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REPORTS FROM
POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

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1. Towards Bologna***1.1. Give a brief description of policy developments and legislative reforms in higher education in your country***

The year 1999 marked the initial milestone for the Kosovo Higher Education System, which was then re-established in full operation. After the war events the Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. A Department of Education and Science was established with two Co-Heads, a local and an international. The Department took on to start a comprehensive reform of the Kosovo higher education system with the mid term focus on the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. All ensuing system and structural measures undertaken since then and all according regulations have been clear statements of our determination to pursue the Bologna goals and objectives.

Thus, the preamble of the Law on Higher Education 2003/14, drafted under close supervision and help by the Council of Europe (adopted by the Kosovo Assembly and Decreed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Michael Steiner in May 2003), makes the following reference to Bologna: "Recalling the Declarations of the Ministers of Education in Bologna (1999) and Prague (2001)"; likewise, all relevant provisions of this Law are in tune with the process that started in Bologna.

- The Law on Scientific Research Activity 2004/42, approved by the Kosovo Assembly in September 2004 and to be promulgated by the SRSG, also draws heavily on relevant aspects and objectives of the similar trends in the European Research Area.

- The Statutes of the University of Prishtina, drafted with extensive international support and expertise (in coordination with CoE and EUA), approved by the Kosovo Assembly in July 2004, has served to further implement and make operational the Bologna Process objectives and principles inbuilt in the forementioned laws (on Higher education and Research) and implements modern European Standards regarding the autonomous operation of a university such as global budgeting, transparent operational processes and internal organization, quality assurance and evaluation, modern management systems, etc.);

Apart from these, a number of administrative instructions have been issued with the propose to regulate relevant areas of higher education, such as:

- a) Quality Assurance and Accreditation (No. 11/2004)
 - b) Recognition and equalization of diplomas and other documents obtained abroad (No. 15/2003 and No. 30/2004)
 - c) Format of diplomas issued by the local providers of higher education (including provisions on Diploma Supplement) - [I] (No. 2/2005)
 - d) Student participation in the study fees (No. 20/2002)
 - e) Scholarship schemes for students (No. 22/2002)
 - f) Licencing of Private Providers in Higher Education (No. 14/2003) etc;
- Other laws (on Adult Education - Lifelong Learning, Private Education and on Financing of Higher Education and Research 2005 - 2015) have been approved as legal initiatives and are being prepared for adoption by the Kosovo Assembly.
- As a result, key principles and objectives of the Bologna Process are provided for in the provisions of these documents.
- In September 2004, the Government approved the Strategy for Development of Higher Education 2005 - 2015, with a more detailed line of actions in order to accomplish its objectives, which are in turn in full compliance with the Bologna and Lisbon Process

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?)

According to Article 4 (4.1. - 4.7) of the Law on Higher Education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is the competent government authority to carry out:

- a) Planning and development of higher education in Kosovo
- b) Regulating public providers of HE and approving their statutes
- c) ... allocating funds to public providers for teaching and research ...
- [...]

m) regulating all other matters on higher education not separately regulated by or under this Law.

According to Chapter 4, section 4.6 and Chapter 8, Section 8.1 (a) - (the so called reserved powers of the SRSG) of the Constitutional Framework and Article 4.2., "the Ministry shall cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary General in the exercise of his direct responsibilities under UNSCR 1244 (99) ... "; this part refers to human rights, peace building and, more importantly, to the rights of minority communities.

Thus, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is the highest authority for planning and regulating all public higher education and research providers. Similar provisions of the Law on Scientific Activity provide that the MEST is competent to ensure the effective functioning of the Research Institutions. The Law on Health, adopted recently by the Kosovo Assembly recognises and makes this situation clearer also regarding the division of responsibilities between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health over the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Prishtina.

All these regulations mentioned above hold true for the University of Pristina and all Private Universities, established according to the regulations of the Kosovo HE Law.

- The University of Mitrovica (UM) for higher education in Serbian language has been established according to UNMIK regulation 2/2002. Strong reform efforts with the support of international expertise focussed in 2002-2003 on the full integration of the UM into the Kosovo legal framework and the change of its internal structure. A reform oriented statute

was developed in cooperation with the then Rector Savic and in informal coordination with the Belgrade Ministry of Education and Sports, which provides up to today the annual budget for the UM. The adoption of the Statute by the Senate of the UM in December 2003 was prevented by political influence of the new Serbian government. Subsequently Rector Savic was - illegally - dismissed by the Belgrade Ministry in April 2004. Since then the UM under the illegal Rectorate of some Mr. Papovic has been re-aligned with Serbian legislation and has cut any contacts to Kosovo and UNMIK authorities. Since then the UM experiences international isolation and is not recognized by the European University Association. It will be UNMIK's obligation ("reserved power" according to UNSCR 1244) to re-establish the UM under the Kosovo legal framework.

2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure

(For example, number of public/private universities/other higher education institutions or numbers/percentage of students in public/private sector)

There are two public Universities in Kosovo:

1. University of Prishtina (with 25.125 students and 1.468 teaching staff)
2. University of Mitrovica (with Serbian as language of instruction) functioning within the Serb parallel system in education (see above). No current student figures are available; there are only estimates available from different sources of app. 4000 to 6000 students.
3. There are also 12 private providers of higher education (most of them since academic year 2004 / 2005), 4 of which are Universities, 4 are academies of arts, 1 is an institute, and 3 are colleges. In total 1755 students are registered in these institutions in all levels and study programmes.

All private institutions, with the exception of one (the American University of Kosovo) operate in full accordance with the Bologna process.

2.3. To what extent are private and State higher education institutions covered by the same regulations?

Currently the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Scientific Activity cover all aspects of operation in public and private institutions of higher education.

However, as was earlier mentioned, the Law on Private Education and the Law on Financing of Higher Education and Research 2005 - 2015 are being drafted to be submitted to the Assembly for approval in June 2005. Administrative instructions and other regulations cover specific aspects of institutions of higher education.

3. Quality assurance

If the answer to any of the questions 3.1. To 3.3. is no, what are your plans in the respective direction?

3.1. Does your country have a national quality assurance system? What are the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved?

Due to the previously mentioned dramatic inhibitions of regular operation of the Kosovo Albanian higher education system until 1999 a quality assurance system has only been established in the recent years after the according regulations of the Higher Education Law have been adopted.

Institutional framework: In accordance with Articles 4.3 to 4.7 (competencies of the MEST) and Article 11.1 to 11.10 of the Law on Higher Education, the Ministry "shall by

Administrative Instruction provide for the establishment of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) charged with promoting the quality of higher education in Kosovo". This Agency was established through the Administrative Instruction 11/2004 and is currently starting into operation. It consists of its Board for Quality Assurance (nine members, of which three are international experts - Article 4.6. of the LHE) and of its permanent administrative structure. In principle, the MEST discharges licensing duties, whereas the KAA is primarily involved in evaluation (of courses and study programmes) and (re)accreditation, including power to award degrees and diplomas (Article 4.4. (a - f) of the Law on HE. Since the KAA is not yet fully operational (due to difficulties in recruiting qualified permanent staff) "Pending the establishment of the KAA, all functions of that Agency shall be discharged by the Ministry" (Article 4.7 of the LHE). Higher Education (both public and private) institutions have to a certain extent developed their mechanisms of internal (self) evaluation.

3.2. Does your national quality assurance system include evaluation of programmes or institutions, external review, international participation, participation of students, the publication of results? (If yes, please describe)

The aforementioned articles of the Law on Higher Education provide the legal framework for all aspects of institutional and programme evaluation. The new Statute of the University of Prishtina provides detailed regulations on regular evaluative measures, following European best practice, such as: peer review, self evaluation, student evaluation, performance reports, implementation of positive/negative consequences, annual reports on all levels of the university etc.

Evaluations cover all fields of university operation such as management measures, study programmes, teaching performance, research activities and artistic work.

External review is provided through the mission of the KAA; international participation is and will remain a strong focus. Contacts have been established on the regional and European level for engaging international experts in the external evaluation teams. For illustration, Cooperation Agreements with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Protocol signed in May 2004) and with Albania (to be signed in February 2005) include provisions for such cooperation between the involved parties. This issue was at the top of the agenda during the official visits in Montenegro, Republic of Turkey (a Cooperation Agreement to be signed also February 2005) and Austria. University of Prishtina and some private institutions of higher education are actively involved in developing and implementing student evaluation mechanisms. Such mechanisms will be introduced in the procedures of operation of the external evaluation teams of the KAA, too. Regarding publication of results, Article 4.5 of the LHE provides that "The KAA will publish its conclusions, recommendations and advice" (so does the Administrative Instruction on KAA, too).

3.3.. Does your national quality assurance system include accreditation, certification or comparable procedures? (If yes, please describe)

The LHE and K.A.A. Administrative Instruction provides that the KAA will provide:

- a) Advice [to] the Ministry on applications from private institutions of higher education for licensing;
- b) periodical quality audit of licensed higher education providers and issuing a decision on accreditation and re-accreditation including the power to award diplomas;
- c) periodic quality assessment of courses and programmes offered by accredited HE providers;

4. The two-cycle degree system

4.1. Has your country introduced a national degree system for higher education based on two main cycles (equivalent to a BA/MA structure)?

(If yes, please describe - for instance, are two-cycle degrees optional or obligatory for the institutions? - If not, what are your plans for introducing this measure?)

Ever since the Department of Education and Science was established, the University of Prishtina has focussed on the mid term implementation of the two tier system of studies. -This structure is now also provided for in the LHE and the new Statute of the University of Prishtina. Articles 2.2. of the LHE provides the kind of diplomas and degrees obtained at the Kosovo higher education institutions: "(i) the degree of Bachelor taken after the equivalent of at least three years of full time study ..., and (ii) the degree of Master or Doctor after obtaining the degree of Bachelor."

- The Statute of the UP, Article 101 provides: "University [of Prishtina] offers these types of undergraduate and graduate academic studies:

1. Undergraduate studies: Studies for Bachelor;
2. Graduate studies: (a) Master studies and (b) Doctoral studies".

All such previous types of studies shall be closed down and be transferred during a transitional period of 4-5 years.

Therefore, with the exception of the private American University of Kosova, all higher education institutions in Kosovo will apply the two tier (BA/MA) 3-2 system of studies in the full scale in the short term. The first cohort of students acquiring B.A. (over 500) degrees at the University of Prishtina have graduated during the 2003/2004 academic year. In autumn 2004 the University of Prishtina advertised its first competition for admission of students in the Master programmes of study according to Bologna.

4.2. Are different orientations of degrees embedded in the system e.g. through a legal division between academic and professional degrees, or through a binary system of institutions?

The differentiation of degrees, in order to better meet the requirements of the labour market, is a prime strategic focus of the MEST. Thus the Statute of the University of Prishtina provides for a new type of faculties (of applied sciences), which see a more practice oriented study concept and closer cooperation with the industry (currently previous technical and economical high schools, which have been integrated into the UP, are developed into this direction).

Similarly the focus on vocational studies on academic level is a main strategic field in the mid term strategy of the MEST until 2015.

5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

5.1. If your country has not ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention, when do you plan to do so?

In accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244 (1999) Kosovo has been administrated by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) which holds (through reserved power according to Chapter 8 of the Constitutional Framework) the right to sign and ratify international conventions. However, Kosovo has applied the Lisbon Convention principles and provisions in its legal instruments:

- The preamble of the Law on Higher Education: " Noting the ... Council of Europe /UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European region ...".

- This is regulated by several articles of the same Law, such as Articles 2.4, 4.1.(g), 24.3 etc.

- The administrative Instructions (15/2003 and 30/2003) have served to further make these provisions of this Law operational.

- The UP Statute, in its Chapter 4.6 (on recognition of studies), Article 144 provides:
 (1) Qualifications (academic degrees, diploma, examinations) of recognized domestic or foreign post-secondary education institutions shall be recognized ... in accordance with the regulations of the Lisbon Recognition Convention ..."

Article 145:
 (2) The decision for recognition ... shall be based on information retrieved from corresponding European database and ... coordinated with the National Recognition Commission, which is responsible for the application of the Lisbon Recognition Convention" etc.

The National Commission for Recognition has been established and operating since March 2004, and Commissions for Recognition have been established in all academic units of the UP and in operation since then. So far, 310 applications have been processed with decisions brought for on 40 of them until the end of 2004.

MEST currently undertakes efforts to establish a national coordination office for the Lisbon convention, following the example of other European countries.

5.2. Does every student graduating in your country receive the Diploma Supplement?

- *automatically and free of charge?*
- *in a widely spoken European language?*

If not, what are your plans for introducing this measure?

Based on Article 4.1. (d) (providing the format and content of Diploma and Diploma Supplement) and Article 12.7 of the LHE, the Administrative Instruction on Diploma format and design ([I] 2/2005 of 05.01.2005) has been issued by the MEST. In its Chapter II (Diploma Supplement), Article 13, this Administrative Instruction provides that: "Higher Education institutions are obliged, upon request, to issue for their graduated students a Diploma Supplement (free of charge and in English language), in accordance with Article IX.3 of the Lisbon Convention". Ensuing Articles 14 - 17 provide for the Diploma Supplement, and its general format is given as an Annex to this Administrative Instruction. This document is binding for all HE institutions in Kosovo and Diplomas have been designed and (over 500 of them) will be accordingly issued soon.

According detailed regulations are given in the new Statute of the UP.

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)

Undergraduate and graduate studies (including doctoral studies) are provided for in Chapter 4 (Articles 100 - 170, with doctoral studies prescribed in particular in Articles 132 - 140) of the Statutes of the University of Prishtina. These studies are fully in accord with all relevant documents and principles of the Bologna Process. Here, we are giving a brief description of doctoral studies based on the UP Statutes (and the LHE):

- Doctoral studies shall have a normal duration of 3 to 4 years, require a minimum of 180 ECTS points and the successful completion of previous studies comprising a minimum of 300 ECTS points (Article 106 (2));
- Preconditions for awarding the Doctorate degree are the successful completion of a post graduate Master study, the successful passing of Doctorate study exams and the successful defence of a Doctoral thesis (Article 106.3).

6.2. What are the links between higher education and research in your country?
(For example, what percentage of publicly-funded research is conducted within HE institutions?)

The higher education strategy development process, which was very participatory, has revealed significant weaknesses in the field of research, not least of all due to the problematic and difficult situation of the Kosovo higher education system before 1999 (see above). First of all, there is very little research activity going on in Kosovo, and it is not effectively linked to study programmes in higher education institutions. The Higher Education Strategy envisions a number of measures to address this issue, including funding arrangements, international cooperation and establishing closer links between higher education and research.

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)

- Application and acquiring of visa from Kosovo is one of the main issues for our students;
- Cross-border cooperation in the region and the overall political situation in SEE sometimes influence cooperation programmes in education;
- Cooperation agreements have opened paths for more cooperation in the region;
- European programmes of cooperation (TEMPUS in particular) have served to facilitate this cooperation and to establish partnerships to a large extent

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

- The Statute of the UP, with recognizing and applying the regulations of the Lisbon convention and the Bologna Declaration, provides maximum opportunities and support for students to set private mobility initiatives
- The MEST has advertised a competition for scholarships for students staying or wanting to study in Europe or in the United States (250.000 Euro);
- The MEST has discussed the possibility to work on a joint scholarship with the Austrian Ministry of Education for Kosovar students in Austria (ove 400 students currently studying there);
- The Ordinance on Diploma Format and Diploma Supplement has been issued serving to facilitate student mobility;
- ECTS has been in application in Kosovo higher education institutions, which, together with Diploma supplement, will make our study programmes and diplomas easily readable;
- We have recruited an officer at the MEST to facilitate individual applications to Erasmus Mundus programme;
- The MEST has committed financial and in kind contributions (amounting to 40.000 Euro)

to support the fifth year of the Summer University in Prishtina, organized jointly by the UP and Academic Training Association (the Dutch ATA); in the 2004 Summer University over 150 foreign students participated from the region and Europe.

- The MEST has issued an instruction to the Student Centre of the UP to arrange for the accommodation of visiting students and faculty coming to various exchange and other programmes to Kosovo.
- The MEST has supported several student initiatives for participation in various exchange schemes and conferences during the 2003/2004 academic year;
- The Administrative Instruction for student participation in the study fees, provides for part of accumulated means to be used for "Student projects and initiatives ..."
- The MEST has licensed the operation of several private institutions of HE, which draw heavily on international expertise and mobility (for illustration, the privately owned University of Business and Technology has established an agreement of cooperation with the Vienna based Technical University and as a result during 2004 carried out mobility programmes to Austria).

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 main factors influencing mobility of our teachers and staff deal with the following:

- Kosovar citizens need to apply for and acquire a visa for travel to most of the countries in Europe. Unfortunately, these can only be applied for and acquired in Skopje (only Switzerland and Germany issue visas in Prishtina);
- Due to the long isolation of the nineties' there is not much cooperation established between our and foreign universities and teaching staff;
- Ageing of the teaching staff (the younger experts have not had much opportunity to gain academic degrees during the difficult years of the last decade);
- Average language competence in widely spoken European languages leaves a lot to be wished for;
- Recognition of our qualifications by foreign institutions sometimes is presented as an obstacle;
- there is a threat of "brain drain" of highly skilled teachers and scientists away from Kosovo due to difficult living standards and low salaries, and stopping it is a big challenge for the future strategic activities of MEST and university management. This is closely connected with the need to increase the quality level of both teaching and research in Kosovo higher education institutions.

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

Articles 6 to 14 of the Administrative instruction for student participation in the study fees provide that university faculty can use part of the accumulated means for (a) participation in conferences with international character and (b) allowing for them a sabbatical year and covering their expenses up to 6.000 Euro per year.

Negotiations have been completed to sign a Joint Executive Programme of Cooperation with the FYR of Macedonia that will allow for student and faculty mobility. Three students have already joined an International postgraduate study programme (supported by the European Commission) with the Macedonian Institute for Seismologic Studies for the academic year 2004 /2005.

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?

Autonomy of higher education institutions is prescribed by the Law on Higher Education. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Law, higher education institutions have right to elect governing and management authorities and fix their terms of office; arrange their structures and activities through their own rules; choose teaching and other staff; set conditions for admission of students; independently develop and implement curricula and research projects; choose subjects to be taught; grant titles to academic staff, etc.

The new Statute of the University of Prishtina implements these preconditions following modern European standards and best practice.

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

According to the Law on Higher Education the public interest is represented by membership in administrative boards of public providers of higher education. The Ministry of Education appoints less than half of the members of administrative boards, whereas more than half of the members are appointed by the public providers according to their statutes. The appointments by the Ministry are based on personal merit, following public advertisement.

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)

The Law on Higher Education stipulates representation of students in the academic bodies of public providers of higher education. This should be reflected in the statute of a higher education provider.

The Statute of the University of Prishtina gives extensive rights to students' organizations. Student elections and participation are regulated on the basis of parliamentary elections, student participation is granted on all levels of governing bodies, both on the level of faculties and university. In the context of study programmes and study commissions, the percentage of student members has been significantly, following European best practice.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

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

Higher education carried out by licensed providers of higher education in Kosovo is accessible to all persons in the territory of Kosovo, or by distance learning within or outside Kosovo in any location, without direct or indirect discrimination on any actual or presumed ground... There is no age limit on enrolling for or being awarded a higher education qualification in Kosovo. (The Law on Higher Education, Section 3). The MEST and UP have worked jointly to enrol 77 students, members of minority and disadvantaged groups, for the academic year 2004/2005.

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?

The Strategy for Higher Education affirms development of policies to enable higher education institutions to develop flexible study programmes in accordance with individual needs of the students, including: intensive study programmes, accredited summer courses, optional and multi-disciplinary courses, with the purpose of adopting to the demands and dynamic changes within the labor market and the knowledge market.

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

The Strategy for Adult Learning 2005-2015 developed under auspices of the Ministry of Labour and with expertise of the European Training Foundation anticipates the development of a system to recognize and validate competences that adults have acquired through non-formal and informal learning, promoting the exchange of experience and good practice in this field with the EU, especially in respect of the experience and outcomes of the EU's Copenhagen Process.

The Statute of the University of Prishtina implements a new study type called “studium irregulare”, which gives to the individual student maximum opportunities to create his own preferred study programme, following general guidelines of existing programmes and utilizing the full array of study offers with the faculty/university.

11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

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

Due to the recent history of the Kosovo higher education system (since 1999 – see above) and the yet undecided political status of Kosovo, such initiatives develop more difficulties than in other countries. Many initiatives have been set by the former and recent Minister of MEST, but such cooperation programmes need time to develop and be implemented in the full scale. Intensifying such measures is a major strategic objective of the Higher Education strategy 2005-2015. A TEMPUS project on European Studies, coordinated by the University of Salzburg as the contracting party, was approved in 2003 and is being implemented at the University of Prishtina as one of the benefiting institutions. The project is to be completed in September 2004.

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

Partnerships between the higher education institutions from Kosovo and EU sponsored mainly by the Tempus Phare Programme have resulted in a number of joint curriculum development projects leading to comparability of the curricula with those in EU countries. This applies particularly to curricula in the field of Law, Economic, political sciences, etc. A Tempus Project named ESWEB - European Studies for Western Balkan Countries: a Curriculum Development GEP Project in partnership between University of Salzburg and Southampton and with the cooperation of Prishtina e Rijeka (Croatia) University for B.A. European Studies in the following modules: Culture, History, Economy and Management, Foreign Language Training and specific skills in International Transfer of Knowledge. The project was approved for years 2003 - 2005. The Statute of the University of Prishtina provides detailed regulations in this respect, following modern European standards and

implementing European best practice.

12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

12.1. Describe any actions taken by your country to promote the attractiveness of European higher education

The European Higher Education Area has been promoted through numerous activities undertaken by the Ministry of Education, higher education institutions and the civil society. One sound example is the Prishtina Summer University which has been organized in last 4 years by the Dutch organization ATA, offering, in addition to the university-level courses, numerous opportunities to discuss the content of European Higher Education Area. This concept was also promoted during the higher education strategy development process, involving wide range of stakeholders from Kosovo and from the Region.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

The Strategy for the development of higher education 2005-2015 in Kosovo approved by the Government is, truly, a Bologna Strategy. The document affirms a shared vision of the Ministry of Education and relevant stakeholders of Kosovo as a democratic society, integrated in the European Higher Education Area, where knowledge and scientific research are of particular role and importance for the enduring and long-term cultural, social and economic development. The six strategic objectives paving the way towards the strategic mission (development of an efficient system of higher education that will contribute to increase the wellbeing of the Kosovar society by offering high quality education and research, with equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the values of freedom, democracy and diversity) imply a number of measures directed towards adherence to the Bologna Process, to mention but a few: 1. Integration of the Kosovar higher education within the European and international development processes of higher education; 2. Harmonization of study programmes in all levels with the objectives of the Bologna Process 3. Full implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) 4. Active participation in international cooperation projects 5. Supporting mobility of academic faculty and students 6. Establishing of the system of distance learning 7. Establishing the Kosovo Accreditation Agency In order to support the operational plan of the Strategy and meet the deadlines for implementing the Bologna Declaration, the Government is preparing a law on extraordinary financing of the higher education in next 5 years.

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

The first group of challenges is related to the inherited state of affairs within HE. The decade of isolation of the HE in Kosovo has evidently influenced the quality of education and the comparability of the higher education results in relation to the countries in the region. HE has been mainly identified with the University of Prishtina. Taking into consideration the issue of survival of the Kosovar HE system in Albanian, teaching was into the center of attention, while other aspects such as quality, scientific research, social services, links with economy, staff development etc remained marginal. The second group of challenges is related to the present reality of the transition phase. One of the main challenges of the transition period is the economic growth of the country. The human resources is fundamental for the sustainable and

rapid economic development. The human resources of the Kosovar population are the most significant wealth of this country. As in other countries, the accomplishment of the Kosovo education system in providing young people with the key competencies demanded in the labor market, is an essential facet for the future economic development. Hence, the unrestricted and open access to a modern education system is also an important factor for the promotion of the contemporary economy development as well as a condition for the common social wellbeing and the welfare of minorities and other marginalized groups in particular. In Kosova, at the individual level the education background is an essential factor for employability and for economic wellbeing. The intensity of achievements in education stimulate innovation, self-employability and entrepreneurship and especially enhance the process of transfer of knowledge. Consequently, all expenditures in education should be considered as investments with the ultimate effect of a rapid economic development. The third group of challenges is related to the means of integrating within the European Area of Higher Education. The most complex challenge is the aspiration to integrate the country within the European Community. From this perspective higher education should be integrated within the European Higher Education Area. The Law for Higher Education drafted in compatibility with the latest developments of European higher education systems points out the need of reforming the Kosovar higher education system towards the objectives set by the Bologna Process. The progress of reforms within higher education is slow. The private sector of higher education has been initiated, encouraging a new attitude towards teaching and learning processes.