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Responsible member of the BFUG (one name only):	Darinka Vrečko Undersecretary
Official position:	
	Email address: darinka.vrecko@gov.si
Contributors to the report:	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology; Eurydice Unit Slovenia; ENIC-NARIC; Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Programmes; University of Ljubljana; University of Maribor; University of Primorska; Students' Organisation of Slovenia; member of the BFUG Board

1. Main achievements since Berlin***1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms***

In 2004 the Slovene Parliament adopted three important acts: Act Amending the Higher Education Act (in May 2004), Act on Recognition and Evaluation of Education (in June 2004), and Higher Vocational Education Act (in July 2004). By doing this Slovenia implemented all three legislative priorities set out in the Berlin Communiqué. The Acts also enable the implementation of other developmental orientations of Slovene higher education envisaged by the Bologna Declaration and its accompanying documents and the Master Plan for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia.

The structure of studies consists of three cycles. The features regarding the contents of study programmes at individual cycles are merely outlined by the Higher Education Act, while details should be provided for with the adoption of a national framework for higher education qualifications in compliance with the guidelines of the European framework for higher education qualifications.

The first cycle has a binary structure and offers two types of study programmes: university (academically oriented) and professional programmes. Duration of the first cycle programmes is determined by years of study (two to four years) and credit points (180 to 240 CP). In one academic year 60 CP can be obtained, each CP representing 25 to 30 hours of student workload, which adds up to between 1500 and 1800 hours annually. Study programmes leading to regulated professions must comply with EU directives; therefore they can differentiate from these rules. The second cycle offers one type of study programmes. A general requirement for admission to such programmes is a successfully completed first-cycle programme. Bridging requirements, amounting from 10 to 60 credit points, can be set for applicants having completed the first cycle programme in an inadequate field. Second cycle programmes contain 60 to 120 credit points. Their actual duration must be designed in

connection with the appropriate first-cycle programme. Programmes in the same field must not exceed five years altogether (3+2, 4+1). The third cycle also offers one type of study programmes that is doctoral programmes. A general admission requirement is the completion of a second-cycle study programme or, in exceptional cases, a first-cycle study programme in combination with documented research or professional achievements that can be validated with 60 credit points. The programmes take three years to complete.

For the first time the Act allows for the design and provision of joint degrees. Special rules will apply to them. They will be prepared by the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia, taking into account the criteria and recommendations of European institutions. All higher education institutions that will design and offer such programmes will be obliged to conclude a special agreement precisely defining the joint diplomas and the diploma supplements.

In addition to the above mentioned study programmes, higher education institutions will have a possibility to provide and organise various training programmes as a form of life-long education.

The new structure of studies should be gradually implemented. The 2009/2010 academic year has been set as the final time limit. Upon deciding to introduce a new study programme it will no longer be possible to offer the old one. This means that the 2008/2009 academic year will be the last one when enrolment into current programmes is still possible. However, three faculties will offer accredited new study programmes to students already by the 2005/2006 academic year.

According to the established practice, accreditation and evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes will continue to be administered by the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia. Its function in the process of adopting the legal basis for the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes will be regulatory. It will also be consulted in planning the development of higher education, changing legislation and preparing starting points for the Master Plan. Its composition has also been redefined, so that in the future it will include the representatives of employers and students.

In order to ensure the functioning of the quality assessment and assurance system the Act has provided for the establishment of a public agency for higher education. It should be established by 31 December 2005 at the latest. It has also been envisaged that a Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education will be set up as a special body of the agency. The Council will replace the present National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission and continue its mandate, while the new tasks assigned to it by the Act will be the adoption of the criteria for quality assessment of higher education institutions and study programmes, performance of external evaluation, and furthering of quality in post-secondary vocational education.

The term of office of the present Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia has been renewed until the establishment of the new Council. Likewise the term of office of the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission has been renewed until the establishment of the new Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education.

The Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia has already adopted new Criteria on accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes and the Criteria on Credit Allocation to Study Programmes, while the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission adopted the Criteria on monitoring, assessing and assuring the quality of higher education institutions, study programmes, and scientific research, art and professional Activities.

The Act has introduced some more new developments. According to the new Act, the ECTS is mandatory for all study programmes. Most institutions have already been issuing diploma supplements. A new provision is that it shall be issued free of charge in the Slovene and one other EU language. To further mobility, instruction in foreign languages is permitted for groups of students including foreigners. The role of students as well as employers and other partners in the bodies of higher education institutions has been increased.

The Higher Vocational Education Act provides for a more transparent arrangement of shorter (two-year) higher vocational education in the context of tertiary education. Accreditation procedures to be performed by the Council for Vocational Education, allocation of credits in compliance with the ECTS, and diploma supplements have been envisaged for those programmes too. External quality evaluation of those institutions will be performed by the same body as in higher education, that is the agency for higher education or, more precisely, the Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education.

The new Act on Recognition and Evaluation of Education will be implemented from 21 January 2005. The new system introduces two parallel systems of academic recognition for academic and professional purposes.

2. National organisation

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

The autonomy of universities and single higher education institutions is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and by the Higher Education Act. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (until November 2004 the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport) is responsible for the concept, state and development of higher education system. The National Assembly adopts The Master Plan for Higher Education and The Master Plan for Research. The fields of study, research and art of national importance, the standards for performing higher education activities and the funding framework are set within these plans. The Government prepares Master Plan Bills on the basis of expert advice provided by its bodies: the Council for Higher Education and the Council for Science and Technology. The Council for Higher Education gives advice to the Government, elaborates the Master Plan for Higher Education, conducts accreditation procedures and gives opinions on various other matters. The Council for Science and Technology prepares and initiates proposals for the research policy (higher education research included), evaluates the status and development, proposes instruments and measures for the implementation of research policy, proposes the amount and the allocation of state budget funds (research programmes of HE institutions included), draws up priority lists of research projects and young researchers, etc. The Council for Student Affairs discusses student's issues and social conditions of their studies, gives opinions, proposals and recommendations. The Minister determines detailed conditions concerning admission quotas, tuition fees, accommodation in student residence halls and other rights and obligations of students in HE, the elements of the form of a diploma supplement. Thus, he/she proposes (and the Government approves) enrolment limitations and issues a Decree on Tuition and other fees for state approved study programs. Public higher education institutions own and manage their own property although a substantial part of their activity is directly financed by the State. The governing board,

which decides upon financial transactions, is composed of the representatives of the founder, students, faculty and staff. The system of lump sum financing of higher education has been introduced by the academic year 2004/05. Higher education institutions are autonomous in managing their internal organisation and operations (considering their statutes and the legal requirements), selecting and electing the faculty, electing the internal bodies: rectors, senates, administrative boards and student councils, deans, and academic assemblies.

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?)

The Higher Education Act covers public and private higher education institutions. In the 2004/05 academic year there are 3 public universities in Slovenia:

- University of Ljubljana with 57,064 undergraduate students,
- University of Maribor with 24,614 undergraduate students,
- University of Primorska with 4,700 undergraduate students,

and 10 private single higher education institutions in all major cities around Slovenia with 2,894 undergraduate students.

Thus, in the 2004/05 academic year the total number of students enrolled in 3 to 4-year professional and 4 to 6-years university undergraduate study programmes amounts to 89,272, while the number of students enrolled in postgraduate master's and doctoral degree programs is 7.035.

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)

To coordinate the Bologna process at the state level, the Minister appointed a Panel of Experts for the Follow-up and Implementation of the Bologna process in the Republic of Slovenia in 2003. It consists of representatives of the competent Ministry, higher education institutions, students, employers, representatives of the Council for Higher Education and the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission. There is a special working group of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Council for Student Affairs charged with coordination of the Bologna process in cooperation with students. The National team of Bologna promoters was established in 2004. At the institutional level universities have set up special coordination groups for the implementation of the Bologna process.

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 procedure for the accreditation of study programmes and institutions lies within the responsibility of the Council for Higher Education. The Council determines the accreditation

criteria and, according to them, evaluates the fulfilment of prescribed components of programmes and institutions.

So far, the evaluation of quality has been primarily the responsibility of HE institutions themselves through a system of self-evaluation. In this task the institutions have been assisted by the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission. The Commission's task is to monitor and assess the quality and effectiveness of teaching, research, art and professional activities of higher education institutions.

In 2004 the new legislation introduced some new important features in the area of quality assurance. It extended the composition of accreditation and evaluation bodies to include the representatives of students and employers, introduced some new procedures (regular external evaluations), bodies (Council for the Evaluation) and agencies (agency for higher education), etc. (see Point 1.1).

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

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

The application for the accreditation of an institution is submitted to the Council for Higher Education by the Government or the ministry, HE institutions (or founders of new HE institutions) and other applicants, while the application for the accreditation of a study programme is submitted by the senate of a HE institution. The applicant must respect the criteria stipulated by the Council Rules. The Council's Commission (or a Group of Experts) for the particular field of study examines the application and evaluates it on the basis of the Council's criteria, and forwards its opinion to the Council. The Council takes a final decision (either approves or refuses the accreditation). Study programmes are finally adopted by senates of HE institutions, taking into account the opinion of the Council for Higher Education.

The quality assessment commissions of HE institutions prepare annual self-evaluation reports. The National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission collects institutional reports and publishes the national report. The methodology for self-evaluation and the system of self-evaluation itself was developed in cooperation with HE institutions and the National Commission. The Commission performs its activities according to the rules determined in cooperation with the senates of higher education institutions and criteria defined by the Council for Higher Education. So far, external evaluations were performed according to the decision of HE institutions themselves. In October 2004, the Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission issued Rules on External Evaluation Criteria in order to establish a national system of regular external evaluations.

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

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

The international dimension is present in several aspects of the national quality assurance system. Groups of experts of the Council for Higher Education that evaluate the applications for accreditation often include international experts. The new Rules on External Evaluation Criteria explicitly provide for external institutional evaluations (CRE and EUA evaluations of University of Ljubljana and University of Maribor); likewise international evaluations of several study programmes (in the area of medicine, veterinary sciences, chemistry, economy

etc.) were performed by groups of international peers in the past. The Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission is active in international cooperation and networking as well. It is a member of the CEE Network and also participates in sessions of ENQA.

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.

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.

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is at present regulated by the Act on Recognition of Foreign School Certificates, which is to be replaced by the Act on Recognition and Evaluation of Education, planned to be implemented from 21 January 2005 on. The system now provides for a single procedure whereby a foreign certificate is matched with a corresponding Slovenian one. The Ministry of Education is competent for the recognition in primary and secondary education, and higher education institutions for the recognition of HE diplomas and degrees regardless of the purpose (further studies or employment). The new system has introduced two parallel systems of academic recognition for academic and professional purposes. Higher education institutions shall only be authorised to recognise completed or partial studies for the continuation of studies at Slovenian HEI (academic purpose). A side step (nostrification by the Ministry of Education) has been abolished and a more direct and individualised approach is being introduced, giving HEI the authority to recognise entry qualifications also at the level of entry into undergraduate programmes, to facilitate a more efficient recognition and avoid lengthy processes. The Act provides for a contact person at each individual HEI also to the same effect and also at other levels or cycles of studies. For professional purposes, completed studies or degrees shall be recognised by the Ministry of Education, stating primarily the level of degree.

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)

Doctoral programmes serve as a basis for preparing individual study and research programmes for students. The schedule of courses determines course fields and study requirements expressed in credit points that can be grouped into study and research programmes of individual students (study group work, research in teams or individual research). Organised forms of study offered by doctoral programmes amount to at least 60 credit points. The admission requirement is the completion of a second-cycle study

programme or one-tier study programme rated at 300 credit points or an undergraduate study programme of at least four-year duration in the appropriate field in combination with documented research or professional achievements that can be rated at 60 credit points. Graduates of master's degree programmes offered until now shall have a possibility to transfer 60 credit points to new doctoral programmes.

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 statistical data (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology) there are around 4,650 FTE researchers in Slovenia (around 7,000 researchers in head count). Among them, around 34% are employed in business sector, 31% in government sector, 30% in higher education sector and 5% in private non-profit sector. There are 808 research teams within Slovenian research establishments and there are important research centres at universities.

At the University of Ljubljana there are 255 such teams, whilst at the University of Maribor there are 86. More than half of those are active in the area of engineering sciences. There are 47 non-university research institutions, 18 of which have the status of national research institutes. In addition to research work at universities, national and other research institutes, there are 277 business companies with R&D teams, particularly in industry.

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)*

The main stimulators for the mobility of student's from/to Slovenia are organised mobility schemes (regional/multilateral). The oldest regional scheme is the exchange programme CEEPUS (almost 400 exchange students per year). Incoming and outgoing numbers of students are balanced. In the most comprehensive mobility scheme, i.e. the Socrates/Erasmus programme, the exchanges have not been balanced yet (200 incoming versus over 550 outgoing students). Important, despite lower numbers, are also exchanges based on bilateral agreements (around 30). Around 300 months of scholarships yearly are offered to foreign as well as Slovene students, mainly for short-term mobility at postgraduate level. In 2002 the Government of Slovenia established a public foundation Ad Futura - Scientific and Educational Foundation of the Republic of Slovenia, whose main task is financial and informational support for international full time mobility of students and researchers from and to Slovenia. (www.ad-futura.si).

Financial support is an important impetus for mobility. National grants and loans are portable for short-term mobility. Among the most frequent reasons for outgoing mobility are, besides cultural and sociological factors, the opportunities to gain new technical skills and professional experience and to improve employability (within the EU), to join programmes not offered in Slovenia, and improve language skills. Factors influencing the incoming mobility are, above all, low costs of living, attractiveness of the country's location, easy visa procedures and well-organised reception and information facilities at universities. The main obstacle to increasing the number of foreign students is still a relatively small number of lectures given in foreign language. The number of foreign students is around 1% and the majority of them come from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Italy.

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

The Government of the RS established two public institutions, Centre for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes and the Ad Futura Foundation, to provide managing, financing and technical support for mobility schemes and information and other support for domestic and foreign exchange students. Student organisations, as well, are providing information and guidance on studying abroad. Some of the important measures, taken at the national level, aiming at improving student mobility are the simplification of visa procedures and health insurance arrangements. To attract more foreign students, universities and student organisations developed a system of organised help and guidance for them and assistance in finding accommodation. Besides, higher education institutions offer special preparatory and language courses for foreign students.

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)

Factors, which encourage mobility of teachers and staff, are, among others, no visa or taxation problems, no major language barriers, good academic contacts across Europe (EU and non-EU countries), accessibility and good organisation of teacher mobility in some schemes. Obstacles that still prevent more Slovene teachers from taking part in mobility are low financial support for mobility schemes, difficulties in finding replacement for the time of absence and the problems connected with the recognition of short-term mobility for academic purposes.

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

In Slovenia, the organisational and legal environment for mobility of teachers is quite favourable, so no special measures were taken in this respect.

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 autonomy of universities and single higher education institutions is assured by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and by the Higher Education Act. Higher education institutions are autonomous in managing their internal organisation and operations (considering the official regulations), selecting and electing the faculty, electing and closing the internal bodies: rectors, senates, administrative boards and student councils, deans, and academic assemblies. In compliance with the law and upon the consent of the Council of Higher Education, they design study programmes and decide upon their content, including enrolment conditions, selection criteria, and professional titles. They manage their own property. The right of disposal (disposal or burdening) still requires the founder's consent. As a result of the introduction of lump sum financing in 2004/05, they receive funds from the state budget in block grants and distribute them according to the criteria adopted by the management board, taking in account official regulations and criteria determined by the Minister. Higher education institutions are also responsible for their self-evaluation.

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

All participants in the process participate in the promotion of the Bologna process, drafting of the regulatory framework, and implementation of measures to reach the objectives of the Bologna process. Representatives of ministries, various agencies and bodies, higher education institutions, students and employers take part in all consultative bodies and in working groups at the ministerial level as well as in various forms of promotional and information activities (presentations of legislative changes at senate meetings of all universities; thematic seminars on the credit system and the employability of graduates having graduated from programmes in compliance with the Bologna structure of studies; consultations with industry representatives; etc.). A special stress is given to ongoing, continual and active participation of student representatives in all previously mentioned activities.

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

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

Students participate in and influence the organisation and contents of education primarily through their representatives in the bodies of universities, their member institutions, and other higher education institutions. There are student councils at all institutions. They give their opinions on all matters concerning student rights and obligations. In compliance with new legislation students form at least one fifth of members of senates and academic assemblies, and they will also hold one fifth of the posts in the new Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia and the Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education.

At the state level, students participate in drafting new regulatory frameworks and in solving student problems.

In 2001 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia Council for Student Affairs was established. The Council's role is consultative; it is chaired by the ministers competent for individual sectors (education, labour, family and social affairs, health, and finance). It prepares platforms, coordinates them and then submits them through competent ministries to the Government. It also prepares starting points for and draft agreements on solving student problems in a coordinated manner. It proposes solutions concerning the relationships between the Slovene Student Union and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Council consists of working groups preparing and discussing proposals, amendments to and solutions for the regulatory framework in the fields related to academic and social issues concerning students (registration and tuition fees, subsidies for housing and public transit tickets, health and social insurance rights, tax legislation concerning taxation of income earned by student work, scholarships and student financial-aid).

Often ad hoc working groups, including student representatives, are formed at the state level in order to study individual problems or draft legislative proposals. An example of such a group is the Panel of Experts for the Follow-up and Implementation of the Bologna process in the Republic of Slovenia, which prepared draft amendments to the Higher Education Act in 2004.

Within the Bologna process, Slovene students are actively involved at local, national and European level (through ESIB). They organise conferences, seminars, workshops, round tables, public debates on the implementation of Bologna process and contribute to developments with their proposals.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

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

In Slovenia, the major part of the higher education sector is financed from public funds. No tuition is charged for present full-time undergraduate studies in Slovenia. Part-time students, however, pay tuition.

The Slovene Government uses the policy concerning scholarships and student financial aid to guarantee most open access to higher education studies. 22.5% of all students receive scholarships, which amount to between EUR 168 and 2020 per year. Most of them are state scholarships for materially deprived students (51.8%) and talented and gifted students (28.5%). Scholarships provided by future employers amount to 18.5%, and those provided by (organised) foundations to 1.2%. Special allowances as a certain percentage of the basic scholarship are provided for disabled students, students from families with minimum income, students with above-average study achievements, students coming from places most distant from study centres, students enrolling in under subscribed programmes, students from minorities, and student families. Scholarships are not taxed and one of the parents may claim a general officially determined tax relief for their children that are full-time students, as they are considered to be dependent family members.

The Slovene Government provides subsidies for meal plans and overall health insurance for all students, while subsidies for housing (in student halls of residence and rented off-campus residential facilities) and public transit tickets are given to a part of students.

Numerous students, however, perform work provided by organised intermediaries, that is student services, to cover the costs of living during their studies. Such student income not exceeding 51% of the average annual salary per employee in Slovenia is not taxed.

Special attention is paid to guaranteeing equal access to higher education for students with special needs. They can enjoy special privileges concerning admission requirements (especially in cases of limited enrolment) and scholarship eligibility, they receive additional subsidies for housing, and provisions to insure their (physical) access to study and residential facilities have been made.

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?

In Slovene higher education, the principle of life-long learning is implemented primarily by opening access to study programmes. In the past ten years the number of students has almost tripled; consequently, enrolment amounts to approximately 50% of the cohort. The country therefore adopted measures to increase the number of study places, encourage diversity of programmes offered, accommodate the provision to adult learners, and provide continuous education for public servants. In particular cooperation of technical departments with the industry is a well-established tradition. The Slovene higher education system adapts its provision to the needs of adult participants, as it implements a flexible organisation of studies, distance studies, e-learning, modules and elective courses. It furthermore increases its role in professional training and development of their graduates and ensures new study places. In doing this it is supported by the state providing appropriate financial mechanisms (student financial aid, state subsidies, co-financing of training after graduation and during traineeship, and similar). Direct co-financing by employers is also increasing every year.

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

The new HE Act (2004) pays full attention to various forms of lifelong education. It defines more precisely short supplementary study programmes intended primarily for specific training, supplementing, deepening and updating knowledge of adult students, short courses, summer schools, training programmes and the like. Students have the right to continue their studies after an interruption. In case of transfers or re-enrollment, their prior workload and examinations shall be recognised.

The Council for Higher Education determines the criteria for recognition of knowledge and skills acquired prior to enrolment, which are part of the new Criteria on accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes.

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

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

Legally there are no obstacles to organise and accredit integrated study programmes leading to joint/double degrees. Several HE institutions have inter-university agreements on implementation of integrated programmes and first such programmes have been prepared for accreditation in early 2005. Slovene HE institutions also participated in the first call for proposals of the Erasmus Mundus programme with partners in eleven applications.

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

First programmes are expected to be implemented in 2005.

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

All higher education institutions have introduced projects within the framework of the Socrates/Erasmus programme, which include in particular the exchange of students and teaching staff. International activities targeting joint provision of study programmes are also on the increase. Thus, in the last five years four HEIs participated in Erasmus Curriculum Development projects as coordinators and over forty as partners. One of the universities participated in the Tuning project and the results are now implemented in the reform of study programmes. Some higher education institutions already offer students possibilities to complete a period of study abroad. They also pay appropriate attention to linguistic diversity and language learning, require use of references in foreign languages, deliver courses in foreign languages, and intensively form links with partners in the framework of a number of European projects. The new Higher Education Act, which explicitly provides for integrated study programmes and joint degrees, will make it possible for individual already established forms of cooperation to develop into joint study projects leading to the award of joint degrees.

11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension

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

The HEIs, which attract high number of foreign students, started to offer some courses in English or German language in higher years of study and at postgraduate level. Home students are encouraged to choose such courses with participation of foreign students and teachers. Individual faculties participate in international programmes (for example, Master's Degree in European Social Policy Analysis - MESPA, European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation - EMA, Joint European Master in Comparative Local Development for the Balkans and other Areas in Transformation) and especially in Community programmes with the aim to develop joint degrees or European profiles. Many HE institutions introduce study programmes with European themes, especially at postgraduate level (such as the European Social Policy and Social Development master's programme). More and more courses with European contents are offered (European history, literature or EU law, economics of the EU, etc.). Many of them are interdisciplinary study courses, developed jointly by several faculties (such as the European protection of human and minority rights). Some departments have redesigned their study programmes in accordance with European standards (e.g. studies for professions that are regulated in the EU) or have had them accredited by international professional associations, which makes it possible for their graduates to find employment or obtain the recognition of their degrees in other EU Member States. Other study programmes stress the mobility of students as a factor increasing their competitiveness at the European labour market. Thus, some programmes encourage students to complete part of their study requirements at foreign higher education institutions. Examples of such incentives include various practices: some programmes recognise Leonardo da Vinci mobility as part of the obligatory training component of programmes. Students of technical faculties, for example, can prepare and defend their diploma theses at foreign institution or foreign teachers can be co-mentors or participate at the defence of master's and doctoral degree theses.

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 promotion of EHEA focused primarily on the national level, including several promotional activities: two national ECTS/Bologna seminars, promotion of the Erasmus Mundus programme, establishment and activities of the Bologna promoters group, national conference with employers, international conference on mobility and an official Bologna seminar on employability. Besides, the attractiveness of the EHEA was promoted in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia by Slovene representatives (the ministry, academics and students) who participated actively in numerous events (seminars, conferences) with presentations or case studies.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

Slovenian national Bologna strategies are based on the Master Plan for Higher Education (2002) and the new Higher Education Act(2004). The main aims are:
- to guarantee open access to higher education (all cycles) and a stable development of integrated universities and other higher education institutions; to further increase the number of students, in particular their share in the second and third cycle;

- to raise quality and effectiveness as well as social and economic relevance of undergraduate and postgraduate studies through improvement of human and material resources, through enhancement of quality assurance procedures as well as through open co-operation between higher education institutions, research institutes, economy, public institutions and other stakeholders;
- to strengthen international co-operation of Slovenian universities and higher education institutions in various inter-institutional programmes and to increase student and staff mobility in higher education and research;
- to encourage higher education to contribute to an open and democratic society.

The Government will endeavour to make it possible for all that are able and wish to study to do so free of charge in the first- and second-cycle of the Bologna model.

The new Higher Education Act (2004) takes into account the Bologna action lines and gives necessary provisions to implement them all by 2010.

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

The main challenges for Slovenian higher education in the following years are:

- according to outspoken interests of students, the main challenge is to support real innovation and quality through ongoing curricular change at universities and higher education institutions and to avoid formal changes only;
- to develop a culture of active participation of all partners in the process;
- to rise substantially the number of the second and third cycle students and to connect graduate studies with needs of enterprises and public institutions;
- to foster integration of higher education and research creating doctoral schools at universities, also in an international context (joint degrees);
- to connect short cycle degrees (two years) with the first cycle of higher education;
- to stress public responsibility for higher education and to consider social dimensions of the ongoing reform of higher education (student support systems; equal access; portability of grants and loans, attractiveness of working in higher education and research, etc.).