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

1 November 2008.

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

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

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

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

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

Details

Country	Armenia
Date	November 1, 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Gayane Harutyunyan, Executive Director, ArmENIC
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Contributors to the report	Ara Avetisyan-RA Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science

	(MoES),
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1. Main developments since London 2007

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

The role of higher education in equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills, in stimulating innovation and supporting productivity and in enriching the quality of the life is central for the Armenian Government . In 2008 the MoES prepared "Development Strategy of Education for 2008-2015".   It has been widely discussed by all the stakeholders.   The main objectives of the Strategy is to enhance the quality of education, to widen acess to higher education, to create a task force for development of international cooperation, to increase the attractivness of education system as well as ensure the effective governance and financial management of higher education.

In 2008 the Government established a Fund acting under the auspices of the President of RA and aiming to povide financial assistance to the Armenian students (both citizens of Armenia and Diaspora Armenians) studying at best higher educational institutions (universities, colleges) worldwide.

Transfer to the two-cycle dgree system has been completed.   Almost 95% of total number of students (excluding doctoral level) are studing within the two cycles.   Two universities started to issues Diploma Suppliment both to Bachelor's and Master's degree programme students.   Starting from 2008 all the educational programmes in Armenia are based on ECTS.

The MoES has developed the proposal for creation of independent National Quality Assurance Agency and submitted to the Government for approval.

2. Partnership

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

> Since 2006, the Bologna Committee has been appointed in the MoES composed by all stakeholders of education, to coordinate, evaluate implementation of Bologna process as well as to support HEIs and disseminate good practice.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up [1]

Yes ☒   No ☐

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☒	No ☐
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☒	No ☐
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☒	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☒	No ☐

Other (please specify) <u>National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility</u>

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group[2]   Yes ☒   No ☐

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☐	No ☒
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☐
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☐	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☒	No ☐

Other (please specify) <u>Representatives from NGOs.</u>

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

> Bologna promoters are group of professionals that advise and work with their colleagues on the implementation of the Bologna reforms: the three-cycle degree system, quality assurance, recognition (ECTS, Diploma Suppliment, mobility issues). They are involved in different type of activites; seminars and conferences, regular visits to HEIs and publishing of a newsletter.

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[1] A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process
[2] A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

> Since 2008 enrollment in all state and accredited private HEIs has been carried out also by masters program in all disciplines. 95% of total students were enrolled in two-cycle system. All successful bachelor degree and master degrees' students have access to the next cycle; master and doctoral level correspondingly.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all[3] students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09[4]	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
Bachelor 90.000 Master 18.000	23000 8000	24%

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

> All study programms are designed according to the Bologna priniciploes: related to qualifications descriptors; educational standards are developed for each specialisation, based on ECTS.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle
Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:
- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements[5] apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes

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

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

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

- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

-total number of enrolled in doctoral studies /aspirantura/ comprises 12000 and almost half of them are involved in comprise those involved in coordinated programs ;

- duration of doctoral studies is at least 3 years, full time - 3 years /coordinated doctural program/, distance - 4 years /coordinated doctoral study/, in case of free creative programs - up to 5 years;

- educational component of doctoral degree includes knowledge of foreign languages, research methodologies, writing, general civil development, various related classes, special classes, teaching practice modules;

- educational component of doctoral degree includes current and summary seminar attestings, as well as defence of summary research paper;

- yes, it comprises the 3rd cycle in higher educaiton qualification framework;

- yes, it is carried out through general civil development and related classes included in the educational component;

- A sample form for calculation of credits for doctoral programs is designed and provided to higher education institutions and other higher education istitutions;

- both by workload - researchers 80%-90%, students 10%-20% based on peculiarities of disciplines.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

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

> Research laboratories have been established and refurbished in higher educational institutions; former scientific institutes operating as independent research organizations now provide their scientists the opportunity to teach special classes. Teachers at higher educational institutions and students carry out their research practices at the research institutes. HEIs and research organisations have concluded partnership contracts; special chairs of relevant higher educational disciplines were established at the research institutes.

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:
- percentage of GDP spent on research
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

> Research funding is presently 1% of GDP , another 60% is from public funding and the rest is from other sources: private, international, etc.

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

Yes ☐   No ☒   If Yes, please specify:

> The State Scientific Committee which is a separated division created recently and at the moemnt there is no any tracking system.

6. Access[6] and admission to the next cycle
Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

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

> Individuals with Bachelor's qualifications are eligible to continue their studies in the second cycle on competative basis. They comprise the 25-30% of the total

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

number of graduates by the disciplines /including 20% current graduates, and 5%-10% previous years' graduates. Transfer from first cycle to the second is performed by procedures specified by HEIs to maintain their independence, and by taking into account special features of each HEI and peculiarities of disciplines. The Government has defined procedures stating general policies and criteria.

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

All qualifications obtained during the first cycle (Bachelor, Diploma Specialist) provide access to the second level-master degree in relevant or related fields.

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

sit entrance exam	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒
complete additional courses	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
have work experience	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☐

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

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

There are no specific requirements

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

all students	Yes ☐	No ☒
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes ☐	No ☐
students of the same field coming from other HEIs	Yes ☒	No ☐

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

entrance exam	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒
additional courses	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
work experience	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

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

All graduates of second cycle have access to the third cycle. The transfer between second and third phases is performed according to degrees obtained during previous years – master (degree equated to Diploma Specialist   to qualification of Master degree by 2010). For transfer to the third cycle apart from holding a preliminary qualification degree each applicant should take exams in foreign languages, informatics (computer literacy) and courses in their own specialization. Applicants' research publications will also be taken into account.

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

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

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

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

Career Centers are established at HEIs jointly with the employers to help the graduatesto find job. Also, once a year are organised job fairs . Up to 40% of first cycle graduates, up to 70 % of the second cycle graduates, 80% of the third cycle graduates finds jobs according to their qualifications.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:
- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- accreditation/quality assurance
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- university governance
  Significant ☒   Some ☐   A little ☐   None ☐

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

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

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

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

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

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared[7]?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** The development of the NQF is in process. Council of Europe has been supporting the MoES: in June there was a cosultative mission of an expert to assess the development of the NQF and to provide further recommendations. In September the MoES with the support of the Council of Europe organised a regional conference on the qualification frameworks.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** The developed framework is compatible with the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of EHEA including learning outcomes based descriptors. Generic descriptors for each cycle will be based on learning outcomes , inlucing ECTS credit range for the first and second cycles. According to the timetable the NQF will be adopted by 2010 ; there has been no formal decision taken yet.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** Each cycle includes credit ranges: Bachelor-240 credits, Master -120 credtis.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** The Draft document was discussed on all educational levels with participation of experts, academic staff, students, employers and trade unions.as

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):
e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **Comment**

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:
f) Are all formal arrangementsdecisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

Comment In 2008 there has been ammendments proposed in the Law "On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Edcuation" regarding qualifications, general descriptors, learning outcomes.

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

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation) ☐

- There is significant progress on implementing the framework ☐

- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed ☐

- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started ☒

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed ☐

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation ☐

Comment See above

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

Completed ☐   Started, but not yet completed ☐   Not yet started ☒

Comment

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes ☐   No ☒

Comment

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Comment

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

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG[9] and national support for implementation

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

Yes ☒   No ☐   ☐ Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) _____

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

> The draft decree on the establishment of the National Agency for Quailty Assurance is submitted to the Government for approval. The Quality Assurance Agency will operate according to ESG requirements.

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

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please give details of these incentives: Units of quality assurance are created in HEIs to carry out internal quality assurance. State budget has special allocation earmarked to HEIs to improve the quality - training of staff including academic, preparation of guidelines and instruction, publication of relevant materials. Negotiations with the World Bank on a new loan project have been completed; part of the funding will be directed to support creation of quality assurance units in HEIS and implementation of activities.

• Other measures

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please outline these measures Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA have been translated into the Armenian Language and introduced to HEIs.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

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[8] http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf
[9] ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates Twice a year the MoES receives progress reports regarding implementation of the Bologna principles including on the status of quality assurance issues .

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

> According to the procedures there are internal quality assurance systems in HE institutions. In 2008 TEMPUS "Internal Quality Assurance System in Armenian Institutions" Project was launched aiming to design and implement relevant internal quality assurance systems in Armenian HEIs.

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

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

All HEIs ☐   Most HEIs ☒   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

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

All HEIs ☒   Most HEIs ☐   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

> Self assesment of programmes implemented by units of HEIs and periodic reviews by HEI`s academic boards, students feedbacks, knowledge assesment new system based on learning outcomes, etc.

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

All HEIs ☐   Most HEIs ☒   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

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

All HEIs ☐   Most HEIs ☒   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

Please describe how the above is achieved.

>

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

All HEIs ☐   Most HEIs ☒   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

> **Additional information if necessary**

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:
a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

Starting from 2009 the Agency will perform external quality assurance according to ESG.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education[10]

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
- self-assessment report   Yes ☒   No ☐
- external review   Yes ☒   No ☐
- publication of results   Yes ☒   No ☐
- follow-up procedures   Yes ☒   No ☐

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

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

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

11. Level of student participation
From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

a) in governance of national agencies for QA.

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

b) as full members in external review teams

        Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

c) as observers in external review teams

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews

        Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes)

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

g) in preparation of self-assessment reports.

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

h) in follow-up procedures:

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

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

Students involvement in external quality review processes is conditioned by the establishment and operation of the National Quality Assurance Service.

12. Level of international participation
In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance
a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance

        Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies

        Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers

        Yes ☐   No ☐   In some cases ☒

d) membership of ENQA

        Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

e) membership of any other international network

        Yes ☐   No ☒   If **Yes**, please specify:

Armenia is member of EQAR.

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

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

> In 2008 the Diploma Suppliment has been issued by Yerevan State Engineering University and State Medical University to the grauates of Bachelor and Master cycles programmes whose studies are based on the ECTS. The format and content of the DS is designed according to the guidelines developed by EU/CoE/UNESCO.
>
> The old type of national diploma suppliment(transcript) is still issued.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- 1st cycle programmes   Yes ☒   No ☐
- 2nd cycle programmes   Yes ☒   No ☐
- 3rd cycle programmes   Yes ☐   No ☒
- remaining "old type" programmes   Yes ☐   No ☐   Not applicable ☒
- short higher education programmes   Yes ☐   No ☐   Not applicable ☒

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language   Yes ☒   No ☐
  - *please specify the language* <u>English</u>
- issued   free of charge ☒   for a fee ☐
- issued   automatically ☐   on request ☒
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format   ☒

- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format   ☐

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

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

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** The DS is used to compare learning outcomes of a qualification to understand the purpose of the educational programme as well as to receive general information regarding the educational system where the qualification/degree was obtained.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** in case of other languages /besides English/ an applicant will be asked to present validated translation of the documents into Armenian.

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

Yes ☒   No ☒

> **Comment** Holders of foriegn qualification need to present Diploma and the Diploma Supplement to prove their studies. No other documents are required. The authencity of the documents is checked both in case of further studies as well as in case of employment.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** It is planned to organise a series of information meetings with representatives of the labour market wih the opurpoose to inform what is DS and how to work with it .

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

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents[11] of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: The laws "On Education" and "On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education" are presently in process of revision in order to fully comply with the principles of Lisbon Convention.

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:
>   i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: he MoES has proposed some ammendments in the Law On Education in correspondence with Lisbon Recognition Convention.
>   The National Infomation Center is responsible for assessment of foreign vacational and higher education qualifications, providing advise and information on education systems.

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

In the existing regulations there are no specific procedurees for academic recognition: the universities usually are in charge of the recognition which is mainly based on the old tradition of comparing subjects that comprise the educational programme and teaching hours. The NICARM has conducted a survey on recognition procedured of foreign qualifications, the existing problems. The results of the survey show that universities are not fully implementing recognition procedures, have problems with crredit transfer, interpreting learning outcomes. Nevertheless, there has been some progress observed in coopertion of universities and NICARM i8n the issues of advising on qualifications, educatio n systems and recognition procedures. The NICARM is planning seminars on the the issues of recognition for the inoversities.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: There are no specific provisions regarding recognition of Joint Degrees in the Armenian legislature. The recognition of foreign joint degree qualification is done under the condition that it is recognised by the countires where the degree was awarded.

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: According to the Law on Education a foreign HEI can establish a branch or representation in Armenia following the required procedures for licensing and accreditation of their educational programmes and institutions. The current legislation does not provide any prevention mechanisms for non-registered, not recognised transnational education . As a result the holders of qualifications awarded by such transnational education providers face serious recognition problems.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The National Information Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility of Armenia (NICARM) provides all needed information to applicants concerning the of the assessment process, criteria, approximate time needed to process an application.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level While the assessment of foreign qualification differences in terms of content, profile and learning outcomes are considered in a rather flexible way.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **Yes,** please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level In case if there are substantial differnces in view of purpose for which the recognition is sought (academic or professional) than partial (allternative) recognition is granted or refused.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **Yes**, please describe how it is done in practice through official bulletins, NICARM is an authorized body to provide all kind of information regarding HE programmes and institutions of Armenia.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **Yes**, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **NICARM is the authority created by the Government of Armenia with the purpose to support integration of Armenia into European and worldwide educational services as well as qualified job markets. It is the national agency where individuals with foreign qualifications can get assessment and recognition of their foreign credentials, as well as get any information concerning armenian and foreign education systems.**   **NICARM is the Armenian representative of the International Network of National Information Centers.**

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

The actions should include further ammendment of legislation as well as checking the compliance of recognition procedure of with the LIsbon Convention principles   make part of quality assurance for HEIs.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS[12]

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes[13] in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100% ☐   75-99% ☐   50-75% ☒   <50% ☐

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[12] Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html
[13] Except doctoral studies

> Introduction of the ESTC has started in 2006-2007 academic year which was also an opportunity to modernise curricula according to the Bologna Process. The ECTS has been introduced at the majority of the Armenian universities. having the acuumulate component allowing students to select subjects and accumulate credits.

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes[14] in your country? Please tick one:

No ☐   In some programmes ☐   In the majority of programmes ☒

In all programmes ☒

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

    i) is it compatible with ECTS?   Yes ☐   No ☐

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

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: There has been organised seminars for the universites and MoES officials for better understanding of learning outcomes.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: HEIs performing periodic reviews of students workload calculations to improve basic components of programs.

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

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: Guidlines for implementation of ECTS has been developed by Working Group of the MoS and disseminated to the HEI`s. It is planned to organise seminars as well as regular consultations for the HEIs.

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

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

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

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: Study periods are recognised by HEis themelves though there are no specific procedures for assessment, but recognition procedures are proved to be used at some of the universites or educational programmes.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: Procedures of obtaining a second higher education, procedures for passing to the third cycle
>
> Procedures for transfer to higher educational institutions from middle vocational institutions.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: There are certin procedures for transfer to HEI from a vocational educational programme, procedures for entering the third cycle.

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

Comprehensively ☐   Some ☐   A little ☐   None ☐

> Please describe the current situation: Elements of Life-long concept are defined by the Law on Higher and Postgraduate education of Armenia as supplimentary postgrduate programmes based on earned professional education and not leading to a qualification,   The purpose of the programme is to improve qualification, bring the skills up to date.   Internal corporate trainings with the similar purpose are also organised.   There are several non-governmental organizations for adult learning. The development of distance learning , e-learning with introduction of ECTS at the   universities will largely promote learning opportunities for all ages   including continuing education, correspondence courses, recreational activities, etc.

17. Flexible learning paths

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

> Now when ECTS based credit system is introduced in the HEIs there will be possibilities for development of felxible learning paths. The Armenian universities already started to create new disciplines which corresponds to the needs of the profesional profiles and of the ever changing needs of job market.

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

Yes ☐　　No ☐

> Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Inter-institutional consortiums are created to promote creation of new disciplines.

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

Yes ☐　　No ☐

> Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Presently, there are measures directed to tackle social -backgraound inequalities.

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

Yes ☒　　No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles See enclosed social dimension paper.

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

Yes ☒　　No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle There are various delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups (distance learning, individual learning, etc.).

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

Yes ☒　　No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle Study programmes are structurised on modular principle, which will ensure broader participation in the learning process in future.

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

> Around 30 % of learners.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees[15]
a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.
    Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

	Yes ☐	No ☒

Does the legislation fully allow:
    i) establishing joint programmes?   Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If No** please explain what are the obstacles

    ii) awarding joint degrees?   Yes ☐   No ☒

> **If No** please explain what are the obstacles Joint degrees are not awarded yet, the process has just started with full implementation of ECTS, procedures are being developed.

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in
    i) joint degrees
        75-100% ☐   50-75% ☐   25-50% ☒   1-25% ☐   0% ☐

    ii) joint programmes
        75-100% ☐   50-75% ☐   25-50% ☒   1-25% ☐   0% ☐

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country
    In the first cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
    In the second cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
    In the third cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐

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

> pedagogy, economics, information technologies

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

> Joint programmes are implemented as result of consortiums, international cooperation.. around 10

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

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

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

> After the Government established the scholarship fund there will be more possibilities to encourage joint degree cooperation.

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

> The number of mobile students from and to Armenia is increaseing each year. . As a result of the reforms in higher education, networking between higher education institutions was intensified as well as the mobility of students and teachers increased.
>
>   The mobility in Armenia is realized in the ways of:
> • Academic exchange within the frames of the Intergovernmental or inter-university agreements;
> • Based on grants and scholarships from the international organizations and foundations;(like Muskie, open society Institute, DAADd, British Council, Tempus and others)
> • Upon individual initiatives.
> Business studies are the most popular subjects for the Armenian mobile students; social sciences and languages occupy the second and third spots.
> Currently, more than 100 scholarships for undergraduate and graduate studies in Armenia are awarded each year. The total number of outgoing students is about 600. The most popular destinations are US, Russia, Germany, United Kingdom.
> According to the statistics only 10% of university academic staff and students are involved in various mobility programmes each year.
> The majority of the Armenian state and only few private universities are undertaking certain steps to increase their attractiveness by creating internet sites, printing catalogues, introducing subjects and foreign language courses.

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: there are no obstacles for foreign students entering Armenia, but still Armenian students and staff have obstacles in issuing visas , getting work permits in European Countries.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: RA Government has created a student`s mobility support Fund. Fund is going to provide scholarship for the Armenian and Diaspora students to study abraod. Foreign students studying within the frames of the international agreements receive scholarship.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: The majority of HEIs have common principles when assessing study periods: institutions look for full compliance with their own curricula based on credits. The credit transfer decision is based on comparision of learning outcomes.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Besides providing financial aid, Armenian authorities are also making efforts to solve issues related to improvement of foreign students living conditions including assistance with their employment during the course of their studies. .

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: RA Government has established a foundation which will create an opportunity to study in institutions of various countries and get financing regardless of inter-state agreements. Increased provision of information on foreign educational institutions, posted on internet site of the MoES and disseminated through mass media.

20. Portability of loans and grants
   a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants. Government starts to develop new mechanisms of grants and loans.

   b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans. Government starts to develop new mechanisms of grants and loans.

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

21. Implementation of strategy

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

The importance of integration into the European Higher Educational area is discussed on all levels By creating higher education system compatible with the European will facilitate fair recognittion of qualifications.

b) What has your country done to:
i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

Provides publications, materials, information on reforms underway in Armenia aiming to achieve EHEA to Armenian Communities in various countries in the world.

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

Integration into the EHEA is recognized as a priority, and the main goal is to enhance the quality of education and ensure competitiveness of Armenian education in the region, which will also contribute to the attractiveness and competititveness of EHEA.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

The list of countries that Armenia is concluding inter-state student and professor exchange agreements with is being increased, joint programmes under the sponsorship of international organizations such as Tempus, Soros, Erasmus Mundus, etc.

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

High level meetings, conclusion of inter-state agreements in the result of which professor and student exchange is being increased, also conclusion of inter-institutional agreements

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The issue of recognition of qualifications is being addressed through bilateral and interantional agreements.

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

TNE is relatively new area in education of Armenia, but it has been rapidly increasing. Institutions and programs   are recognised in case they are established within intergovernmental agreements and are accredited in the home country.

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

    i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

<div align="right">Yes ☐   No ☒</div>

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

    ii) incoming higher education provision?

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied As per current legislation those educational institutions undergo accreditation.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

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

Armenia's Higher education sector presents significant challenges and opportunities for development. A decade-long reform process has resulted in tangible results. But despite a reformed administrative and legal framework, there are issues that continue to prevent the system from assuming its full potential in driving the country's transition to a competitive democratic society.

The inadequacies between learning outcomes and the demands of the contemporary job market; improvement of teacher education and teaching materials; not fully shaped system of professional development in Higher Education Institutions are some of the challenges to be addressed and act as barriers to the quality and relevance of education and to social and economic development in general.

Short term challenges:
- Strengthen the financial portfolio management of HEI
- To improve Lifelong learning programs and structures
- Internationalization of HEIs.
- Fostering joint degree awarding programmes.

In the long term perspective:
- To create more competitive and higher quality education systems resulting from better coordinated and more effective reforms, coupled with increased confidence of citizens and investors in Armenia's education system.
- To improve and streamline organizational structures and systems to support strategic planning, policymaking and program implementation, monitoring, budgeting and other related functions.

PART II

**TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES
on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension**.
The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

"We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity."

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)
1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

> To widen access to higher education for all groups in the society and providing equitable access through social benefits is one of the urgent issue for higher education sector in Armenia.
> It should be noted that of societal groups, if we consider women and men, socially vulnerable and rural population, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities as such, significantly underrepresented in higher education is, perhaps, the socially insecure, poor population in Armenia.
> However, despite the fact that current social policy of the Government in higher education is partially supporting equal participation of certain groups there are still various social issues in the sector of higher education necessary to be approached from the perspective of participation and successful completion by representatives from all societal group. There is no gender discrimination which is also proved by the statistical data. Particularly, as of 2007/2008 the total number of students in 85 higher educational state and non-state institutions and 13 branches comprised 112244, of which 54.9% percent were women. In the free of charge education system female students comprise 52.7%.

Substantially underrepresented in higher education sector is only the poor segment of population. Poor or extremely poor segment is involved in the Family Benefit system. As per the Poverty Reduction Strategic Program poor or extremely poor families comprised 23.7% in 2006, and enrolment of their children in higher education is of serious concern. If involvement of this group in higher education system is homogenic compared to non-poor population, in higher education area it is considerably polarized. Here the indicator of involvement of the poor segment of population is 5.4, whereas the indicator of the extremely poor is almost 8 times lower than that of the non-poor population. Besides, involvement of poor and extremely poor populations in higher vocational educational system bears also evidence of regional disproportion in favour of the capital. It is 4.3 times lower in rural communities.

The reason for underrepresentation of this societal group in higher education sector is the scope of financial resources allocated by the state, as well as their allocation mechanisms, which are still insufficient to ease current tension in higher education. First of all it is conditioned by yet limited state financial resources. Higher education costs currently comprise around 0.2% of the GDP and 8-9% of total budget for education. These indicators still significantly yield to OECD average indicators.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

Current state support within the scopes of social policy is limited to full compensation of state scholarships allocated to certain groups of students. It is carried out based on admissions results and social status of applicants. State scholarship compensation is established based on the following principles approved by RA Government 27 July 2006 N 1183 resolution:

1. According to admission exams and further high progression in learning

2. Complete compensation of scholarships for students of 5 social categories specified by the Government. Students of specified categories shall not be subject to rotation:

a) parentless children
b) individuals having 1 and 2 category disabilities
c) children of killed or deceased military servants
d) individuals, who have acquired disabilities during the mandatory military service

e) individuals dispatched for targeted education

Within the framework of several inter-governmental agreements currently Armenian citizens are provided the opportunity to compete for scholarships to study in foreign higher educational institutions (Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Greece, Syria, Germany and China).

3.   Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report ion the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).   Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

Types of student social support in higher education:

1. Tuitions

Tuition discounts in state HEIs are made by the institutions based on the principles approved by RA Government 27 July 2006 N 1183 Resolution. As prescribed the number of students entitled to partial discount should comprise 10% of the students enrolled in the paid system of the given institution. On behalf of higher educational institutions tuition discounts mainly comprise 30-50 %.

a) socially insecure students
b) students having one of the parents (single parent)
c) students from families with 3 underage children or more than 3 children-students
d) students from families having 2 and more children enrolled in paid educational system
e) students whose parents have 1 and 2 category disabilities
f) students-children of secondary school teachers in far away mountainous and border villages
g) students having children under 1
h) high progression students not involved in student benefit system, at the discretion of the institution
i) students having other status, at the discretion of the institution

2. Lodging

State support for students coming from regions enrolled in HEIs of the capital is provided only to 400 students, due to which they are able to

address their lodging issues with smaller fees. However, this cannot meet the current demand among the students. Therefore to address their lodging issues the students have to rent apartments at rather high fees even in the suburbs of Yerevan .

3.   Healthcare issues

Primary healthcare to students is provided by medical points operating at the institutions. Besides, there is a student polyclinic operating in Yerevan providing appropriate services to students under contracts signed with HEIs.

4. Organisation of leisure

Most state HEIs have affiliated establishments where students can organise their leisure at small fees. However institutions may allocate free resort referrals to socially insecure students who demonstrate high progression. Non-state institutions do not have their own means to organi leisure, information on other projects organising leisure is not available.

5. Counselling and information provision

MoES publishes Information Booklet for Applicants each year for professional guidance to applicants, covering issues like the number of places established by the government for free and paid education, tuition amounts, as well as privileges. The Information Book also includes all admission rules. MES and HEI internet sites also enhance student awareness on social support projects.

Student counselling at HEIs is mainly carried out through student organizations at the institutions. In fact, the students and their organizations have 25 % representation on HEI Management Councils, which also have HEI activity planning and monitoring functions and dedicate part of their work to identifying socially insecure students and providing appropriate support.

Recently career centres are being created at HEI to provide counselling and guidance to students relating to job placement.

4.   Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

All Armenian HEIs submit annual statistical reports to National Statistical Service(NSS) as per the prescribed format based on which Social

Situation of Armenia Year Book is published. Besides, since 2004, each year the NSS carries out household studies, which also cover issues relating to accessibility of education, particularly higher education. The results of those studies are published in a Year Book called Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia.

Unfortunately specific, particularly regular, studies on social situation of students have not been carried out so far, and the abovementioned sources do not provide sufficient information on various social issues of students.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

1. Improve legislation to implement social support policy in higher education sector.

2. Introduce efficient higher education financing system to ensure equal social conditions for all groups in the society.

3. Create funds and other institutions for alternative financing of free higher education.

4. Ensure equal start-up opportunities for access to higher education for all groups of the society.

5. Implement programmes to address social needs of learners during their studies.

6. Enlarge and improve mechanisms of counselling and information provision to all groups of society relating to social support programmes implemented by the Government and HEIs.

7. Increase cooperation between student organisations to improve social conditions of learners.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

The introduction of a two-in-one (unified) examination system – for completion of school and admission to HEI, has been launched since 2007 to increase HEI admission opportunities and make admission contests maximally transparent. It allows the applicants to avoid double exams (for completion of school and admission to HEI) and provides opportunities to apply to more HEIs simultaneously. In 2007 this system was piloted for one subject, in 2008 exams in five more subjects were carried out by this system. In 2009 all HEI admissions exams, except for creative professions, will be carried out using this system.

A number of measures will be implemented to increase accessibility to and participation in higher education. Particularly:
1. Increasing the number of state scholarships by 5% annually,
2. enlarging targeted admission for learners from regions,
3. expanding distant learning opportunities for a bigger number of occupations,
4. creating easier transfer from vocational to higher education
5. developing and introducing a system for student loan provision

HEIs financing system will be revised to enhance the quality of academic environment and overall education. Particularly HEIs will be awarded state grants based on proposals submitted by them with an aim to implement relevant reforms and development projects according to Bologna Process principles. Priority projects will be identified according to their social aspect: implementation of social projects, organisation of counselling services, enrichment of library and lab resources, including electronic, revision of curricula, etc. To improve the learning conditions of the students, measures will be undertaken to refurbish student dormitories and design mechanisms for compensation of students' commutation costs.

Nowadays student organisations play a significant role in HEIs management, which is ensured by national legislation: they are involved in both HEI management councils (students comprise 25% of the board) and department boards. To further increase the role of student organisations a Board of Student Representatives will be created under the Ministry within Bologna Process social aspect to carry out monitoring of the National Strategy and make recommendations on revision of the Action Plan and overall strategy. Currently some HEIs practice evaluation of the educational process and curricula by the students. This experience will enlarge and become mandatory for all

HEIs simultaneously with introduction of a Quality Assurance National System and internal quality evaluation procedures.

Higher education financing system currently is preparing for reforms with an aim to decrease financial impediments for acquisition of higher education, foster the reforms at HEIs and enhance their efficiency. The concept of reforms is developed to be adopted in 2009 and will be introduced from 2010.

To make financial and other aid more targeted accountability system of HEIs will be revised, including relevant data about vulnerable groups and social support programmes carried out in the institutes. At the same time regular studies will be carried out among the students to reveal difficulties emerging in the learning process for individual students and specific student groups. In the result of those studies the target groups of social support and National Strategy annual Action Plans will be revised.

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

The State Budget is allocating funds to higher education via a number of programmes, viz.:
· Student benefits and scholarships,
· Students' lodging at discount prices,
· Student sports events,
· Other services.
National strategy actions under the Bologna social aspect will be financed by a separate program from the State Budget from 2010. Currently the SB share of vocational education comprises about 10%. This share will be increased by 5 percentage points to comprise the 15% of the education budget; in fact, starting from 2012 financing of higher education will increase at a progressive pace. Currently the II phase of the World Bank Quality of Education and Compliance Project is under preparation with main components being reforms in higher education. Of 2010-20XX credits $X million US will be allocated for those reforms.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

No Activity   Timeline

1. Approving new HEI admission procedures   December 2008
2. Fully introducing school final and unified exams system   July-August 2009
3. Approving occupations lists and places for higher education by distant learning and targeted admissions March 2009
4. Developing the concept of student loan provision system   October 2009
5. Approving the procedures for providing grants for HEI development projects March 2010
6. Creating a Bologna process social aspect National Strategy coordination Student Council affiliated to the Ministry   February 2009
7. Developing proposals for compensation of commuting students   August 2009
8. Developing the concept of reforms in higher education financing December 2009
9. Designing the new HEI accounting system   April 2009
10.   Conducting research studies for assessment of social needs of HEI students   February-April 2010

6.   What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

Monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the National Strategy will be carried out through a Student's Council which will be created under the Ministry to submit recommendations on the Action Plan and revision of the overall strategy.

HEI accounting system will be revised including relevant data on vulnerable populations and social aid projects underway in the institutions. An administrative registry of higher education statistical data will be implemented in the Ministry.

Regular studies will be carried out among the students to identify difficulties emerging during the learning process for individual students and specific student groups. In the result of those studies social aid target groups and National Strategy annual Action Plans will be revised.

A relevant page will be launched on the Ministry Internet site where National Strategy implementation comprehensive information will be posted.

The responsible body for preparation, introduction and evaluation of National Plan of Actions is the Ministry of Education and Science of RA.

A Coordinating Council of NPA will be created within the Ministry where representatives from student organisations and HEIs will be involved. The Council will be chaired by the Deputy Minister. NPA contacts are as follows:

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a)contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

ANNEX A

Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

Financial
• scholarships - means tested
• scholarships - merit based
• research grants
• grants for studying abroad
• grants or loans for (nearly) every student
• unspecified social support system
• free education (at least 1st cycle)
• reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
• financial assistance for certain groups/areas
• improved funding systems
Structural
• new /expanded routes of access
• broader teaching or learning strategies
• information and preparation at secondary schools
• increase student places
• indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
• subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
• provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
• counselling/guidance services
Certain groups
• measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
• measures for disabled (not financial)
• measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
• allocation of study places to certain groups
• promote access from all national areas
Policy and practice
• explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
• carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
• evaluations/research of policies and practices
• monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B

Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

• Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education

• Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

• Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally

• Flexible delivery of higher education

• Flexible learning paths into and within higher education

• Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning

• Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

• Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring

• Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)

• Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

• Counselling

• Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children

• Appropriate housing conditions for all students

• Provision of healthcare

• Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

• Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance

• Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations

• Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies

• Financial and legal advice for students

• Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent

• Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally

• Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C
Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

• Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

• Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

• Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services
B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

• Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?
• Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding
financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not ableto finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?
• Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.
What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?
• Stakeholder involvement
Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?