

BOLOGNA PROCESS NATIONAL REPORT 2005-2007

A. Background information on your Higher Education system

Details

Country	REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
Date	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.

In April 2006, the Government approved the *Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010* and measures for the first stage of its implementation for 2006-2007. The main objectives of the Development Plan are to improve the governance and management of higher education, to enhance the quality, embed new financing mechanisms and to ensure the effective use of financial and human resources. The last amendments to the *Law on Higher Education* of 2006 enable colleges (non-university type higher education institutions) to award a Professional Bachelor degree from 2007 onwards. It will be possible only in accredited colleges. At present, there are 7 (4 public and 3 non-public) such colleges, 9 colleges are under the accreditation procedure. For the time being, all colleges award a higher education diploma and a professional qualification.

A position of a postdoctoral fellow was introduced by the Law on Higher Education in the career scheme of higher education and research institutions (see point 24).

In July 2005, amendments made to the Law on Higher Education and subsequent secondary legislation (*Order of the Minister of Education and Science on General Requirements for Joint Degrees*) in January 2006 created a legal basis to award international joint degrees at higher education institutions.

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.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs

- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

There were hardly any important changes in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education since Bergen. The main role on the stage remains to the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter - the Ministry). Higher education institutions are accountable to the Ministry of Finance for the use of budgetary allocations. The expediency of the use of budgetary funds is monitored by the National Audit Office. Other ministries are involved when discussing issues within their competence; this usually concerns the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance etc. Some planned changes are targeted at reviewing and updating responsibilities and functions of the main expert body on issues of higher education - the Science Council of Lithuania, the same concerns the main stakeholders – the Rectors’ Conference of Lithuanian Universities, the Directors’ Conference of Lithuanian Colleges and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The objective of the reform is to avoid overlapping of their activities.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania distributes state budgetary allocations to public higher education institutions with reference to the draft prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science in accordance with the funding methodology approved by the Government. Public funding is allocated as a lump sum and is linked to the results of the assessment of the activity of a higher education institution, of the research activity in particular, and quality assurance of studies.

According to the *Law on Higher Education* (2000), the autonomy of higher education institutions encompasses the following rights: to establish their own procedure of studies; to formulate programmes conforming to the guidelines for a study field; to publish study, scientific and other literature; to define their own organisational structure, internal work procedures, a concrete number of academic staff and research workers, administrative staff and other employees, their rights and duties, and pay conditions in compliance with the valid legal acts; to elect self-government institutions in a procedure established by their statutes; to enrol and expel students; to establish forms of co-operation with Lithuanian and foreign enterprises, institutions and organisations; to manage the property, to use and dispose of it in the order prescribed by law. Alongside with the rights specified above, universities have the right to choose study forms and subject areas, research, professional artistic activities; to approve study programmes conforming to the guidelines for a study field; to award degrees, including research degrees, and academic titles.

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

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

Institutional structure is described by the Law on Higher Education (2000). There are 2 sectors of HEI: universities and colleges (non-university type HEIs). They are either public or non-public. At present, there are 15 public and 7 non-public

universities, 16 public and 12 non-public colleges. Since Bergen, one non-public college and one non-public university were established.

The total number of students admitted to public universities in 2006 was about 37 000, to public colleges - 14 000. Majority of the students was admitted to public higher education institutions, there were about 2000 students admitted to non-public HEIs in 2006.

Both public and non-public institutions are under the same legal regulations and have to meet the same quality standards. However, some of the legislative requirements for establishing and licensing institutions, as well as regulations for admission, differ in the public and non-public sector. State budget resources are allocated exclusively for the public sector, however, in some particular cases determined by the legislation a non-public institution can also receive state funding.

Partnership

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

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

The implementation of the Bologna Process in Lithuania since 2004 has been supervised by the national Bologna Follow-Up Group which consists of the members of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, the Rectors' Conference of Lithuanian Universities, the Directors' Conference of Lithuanian Colleges, students' representatives, the national ECTS/DS coordinator and counsellor, the national BFUG member. This group is directly responsible to the Minister for preparation for the Bologna Ministers' Conferences and coordinates dissemination of the information on the Bologna Process in Lithuania. A publication on the Bologna Process including both the original text of the Bologna Declaration and its translation to Lithuanian, Prague, Berlin and Bergen Communiqués, supplemented with some other useful information, was released at the end of 2005. It will be updated after London's Ministerial Summit. It is worth mentioning here the national Bologna promoters' group which works very effectively implementing Bologna ideas in the academic society, organises national conferences on Bologna issues inviting foreign experts, etc. There is a close co-operation between the national Bologna promoters' group and the national Bologna Follow-Up Group. Representatives of the business sector and staff trade unions are not members of these groups, nevertheless, they are permanent partners in ongoing discussions on how to involve in and play more actively contributing to the enhancement of the quality and competitiveness of the national higher education, how to meet the needs of a contemporary labour market in specialists training in higher education institutions.

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

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or

<p>equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the role of students in the governance of HEIs • the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.
<p>General provision on the composition of self-governing bodies of a higher education institution is set out by the Law on Higher Education (http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=281384).</p> <p>Minimum 10 percent of a self-governing body of a public higher education institution (both a senate of a university and an academic council of a college) have to be student representatives. Student representatives are also members of the supervising and advisory body – a council of a higher education institution. Besides, each higher education institution has a commission for dispute resolution to settle disputes between students and administration of a higher education institution. Students are represented in this body on a par with the administration. However, student unions expect and expressed their wish to increase the role of students' influence to the governance and the quality of studies in higher education institutions. The Ministry supports this point of view and is ready to take into consideration their relevant proposals, if received.</p>
<p>6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.</p>
<p>For the time being, a university council in a public university and an academic council in a public college are public supervision and advisory bodies. The council comprises three segments: one third of the members of the council is appointed by the senate (academic council) in the order prescribed by the statute; another third of the members of the council (excluding employees of a respective higher education institution), representing science, culture, art, business, institutions of local self-government and national authorities, is appointed by the minister; the remaining third of the council members is appointed by a consensus between the rector (the director of a college) and the minister. Business and social partners are also members of the councils of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher education (see point 14 for extra information).</p> <p><i>Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010</i> is targeted at strengthening stakeholders' impact on higher education, especially stressing the importance of involving partners from business and entrepreneurship in the process of studies, innovative and research activities in higher education institutions, as well as in their governance. There are plans to embed a principle that both employees and NGOs had an equal right to make proposals concerning higher education and research policy and its implementation. Furthermore, according to this plan, the majority of a university council should comprise social and business partners. National objectives and special measures for the implementation of the Lisbon strategy are also in reference here.</p>

B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)
<p>Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle</p> <p>7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.</p> <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.
<p>(See point 4 of the National Report to the Bergen Conference.)</p> <p>Approximately 96 percent of the total number of students under doctoral level is within a two cycle system. Some percent of students study in the programmes of integrated studies, which lead directly to the second cycle qualification, such as in the study fields of law, medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy.</p>
(Eurydice)
<p>Stage of implementation of the third cycle</p> <p>8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.</p> <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the percentage of 3rd cycle students following structured doctoral programmes• the normal length of full-time doctoral studies• the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only• the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies• are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes• are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies• are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?
<p>All doctoral candidates study following structured doctoral programmes, in particular cases there is a possibility for a candidate to defend a doctoral thesis taking an equivalency examination. Standard duration of a doctoral programme is 4 years. A doctoral programme consists of doctoral courses, an independent research activity and preparation of a doctoral thesis. Upon completion of doctoral studies, a doctoral thesis must be prepared and publicly defended in order to qualify for a research degree. Not less than 20 national (30 ECTS) credit points have to be earned by a doctoral student during the stage of doctoral courses. Some universities allocate credit points to the whole doctoral programme integrating study and research. In addition, doctoral students have to deliver lectures and conduct seminars to acquire</p>

lecturing skills. Evidences of interdisciplinary training and development of transferable skills are such as – improvement of foreign language skills; not less than 3 course units chosen by a doctoral candidate for his doctoral course may not necessary be directly linked to his research activity; possibility to participate in national or international research activities, for instance, projects, conferences, seminars, exchange projects etc.

Mandatory supervising and assessment procedures are prescribed by the *Regulations on Doctoral Studies* (2001), a new draft of which is expected to be prepared in the nearest future.

There is a necessity for NQF. It will be prepared in the coming years to cover the third cycle qualifications, these qualifications will undoubtedly be linked to the learning outcomes, like other qualifications in NQF.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Access¹ to the next cycle

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

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

There are about 90 qualifications of higher education. Two thirds of these qualifications give access to the second cycle and approximately one third of the qualifications do not give direct access (in student numbers it is also about 30 percent of all first cycle students). This refers only to college graduates who do not have immediate access to the second cycle. Majority of college graduates go to the labour market. Other highly motivated students have a possibility to obtain a Bachelor's degree through bridging courses and afterwards to be admitted to the second cycle. Introducing a qualification of a Professional Bachelor's degree from 2007 onwards in professional higher education will facilitate access to the second cycle for graduates of this non-university sector. It should be noted that only colleges

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.

after a successful accreditation procedure will be entitled to award this degree. The secondary legislation on practicalities of implementation of a Professional Bachelor degree will be adopted in the beginning of 2007.

All first cycle university graduates have access to the second cycle.

There are no qualifications in the first cycle that give access directly to both the second and the third cycle or solely to the third cycle.

All second cycle qualifications give access to the third cycle.

(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.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared; has a timetable for implementation been agreed?)
- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

The national qualifications framework (NQF) is the subject under debates among public authorities and academe. A pilot project financed by the European Structural Funds was launched in 2005. The model for the NQF is expected to be created by 2008. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the Ministry of Education and Science are authorities in charge of fulfilling this task. The Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, the Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation, the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, higher education institutions are represented in the working group preparing the model. It is important to keep simultaneous attention to the development of the EQF for LLL; on the other hand, NQF should be compatible with the European Qualifications Framework for higher education.

In fact, qualifications of higher education, awarded by Lithuanian higher institutions, are, in general, compatible with the overarching qualifications framework for EHEA, as since 2000 3 cycle system is legally enforced by the *Law on Higher Education*, though in fact it has been operating since 1993. All 3-cycle qualifications awarded are defined by profile, level structure and credit ranges by this law. On the other hand, all Lithuanian higher education qualifications are classified by study field, level and profile in the *General Classifier of Study Areas and Fields* approved by the Government in 2001. Updating and amending of this set in accordance to the requirements and

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

attributes of QF for EHEA (outcome-based descriptors of cycles (levels) and the main types of qualifications, credit ranges etc.) is a probability under debates on how to develop NQF for HE and to create links to NQF for LLL.

The Development Plan for 2006-2010, that has already been mentioned above in point 1, includes the goal of the implementation of the qualifications framework for higher education compatible with the national qualifications framework for LLL.

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

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

Whereas graduates with a bachelor's qualification have already been acting in a labour market for some time, no special efforts or measures are taken for increasing employability of these graduates. They can find jobs without much difficulty and hold positions in different sectors of the labour market – economic entities, business enterprises, public or civil service etc. As yet, this is not a case of a large-scale unemployment. However, the second cycle graduates, notably of certain study fields, are more willingly admitted to the labour market and are offered better paid job positions. According to the Lithuanian Jobcentre data resources only 12.4 percent of unemployed citizens were graduates with higher education qualifications in the register of this centre in 2005. There were 27324 university graduates of both the first and the second cycle and 1642 of them were registered at the Lithuanian Jobcentre (791 of them succeeded in finding a job). There were 11173 college graduates of the first cycle and 1396 of them were registered at the Lithuanian Jobcentre (668 of them succeeded in finding a job). In 2005, approximately 6 percent of all university graduates and 12.5 per cent of college graduates were registered at the Jobcentre.

The same situation is expected to persist in the coming years; in case of any inconsiderable deviation the most probable tendency will lead towards decreased unemployment.

Approximately 61 percent of graduates with a Bachelor's qualification were enrolled in the second cycle study programmes in 2005/2006. (In 2006 there were 20617 first cycle university graduates and 12582 college graduates. 11284 of them later enrolled in the second cycle programmes.) Introducing a qualification of a Professional Bachelor's degree from 2007 onwards in colleges (non-university type of HEIs) will facilitate access of graduates from the sector of professional higher education to the second cycle. At present, they have access to universities only after they obtain a Bachelor's degree as a result of bridging courses at universities.

There is no possibility to have access to the third cycle after obtaining the first cycle qualification.

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?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any deadlines set for taking action to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

The operating national quality assurance system, which started in 1995, basically is in line with *the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA* today, as it embraces all core elements required for both external and internal quality assurance process. Implementation of common European quality assurance standards is one of the objectives defined in a new policy document for the coming period – the *Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010* (see point 1). One of the chapters of this document is devoted to updating of the content of studies and evaluation of the quality of higher education.

It is worth mentioning that the *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA* have been translated into the Lithuanian language and introduced to higher education institutions.

At some higher education institutions systems of internal quality assurance are already being implemented on different levels. Some universities have already been evaluated by such organizations as European Universities Association.

What concerns the standards and guidelines for QA agencies, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is making preparations for its evaluation in 2007–2008, seeking to make certain that its performance is in line with the 3rd part of the *Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA* and to become a full member of ENQA.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education⁴
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
 - internal assessment
 - external review
 - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education operates in Lithuania and performs:

1. evaluation of all higher education study programmes (university and non-university type);
2. institutional evaluation of both public and non-public colleges (non-university higher education sector);
3. evaluation of applications for establishment of new public and non-public higher education institutions;
4. research and development quality assessment of research and higher education institutions.

An internal quality assurance system is obligatory in each public and non-public higher education institution. A self-evaluation report is a compulsory basis for an external evaluation procedure and proposal making concerning accreditation.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is in charge of carrying out external review of study programmes, higher education institutions and research activities, as well as of evaluating applications to receive a license to provide higher education. External review is performed on the basis of a self-assessment report (made by the institutions under evaluation) and a site-visit of the team. Evaluation of the above mentioned activities is carried out periodically once in a 8 year term, as a rule, unless particular shortcomings are identified and they have to be rectified employing the proposed measures until a prescribed deadline.

Compulsory publication of conclusions and findings is aimed at informing the society and, furthermore, the results of external evaluation are taken into account when allocating state budgetary funds for an institution. The Centre schedules preliminary evaluation plans for 2-3 years ahead and produces reports on summary analyses and findings on the reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc. annually and publicly. A part of the evaluation reports have been published since 2005 and are available on the web-site of the Centre.

A peer review of the Centre is planned for the end of 2007 or the beginning of 2008.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

⁴ 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.

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

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
 - the governance of national agencies for QA
 - as full members or observers in external review teams
 - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
 - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
 - in internal evaluations.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is an independent public service institution established by the Ministry of Education and Science. The governance structure does not include a governing board; therefore, participation of students in the governance of the Centre is excluded.

Students' participation is regulated by legislation, consequently, it is compulsory in both counselling boards of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education - the Experts' Council for Quality in Higher Education and the Experts' Council for Assessment of Research and Higher Education Institutions and three committees. Lithuanian Students' Union is always invited to delegate one representative or two to each of these councils and committees.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education started including students as full members in peer teams for external evaluation in 2006. Students are also included in internal quality assurance arrangements: a student representative is involved in the group preparing a self-evaluation report either of a study programme or of an institution, or through questionnaires or other internal quality procedures. Student representatives have a status equal to other members of either of these panels. Students studying under a certain programme or in a certain institution under evaluation are also always interviewed by peer teams during site-visits. Nevertheless, students see the need for increasing their role in higher education quality assurance arrangements in future.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

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

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance
 - the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
 - the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
 - teams for external review, either as members or observers
 - membership of ENQA
 - membership of any other international network.

In 2002, a practice of assessing study programmes by experts' panels with participation of foreign experts appointed for evaluation of study programmes in a certain field of study was introduced. Programmes in the fields of law, medicine, odontology, sociology, education, management and business administration, public administration, public health have already been evaluated with the participation of foreign experts. Study programmes of social work and computer science are under evaluation at the moment (end of 2006). Other study fields are scheduled to be evaluated by peer review teams composed of foreign experts in future.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is currently making preparations for a membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Application is planned for 2007. For some years it holds a membership of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN).

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.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
 - issued in a widely spoken European language
 - free of charge
 - automatically
 - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

A Diploma Supplement was legally introduced at national level in 2004. Since 2006 onwards, it is delivered automatically free of charge in the English and Lithuanian languages to all graduates at all higher education institutions and conforms to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format. Doctoral students, they amounted to about 2 percent of graduates of all cycles in academic year 2005/2006, do not receive a Diploma Supplement.

All students of the first and the second cycle (100 percent) graduating in 2007 should receive a Diploma Supplement.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents⁵ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
 - applicants' right to fair assessment
 - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
 - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
 - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention and the latter Supplementary Documents and the main principles and instruments for recognition are fully in force. (See point 5 of the National Report to the Bergen Conference and the National Action Plan for Recognition attached to this report.)

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

Lithuania operates its own national credit system. The *Law on Higher Education* states that the average amount of one academic year in full-time studies corresponds to 40 credits. The national credit system is applied to the Bachelor and the Master cycles and non-university sector study programmes. Doctoral programmes have to allocate credits as well according to the *Decree of the Government on Doctoral Studies* of June 2002 (see National Report to the Bergen Conference, point 6.1). The use of the national credit system is an essential element for a study programme accreditation and registration.

⁵ 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)

The national credit in Lithuania is based on a student's workload (contact hours, independent study, exercises, research and/or other assignments) and refers to 40 notional student's work hours per week. 1 Lithuanian credit equals to one study week. One national credit is equal to 1,5 ECTS credit. One academic year equals to 40 national credits, 1600 hours of a student's work.

Institutions use ECTS as a transfer system for exchange purposes on a voluntary basis. A multiplying factor 1,5 is used to calculate correlation between the national and ECTS credit. For accumulation purposes, national credits are used.

However, alongside the national credits ECTS credits are indicated in a Diploma Supplement.

Universities took an initiative to replace the national credit system with ECTS. According to the proposal of the Rectors' Conference of Lithuanian Universities the Ministry is preparing the amendment to the Law on Higher Education for 2007.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications⁶? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

The National Action Plan for Recognition attached to this report was elaborated by the staff of the Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC and the Ministry. This Plan covers measures to be implemented for facilitating the process of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications and improving provision of information on recognition.

Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

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

Please include:

- the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.

Study periods are recognised by higher education institutions themselves. An *Order of the Ministry on the Procedures of Recognition of Study Periods* determines institutions' rights and obligations in study period recognition that both gives access to studies (except to the first year studies) and allows the transfer of accumulated credits.

The following shall be recognised in Lithuanian higher education institutions: results of studies at a foreign higher education institution; results of studies at another Lithuanian higher education institution of the same or different type; results of studies in accordance with another study programme of the same higher education institution. Recognition of non-formal or informal prior learning is in future plans.

⁶ ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

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

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

(See point 10.1 of the National Report to the Bergen Conference.)

Results of continuing studies may be evaluated by credits in the order established by a higher education institution. A person who earns a required number of credits in accordance with a certain study programme, may, in the order established by the Government, be recognised as having acquired a higher education and be awarded a qualification.

Higher education institutions may create conditions for a student to study according to an individual study programme drawn up in the order established by that higher education institution.

According to the *Law on Higher Education* higher education institutions are autonomous to arrange study programmes conforming to the guidelines for the study area. Higher education institutions are free to decide on delivery methods, subject modules and a mode of studies they offer. All study programmes are structured in line with the guidelines for a certain study field approved by the Ministry. Consequently, all degree study programmes have 3 types of course units: compulsory, optional and free elective. Within an undergraduate programme, about 70 per cent of the credits are required to be earned in the compulsory course units, about 20 per cent - in the optional ones (elective from a prescribe list) and no less than 5 per cent - in free elective ones. "Free" means a possibility to select any course at students' home or another higher education institution.

The majority of higher education institutions belong to the Lithuanian Higher Institutions Association for Organising Joint Admission (Lithuanian acronym – LAMA BPO). The Association develops and carries out admission procedures equally applicable to all. Thus, an applicant may apply by a single application at once to up to 20 study programmes offered by any member of this association and be admitted to one. Since 1999, a competitive grade of national school leaving examinations is the basis for admission, thus simplifying the admission procedure to higher education institutions. Appeal tools are also in place within the admission procedure.

Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint

programmes

- whether joint⁷ degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

In July 2005, amendments made to the *Law on Higher Education* and the subsequent *Order of the Ministry on the General Requirements for Joint Degrees* of January 2006 created a legal basis to award joint degrees at higher education institutions. This is applied to the first and the second cycle study programmes only, but not to doctoral studies, and only in exceptional cases, when a study programme leading to a degree is carried out together with (a) foreign higher education institution(s).

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 following higher education and research institutions function in Lithuania: 15 public and 6 non-public universities, 17 state research institutes, 18 university research institutes, 8 state research establishments. In fact, the majority of research activities are carried out at universities. The R&D activities carried out at the university research institutes are of high international quality. They mainly focus on the basic research and provide the research basis for university education and doctoral studies. State research institutes are engaged in the long-term research which involves different groups of scientists.

Current national strategic papers are targeted to the synergy between research and higher education. Additional emphasis should be made on the fact that state funding for a university depends to a large extent on the assessment of the research activities of the university.

Seeking to enhance interaction between higher education and research, a conception on the establishment of joint centers of research, higher education and business is under construction. It will be aimed at concentrating higher education and research potential in place and consolidating infrastructure for the common use.

A new system of funding research based on competitive programme financing is being created. It will pave the way for enhancement of competitiveness of higher education and research institutions.

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

According to the amendments (2005) to the *Law on Higher Education* a person may hold a position of a postdoctoral fellow ('postdoc') in another higher education or research

⁷ a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

institution than that in which one has prepared a doctoral thesis, if only one has defended the thesis not earlier than 3 years before the appointment to this position. 'Postdoc' position in an institution is based on an individual employment contract and appropriate funding is allocated from the state budget.

Regrettably, there are still no reliable data on how many doctoral candidates take up research careers. On the other hand, a concept of what is a research career should be elaborated and clearly defined before we start gathering the data aiming to have it reliable and comparable.

The social dimension

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

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.

Admission to higher education institutions is based on an applicant's maturity examinations results at National Examination Centre (NEC) and conducted by HEIs under the admission regulations approved by the Ministry. The competitive grade achieved is generally taken as the basis for admission to all Lithuanian higher education institutions. Since 2003, most universities are members of the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Joint Admission, that began to organise and co-ordinate admission procedures for all its members. The first college acceded to the joint admission procedure in 2006. The system of admission ensures equality of access to higher education for all applicants and possibility to apply to several study programmes at once. The possibility to both submit and correct an application form on-line from 2006 onwards even more facilitates the procedure. In fact, very high enrolment rates of school-leavers in higher education institutions every year allow us to take no complementary measures for further widening the access.

In 2006, there were about 500 disabled students in Lithuanian higher education institutions. The Ministry initiated 2 surveys on the analysis of the situation and problems of individuals with special needs in higher education institutions. The surveys were conducted in 2005 and 2006. The findings and recommendations achieved were discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate measures are planned to incorporate them into strategic policy documents, besides, financial resources from the national budget and European Structural Funds will be used for their implementation. For instance, proposals to set a structure representing disadvantaged groups and disabled persons in higher education institutions, to establish a position of a coordinator of equal opportunities in higher education institutions, etc. were introduced. All these measure are planned to be included into legislation in 2007-2008 and drafts of action plans for a period up to 2010.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without

obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

In 2006 the Government approved the *Regulations on Financial Support Measures for Disabled Individuals Studying in Higher Education Institutions*. The Regulations set down monthly scholarships and purposive allowances to cover study expenditure paid every semester for disabled students of the first and the second cycle. The Regulations came in force from academic year 2006/2007.

Development of the national student support system, as providing loans, grants, scholarships, etc. for students, is one of the key elements of the reforms planned until 2010 in the whole higher education system. Particularly important is an objective to create new and more effective financing mechanisms taking into account appropriate measures for student support. The main target in developing financial support for students is to make the support more socially targeted, whereas it was rather merit based until today. A comprehensive analysis on the development of the national student support system will be prepared in 2007. The last changes made in legislation in 2006 are aimed to ensure that all students applying for the state loan to pay study fees receive it.

This year, Lithuanian institutions had a possibility to join FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique), after the IXth FEDORA Congress was held in Vilnius. The event had to renew a dialogue on various aspects between professionals in guidance and counselling, working in similar areas of expertise across Europe, as well as to encourage relevant stakeholders to draw different perspectives of guidance and counselling within the EHEA.

Mobility

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

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

The numbers of mobile students from and to Lithuania have been growing constantly over the past four years. The country's policy is to encourage mobility of both degree and non-degree students. International degree seeking students reach the number of 1200 in Lithuania.

The organized mobility is implemented mainly through Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates programmes, as well as funds allocated for this purpose by the Ministry of Education and Science. As a rule, all these programmes support only non-degree mobility. Since 2002, the annual national budgeted allocation for Socrates/Erasmus programme was 9,1 mln.litas (2,63 mln. EUR). 6,2 mln. litas (1,79 mln. EUR) went directly to mobile student grants. In 2006, the fund was increased up to 11,6 mln. Lt

<p>of which 7.6 mln. Lt went directly to student grants and 1.3 mln. Lt – to mobile academic staff. All exchange students are also eligible for extra support from the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation, they can also apply to a bank for loans on an individual basis.</p> <p>In the last years, more and more students tend to degree studies abroad on an individual basis. Mostly, they are the second cycle students.</p> <p>(For additional information see points 7.1-7.2 of the National Report to the Bergen Conference.).</p>
<p>28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.</p>
<p>Only short-term study loans are available for exchange students. They can apply for such loans to the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation or banks. As the state is concerned about the increasing tendency of youth emigration, issues of portability of loans still remain discordant for the country. However, participation in the BFUG WG on portability of loans means that the expertise of other countries here is very helpful.</p>
<p>29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.</p> <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any measures to increase inward staff mobility • any measures to increase outward staff mobility.
<p>See points 7.3-7.4 of the National Report to the Bergen Conference. Additionally, national measures drafted for using ESF for this purposes in 2007-2013 are important to notice.</p>

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

<p>30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.</p>
<p>See the National Report to the Bergen Conference, point 12.1.</p>

Future challenges

<p>31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.</p>
<p>As regards the Bologna process, it seems to be very important for the country in the coming period to make emphasis on the development of the higher education system as the whole and separate higher education institutions, to encourage and support them in their endeavours to enhance the quality through strengthened international relationships and cooperation, new joint initiatives in research and studies. On one hand, it is necessary to achieve in a short time that the national higher education system becomes competitive in the European and global context. On the other hand, despite the fact that higher education is a current priority of the country, this is a great challenge to higher education institutions, as well as to other main actors of the system, because they must have deep understanding, driving ambitions and experience and be competitive internationally.</p> <p>Successful implementation of the forthcoming reforms of the national higher education system planned in relevance with the society's needs, covered by the <i>Lithuanian Higher Education System Development Plan for 2006-2010</i> and the national programme for the Lisbon strategy, seems to be of great importance and</p>

challenge for the coming period.

Despite satisfactory results in the implementation of the Bologna reforms, a high rate of young people emigration remains, consequently, contradictions and problems in the society.