

**BOLOGNA PROCESS
SERBIAN NATIONAL REPORT: 2005-2007**

A. Background information on your Higher Education system

Details

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| Country | Republic of Serbia |
| Date | 15 December 2006. |
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Main achievements since Bergen

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.

The Law on Higher Education (LHE), which fully implements the Bologna Declaration, came into effect on 10 September 2005. The Minister of Education and Sport has enacted, within the due legal term, the following bylaws: Rules and regulations on the substance and method of records kept with the institutions of higher education; Rules and regulations on public documents kept with the higher education institutions; Rules and regulations on the register of higher education institutions, the curricula, teachers, fellows and other employees; and Rules and regulations on the format of operating licenses. Printing of public documents is done by the National Mintage, and procurements via official state institutions, to eliminate forgeries.

Within two months after entering into force of the LHE, the Conference of Universities of Serbia and the Conference of Headmasters of Colleges were established (the latter would, in accordance with the LHE, be replaced by the Conference of the Academies of Professional Studies, once it is established). These conferences proposed the members of the National Council for Higher Education, which were approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. The National Council, in turn, under the proposal by the Conference of Universities of Serbia, elected members of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission.

The Council and the Commission, the two bodies independent and separate from the executive authorities, started drafting, immediately after their establishment, the norms and standards, to enable the soonest possible accreditation of higher education institutions and curricula according to Bologna process. The points of departure were the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance adopted in Bergen, at the proposal by ENQA, but also the experience of most European countries-signatories of the Bologna Declaration, with the view to studying the same in detail, adjust and apply them to the system of higher education in Serbia, while preserving the cultural, linguistic and national specific features, as one of the Bologna Declaration postulates.

The Standards were approved on 20 October 2006, while in early December 2006 the Council and the Commission determined detailed procedure for accreditation and code of conduct of all the participants in the process, allowing for quality and unbiased selection of higher education institutions and curricula and opening competitive venues to the professionals educated and employed in the higher education system in Serbia across the European higher education area.

The Accreditation standards, in compliance with the Law, were published in “The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” and at the Internet site of the Ministry of Education and Sport (section with web pages of the National Council and Accreditation Commission). The Standards have been published both in Serbian and in English.

In compliance with the LHE and the adopted Standards, the accreditation of colleges, bound by the Law to enter first the accreditation process, shall start on 15 December 2006.

One of the crucial points in the procedure is establishing of the professional teams of reviewers: they were elected by the Accreditation Commission, further to the announced public invitation, from among the ranks of the internationally recognized domestic and foreign university teachers, scholars, artists and experts from scientific or artistic fields, as specified in the LHE.

National organisation

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

The National Council for Higher Education is an independent body formed to secure development and enhance the quality of higher education. Its members are elected by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. The National Council reports to the Parliament, at least once a year. Students are also involved in the proceedings of the National Council.

According to the LHA the National Council shall:

- 1) Monitor the development of higher education and its compliance with the European and international standards;
- 2) Propose to the ministry responsible for higher education affairs (hereinafter: the Ministry) the policy of higher education;
- 3) Provide opinion about the policy of enrolment to the higher education institutions;
- 4) Provide opinion about the procedure of enactment of regulations on the matters of importance for the higher education;
- 5) Propose to the Government the general rules and standards of operation of the higher education institutions, as well as the funds for their achievement, based on the opinion obtained from the Conference of Universities and the Conference of Academies of Professional Studies;
- 6) Determine the scientific, artistic and professional fields in the scope of

- education, at the proposals by the Conference of Universities and the Conference of Academies of Professional Studies;
- 7) Determine the standards for self-evaluation and rating of quality of higher education institutions;
 - 8) Determine the standards and procedures for external quality Assurance of higher education institutions;
 - 9) Determine the standards for issuance of operating licenses;
 - 10) Determine the standards and procedure for accreditation of the higher education institutions;
 - 11) Determine the standards and procedures for accreditation of the curricula;
 - 12) Decide in the second instance on the appeals challenging the accreditation procedure;
 - 13) Provide recommendations about further details for election to the occupation of a teacher; and
 - 14) Determine a list of professional, academic and scientific titles, with indication of the occupation within the corresponding levels of study in the relevant fields, as well as the abbreviations of the professional, academic and scientific titles.

The National Council is financed by the Budget of the Republic of Serbia. The National Investment Plan of the Government of the Republic of Serbia allotted the funds for professional advancement of the members of the Council and the Commission.

The National Council has established a separate body – Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, to perform accreditation, quality assurance of higher education institutions and of the units within their structure, and evaluation of the curricula.

The members of the Commission were elected by the National Council from among the ranks of distinguished full professors, scholars, artists and experts, at the proposal by the Conference of Universities.

The LHE stipulates that the Commission shall:

- 1) Propose to the National Council the standards for issuance of the operating licenses;
- 2) Propose to the National Council the standards and procedures for accreditation of the higher education institutions;
- 3) Propose to the National Council the standards and procedures for accreditation of the curricula;
- 4) Propose to the National Council the standards for self-evaluation and quality rating of higher education institutions;
- 5) Propose to the National Council the standards and procedures for external quality Assurance of higher education institutions;
- 6) Help and collaborate with the higher education institutions and units within their structures in assuring and enhancing their quality;
- 7) Implement the procedure of accreditation of the institutions and curricula in the field of higher education, decide on accreditation requests and issue accreditation certificates in the format to be defined;
- 8) Look after the harmonization of the standards and procedures in the field of accreditation, within the European higher education area;

- 9) Provide opinion in the procedure of issuance of operating licenses; and
- 10) Handle other matters in line with the Act establishing the Commission.

The Commission's work shall be financed out of income earned on accreditation fees, accrued to a separate sub-account for such a purpose. The amount of the accreditation fee shall be defined by the National Council and approved by the Government. The Commission has made a code of conduct which has been translated to English.

Quality Assurance in the fulfilment of obligations of independent higher education institutions and the units within their structures shall be made in line with the Rules and Regulations enacted by the Minister of Education and Sports at the proposal by the National Council.

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

The LHE stipulates that the activity of higher education shall be carried out by the following higher education institutions:

- University,
- Faculty or academy of arts within university (offers academic studies, i.e. basic /undergraduate/, graduate and post-graduate studies, and may offer professional studies too),
- Academy of professional studies (basic and specialized professional studies),
- Higher school (basic and graduate academic studies), and
- Higher school of professional studies (basic and specialized professional studies).

University, academy of professional studies, higher school and higher school of professional studies are independent higher education institutions, while faculties must be units of a university.

There are 7 state and 7 private universities in the Republic of Serbia, and 84 state and 51 private faculties. There are also 49 state and 31 private colleges (to be either upgraded to the level of higher school of professional studies or closed down, depending on the outcome of the accreditation process, that is supposed to be carried out by mid-2007).

The Law places private faculties and the faculties founded by the Republic of Serbia on equal footing regarding their rights but also the obligations.

In the academic year 2006/2007, a total of 98,259 students have been enrolled in all the higher education institutions in Serbia.

The total number of students enrolled in the **basic (undergraduate) academic studies** at the universities and faculties (state and private) is 57,359 (**58%**).

The total number of students enrolled for the **graduate academic (master) studies** at the universities and faculties (state and private) is 10,860 (**11%**). This number will be much higher, because the compilation of the university data is still ongoing due to the fact that the universities are only now enrolling students, given the current procedure of reorganization and accreditation of the master curricula.

The total number of students enrolled in the **colleges** (state and private) is 30,040 (**31%**). Most of the current higher schools filed their applications for accreditation as academies of professional studies, and higher schools of professional studies. The academies of professional studies and higher schools of professional studies were non-existent in the previous system of higher education.

The activity of all higher education institutions is governed by the same law - the LHE.

Partnership

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

The implementation of the Bologna process in Serbia is overseen by the Committee for the Monitoring of Implementation of the Law on Higher Education, consisting of representatives from the state and private universities, as well as by the students' representatives and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

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

In the discussions and decision-making about the quality assurance in teaching, reform of the curricula, analyses of efficacy of study and determination of the ECTS credits, representatives of the students participate in the work of the professional and other bodies of higher education institutions.

In the professional bodies (e.g. in the university Senate), students make up to 20% of members, and in their committees 20% of the total.

Apart from this, the representatives of students elected by the students' parliament participate also in the deliberations at the National Council for Higher Education. Their role is particularly significant (codified by the Law) when it comes to the issues of determination of the standards for self-evaluation and quality ranking of higher education institutions, of the standards and procedures for accreditation of higher education institutions and the standards and procedures for accreditation of the study curricula

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

No measures ensuring collaboration with the business and social partners within the Bologna process are in force right now.

B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

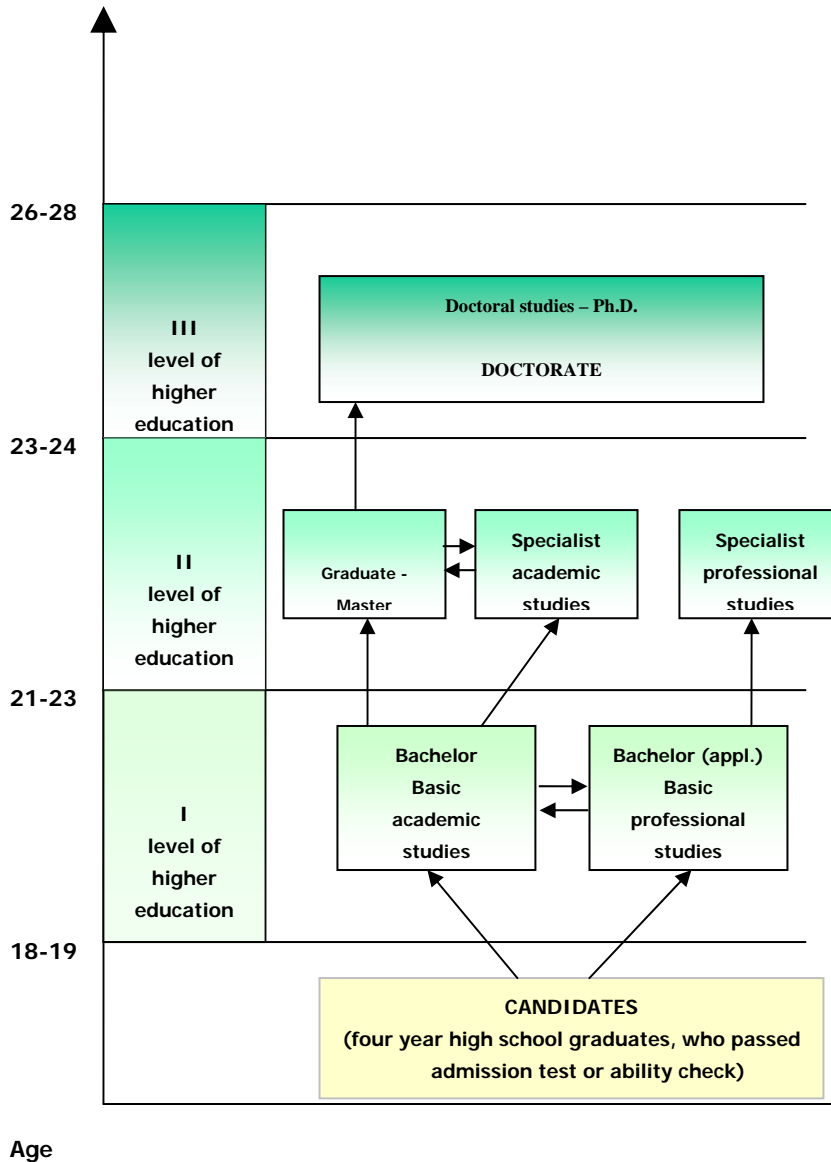
Degree system

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| (Scorecard and Eurydice) |
| Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle |
| 7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle. |
| All the faculties of the University in Belgrade and of the University in Novi Sad have introduced the programmes of the first and second cycles. The faculties of the universities in Nis and Kragujevac have introduced the curricula of the first and second cycles in about 80% of the cases, while the percentage among the faculties of the University in Pristina (in Kosovska Mitrovica) is about 50, due to the specific conditions prevailing there. |
| (Eurydice) |
| Stage of implementation of the third cycle |
| 8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle. |
| Doctoral (PhD) studies last three years encompassing both the courses taught and independent researches. Interdisciplinary training is also integrated in the doctoral studies. |
| The LHE stipulates that the doctoral studies should have at least 180 ECTS credits, along with the previously achieved level of studies of at least 300 ECTS credits at the basic academic and graduate academic studies. |
| Within the Accreditation standards, due to great relevance, special standards have been anticipated for the accreditation of curricula of the doctoral studies. The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission shall control, in particular, the following: competence of higher education institution to carry out the doctoral studies; the structure, purpose and objectives of the curricula; competences of the graduates; curriculum; quality, state-of-the-art and international compliance of study program; enrolment of students, their grading and promotion; the faculty staff; organization, material aspects and quality control. The accreditation of doctoral studies' curricula requires specific eligibility depending on corresponding education-scientific, namely education-artistic field, which the Commission will take account of when deciding. |
| At the moment, there are no precise data about the exact number of the students enrolled to the programs structured for doctoral studies. The preparation of a national framework of qualifications is ongoing. |

Access¹ to the next cycle

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

The access to the studies of various levels is regulated in the manner described in the chart below:



As shown above, all the types of studies enable access to the other study levels, but such mobility is somewhere direct, and elsewhere via additional exams (e.g. transfers from professional studies to master studies).

¹ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA².

The Minister of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia set up a commission mandated to create a National Qualifications Framework, which involves representatives from all the levels of education (elementary, secondary and high), representatives of the Employment Agency, Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

The starting point for the commission approach is the European Qualifications Framework in the area of higher education adopted in Bergen by the ministers responsible for higher education, with which the future National Qualifications Framework will be harmonized. We expect that the Commission will adopt the National Qualifications Framework before the London Ministerial Conference.

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

The faculties adjust their study programmes to the newly evolved needs of a society in transition. A large number of the faculties organize their basic academic studies over three years, whereby young people are educated for immediate integration in the work process (e.g. the University of Belgrade Faculty of Architecture, where the studies of the first cycle last three years, the University of Kragujevac Faculty of Law, University in Kragujevac, Faculty of Law, technical faculties in Novi Sad etc.).

Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA³

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

The National Council for Higher Education adopted on 20 October 2006 the Accreditation Standards that are fully harmonized with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA.

² A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

³ <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

The accreditation of higher education institutions started in compliance with the Standards and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission shall invite the internationally recognized foreign and local scholars, artists and professionals and international organizations and associations dealing with quality assurance.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

An independent higher education institution, or higher education unit within its structure, shall define, in its Statutes or another general enactment, the bodies and procedures for monitoring, assurance, enhancement and development of the quality of study programmes, teaching and conditions of work.

The monitoring of fulfilment of the obligations of an independent higher education institution and higher education unit within its structure, in terms of quality, will be carried out in line with the Rules and regulations enacted, at the proposal of the National Council, by the minister responsible for higher education affairs. (Rules and Regulations on Supervision of Fulfilment of Obligations of Higher Education Institution and Higher Education Unit within its Structure in respect of quality).

In the process of quality monitoring, the evaluation of the students of the curriculum shall be taken into account. The methods of evaluation of the curriculum and teaching have been regulated by the universities under their respective Rules on evaluation of the educational work of professors by the students.

The Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance examines the fulfilment of obligations of a higher education institution and of the higher education unit within its structure, concerning the quality against the annual plan of action, and according to a particular instruction by the National Council, at a request by an independent higher education institution or the Minister.

The applicants for examination of the fulfilment of obligations of an independent higher education institution and the higher education unit within its structure in respect of quality may not resubmit such a request within the same year.

The Commission submits a report about the accomplished quality assurance of the fulfilment of the obligations of a higher education institution and the higher education unit within its structure, to the National Council, the Minister and the independent higher education institution.

An independent higher education institution may challenge the findings within 15 days from the date of delivery of such a report.

The National Council forwards the Commission report to the Conference of universities and the Students' conference of the universities, or to the Conference of the academies of professional studies and the Students' conference of the academies of professional

studies.

The National Council endorses the evaluation of the fulfilment of obligations of the higher education institution and the higher education unit within its structure, concerning quality, on the basis of the Commission report, and submits it to the independent higher education institution and the Minister.

The results of examination of fulfilment of obligations of the independent higher education institution, concerning quality, are published according to the provisions contained in the enactment of the National Council.

The system of the quality assurance encompasses the entire system of higher education in Serbia. The accreditation procedure includes all the three scheduled elements (internal assurance, external assurance and announcement of the results).

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

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

Students are not directly involved in the work of the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance, rather their representatives, elected by the students' parliament, who participate in the work of the National Council of higher Education. Students also participate in the process of consultations during the external assurance, as well as in the internal quality assurance of higher education institutions.

To provide for an adequate representation of students in the education process, the first draft Law on students' organization was prepared, at the proposal of the Minister of Education and Sport and further to the LHE, which is (or will be) submitted to the parliamentary scrutiny. The draft law shall govern the status, activities, competencies, organization and functioning of the students' parliament, students' conference and students' organization.

Level of international participation

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

The LHE provides that the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance may solicit the services of international organizations and associations for quality assurance in higher education, in line with the enactment by the National Council.

Also, internationally recognized foreign university teachers, scholars, artists and experts may be appointed as reviewers in the accreditation procedure. Their appointment is provided for by the LHE and further elaborated in the Code of Conduct enacted by the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance.

Accreditation Commission perceives its memberships in the two international QA organizations of major relevance as being the most important; these are ENQA and INQAAHE.

Accreditation Commission has applied for the INQAAHE membership and **was admitted as a full member on December 11 2006.**

The Commission presently aims for the ENQA membership. In order to become a full ENQA member, a national QA body has to present the following:

1. Proof of sufficient material and human resources for fulfilment of its mission and realization of its goals. This is already fully achieved: LHE states that the Accreditation Commission is financed from the funds obtained from the accreditation fees (Article 13 Paragraph 16), and a bank sub-account has been made available for this purpose.
2. A published mission statement which clearly shows management and action plans. (This has been partly achieved).
3. A publicly available responsibility policy expressed as a policy of reaffirming of its own quality and presence of internal quality assurance procedures, published on the website. (This has been mostly done as well).
4. Law on Higher Education and all accreditation and QA standards and procedures translated to English. The Law has been translated and published on the Ministry website (Accreditation Commission section). Accreditation standards are presently being translated and will be published in English on the same website by the end of December 2006. The Accreditation Commission is obliged to present its report to the National Council for Higher Education by December 15. The report, along with the accreditation standards and accreditation agenda, will be made available in the form of a printed publication, in Serbian and English, which will be made available on the website as well.

In order for its application to be successful, the Commission has yet to clearly define the management structures and financial control mechanisms.

Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

The Law set out the obligation to issue Diploma Supplement. The students who shall graduate in 2007 shall automatically and free of charges receive the Diploma Supplement, corresponding to the format of the EU Diploma Supplement, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, in Serbian and English.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents⁴ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The Republic of Serbia signed the Lisbon Convention in 2001 and ratified it in September 2003. The ratification instruments were deposited in 2004.

Some of the relevant legal provisions comply with the legal framework of the Convention and subsequently adopted supplementary documents.

The LHE provides that, in the procedure of validation of foreign higher education diplomas, the system of education of the country where the diploma of higher education was acquired, the study programme, the enrolment conditions for the programme, the rights granted by such a higher education diploma in the country where it was acquired, and other facts of significance for recognition by a higher education institution, shall be taken into account.

The following principle is applied in practice: provision of information about the programmes and institutions of higher education in the Republic of Serbia.

The ENIC Centre of Serbia, formed within the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Serbia in 2001, as a member of the ENIC/NARIC network, participates actively in providing electronic information to all the stakeholders in the network, as well as to the students (during and after their studies), to the university teachers, administrative departments of higher education institutions, ministries and other administrative authorities, international organizations, employers and other interested

⁴ 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)

parties.

The ENIC Centre of Serbia provides for information about:

- Validation of diplomas, titles and other qualifications obtained abroad;
- The education systems of the member states of the ENIC/NARIC network;
- The system of higher education in the Republic of Serbia;
- Enrolment of students to the higher education institutions;
- The procedure for validation of the diplomas obtained abroad; and
- The status of the higher education institutions and study programmes.

The ENIC Centre of Serbia posts and maintains its Internet pages with the links toward the Internet page of the ENIC/NARIC network and other relevant Internet pages.

Seminars, open forums and information days are scheduled, with the view to improving the system of information about the national education system and criteria and procedures for validation. The rectorates of all the universities in the Republic of Serbia should implement, in collaboration with the ENIC Centre of Serbia, the mentioned activities that would be accompanied by respective publications.

Efficient cooperation at the regional and international levels has been established with the other ENIC/NARIC centres via exchange of documents, experts, experience and information by way of networking, in the aim of advancement of the mobility and recognition in the field of higher education.

The National Council will establish, within its competences, an inter-departmental agency within the Government of Republic of Serbia for validation of the foreign higher education documents.

The Agency would be vested with the validation of foreign higher education documents, central point of application and the entire administrative procedure for validation of higher education documents.

The Agency would be in charge of gathering all relevant information regarding validation of qualifications. The collected documents would be submitted to a professional commission that would be formed in a related higher education institution and which would take decisions on validation, while having the obligation to submit its decisions to the Agency, within a time limit.

Also planned is an enactment of a documentary basis for the procedure and criteria of validation of qualifications at the national level, where the European ones would also be included.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

The LHE prescribes mandatory use of the ECTS system of credits. In the academic year 2006/2007, all the programmes of all cycles of studies use the ECTS as the sole system of credits.

The achievements in each of the subjects in the study programme are presented with a number of ECTS credits, and the volume of studies with a sum of the ECTS credits.

A sum of 60 ECTS credits corresponds to the average overall engagement of a student within the scope of 40-class working weeks in one academic year. The overall engagement of a student consists of active teaching (lectures, drills, practical lectures, seminars, etc.), independent work, colloquiums, exams, preparation of graduation papers, and voluntary work in the local community and other forms of engagement.

Voluntary work is a student's unpaid work, organized by the higher education institution on the projects of significance for the local community, evaluated in the system of higher education. The conditions, the method of organization and the evaluation of such voluntary work are regulated by the higher education institution with its general bylaw.

The total number of classes of active teaching can not be lower than 600 classes during an academic year.

The basic academic studies carry between 180 and 240 ECTS credits.

The basic professional studies carry 180 ECTS credits.

The specialized professional studies carry at least 60 ECTS credits.

The specialized academic studies carry at least 60 ECTS credits when graduate academic studies had previously been completed.

The graduate academic studies carry:

- 1) At least 60 ECTS credits when a volume of basic academic studies of 240 ECTS credits had previously been achieved;
- 2) At least 120 ECTS credits when a volume of basic academic studies of 180 ECTS credits had previously been achieved.

The doctoral studies carry at least 180 ECTS credits, when a volume of studies of at least 300 ECTS credits had previously been achieved at the basic or graduate academic studies.

Certain academic study programmes may be integrated within the basic and graduate academic studies.

The academic study programmes in medical sciences may be integrated within the basic and graduate academic studies, with the total volume of no more than 360 ECTS credits.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications⁵? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Minister of Education and Sports has established the Commission for drafting of National Action Plan for Recognition. The Commission has produced the first draft of the National plan (enclosed with this National Report). All relevant documentation and European recommendations related to structure and contents of National Action Plans for Recognition has been translated to Serbian and is available from the Ministry's website.

The Draft Plan will be sent to all universities in Serbia in order for them to directly contribute to its finalization with their suggestions and proposals.

Lifelong Learning

Recognition of prior learning

(Scorecard)

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

The institutions of higher education define in their Statutes whether and under what conditions would they recognize previously obtained qualifications as the basis for enrolment or continuation of studies. This is their legal obligation (Article 48, paragraph 3, item 12 of the Law). It is illustrated by the Statute of the University of Belgrade (Articles 106 and 107 of the Statute).

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

The LHE prescribes for the existence of mandatory and optional study fields or subjects.

The standards for accreditation of study programmes anticipate that the optional subjects within the structure of study programs, save for the field of arts, are represented with at least 20% of the total number of ECTS credits at the basic studies, or at least 30% of the total number of ECTS credits at diploma studies.

In the field of arts, the number of ECTS credits that correspond to the optional subjects in one study programme is as follows:

- At least 5% at the basic studies;
- Around 10% at the diploma studies; and
- Around 20% at the doctoral studies.

⁵ ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

The LHE prescribes a possibility to organize a study programme for a joint degree of several higher education institutions that possess operating licenses, which may be accomplished once the responsible bodies of the higher education institutions that organize them shall have approved it. A large number of institutions of higher education in Serbia organize and carry out the studies for joint degrees with local and foreign partners (e.g. University of Belgrade - La Sapienza, Roma – University of Sarajevo)

In line with the Euro-Atlantic integration of Serbia, this principle has been applied to the integration of the Military Academy into the system of higher education of Serbia (joint degree with the University of Belgrade Faculty of Managerial Science).

C. Current issues in Higher Education

Higher education and research

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

The higher education institutions in Serbia are scientific research institutions, so they equally foster research and education (save the professional studies and higher schools).

For an institution to pursue research and education it is necessary to meet the prescribed Standards for accreditation of study curricula of doctoral studies, primarily the following: competence of higher education institution to carry out doctoral studies, corresponding structure of curriculum and its international compliance and scientifically apt faculty staff who must meet a series of criteria and the competence of graduated students.

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

The exact data about the percentage of the candidates for a doctoral degree that opt for a research career are not available. It is evident only that most of the staff who built their academic career at the universities are regularly engaged in research.

The social dimension

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

The Government of Republic of Serbia has adopted an Action plan entitled “Decade of the Roma 2005-2015” and, within it, for the second year now, the Ministry of Education and Sports enrolls the candidates of Roma nationality, who pass the entrance exam, as students financed from the Budget, with provided accommodation in the students dormitories. In the previous two years, 200 candidates have been enrolled. This action is implemented in collaboration with the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, which has taken over the responsibilities of the earlier Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, after disintegration of the State Union.

At the University of Novi Sad, for the third time, an experimental programme is running called “School of Romology for Roma and non-Roma students”. The goal of this 1-term professional programme is to make the broad academic public at the University aware of the Roma issues at home and abroad, as well as to provide the basic knowledge about the Roma language and culture so that, during the Decade of the Roma, their position could be considerably improved in higher education. The school was attended by about 100 Roma and non-Roma students, and the same number got the certificates (including the generation that will become entitled to them in February 2007). This fact is not negligible, since this is the only programme of higher education for Roma students in our country today, offering knowledge about their culture, language and community.

In collaboration with the Association of the students with handicaps, the Ministry of Education also implements an affirmative action in the enrolment of students financed by the Budget and the accommodation in the specially equipped student dormitories for the students with handicaps. All the faculties have undertaken to provide conditions for work and access to such students, since this is a legal obligation. The same kind of action is undertaken by the Ministry, in collaboration with the Social Welfare Centres, in the enrolment of children lacking parental care.

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

A considerable part of the students within the higher education institutions founded by the Republic are financed from the Budget of the Republic of Serbia, according to their success at the admission test (for the first year students) and their results during the studies. Next to that, the Government of Serbia has continually and systematically provided assistance to the most talented students through the Fund for Young Talents by means of scholarship grants and awards that stimulate further education and even master and doctoral studies abroad, regardless of their economic or social background.

Mobility

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

The measures conducive to mobility include introduction of the ECTS system at all the faculties and harmonization of the programmes by professions (faculties of technical sciences, faculties of law, economics, etc.) in the first cycle of studies. Also, modernization of the existing curricula and introduction of new ones is continually implemented after the models of curricula of the European higher education institutions.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

Transferable student loans and grants do not exist in Serbia for the time being, but a possibility for their introduction is currently under consideration within the National Investment Plan of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

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

International mobility, contacts and visits of the Serbian universities staff to European universities are regularly carried out, among other forms and basis, through a variety of Tempus Projects. They vary in length of stay, but most frequently they last from several days to a few months, although there are some Serbian professors who teach at European universities on the more frequent basis. Many European guest professors teach at the universities in Serbia. Those contacts enable transfer of knowledge, exchange of information about the teaching methods and curricula, sharing experience in implementation of the Bologna process, organisation of joint programmes, etc.

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

29. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

The work on the promotion of the EHEA attractiveness includes the activities of the Ministry of Education and Sport in the organization of international conferences on the topic of the Bologna process, which were attended by representatives of all the Serbian higher education institutions and international experts. In addition, the members of the national team of promoters of the Bologna process have organized promotional seminars at their universities. Students' organizations have also been promoting the Bologna process in Serbia for years now.

All the legislation pertaining to the Bologna process and the LHE, as well as related bylaws, is available at the Internet site of the Ministry of Education and Sport, (section "Bologna process in Serbia").

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Future challenges

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| 30. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country. |
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| The work to be done on National Qualifications Framework and on the National Plan for Recognition of Qualifications will represent the largest forthcoming challenges in the next stage of implementation of the Bologna Process in Serbia. |
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