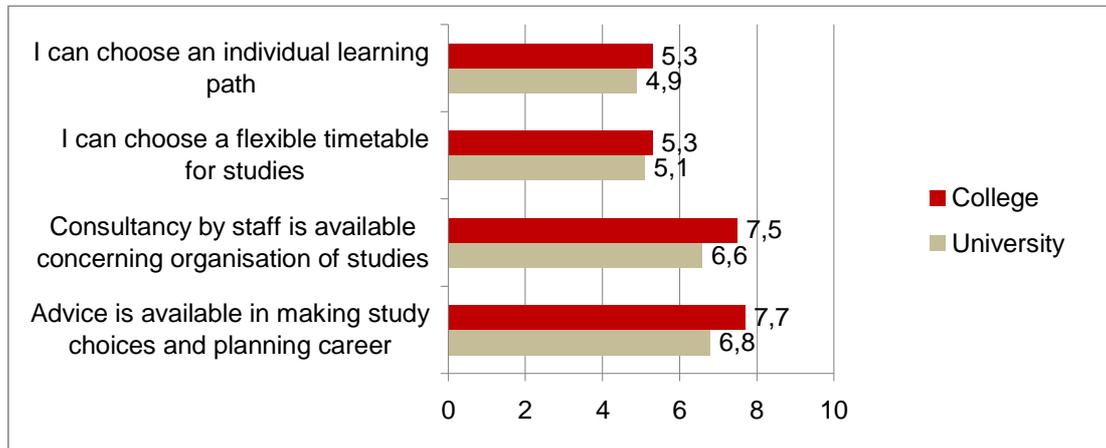
CURRENT SITUATION

Description of the current situation is based on available statistics and also on the results of 2 surveys: *Social-Economic Situation of Students in Lithuania* (2007) and *Students' Opinion on the Improvement of Quality in Higher Education* (2008). In addition, a special questionnaire was sent to the Association of Lithuanian Student Representation (LSAS).

Number of students, estimated for 1000 of the population is slightly increasing: 58 – in 2005, 59 – in 2006, and 61– in 2007. Students-teachers ratio is comparatively stable in Lithuania since 2004/05: it is about 15 both in universities and colleges.

Learning environment

Within the survey on *Quality in Higher Education* there were components of Academic support and management as well as Infrastructure. The results are presented below (evaluation was carried out in scoring scale of from 0 to10)



Social-economic conditions

According to the results of the *Social-Economic Situation of Students in Lithuania*, 47.7% of the sample group defined their material/financial conditions as satisfactory or fully satisfactory; 9.5% of the sample group applied for loans.

The amount of loans provided by Lithuanian State Studies and Science Foundation is increasing for living expenses and studies abroad, but slightly decreasing for tuition fees (it should be noticed that loans for tuition fees are available for all students).

The *Social-Economic Situation of Students in Lithuania* survey shows that 51.3% of respondents live in student hostels, 32.5% share apartments with parents or relatives, 16.2%

rent or live in his/her own apartments; 69.9% of total are satisfied by living conditions, 11.5 are not satisfied. Particularly, among students living in hostels 57.3% are satisfied and 18.3% are not satisfied. However, only 26.5% of the sample group agree or mostly agree that living conditions in hostels ensure social welfare for students' families.

At the same time statistics shows that there are not enough places in student hostels. Situation is different in the case of universities and university colleges: almost all (97%) of applications by college students got positive answers, but only 75% of applicants can live in hostels in the case of universities.

Percentage of College student's in student hostels (according the demand)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
99,4%	98,0%	97,1%

Percentage of University student's in student hostels (according the demand)

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
80,2%	76,0%	75,2%

In 2006/2007 there were 38.2% of part-time extramural and 6.0% of part-time evening students of total number of students; in 2007/2008 there are 40.0% of part-time extramural and 6.1% of part-time evening students of total number of students.

Socially sensitive groups

Except of measures defined by the *Law on Higher Education* at the institutional level HEIs also have some exemptions for disadvantaged/disabled persons in relation with admission to HEI. For example, in the case of equal scorings a priority is given to candidates who are orphans or coming from foster home or disabled persons. There is no admission fee to these candidates.

The *Association of Lithuanian Student Representation* (LSAS) identified some problems which were not reflected in the above mentioned surveys: buildings, particularly old ones, and infrastructure of HEIs are not adjusted to disabled students; the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date database about social situation of students leads to complicated procedures in applying for social scholarships and allowances; Lithuanian State Studies and Science Foundation provides loans for tuition fee only, but not to cover a full price of studies if any.

PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN DECISION-MAKING

Students participation in the governance of HEI is defined by the *Law on Higher Education* (art. 51). Principles of formation of a students' representation and its activity shall be established in the Statute of the higher education establishment. According to the article 52, the students' representation shall have the right to obtain information and explanations from relevant bodies of the HEI as well as to take part in decision-making on all issues related with students. Students' representations may join associations or other confederations (art. 53). Students' representations shall submit proposals to the *Seimas* (Parliament) and the Government.

By the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, the *Forum for Quality in Higher Education* was established in October 2007 involving representatives of HEIs, associations of students and employers as well as governmental institutions which are responsible for the development and implementation of higher education policy. Representatives of these 4 parties, particularly students, are members of the Council of the *Forum*. It should be noticed that students initiated/participated in variety of discussions concerning the higher education reform in the period of 2007-2008 as well as carried out related surveys.

As it was presented in the first part of the National report, students are a part of various procedures of quality assurance (QA) both at the national and institutional levels, i.e. in governance of national agencies for QA, as full members in external review teams, as part of the decision making process for external reviews, in the consultation process during external reviews (e.g. arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) as well as in internal quality assurance in the HEI.