

REPORT

for the Austrian Information Seminar on the Bologna Process

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Implementation of the Bologna Process priorities within the higher education system of the Republic of Moldova

Joining the Bologna Process has proven the fact that the Republic of Moldova is not just an observer of the “Europe of Knowledge” construction, but also an active participant of this crucial for the modern society process.

For the majority of the European countries the Bologna Process is an incentive not just to promote tertiary education reforms, but also to constantly improve and modernise national higher education systems.

This report is aimed to overview major developments within the higher education system of the Republic of Moldova, as well as main strategic priorities for further implementation of the Bologna reforms.

1. First of all it is necessary to mention that a National Commission aimed at monitoring the implementation of the Bologna Process principles was established in the Republic of Moldova. A National Bologna Process Action Plan was elaborated and approved. Bologna Process follow-up groups were created within higher education institutions.
2. Another major development is the modification of the national legislation in view of organisation of higher education as a cycle structure. (first cycle – Licentiate, second cycle - Master)
3. In order to further assure a firm legislative framework for educational reforms a “Concept of Modernisation of education in the Republic of Moldova and a “Code of Laws in the field of Education” were elaborated. Both documents include parts, which stipulate principles and stages of the higher education sector reform.

4. In July 2005 the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved a new Classificatory of educational fields and specialities. The Classificatory was elaborated in concordance with the ISCED-97, EUROSTAT and is essentially based on learning outcomes, which were stipulated in accordance with the labour market needs.

In this context it is worth mentioning, that the admission to higher education institutions in 2005 was organised in accordance with the new Classificatory. Thereto a provisional Frame Plan for the 1st cycle has been approved in order to stipulate the guidelines for the new curriculum development.

5. The implementation of the European Credit Transfer System in the Republic of Moldova started in 2000 in several pilot higher education institutions. Today the ECTS is officially applied in all universities of the country. A Guide on the implementation of the National Credit Transfer System was elaborated. The Guide is envisaged to disseminate good practice examples on the ECTS pilot implementation and to assure better transparency and comparability of study programmes and qualifications awarded by the higher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova.
6. Another important development within the higher education system of the Republic of Moldova is issuing to every graduate automatically and free of charge of the Diploma Supplement. The national model of the Diploma Supplement was favourably appreciated by the experts of the UNESCO-CEPES, as well as by the Council of Europe experts, at the national conference on the Bologna Process, which took place in December 2005.
7. In order to improve the national recognition system a separate structural division named – **Service for Recognition and Equivalence of Academic Certificates** was created in 2005 within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Moldova. The experts of the Service are currently analysing international practice in the field of recognition and equivalence of foreign qualifications and are in charge of the elaboration of the national legislative framework in their field of responsibility.

8. Another important and demanding task for the academic community and authorities is Quality Assurance. Specific structural divisions aimed to monitor and to manage the quality of education and training were established in universities. An independent National Quality Assurance Agency is under the creation. Educational standards and requirements are currently revised and improved.

Several modifications have been introduced to the process of academic evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions in order to assure better transparency and objectivity of this process. Thus the representatives of branch ministers and student organisations were included into the membership of the evaluation and accreditation committees.

9. A considerable attention is paid to the promotion of student participation in higher education governance:
 - Students are members of management structures of higher education institutions
 - Students participate in the evaluation of quality of education, training and services offered by a university
 - Numerous students' associations and organisations are widely involved into the process of higher education modernisation.

The academic community and the educational authorities of the Republic of Moldova are fully aware of the fact that some progresses achieved in the realisation of the Bologna Process principles shall not be treated as a final outcome, but as an incentive to further enhance and stipulate the obtained results on both national and institutional levels.

Hereinafter it is necessary to specify several major aims, which were agreed as the basic priorities of further implementation of the Bologna Process objectives in the Republic of Moldova. These are the following.

- elaboration of the National Qualification Framework;
- consolidation of Quality Assurance structures;
- improvement of the recognition system;
- assurance of better convergence of higher education, science and research through common efforts of all stakeholders involved;

- promotion of social dimension in higher education;
- enhancement of the national higher education system attractiveness, through quality assurance, transparency and better academic mobility.

Best European practices adjusted to the tradition, history and values of the national higher education will be applied for the realisation of the mentioned above goals and tasks.

In this context the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, as well as the academic community of the Republic of Moldova assume the responsibility to:

- further enhance the obtained results and to continue the implementation of the intermediate priorities and objectives of the Bologna Process;
- permanently revise and update coherent strategy in the field of higher education;
- impartially inform the academic community and civil society regarding the recent developments in the Bologna reforms implementation, as well as about their effects and consequences.

The developments within the tertiary education sector of the Republic of Moldova are essentially based on the major goal to assure competitiveness of the national higher education system and to transform the latter into an engine of social and economic development of the country.

We wish to the participants of this remarkable event every success in the realisation of our common, but highly demanding task - to build the European Higher Education Area as the most modern, efficient and competitive system in the world essentially characterised by the constant self-improvement.