

bologna process

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1. Main achievements since Berlin

<p><i>1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms</i></p> <p>“The Higher Education Law” has been drafted to supersede the laws currently in force: Act of 12 September 1990 on Schools of Higher Education (Journal of Laws No. 65, item 385, as amended) // Act of 26 June 1997 on Higher Vocational Schools (Journal of Laws No. 96, item 590, as amended) // Act of 31 March 1965 on Higher Military Education (consolidated text, Journal of Laws No. 10 of 1992, as amended).</p> <p>Fundamental principles and postulates of the regulations adopted in the Draft Law are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respecting the diversity of higher education institutions contributes to achieving the constitutional aims, i.e. a universal and equal access to education and the right to study. The draft specifies the role of the state and its responsibility for higher education in connection with the higher education institution’s autonomy principles, and defines regulatory functions of the minister competent for higher education as well as his supervisory functions with respect to “trade” institutions of higher education, exercised in consultation with the ministers competent for these “trades”. 2. Due to the fact that the international context and, in case of Poland, the European context (including the Bologna Process) in particular, is becoming increasingly important in the higher education, the Draft Law introduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three-cycle study system; - possibilities of transferring and accumulating achievements in the study process followed at various higher education institutions, in accordance with the ECTS standards; - issuance of diplomas other than typical ones and the issuance of the Diploma Supplement. <p>The Draft sets forth the principles for educational quality assurance. There are tendencies which point to the growing role of quality standards enforced in the higher education system, which are comparable on a European scale. This shows the necessity for a controlling role of the state, such as in the process of establishing higher education institutions and assuring the required educational quality. For this reason, “licensing” and state diplomas are upheld in the Draft Law. The Draft introduces mechanisms that assure the educational quality at HE institutions based on the generally binding educational standards, laid down by</p>
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the minister, and the measures taken by the State Accreditation Committee.

3. The structure of the higher education system has been completed:

- individual types of HE institutions have been defined so that the terms used in their proper names, such as university, technical university, medical university, etc. as well as academy, reflect the status of such an institution,
- in line with what has been implemented in Europe, the Draft Law lays down regulations on the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland and the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland, which are the national conferences of rectors from the respective types of schools, and on the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland - as the institutions that provide advice and opinions to the public authorities.

4. A principle has been adopted which provides for the coexistence of state and non-state higher education and creation, by the state, of development opportunities for the two sectors, on condition that the higher education institutions comply with the quality requirements.

5. The Draft offers new possibilities of co-operation among academic and research institutions, and of institutional consolidation. Relying on the constitutional principle of providing autonomy to HE institutions, the role of HE institution statutes as the source of law in higher education has been increased, moving to these statutes regulations that concern an institution's structure as well as rules and procedures for employing academic teachers, while ensuring compliance with the statutory regulations common to public and private HE institutions.

2. National organisation

2.1. Give a short description of the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their competencies

(For example, do higher education institutions report to different ministries?)

The Minister of National Education and Sport supervises the higher education system and HE institutions (both state and non-state schools), with the exception of:

- academies of music, fine arts, theatre and cinematography, which are supervised by the Minister of Culture
- academies of medicine, which are supervised by the Minister of Health
- the Higher Police Training School and the Main School of Fire Service, which are supervised by the Minister of Interior and Administration
- military schools, which are supervised by the Minister of National Defence
- Gdynia Maritime Academy and the Maritime University of Szczecin, which are supervised by the Minister of Infrastructure.

Institutions involved in higher education issues:

- The General Council for Higher Education

The General Council for Higher Education is an elected higher education's representative body, operating since 1982 (currently pursuant to the Act on Higher Education (Journal of Laws of 1990, No. 65, item 385, as amended). The Council co-operates with the Minister of National Education and Sport and with other public authorities in formulating the country's educational policy in the field of higher education. On its own initiative, the Council expresses opinions and gives assessments on all matters concerning higher education, science and culture. The Council provides opinions on matters presented by the Minister of National Education and Sport and by other public authorities, including reviews of legal instruments

concerning higher education, science and culture, the section of a draft budget that relates to higher education, as well as the principles for granting state subsidies to the institutions of higher education. The Council reviews the HE institutions' requests for the right to award academic degrees and degrees within the scope of art.

As part of its activities the Council co-operates with national and international organisations active in the field of higher education.

- The State Accreditation Committee – see Section 3

- The Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP)

CRASP is a voluntary association of rectors representing Polish higher education institutions that have the right to award a doctor's degree (or its equivalent). The objective of CRASP is to represent the interests of higher education and science as well as the common interests of higher education institutions. Currently the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland consists of rectors from 101 HE institutions. Two of such institutions and the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland have the associate member status.

- The Conference of Rectors of Private Higher Education Institutions (KRUN)

Established in 1993, KRUN is a voluntary association of rectors of non-state higher education institutions, i.e. the institutions established by natural persons or legal persons on the basis of permission issued by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The principal objective of KRUN is to equalise the rights of non-state HE institutions established in accordance with the Polish law with the rights enjoyed by other HE institutions operating in Poland and to promote all-round development of higher education in Poland.

- The Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland

The Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland is a nationwide representative body of all student self-governments (Article 157 of the Act on Higher Education). Student self-governments unite the entire students environment on a compulsory basis. They co-decide on the distribution of the material aid fund for students and subsidies for youth organisations operating at HE institutions. They encourage cultural life among the student environment and participate in the election of governing bodies of HE institutions, their faculties and institutes. They influence the work of organs that determine the curriculum and the study programme.

- The Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange

The Bureau reports to the Minister of National Education and assumes the role of a national ENIC/NARIC centre. Also, since 1 May 2004 the Bureau acts as a Polish contact point regarding directives on the general system of recognising professional qualifications acquired in the EU. The main competencies of the Bureau are to:

- 1) supply information and provide opinions on foreign higher education diplomas,
- 2) implement international contracts or other agreements with foreign partners with respect to academic recognition as well as education of Polish citizens abroad and foreign citizens in Poland,
- 3) provide information on the principles for recognising qualifications awarded in the EU member states to practise regulated professions, or undertake or practise regulated activities,
- 4) exchange and disseminate information on educational systems and opportunities in Poland,
- 5) co-operate with Polish and foreign diplomatic and consular posts, departments competent for matters of academic education of Polish citizens abroad and foreign

citizens in Poland, including reimbursing HE institutions and other foreigner-educating units for students grants.

- The Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles

The Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles is a collective body elected for the term of 4 years out of candidates proposed by the organisational units entitled to award a doctor's degree or a doctor's degree within the scope of art. The candidates are selected by the persons who have the academic title of professor or the title of professor within the scope of art. The Commission's current term expires on 31 December 2006.

The Central Commission:

1. grants the powers to award academic degrees and degrees within the scope of art,
2. controls activities of the units authorised to award academic degrees and degrees within the scope of art, connected with awarding these degrees,
3. approves resolutions passed by the councils of the above-said units on awarding the degree of habilitated doctor (doktor habilitowany) and the degree of habilitated doctor within the scope of art,
4. puts forward candidates for the academic title of professor or the title of professor within the scope of art to the President of the Republic of Poland.

2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure

(For example, number of public/private universities/other HE institutions or numbers/percentage of students in public/private sector. To what extent are private and State higher education institutions covered by the same regulations?)

Poland has state higher education institutions (**currently their number stands at 125**) and non-state higher education institutions (**there are 313 such institutions entered in the register**), formed after 1990. Non-state higher education institutions are set up relying on the permit granted by the Minister of National Education and Sport and they attain their legal personality through being entered in the non-state schools register kept by the Minister of National Education and Sport.

State and non-state higher vocational schools have been established since 1998. A compulsory 15-week internship is an important part of preparing their graduates for practising their professions.

The studies can be run on full-time, part-time, evening and extramural bases. Full-time studies are the prevalent form unless the school's statute stipulates otherwise.

To qualify for admission to an institution of higher education, the applicant has to hold the certificate of the secondary education (świadectwo dojrzałości). The rules of admission to the first year of studies are determined autonomously by each institution. Some organize competitive entrance examinations, others use ranking procedures based on the final grades listed in the certificate of secondary education, still others admit all who apply. If the conditions for admission provide for examinations the subjects passed during the secondary schools leaving exam the base of admission are the results of this exam.

The gross higher education enrolment rate has gone up from 12% in the 90s to the current level of 47%.

Out of the total of 1,845,400 of students, 71.6% (i.e. 1,320,800) are studying at the state HE institutions, whereas 28.4% (i.e. 524,600) at the private ones. More than 47% students (i.e. 873,200) attend full-time HE courses and approx. 53% (i.e. 972,200) pursue part-time, evening or extramural studies. The total number of students has risen by nearly 60,000 (or

3.1%) compared to the previous year.

2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country

(National Bologna group, thematic working groups, composition and activities, stakeholder involvement)

The Ministry of National Education and Sport oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process. Also, a contribution is made by the institutions involved in the field of higher education, such as the General Council for Higher Education (RGSzW), the State Accreditation Committee (PKA), the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP), the Conference of Rectors of Private Higher Education Institutions (KRUN), the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange (BUWiWM), the Socrates-Erasmus National Agency.

Pursuant to Resolution of the Minister of National Education and Sport **the Bologna Process Council** has been formed in Poland. It is an advisory and opinion-providing body which supports the Minister in matters related to the Bologna Process. It is made up of representatives from the above-named institutions.

11-strong **Bologna Promoters Team** has been appointed to support and promote Bologna Process-related activities at higher education institutions.

Also, the **CRASP Bologna Team**, which was formed in January 2004, has been monitoring the developments in the European higher education and popularising the idea of the Bologna Process. The CRASP Presidium has also established a doctoral scholarship that supports research on monitoring the course of the Bologna Process.

In principle, all HE institutions have designated **proxies/co-ordinators** to carry out activities related to the Bologna Process implementation. As far as universities are concerned, six HE institutions have a duly authorised proxy, one has a rectors committee, eight have a vice-rector competent for students affairs or teaching, and two HE institutions entrusted their co-ordination tasks to central administration units that deal with teaching issues.

3. Quality assurance

The following questions have been included in the template at the request of the Working Group on Stocktaking.

3.1. National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

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

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

The quality system at Poland's higher education institutions includes state accreditation and environmental accreditation (evaluation).

The body responsible for the state accreditation is the **State Accreditation Committee**, which has been functioning since January 2002. It is the only statutory organ that covers the entire higher education area and operates for the benefit of the education quality evaluation, whose

opinions and resolutions have a legal effect.

The Committee's activities extend to all HE institutions. Since 2003 its competencies have been widened to include the establishment and conducting, at military schools, of the fields of study (degree programmes) relating to other than military subjects.

Within its competencies, the State Accreditation Committee:

1. reviews and provides opinions on all applications concerning:
 - a. establishment of a HE institution,
 - b. establishment of a remote branch by a HE institution,
 - c. launching new fields of study at the existing HE institutions,
 - d. ascribing educational specialisations delivered at higher vocational schools to appropriate fields of study,
2. evaluates the quality of education and checks the compliance with the conditions for the delivery of higher education studies at all Polish civilian HE institutions, i.e. state and private, academic and vocational, including those supervised by ministers competent for: higher education, health, culture, infrastructure and national defence (with respect to the fields of study other than military subjects).
3. gives consent to establish and deliver a field of study other than those set forth in the Act on Higher Education.

The Presidium of the State Accreditation Committee (SAC) makes a list of the fields of study and the HE institutions to be evaluated in each calendar year. Undergoing a SAC accreditation procedure is compulsory. The Minister of National Education and Sport takes decisions based on the education quality ratings given by SAC. In particular, in case of a negative rating the Minister is obliged to suspend the enrolment for a given field of study or revoke the right to provide a given field of study.

The table below shows the results of the evaluations made by SAC from its inception to 31 December 2004: The ratings given by SAC in the years 2002-2004

	Rating				Total	Percentage of Outstanding and Positive ratings
	Outstanding	Positive	Conditional Approval	Negative		
State HE institutions (excl. state higher vocational schools)	19	532	111	17	679	81%
State higher vocational schools	-	30	6	-	36	83%
Non-state HE institutions (excl. higher vocational schools)	1	150	54	18	223	67%
Non-state higher vocational schools	-	29	7	2	38	76%
Total	20	741	178	37	976	X

The General Council for Higher Education make the recommendations in the field of an educational approach at the higher level. The Council provides opinions on requests for establishing or changing the name of the fields of study specified in the Order of the Minister

of National Education and Sport. The Minister of National Education and Sport has authorised the Council to prepare projects of education standards (which set forth educational rules at the higher level) for particular fields of study and levels of education.

The Council prepares these standards in co-operation with experts in the specific disciplines and with deans of faculties in charge of a given field of study, which makes sure that the standards are approached in a broad-based manner and are of a high quality.

Curricula and study programmes realised at individual HE institutions must comply with the educational standards. The observance of this principle is part of education quality checks and evaluations carried out by the State Accreditation Committee.

Accreditation according to the different type of HE institutions is handled by accreditation committees appointed by conferences of rectors of particular types of HE institutions, which operate within the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland. These committees are:

- University Accreditation Committee,
- Accreditation Committee for Technical Universities,
- Accreditation Committee for Medical Universities,
- Accreditation Committee of Economic Universities, which operates under the name of and with the status of the Foundation for Promotion and Accreditation of Economic Studies,
- Accreditation Committee of Agricultural Universities,
- Accreditation Committee of Pedagogical Universities,
- Accreditation Committee of Physical Education Academies.

The activities of the above-named committees are co-ordinated by CRASP Accreditation Committee, which was set up in June 2001. In fact, the environmental accreditation is much the same as the evaluation and is voluntary.

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

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

The State Accreditation Committee has developed close co-operation with accreditation committees from other countries. In 2004 Poland was visited by a Spanish delegation, who took part in the evaluation of selected Polish HE institutions.

In addition part of HE institutions participate in the international accreditation networks.

Please add any general comments, reflections and/or explanations to the material on quality assurance in the stocktaking report.

4. The two-cycle degree system

The two-cycle degree system is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

The total number of the fields of study in Poland, as specified in the Order of the Minister of National Education and Sport, stands at 106. After deducting 6 fields of study that are delivered only in the form of uniform master's degree studies (i.e. law, pharmacy, psychology, veterinary medicine, medicine and medicine & dentistry), there remains 100

fields of higher education study where education can be provided on a two-cycle basis.

The draft of the new higher education law stipulates an obligation to introduce a two-cycle degree system, with the exception of the above-mentioned 6 fields of study, which are to be delivered as uniform master's degree studies.

5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

On 23 July 2004 the Minister of National Education and Sport signed an order on the types of diplomas and professional titles as well as diploma forms issued by higher education institutions. As from 1 January 2005 the higher education institutions will issue graduates of all types and programmes of study with a new diploma of higher education, made up of Part A and Part B (Supplement).

Diploma Supplement contains information about the graduate (i.e. the diploma holder), the HE institution and the teaching content as well as the graduate's achievements and competencies. More detailed information on the teaching standards, fields of study as well as achieved ECTS grades and credits can also be specified in the Supplement's form.

On 17 March 2004 Poland terminated the procedure of **ratifying the Lisbon Convention** on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (Council of Europe Convention of 11 April 1997).

Rules for academic recognition

Foreign education credentials are recognised in Poland pursuant to international agreements on academic recognition or through nostrification. Recognition of professional qualifications in the regulated professions which have been obtained in the EU is regulated by separate provisions.

Nostrification must be conducted with respect to documents issued in the countries which have not signed agreements on mutual recognition of education documents with Poland and with respect to documents issued in the countries which have signed such agreements with Poland but which are not specified in them because the first such documents were issued after the signing date of these agreements.

In a majority of cases bilateral agreements affirm the equivalence of education both for academic purposes (further education) and professional purposes (practising a profession). Pursuant to the agreements signed with Austria and Germany, education documents are recognised only for the academic purposes.

Recognition of the periods of study abroad is at the discretion of HE institution's governing bodies.

Nostrification of diplomas of higher education

Apart from diplomas recognised pursuant to the agreements on the recognition, a Polish equivalent of diplomas of higher education may be determined by means of a nostrification procedure.

The nostrification of diplomas and professional titles obtained at HE institutions abroad is carried out by a HE institution's faculty council authorised to award a degree of a doctor of a specified discipline. Lists of units that have such powers are published by the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles. The faculty council specifies the course of the

nostrification procedure.

A person who holds a foreign diploma of higher education may be exempt from the nostrification procedure during admission to complementary master level courses or post-diploma studies. Furthermore, persons who have completed higher education studies in one of the UE or EFTA member states may also be exempt from the diploma nostrification requirement during admission to doctoral studies.

Nostrification of degree-awarding diplomas

Degrees which have been obtained abroad and are not recognised based on the international agreements are subject to nostrification. Nostrification of such degrees is carried out by the councils of organisational units authorised to award the degree of habilitated doctor of a specified field of science or art. Lists of such units are published by the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles.

6. Doctoral studies and research

6.1. Give a short description of the organisation of third cycle studies

(For example, direct access from the bachelor level, balance between organised courses, independent study and thesis)

Doctoral studies have been delivered in Poland for a number of years. Currently, the Act of 14 March 2003 on the Academic Degrees and the Academic Title as well as on the Degrees and the Title within the scope of Art (Journal of Laws No. 65, item 595) sets forth the rules concerning such studies in the manner that is uniform for all units authorised to conduct such doctoral studies. In accordance with the adopted regulations, doctoral studies prepare for obtaining a doctor's degree and may be provided by organisational units of HE institutions and other research institutions, which are authorised to award the degree of habilitated doctor. Moreover, they may be provided in the form of environmental studies (delivered by the authorised units with the participation of other organisational units of HE institutions or research institutions).

Doctoral studies are provided in the form of full-time or part-time studies. The full-time studies are free of charge.

The content related supervision over doctoral studies is exercised by the council of an organisational unit which provides these studies. Doctoral studies are established by the rector of a HE institution or the director of a research institution.

As a general rule, the period of pursuing such studies is 4 years and, in individual cases, may be shortened or extended pursuant to the regulations of these studies.

As part of their basic obligations, students of doctoral studies take part in the realisation of the study programme agreed by the unit's scientific council and sit for obligatory examinations as well as undertake research or artistic activities and submit reports on their progress. Also, students of full-time doctoral studies are required to teach or participate in the teaching of classes, and the maximum duration of such classes conducted by a student of doctoral studies may not exceed 90 computational hours per year.

Students of doctoral studies are liable to disciplinary responsibility in compliance with the rules specified for students under separate provisions, and are also entitled to loans and credits.

Pursuant to the above-said Act, the degree of doctor may be awarded only to a person who holds a professional title of magister or another equivalent title, has successfully passed doctoral examinations within the scope defined by the council of an organisational unit and has presented and defended a doctoral dissertation.

A doctoral dissertation may be prepared and defended by persons who pursue doctoral studies, persons employed at a HE institution or another research institution and any other person who holds professional title of magister or another equivalent title, in so far as the authorised unit considers, based on the presented doctoral dissertation, that the initiation of doctoral proceedings is well-founded.

6.2. What are the links between HE and research in your country?

(For example, what percentage of publicly-funded research is conducted within HE institutions?)

HE institutions conduct teaching activities and research. These tasks are funded by two ministries.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport grants subsidies for didactic activities, financial aid for students and teaching-related construction investments. The Ministry of Scientific Research and Information Technology provides funds for scientific activities: statutory scientific research, the institutions' own research (scientific development of staff), teaching-related investments (construction and apparatus) and so-called research grants (i.e. research carried out by HE institution employees or their teams).

The proportion of financial expenditure for research activities to that for didactic activities stands at 20.1%.

7. Mobility of students and staff

7.1. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of students from as well as to your country *(For instance funds devoted to mobility schemes, portability of student loans and grants, visa problems)*

On the one hand, mobility to Poland has been encouraged by the popularity of doctoral studies but, on the other, it has been slightly hindered by difficulties in legalising the stay in the country.

Mobility from Poland is very popular because employers often appreciate experience gained internationally. However, the number of departures is limited by financial factors.

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

What contributes to the growth of mobility is the implementation of the Bologna Process assumptions, i.e. the use of ECTS, Diploma Supplements, etc.

Mobility is encouraged through numerous seminars organised by the National Agency for coordinators of the Socrates-Erasmus programme.

HE institutions promote also themselves different possibility of study for the benefit of students and future students.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport and National Agency make an effort to promote Poland and its higher education internationally.

7.3. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of teachers and staff from as well as to your country *(For instance tenure of appointment, grant schemes, social security, visa problems)*

The benefits of academic teachers mobility, which adds to their teaching experience, are increasingly obvious. This form of education is weakened due to a shortage of funds and minor importance of teaching achievements in the assessment of a teacher's work.

7.4. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of academic teachers and staff from as well as to your country

See Section 7.2

Poland fits in the general tendency of a growing student and academic teacher mobility.

Table: General statistical data regarding the SOCRATES/Erasmus programme in Poland

	1998/99	99/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04 indicative
Number of HEI with Institutional Contracts	46	74	98	99	120	148
Number of HEI with student exchange programmes	40	72	90	96	118	137
Number of HEI with academic teachers going to foreign HEI	38	66	82	94	111	132
Number of students planning to go to foreign HEI	1,524	3,193	5,046	6,430	7,747	Approx. 9,000
Number of students already gone to foreign HEI	1,426	2,813	3,691	4,323	5,419	6,276
Number of academic teachers planning to go to foreign HEI	673	1,212	1,751	2,174	2,587	Approx. 2,000
Number of academic teachers already gone to foreign HEI	356	614	678	799	884	947

8. Higher education institutions and students

8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions

Is autonomy determined/defined by law? To what extent can higher education institutions decide on internal organisation, staffing, new study programmes and financing?

Article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland stipulates that “the autonomy of higher education institutions shall be ensured in accordance with principles specified in the law”. The Act on Higher Education indicates that: higher education institutions are organised and operate on the basis of freedom of scientific research, freedom of artistic activity and freedom of teaching.

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

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

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

Students participation in HE institution’s collective bodies, e.g. Senate and faculty councils, is regulated in the Act on Higher Education. Senate is made up of selected student self-government representatives, whose number is specified in a HE institution’s statute, however it is not lower than 10% of Senate’s make-up. Senate determines the general direction for HE institution’s activities, decides on setting up and repealing fields of study, and determines teaching load for particular positions, conditions for its reduction and rules for calculating the numbers of teaching hours.

Obtaining consent from the resolution-making student self-government is a precondition for the enforcement (or amending the wording) of the regulations of studies adopted by the senate of HE institution. The Act does not determine that this consent is a sine qua non for the enforcement of the regulations of the studies, as it alternatively provides for another procedure for its enforcement by means of a Senate resolution adopted with a

majority of at least 2/3 of the votes of its statutory make-up.

Student self-government influences the substantial content of an HE institution's educational offer, as it reviews and provides opinions on the curricula and study programmes, and lays down the general direction for faculty operations, as adopted by the faculty council.

Due to a large number of smaller HE institutions, the Minister of National Education and Sport has issued an order with the aim to guarantee to students from all HE institutions a certain minimum level of regulations regarding: education in a given HE institution, student's rights and obligations, organisation of education, etc. Also, the Act requires that - in matters relating to the above-said order - the Minister should seek an opinion of a nationwide representative body of student self-governments, which ensures that students participate in the organisation of education at the national level.

Student self-government represents students before HE institution's governing bodies, provides opinions, presents proposals and projects regarding HE institution's education, puts forward draft versions of relevant resolutions to HE institution's suitable units and bodies, etc. Student self-government representatives who work at taskforce committees appointed by HE institution governing bodies may directly influence such an institution's structure of study programmes, their content, creation of a teaching-hour system as well as teaching and research plans.

In addition to student self-government, students also have the right to associate in university student organisations, particularly in scientific, artistic and sports circles, in accordance with the rules set forth in the above-said Act. University student organisations and exclusive student or student & academic teacher associations that operate at HE institutions may submit proposals to HE institution governing bodies and student self-government bodies on matters concerning studies and a HE institution's functioning.

As a nationwide representative body of all student self-governments, the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland reviews and issues opinions on draft versions of legal instruments concerning students.

The Students' Parliament representatives are members of the General Council for Higher Education and are invited to attend sessions of Parliamentary Committees that deal with matters relating to students, educational process, scientific research and development. Recently the Students' Parliament has been endeavouring for student representatives to participate in the work of the State Accreditation Committee and its evaluation teams.

A draft of the higher education law which is being worked on by a Parliamentary Committee, provides for higher participation of students in the organisation and content of education. The participation of student representatives in HE institution's collective bodies has been increased to 15%, which should provide the student environment with a greater possibility of influencing decisions taken by these bodies.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

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

9.2. Describe measures which promote satisfactory living conditions for students

In particular, better access to higher education is promoted through:

Development of higher education network

Development of a system of non-returnable material aid for students

Development of a student loan system

Removal of barriers to access to higher education for the disabled students

Re 1) Development of higher education network

The country's policy is continuously aimed at equality of access to higher education for young people from rural areas and small towns. State higher vocational schools are being established, also located in smaller urban areas. Their fields of study are adjusted to the requirements of local labour markets.

With a view to increasing higher education accessibility through, among other things, bringing places of education closer to places of residence of future students, HE institutions have been allowed to establish not only their remote branches and faculties, but also remote teaching centres. As a rule, such centres may be formed in small towns, where there is a social demand for higher education but no HE institutions or their branches are available in the immediate vicinity.

Also non-state HE institutions make it possible to take up higher education studies close to the place of residence, in particular for young people from poorer families. This is because tuition costs are often lower than costs of living in large university cities.

Re 2) Development of a system of non-returnable material aid for students

At the present moment, students who study on full-time, part-time, evening and extramural bases both at state and non-state HE institutions as well as civilians who study at military schools may apply for material aid in the form of:

social scholarship, whose amount may be increased due to incurring additional costs in respect of disability and accommodation of the student as well as his/her spouse and child;

academic merit scholarship or athletic scholarship;

minister's academic merit scholarship;

minister's athletic scholarship on the basis of outstanding sports merit (from 1 January 2005);

subsistence allowance.

Social scholarships and subsistence allowances are granted on the basis of a student's difficult material situation. Remote students, including students who live in rural areas and small towns, have a possibility of receiving higher social scholarships on account of accommodation at a dormitory or another type of residence, e.g. lodgings. The type of accommodation is chosen by a student. With the exception of minister's scholarships, scholarships are granted by HE institutions.

Re 3) Development of a student loan system

Student loans, with part of their interest financed out of the state budget, are a supplementary form of material aid for students.

In accordance with the above-mentioned regulations, applications for loans may be submitted by all students, irrespective of the type of their HE institution (i.e. state or non-state) or system of studies (i.e. full-time, part-time or evening), as well as by students of doctoral studies, on condition that they commenced their studies not later than at the age of 25.

Pursuant to the new regulations, a loan is granted for the period of higher education studies (not longer than 6 years) and doctoral studies (not longer than 4 years), and is paid out in monthly instalments.

Repayment of student loans begins 2 years after the completion of studies, including doctoral studies.

Re 4) Removal of barriers to access to higher education for the disabled students

According to data for the academic year 2003/2004, the number of disabled students - with

various types of disability - studying at all kinds of Poland's HE institutions stands at approx. 7,100, which accounts for nearly 0.4% of the total number of students (compared to approx. 1,300 disabled students in 1998). The educational reform helped increase the number of young people obtaining matriculation certificates, which also contributed to an increase in the number of disabled students.

A proper material aid system is one of the ways to improve access of disabled young people to higher education. A student whose disability has been certified by an appropriate body may have his/her social scholarship increased due to incurring additional costs on account of disability. In case of full-time students the amount of social scholarship may also be increased on account of accommodation at a dormitory or another type of residence.

Furthermore, the disabled who have obtained a student loan and are in a difficult material situation may apply for partial loan cancellation. Whereas in case of permanent incapability to pay back their liabilities, borrowers who demonstrate their permanent incapacity for work may apply for total loan cancellation.

It must be stressed that removing architectural, communication, transport, social and psychological barriers that prevent disabled people's access to higher education has been one of the priorities of HE institutions. A growing number of such institutions are undertaking comprehensive programmes that will make them fit to increase the number of disabled students.

Also, special training is provided to HE institution students and staff to remove communication barriers and promote the idea of integrative education, improving spiritual comfort of studying that is important for the disabled.

10. Developments in lifelong learning

10.1. What measures have been taken by your country to encourage higher education institutions in developing lifelong learning paths?

In mid-2003 the Council of Ministers adopted a document called **Lifelong Learning Development Strategy by the year 2010**. Among other things, it resolves that "...it is necessary to intensify efforts to guarantee a high level of education, increase learning accessibility, popularise secondary education and raise the proportion of people with higher education".

Priorities set in the Strategy take account of the factors, such as: scientific and technical progress as well as an increase in educational aspirations within the society, which can be evidenced by, among other things, a several-fold increase in the number of students and non-state HE institutions over the past decade.

Also, a necessity has arisen to conduct scientific research that promotes the quality of lifelong learning, while HE institutions have been involved in formulation and implementation of teaching staff development programmes for various forms of lifelong learning, including education of adults.

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

It is possible to provide modular education and individual learning plans. Decisions in this respect are taken by governing bodies of a given HE institution.

Part-time and evening studies are very good base to developing adult education and LLLearning.

11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

11.1 Describe any legal obstacles identified by your country and any progress made in removing legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and/or joint study programmes

The draft Higher Education Law, which is being examined by the Parliament, contains provisions that facilitate joint education (formulation of joint study programmes and curricula) and issuance of joint diplomas. No such possibilities are provided in the current Act on Higher Education.

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

Legal regulations on higher education allow to provide education under integrated study programmes leading to double degrees. These programmes must provide for education delivered as part of fields of study and have a structure that is based on relevant teaching standards.

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

Integrated education leading to double degrees may provide for joint or independent admissions, joint teaching of classes, holding of examinations and internships, as well as student and academic teacher exchange.

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

Poland participate in the CEEPUS programme and Euro-Faculty.

11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension (For instance foreign language courses, European themes, orientation towards the European labour market)

“European Studies” is a field of study dedicated to the problems of the European integration. It is featured as a specialisation on the subject areas, such as: international relations, political science, law, economics and others. Additionally, a number of HE institutions provide post-diploma education in the European Studies/European Integration.

12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

12.1. Describe actions taken by your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA

The years 2003-2004 saw intensification of actions to promote the concept of creating the European Higher Education Area in the environment of Polish HE institutions. Entities which undertake these actions include: amongst others, two nationwide conferences focusing on this subject were held (at the Warsaw School of Economics in November 2003 and at the Warsaw University of Technology in May 2004) on the initiative of the Ministry of National Education and Sport; “Bologna Days”, i.e. information and training meetings intended for representatives of HE institutions from various regions, were organised at a few academic centres on the initiative of the Socrates-Erasmus National Agency and a group of national ECTS/DS promoters, with the participation of local institutions; special thematic sessions are organised as part of the sittings of the Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP); persons invited to these

sessions, including foreigners, provide rectors of the CRASP member institutions and the Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland with the latest information about the course of the Bologna Process.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

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

Bologna Process implementation elements that form part of general higher education strategy

1. Facts and circumstances that surround higher education system

1.1. Beneficial transformations in higher education

wide accessibility of higher education - extensive network of HE institutions (approx. 400)

higher HE enrolment rate (47%)

dynamic increase in the number of students (the number of students has grown four times since 1990 to the current level of over 1,800,000)

increase of scholarship assistance and loans to include students from all kinds of HE institutions and all systems (forms) of study

wide and diverse educational offer

implementation of education quality evaluation system (establishment and operation of the State Accreditation Committee)

dynamic implementation of the Bologna Process assumptions, including, in particular, introduction of Diploma Supplement and growth of mobility

2. External conditions

- changes in labour market

- demographic factors

- development of new information & communication technologies (ICT)

- cooperation with non- EU countries

3. Goals of undertaken actions

3.1. General goal - increased competitiveness and attractiveness of Polish (European) higher education as an element of a knowledge-based society

3.2. Specific goals

*** Further increase of general character and access to higher education**

*** Further actions to raise higher education quality and effectiveness**

- change of teaching standards

- development of new fields of study

- new educational methods

- three-cycle study system

*** Adjustment of education to labour market requirements**

- development of enterprise and creativity

- *development of co-operation between entities involved in education, science as well as economy and labour market*

- personnel development

- development of HE institution infrastructure

- education focused on skills and effects (learning outcomes)

*** Development of lifelong learning**

*** Openness of higher education system to educating in the area of the EU and third-countries**

- system openness to education of foreigners
- wide participation in European educational programmes (Socrates-Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, etc.)
- development of ECTS as credit transfer and accumulation system
- introducing and widening the offer of education in foreign languages
- studies run in co-operation with other HE institutions, including foreign ones
- further popularisation of the Bologna Process assumptions in academic environment