



March 23, 2011

**INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY COUNTRIES  
APPLYING FOR ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN HIGHER  
EDUCATION AREA (EHEA)**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Declaration foresaw the possibility that new countries would join the Bologna Process and consequently the newly launched European Higher Education Area (EHEA), currently comprising 47 countries.

Through the 2003 Berlin Communiqué, Ministers specified the criteria for membership, and these are still valid for the EHEA:

*Ministers consider it necessary to adapt the clause in the Prague Communiqué on applications for membership as follows: Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.*

In effect, there are two criteria for membership:

An applicant country needs to be a party to the European Cultural Convention;

Its competent public authorities need to commit to and implement the values, goals and key policies of the EHEA.

The aim of the present questionnaire is to provide a basis for the Ministers of the EHEA - advised by the Bologna Follow-Up Group - to decide whether an applicant country broadly satisfies the criteria for membership of the European Higher Education Area, with a special focus on the second criterion described above.

There is no expectation that all questions be answered affirmatively or that all aspects of EHEA-related policies be fully implemented in applicant countries. However, a certain level of commitment needs to be demonstrated in implementing the values, goals and key policies of the EHEA. For each major EHEA policy reform area, there are standards and policies adopted by EHEA Ministers in the Ministerial Communiqués and these will constitute the reference point of the evaluation. For each area, questions cover the current state of implementation as well as - especially in cases where current implementation falls short of EHEA goals - plans and timetables for further implementation. This future-oriented aspect of further development is an important part of the questionnaire.

The questions are purposely left open-ended so that the applicant country is encouraged to provide any information that it feels would help the Ministers understand the national higher education system as well as its policies and priorities. As a general rule, descriptions should be brief and to the point and may be illustrated by brief examples where relevant. It is suggested that main descriptions should not exceed 1,000 words

while secondary descriptions should not exceed 500 words. For comparison, the "Introduction" section of this document has around 600 words.

Please send the completed questionnaire to the BFUG Chairs at [secretariat@ehea.info](mailto:secretariat@ehea.info) **no later than 1 December 2011**. The competent authorities of the applicant country will then be duly informed, through the contact person indicated in the questionnaire, about the subsequent steps and deadlines involved in the assessment of the application, which may involve follow up questions, an invitation to a BFUG meeting for additional clarifications or, if judged necessary, a site visit by the small expert team which will assess the application. Any expenses connected with the assessment of the application will be covered by the applicant country.

The competent public authorities are strongly encouraged to consult stakeholders about the content of the report.

For all major policy areas, additional information as well as the main documents - including the Bologna Declaration and all subsequent communiqués - are readily available at <http://www.ehea.info/>. For any questions, please contact the Bologna Secretariat at [secretariat@ehea.info](mailto:secretariat@ehea.info).

## DETAILS REGARDING THE APPLICANT

Country	The REPUBLIC of BELARUS
Date of questionnaire submission	November 27, 2011
Contact person/ Position	Alexander I. Zhuk, the First Deputy Minister of Education
E-mail address	rivshbuch@mail.ru; titovitch_igor@mail.yahoo.com
Mailing address	9, Sovetskaya Street, Minsk, 220010, Republic of Belarus
Telephone	+ 375 17 209 99 09
Contributors to the report	M.I. Demchuk, the National Institute for Higher Education; Yu. I. Miksiuk, the Ministry of Education; I.V. Titovich, the National Institute for Higher Education I.A. Mitskevich, the National Institute for Higher Education

The European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe dated December 19, 1954 came into force for the Republic of Belarus on October 18, 1993.

### I. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

**1. Please describe the national higher education system including a) an outline of the main regulatory documents b) the governance arrangements of the system (main regulatory bodies, their competences and interactions) c) the institutional structure underpinning the national higher education system (number and types of institutions, student enrolment and academic staff structure).**

**A.** The legal regulation of the higher education system of the Republic of Belarus is performed according to Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus No. 243-3 dated January 13, 2011 as well as other legal acts adopted as to amend the Code and to determine specific elements of the educational process organization. The whole legal base was adopted within the period of June-November 2011 and is applied to the relations as of September 1, 2011. The higher education legal base is open to all stakeholders and interested persons and is posted on the web site [www.eduBelarus.info](http://www.eduBelarus.info). The edicts of the President of the Republic of Belarus determine some elements of social support of students and talented young people. Individual resolutions of the Government determine the procedure of starting training in new specialities, the procedure of employment of graduates, indemnification of tuition fees to the national budget, accreditation of higher education institutions and specialities, rules of taking positions within the teaching staff, the procedure of transfer, quitting and re-admission of students, transfer of powers to the Ministry of Education as to adopt legal acts in the field of higher education. Individual legal acts of the Ministry of Education establish samples and detailed description of higher education documents, the procedure of carrying out activities within training and methodological associations in the field of higher education, approve typical forms of agreements with students in the field of higher education and determine the powers and procedure of carrying out activities of self-governing body at a higher education institution.

Beside the Code of education, the step-by-step improvement of the higher education system is ensured by the State Program of Higher Education Development for 2011-2015 providing a set of duly funded actions.

The Republic of Belarus has the following structure of training specialists in the following fields: natural sciences – 4,8%, humanities – 16,8%, pedagogy – 21,0%, medicine – 3,7% , economics – 23,0%, engineering – 22,0%, agriculture – 6,6%, military – 2,1%.

**B.** Administration in the higher education system of Belarus is public and is established in the Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus.

Public administration in the field of higher education is carried out by the President of the Republic of Belarus, the Government, state bodies of public administration, local executive and regulatory authorities within their powers.

The President of the Republic of Belarus determines the state policy in the field of education and ensures implementation of its main areas. The Government ensures execution of the state policy in the field of education and carries out general administration of the educational system. The Ministry of Education ensures functioning of the system of education, general administration of the system of education, control over education quality, carries out the state staff policy in the field of education, licensing of educational activities, organizes development of scientific and instructional provision of educational curricula for higher education, and organizes drafting and publication of textbooks, manuals, etc.

Social public administration the field of higher education is carried out by the following: the Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions, regional councils of rectors of higher education institutions, the institutions which ensure functioning of the higher education system, training and methodological associations in the field of higher education, leading higher education institutions.

The Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions unites heads of higher education institutions of the Republic of Belarus (state-owned and private ones) for development of recommendations within the framework of higher education. As a rule, the Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions considers the most significant strategies of higher school development and sends relevant recommendations to the Ministry of Education, and also it takes part in consideration of nominees for the office of heads of higher education institutions, in formation of the reserve for substitution in the office of heads of higher education institutions. The regional councils of rectors unite heads of higher education institutions in some specific region of Belarus as to develop recommendations for determining general approaches and policies of effective management of higher education and scientific activities carried out by the republican and local public administration bodies, as to improve state policy and its implementation in the field of higher education and science with taking into consideration the specifics of development in some individual region.

The institutions ensuring functioning of the system of higher education are the Republican Institute of Knowledge Control, which ensures organizational and legal provision of the centralized testing of applicants in various subjects, and the National Institute for Higher Education, which ensures scientific and methodological provision of higher education development and functions in the field of procedures required for recognition of foreign educational certificates.

As to improve the quality of training of specialists at the most significant higher education institutions, the training and methodological associations in the field of higher education (29 associations in various education profiles) function. The training and methodological associations include teaching and scientific staff and representatives of perspective employers. Their competence includes development and improvement of the content of educational curricula in the field of higher education, coordination of drafts and scripts of training materials and preparation of reasoning decisions for opening new specialities.

As to improve the system of higher education and to strengthen its role in solving social and economic, scientific and technical as well as of any other tasks for development of the Republic of Belarus, as to coordinate activities of training and methodological associations, to work out updated educational technologies and means of education, some higher education institutions are also provided with the status of the leading higher education institutions. The Government provided this status to 9 universities.

**C.** The national higher education system is primarily a university-type system.

In the Republic of Belarus there are 45 state-owned higher education institutions and 10 private institutions. Among the 45 state-owned higher education institutions there are 31 universities, 7 academies, 3 institutes and 4 higher colleges. All private higher education institutions are institutes. Higher education institutions are situated in every region of Belarus. All state higher education institutions are assigned to the ministries and other republican agencies: the Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus (1), the Ministry of Education (23), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (4), the Ministry of Health Care (4), the Ministry of Culture (3), the Ministry of Communication and Informatization (1), the National Bank (1), the Ministry of Sports and Tourism (1), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (2), the Ministry of Defense (2), the Ministry of Transport and Communications (1), the Ministry of Emergency Situations (2).

In the academic year of 2010/2011 the number of students was 442 890 persons: 382 797 students (86,5%) were trained in state-owned higher education institutions, 60 093 (13,5%) – in private ones. Over 62% of students are female. As full-time students 221,7 thousand persons are trained, and as part-time (correspondence) students 220,5 thousand persons got their training.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2010/11	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2010/11
Total 442,9 thou. Specialist 439,3 thou. Master 3,6 thou.	Total 100,5 thou. Specialist 99,2 thou. Master 1,3 thou.	Specialist 99% Master* 1% *After the Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus came into force (September 1, 2011), the number of master's degree students will increase.

Due to bad academic performance 16 311 students were withdrawn from state higher education institutions in the academic year of 2010/2011.

The higher education institutions employ 24 451 teachers, among them there are 1 342 Doctors of Sciences, and 8 969 Candidates of Sciences. The scientific title of Professor belongs to 1 252 persons, and there are 7 328 persons having the title of Associate Professor.

## **2. Please give a description of the strategies that your country is currently pursuing in the field of higher education.**

By Instruction of the President dated August 29, 2011 in the system of higher education the following is carried out: preparation of measures to contract terms of training in 2012 at the first cycle of higher education (by 25 %), review of the structure and volume of compulsory social and humanities disciplines studied by students in their initial years of training, increase of self-study hours for students.

At the same time approaches to standardization of the educational process at the second cycle of higher education (master's degree) and piloting system of credits are developed.

Development of organizational and regulatory documentation regulating academic mobility of Belarusian students funded by the Ministry of Education is carried out.

Formation of structures within universities directed at development of innovative and business activities of students (business-incubators, etc.) is stimulated. Elaboration of the National supplement to higher education certificates, based on Diploma Supplement, has been completed, and the work on the national system of credits is continued.

Implementation of the international system of education quality assessment at higher education institutions on the basis of ISO 9001 standards is about to be completed.

The National qualification framework, compatible to the European qualification framework is in the development process.

**3. What are the partnership arrangements underpinning the system? Is there any specificity of your national higher education system that needs highlighting?**

Specificity: Employers in the Republic of Belarus at present are not ready to see a Bachelor as a full-fledged participant of the labor market, that is why the first cycle of higher education preserved its traditional name (“specialist”) and training structure.

In the Republic of Belarus postgraduate education is traditionally an independent level of education that includes two stages: postgraduate department (candidate of sciences) and doctorate department (doctor of sciences).

**4. What are the main challenges that the national higher education system in your country is facing?**

The system of higher education of the Republic of Belarus is facing the challenges, which are characteristic of other countries of Europe as well:

- demographic problems continue to cause decrease of a number of students;
- mass character of higher education results in drop of quality in training specialists;
- delayed response of the system of education to demands of economy fields for specialists of new generation leads to an imbalance between the number of graduates, the structure of specialties and qualifications and the requirements of the national economy;
- traditional character of institutional component of higher education;
- lack of readiness of some HEIs to participate in programs of academic mobility as full participants (insufficient funding, low level of knowledge of foreign languages);
- lack of integration of science, education and high technology production.

**5. Why does your country want to join the EHEA?**

As a result of joining the EHEA:

- the level of trust in the national higher school among the nationals will increase;
- higher education will become more universal and will expand opportunities for the nationals of Belarus;
- integration of higher education institutions in international associations, their involvement in scientific and research projects;
- compatibility of the national higher education system and the European system will be ensured, and it will result in increase of international students;
- carrying out activities to continuously update the higher education curricula in compliance with the achievements of scientific, technical and social progress;
- strengthening responsibility of higher education institutions for quality of training specialists;
- meeting the requirements of the country’s joining the WTO: ensuring compliance of educational services and labor resources to the standards adopted by the WTO member-states.

## **II. STRUCTURAL REFORMS**

The EHEA is built on three structural components: quality assurance, degree structures/qualifications frameworks and the recognition of qualifications. This part of the questionnaire covers each area.

### **1. Degree structure system/ Qualifications Frameworks/ Employability**

A. Please describe the higher education degree system/qualifications framework of your country. Specifically, please describe how this relates to the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) adopted by Ministers in 2005 as well as the further procedure and timetable for self certifying your national framework against the QF-EHEA. The description should specify whether any study programs are exempted from the three tier structure and, if so, describe their position in your higher education system and indicate the proportion of the student body concerned.

The cycle structure of higher education in the Republic of Belarus includes training a specialist (the first cycle) and training a master (the second cycle). Two-cycle nature of the higher education is established legislatively in the law of the Republic of Belarus “On Higher Education” (2007), the Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus (2011). The first cycle of higher education ensures training of a certified specialist, who is ready to carry out independent professional activities and to continue education for the master’s degree. Term of training at the first cycle is 4-5 years (6 years at more complicated specialities) as a full-time student. The second cycle of higher education (master’s studies) is aimed at more profound professional training and at training scientific, teaching and research staff. Term of study at this cycle of education is 1-2 years as a full-time student.

The first cycle of higher education is compatible with QF-EHEA cycle 1, and the second cycle (master’s studies) – with cycle 2. The third QF-EHEA cycle is represented in the educational system of the Republic of Belarus by postgraduate education, which includes 2 stages: postgraduate department (military adjunct department) and doctorate department. Postgraduate (adjunct) department is aimed at training specialists possessing planning skills and skills of independent research, sound theoretical knowledge, which will allow to prepare a qualification scientific thesis (dissertation) as to become a Candidate of Sciences. Term of training at postgraduate department on a full-time basis is 3 years. Doctorate department is aimed at training specialists possessing skills to organize scientific and research activities within new trends of researches or as to develop the existing relevant research trends, skills of analytical summary making of the results of scientific work allowing to prepare a qualification scientific thesis (dissertation) as to become a Doctor of Sciences. Term of study at a doctorate department on a full-time basis is 1 year.

Short-term QF-EHEA programs correspond in the Republic of Belarus to educational curricula of higher education integrated with specialized secondary education curricula, which are widespread at higher colleges. Term of training according to this curriculum as a full-time student is no more than 2 years. The total number of students on such programs is around 2000 people.

In 2010 the commission of the National Qualification System was set up in the Republic of Belarus (39 representatives, 17 bodies of public administration under auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security). At present the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and all stakeholders are developing the National Qualification Framework of the Republic of Belarus. The self-certification of the National Qualifications Framework to ensure compliance with the QF-EHEA is planned for 2014.

B. The development of the national qualifications framework is, among other things, closely linked to the concern for improving the employability of higher education graduates. Please provide a description of your policies and priorities for improving the employability of higher education graduates and, in doing so, please cover the public as well as the private sector of the labor market. Please address the extent to which first cycle degrees (Bachelors or equivalent) are considered for employment, with specific reference to both the public and the private sector.

The legislation of the Republic of Belarus establishes that all students who are trained at state higher education institutions on the full-time basis with training funded from the national budget will obligatorily get their first employment according to the education and qualification acquired. The legislation establishes issues and categories of graduates having the right of independent employment. A higher education institution provides job placement at a specific organization for its graduates. When providing a job placement the requests from state employers and organizations which cooperate with the higher education institution are of the priority. Job placement is carried out at private organizations on the same conditions as at state organizations. As a rule, 75% of graduates take up employment in the public sector, and 25 % - in private. Both a graduate and an employer have mutual obligations of employment for the period of 1-2 years.

Graduates who paid fees, solve the issue of their employment by themselves, but also can apply to the higher education institution for a job placement.

In the academic year 2010/2011 the first employment was provided to 19 686 graduates from state higher education institutions, who were trained on a full-time basis with training funded from the national budget. 90,7% of them started working in the assigned organizations.

## **2. Quality assurance**

Please describe the national quality assurance arrangements in your country, with reference to both the internal quality development at higher education institutions and arrangements for external quality assurance, normally conducted by quality assurance agencies.

A. For internal quality assurance, describe whether higher education institutions in your country have quality assurance arrangements in place and, if not, what the plans and timetable are in this regard.

**A.** Since 2008, the work has been going on setting up and certification at higher education institutions of Quality Management Systems to check compliance with ISO 9001 standards. The following system of internal quality control was developed:

- higher education institutions have developed and approved quality guaranty policies of education, which can be found at the web sites of higher education institutions and relevant information stands;
- educational and scientific activities of higher education institutions are described in terms of processes and procedures and recorded in the appropriate quality standards of higher education institutions. These standards include sections that describe procedures for quality monitoring and continuous quality improvement;
- to develop quality management systems appropriate organizational structure as well as quality boards were created in each institution which include students as educational services consumers;
- organizational structure of higher education institutions audits higher education institution quality management system annually, which results in developing quality improvement mechanisms.

At present 30 higher education institutions in the country passed the ISO 9001 standards compliance certification.

Ongoing and final assessments of the level of knowledge are performed in accordance with Criteria developed within the ten-point scale. The Ministry of Education in 2011 adopted and published new rules for the ongoing and final assessment of students.

Quality assurance of teaching staff work is achieved by organizing the input quality control: the representatives of the faculty are elected by the Council of higher education institution for a period of 1-5 years in accordance with the procedure established by law. Every year the teaching staff quality of work is assessed by the Commission created at higher education institution which results in appropriate coefficients.

Developed and certified quality management systems are published on higher education institution web sites. Also these web sites regularly provide information on student and teaching staff. External quality control is preceded by self-control which is the initial information for the external quality control agency.

During the self-control of a higher education institution visual review, study of documentation, analysis of actual conditions, attendance of classes, discussions with participants of educational process, knowledge control of students (in writing, oral, testing with technical training means, practical tasks) are carried out. Under the results of self-control each subdivision provides the self-control commission with a note, containing the analysis, conclusions and proposals about the content, level and quality of training. Based on the materials of notes from subdivisions and control tasks used to assess knowledge of students in various subjects within the self-control procedures, the self-control commission works out a summary report, which is then submitted to the Education Quality Control Department. If unreliable data in the materials were provided and then detected in the process of certification, it will result in termination of certification with a negative summary note.

B. For external quality assurance arrangements, the description should focus on the way in which the competent authorities of your country comply with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) adopted by Ministers in 2005. To the extent that your country does not comply with the ESG, the description should include your plans for doing so and the timetable for achieving this. Elements that may be covered include cooperation with quality assurance agencies of other countries with a view to assessing the quality of your institutions as well as with organizations and networks such as ENQA. For both internal and external quality assurance, it is suggested that the description outline the responsibilities of the bodies involved.

**B.** The external mechanisms for quality assurance in the Republic of Belarus include licensing and accrediting higher education institutions. The Education Quality Control Department of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus fulfils the functions of carrying out, coordination and methodological support of the state education quality assurance. A license means the right of an educational institution to carry out educational activities. State accreditation of an educational institution means a confirmation of compliance of the educational activities of that institution with the legislation on education, of the content and quality of the provided education with the requirements of the educational standards. The decision on accrediting a higher education institution establishes the right of that institution to issue educational certificates to its graduates (state sample documents). The state accreditation of educational institutions is carried out to check compliance with the indicated institution type and with every specialty (program). Criteria for state institutional and program accreditation are established by law.

The reasons for accrediting decision for compliance with the indicated type of the education institution are the following:

meeting requirements of the legislation on education;

absence of gross violations by an educational institution, its branches of the legislation on licensing, of licensing requirements and conditions;

compliance of the education institution with the criteria of the indicated type of institution.

The reasons for accrediting decision for every specialty (program) are the following:

meeting requirements of the legislation on education;

absence of gross violations by an educational institution, its branches of the legislation on licensing, of licensing requirements and conditions;

compliance of the resource, scientific and methodological support of the educational process in the accredited speciality with the established requirements;

compliance of the content and quality of education determined under the results of a comprehensive control test done by the trainees in 4 disciplines of the accredited speciality with the requirements of the educational standards, study and training documentation of educational curricula.

External quality control results in a report which is submitted to interested parties. The licensing, accrediting decision of the Education Quality Control Department is approved by the Ministry of Education.

State accreditation is to be confirmed no less than once within five years.

The Education Quality Control Department of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus is a member of the Eurasian Quality Assurance Network – EAQAN and implements quality assurance elements of the EAQAN in the national system of education.

The legislation of the Republic of Belarus does not put any limitations on higher education institutions in carrying out any additional procedures of external education quality assessment. The Republic of Belarus seeks to join the ENQA.

### 3. Recognition of Qualifications

A. The fair recognition of foreign qualifications is a prerequisite for academic mobility and the fundamental principle of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention. If your country has not yet ratified the convention, please indicate your plans and timetable for doing so. Regardless of whether your country has ratified the convention or not, please outline your actions, plans and priorities in regards to the recognition of foreign qualifications in your country, with an indication of a timetable. It is suggested the description comprise the organization and competence of the national competent authorities for recognition and the role of ENICs/NARICs. Arrangements and policies for the recognition of qualifications earned through alternative learning paths/lifelong learning should also be addressed.

A. In 2002 under Edict of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 5 dated January 4 the Republic of Belarus joined the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The function of taking decisions about recognition of all qualifications, except for scientific titles and degrees, belongs to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. The function of an expert organization when assessing foreign qualifications, except for scientific titles and degrees, is carried out by the National Institute for Higher Education, acting also as Belarusian ENIC. Recognition of scientific titles and degrees is a competence of the Higher certification Commission of the Republic of Belarus.

The main principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the explanatory report are the basis of the national legislation in the field of recognition (the relevant document came into force in 2008).

In 2010 taking a decision on recognition of an educational certificate issued to a person in a foreign country and on establishing its equivalence (compliance with) to an educational certificate of the Republic of Belarus is included in the List of administrative procedures carried out by governmental bodies and other organizations when application of citizens is submitted, and is carried out free of charge for any applicant.

As to carry out the recognition procedure the holder of a foreign qualification should submit the following documents to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus:

a copy of the educational certificate certified by notary public;

a copy of the supplement to the educational certificate (academic transcript) certified by notary public;

translation of the educational certificate and supplement to the educational certificate (if required) certified by notary public;

a copy of passport.

The Ministry of Education sends within 3 days these documents to the National Institute for Higher Education for preparing the expert summary.

Within the expertise of the document the following is found out:

the fact of training and issue of the submitted document to the name of its holder (if there are reasoned doubts in validity of the submitted document or its incompliance with the sample established in the state of its issue);

applicability of provisions of treaties where the Republic of Belarus is a party to, to the submitted document;

comparability of rights of the submitted document holder in the state of its issue and the holder of the corresponding educational certificate in the Republic of Belarus;

compliance of the submitted document with the sample established in the state where the document was issued (if required);

accreditation or any other form of state recognition of the educational institution (organization) of the foreign state that issued the document, as a component of the national system of education:

accreditation of the program or the right of the educational institution (organization) of a foreign state to issue educational certificates under the educational program indicated in the foreign educational certificate;

compliance of the field of training of the holder of the submitted document with the Unified State Classifier of the Republic of Belarus “Specialities and Qualifications” approved by the Ministry of Education (except for the level of general secondary education);

compliance of the mode of study of the holder of the submitted document with the mode of study provided for this level (cycle) of education and (or) the relevant educational program in the Republic of Belarus;

compliance of the content of the educational program studied by the holder of the educational certificate with the requirements of the relevant educational standard(s) of the Republic of Belarus and (or) the relevant training curriculum documentation in part of professional competences and graduate qualification description as well as in part of minimum content of curriculum in cycles of disciplines (except for the level of general secondary education).

Under the results of the expertise the reasoned expert summary is filled out about possibility or impossibility to recognize the foreign educational certificate. The conclusion about possibility of recognition can have a form of: a) recommendation about full recognition of a foreign educational certificate as comparable to educational certificate of the Republic of Belarus; b) recommendation about partial recognition. The recommendation about partial recognition of a foreign educational certificate is delivered in the following cases:

- incompliance of the educational program studied by the holder of the foreign educational certificate with the requirements of the relevant educational standard of the Republic of Belarus in part of professional competences and graduate qualification description as well as in part of minimum content of curriculum in cycles of disciplines;

- significant differences in the rights of holders of foreign educational certificates in the state of issue and the holders of the corresponding educational certificates in the Republic of Belarus.

In this case the applicant is provided with the right to continue education in educational institutions of the Republic of Belarus.

Conclusion about impossibility to recognize a foreign educational certificate is delivered in the following cases:

- submission by the applicant of false documents;
- lack of accreditation of the educational institution or program;
- incompliance of the field of training of the applicant with the Unified State Classifier of the Republic of Belarus “Specialities and Qualifications”.

The expert conclusion of the National Institute for Higher Education is sent to the Ministry of education of the Republic of Belarus and acts as a basis for taking decision about recognition or failure of recognition of a foreign educational certificate.

The average term of expertise of a foreign educational certificate is the following:

up to 30 days – without an inquiry sent to a foreign state;

2-4 months – with an inquiry sent to a foreign state.

The National Institute for Higher Education acting as Belarusian ENIC also provides information needed for assessment of Belarusian qualifications to foreign partners.

The civil legislation establishes the applicant’s right to appeal in court against actions and decisions of an official person responsible for the recognition procedure.

Within the framework of adapting the national higher school to the European Higher Education Area the procedures and practices of alternative and non-formal learning assessment are analyzed. It is also considered reasonable to make Belarusian ENIC more active in dissemination information about the educational system of the Republic of Belarus including preparation of specialized publications in English and support of the relevant web site [www.inter.eduBelarus.info](http://www.inter.eduBelarus.info), as well as to make active the participation of representatives of the Republic of Belarus in international sessions dedicated to the issues of educational certificates recognition and working out common attitudes and improving the criteria. Special attention is to be paid to development of assessment criteria of non-formal learning.

At present the Republic of Belarus has a number of agreements on mutual educational certificates recognition with the following states:

Russia (1996), Ukraine (1998), China (1998), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan (1998), Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan (2004), Poland (2005), Vietnam (2007), Turkmenistan (2010), Azerbaijan (2011). In regard to a number of states, the agreements on mutual educational certificates recognition are effective, where the party to was the USSR. In 2010 drafts of agreements on mutual recognition were developed with Lithuania, Georgia.

B. The Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) are important transparency instruments for improving recognition and Ministers have committed to implementing both; in the case of the Diploma Supplement to deliver it automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken language. Please describe the current state of implementation of these instruments in your country as well as your plans, priorities and timetable for further developments.

**B.** At present 100 % of graduates from higher education institutions of Belarus get a supplement to a diploma of higher education, which is an excerpt from the credit and examination record with indicated subjects and academic hours. In 2010 the Presidium of the Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions supported reasons for development and further use in the Republic of Belarus of the national supplement to higher education documents corresponding in its structure and content to the European Diploma Supplement. At present the layout of the National supplement to documents on higher education is developed in compliance with the European recommendations and is submitted to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus for its approval. It is expected that all graduates of the academic year 2011/2012 will get the National Supplement to higher education documents. The National supplement to higher education documents is designed in Belarusian, Russian and English. The self-certification of the National supplement to higher education documents is planned for 2012. The national credits system as an element of credit-module training was first introduced in the national system of education in 2003 and was fixed in the higher education standards of the second generation. The system has the transfer function. These credit units are the first trial to adapt the national educational standards to global requirements, and they do not fully meet the ECTS requirements. In 2011 the National Institute for Higher Education developed the new national credit units system adapted to the ECST requirements. It is based on the following provisions:  
One credit unit is equal to 34-36 academic hours with the time of one academic hour equal to 45 minutes and to 38-39 academic hours with the time of one academic hour equal to 40 minutes.  
The ultimate volume of a student's workload per week is 54 academic hours, i.e. 1.5 credit units.  
Calculation of discipline working intensity in credit units will be done by dividing its total working intensity in academic hours by 34-36 (38-39 respectively) with rounding to 0.5 according to the established rules.  
The working volume of a student reflected in a credit unit includes lectures, seminars, practical studies, control tests, summaries, course paper (project) in the subject, student's self-study, examinations, credits and other forms of assessment.  
Credit units for internship and other types of practice and the final state examination are added to the credit units, and they will be calculated on the basis of a number of weeks assigned to them: 1 week corresponds to 1.5 credit units.  
Credit units are acquired only after completion of studying the discipline and if the required examinations (credits) are passed successfully.  
The sum of credit units should be equal to 60 per 1 year of training.  
In 2012, a national credits system adapted to the requirements of ECTS will receive a legislative support, and the self-certification procedure will be carried out.

### III. OTHER KEY AREAS

In addition to its structural reforms, the EHEA seeks to develop a common understanding and joint policies and guidelines in a number of other key areas of higher education policy. This part of the questionnaire seeks to assess the state of the implementation as well as the level of commitment of your country in two areas of key importance to making higher education in Europe both more attractive and more accessible to all.

#### 1. Academic mobility

A. Please provide a description of the place of academic mobility, defined as the mobility of higher education staff and students, in your national higher education policy. Your description should comprise the current situation as well as your plans, priorities and timetable for further development. In particular, the description should outline your country's plans regarding the objective adopted by EHEA Ministers in 2009 of attaining 20 per cent mobile graduates in the EHEA by 2020.

B. It is suggested that the description include reference to financial incentives, such as scholarships, grants and loans offered to staff and students wishing to go abroad for a period and incentives (financial or otherwise) offered to foreign staff and students wishing to spend a period in the country, as well as to whether loans and scholarships are portable.

C. It is further suggested that the description refers to any specific impediments to mobility that you may have identified for your country as well as to how your country plans to overcome them.

Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus (No. 243-3 dated January 13, 2011) established the definition of academic mobility for the first time in the Belarusian legislation:

“1. Academic mobility is exchange of trainees, teaching staff members of the Republic of Belarus and a foreign state with a purpose of training, qualification upgrading, improving teaching activities.

2. Academic mobility shall be achieved by means of implementation of international programs, treaties of the Republic of Belarus, agreements signed between an educational institution of the Republic of Belarus (any other organization from the system of education of the Republic of Belarus) and an organization from a foreign state (an international organization, a foreign national, a person without nationality).

3. Exchange shall be carried out, as a rule, on a parity base and shall be temporary. Trainees, teaching staff members shall come back to the state of their permanent residence after completion of training, qualification upgrading, improving teaching activities. Duration and any other terms of an exchange shall be established in the agreement.”

The academic mobility of academic staff is officially organized only within the inter-institutional agreements. Privately, academic staff participates in academic mobility, organized by foreign states, international funds and programs.

An opportunity of the nationals of the Republic of Belarus to get education in foreign educational institutions is implemented in two main trends: training with obtaining final qualification and training for a definite period of time.

Education with obtaining final qualification is available for a small number of students sent to a foreign state according to intergovernmental agreement in the field of education. Training is conducted in the fields, which are absent in the national system of higher education. In the 2010/2011 academic year 119 students were sent abroad (Russia, China, Germany, Lithuania).

Training for a definite period of time is carried out on the basis of mutual higher education institution agreements, personal initiative of students as well as within the framework of implementation of exchange programs. At present there are over 2 thousand agreements between higher education institutions on mutual exchange of trainees (for example: <http://edubelarus.info/index.php?do=dublcontr>).

Annually more than 1 500 students from Belarus go abroad within the framework of academic mobility to foreign universities for training (up to one year), for practice, for internship, etc.

Primary states for visiting are the following (in descending order): Germany, Russia, the UK, Poland, Ukraine, France, Sweden, China, Italy and the Netherlands.

Development of academic mobility is in focus of the CIS Network University (Belarus is represented by Belarusian State University) as well as development of “double diplomas” in the national higher education institutions. Programs of “double diplomas” (no more than 10) are realized in some higher education institutions since 1994 with universities of France, Russia and Norway.

Academic mobility is mostly implemented within the framework of the international educational programs (TEMPUS, DAAD, COPERNICUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS, LINGUA, etc.), supported by the governments of various states as well as on the basis of interstate treaties and agreements between higher education institutions. Funding of these programs is implemented from various sources mostly in the way of scholarships issued by universities, foundations, companies and governments of states.

The State Program of Higher Education Development for 2011-2015 is aimed at development of academic mobility and provides a number of measures, including grants for the most talented Master students of the Republic of Belarus giving the possibility to get training abroad. The precise number of Master students, planned to be sent to study abroad using state grants is not fixed at the moment, and will depend on adequate funding.

The National Program of export Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2011-2015 provides a number of actions as to attract foreign students to the Republic of Belarus – to increase incoming mobility. This will be facilitated by the fact that the Republic of Belarus in a number of agreements on cooperation in the field of education is committed to scholarships and social welfare of foreign students. Also, to increase the attractiveness of higher education in Belarus, the educational process is organized by a number of specialties in English.

Among the obstacles to increase academic mobility are:

- insufficient number of specialties taught in English;
- lack of national body responsible for the development of academic mobility;
- lack of information about the educational services provided by higher education institution of the Republic of Belarus for foreign students;
- lack of student accommodation for international students.

To solve partly these problems the State Program of Higher Education Development for 2011-2015 provides funding for the construction of new dormitories, allocation of finance for Master students to get education abroad, creation a center for international cooperation in education, etc.

## **2. The Social Dimension of Higher Education**

Work to strengthen the social dimension of higher education aims at realizing the aspiration expressed by the EHEA Ministers at their 2007 meeting that "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations". Please describe the social support mechanisms for students in your country.

Please provide a description of the main achievements in strengthening the social dimension of higher education in your country as well as of the main challenges in strengthening it further, including your priorities, plans and timetable in this respect.

It is suggested the description comprises an outline of the social composition of the student body in your country, including an overview of possible under-represented groups and whether your country has any national targets for access and completion in higher education of students from under-represented groups. In this context, it may be relevant to describe whether there are systematic differences between study programs and/or institutions (e.g. in terms of the profile of study programs or the geographical location of the institutions within the country) and whether there are national or institutional strategies in place for making the student body reflect the diversity of your national population. A description of current data collection in this area as well as plans and timetable for further improving such data collection would also be welcomed.

In the Republic of Belarus, access to higher education is regulated by law. The Constitution guarantees equal access to higher education on a competitive basis. Presidential Edict approving the unified rules of admission to higher education institutions of Belarus, establishes equal access to higher education also for some foreign nationals. Citizens of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have the right to enter and study in Belarusian higher education institutions from the funds the Republic of Belarus.

Conditions for admission citizens of the Republic of Belarus to higher education institutions do not contain any discriminatory provisions. All citizens, regardless of gender, social status and region of residence are in the same conditions of admission and training at higher education institutions. For certain applicants (children with disabilities, orphans, winners of competitions, etc.) there is a system of privileges and benefits when entering higher education institutions.

There is a mechanism that allows applicants from rural areas to enroll in higher education institutions participating in a separate competition held only among this group of applicants. Today this mechanism is almost not used, since the level of knowledge of rural students has increased, which is confirmed by a comparable number of points earned by rural and urban school graduates. Due to the fact that the educational process in higher education institutions is carried out in accordance with educational standards higher education institutions in Minsk and other regions of the Republic of Belarus provide comparable quality of education services.

The student contingent is represented by different groups as follows:

62,7% of students– women, 14% of students come from rural areas, 10,5 thousand – foreign students, 1,8 thousand – orphans.

There is a system of preferential loans to receive higher education for low-income people. These students pay not more than 65% of the tuition fees, the rest is compensated by the state.

Every year after the organization of the enrollment procedures the appropriate statistics is collected and the results are discussed at the Board of the Ministry of Education in order to improve the admission mechanisms for the next year. Information on the enrolment of students is posted each year on the web site of the Ministry of Education (The Main Information and Analytical Center of the Ministry of Education).

In 2012, adjustments in admission regulations will be made: it is planned to reduce the number of categories of applicants with privileges and benefits for admission to higher education institutions.

The state system of scholarships includes name, study, social, special scholarships and personal scholarships of the council of a higher education institution. Certain categories of students with low performance, including students who study on a fee basis receive social scholarships (orphans, disabled, students with children, students from areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster, and etc.).

Non-resident students are provided with accommodation in higher education institutions dormitories.

There is a system of state compensation of accommodation costs for those students who rent housing.

All students have right to use the library, sports facilities of the higher education institution free of charge.

#### IV. VALUES AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The European Higher Education Area is characterized by major areas of policy reform and by being based on a number of fundamental values of European societies and their academic tradition. In addition to the policy areas covered in sections II and III above, this section of the questionnaire addresses three further values underlying the EHEA.

##### 1. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy

Please describe the fundamental values underlying your higher education system and provision. It is suggested that the description includes an outline of the legal provisions concerning academic freedom and institutional autonomy as well as a description of how these fundamental values are ensured in practice. It is further suggested that reference be made to provisions of the Magna Charta Universitatum in this respect.

Values underlying the national system of higher education:

- equal opportunities, accessibility of higher education. Provided by corresponding legislation regulations in terms of establishing equal requirements and conditions for receiving higher education, social support for citizen with low opportunities, special conditions for receiving higher education by disables people. At the same time the State supports the development of the fee-based private sector of higher education.
- possibility to receive higher education at state funded higher education institutions free of charge. The State allocates over 6% of GDP for the development of the national educational system and creates conditions for commercial activities where profits are left for educational institution. Every year the Ministry of education of the Republic of Belarus provides admission quotas for state financed specialties for each higher education institution. In the academic year 2010/2011 in the state owned higher education institutions 149600 students (40 %) studies were financed by republican budget.
- state support and priority-driven development of education and science according to social and economic goals of state development, permanent improvement of higher education system and science. Specialties are modified in order to provide specialists for the State economy. Continuous educational process is ensured by successive levels of scientific oriented education.
- combined state and public management of education, ensuring the participation of government agencies and other organizations, including public associations, in the development of higher education system. While preserving the fundamental role of the Ministry of Education in education management, a number of powers have been delegated to other organizations, including public ones: the Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions, the regional councils of rectors of higher education institutions, institutions providing functional support of higher education system, training and methodological associations in the field of higher education, leading higher education institutions. These powers are: development of recommendations on higher education issues, consulting on nominees for the rectors of higher education institutions positions, preparation and organization of admission to higher education institutions procedures, expertise of foreign educational qualifications, scientific and methodological support of higher education development, designing and upgrading higher education programs, approving of draft educational publications, expertise for opening new specialties;
- humanization, personalization and differentiation of higher education, its independence on ideological and political influence that hampers acquiring objective scientific knowledge. Provided by compulsory study of social and human sciences in the first years (18-20% from the whole period of study), orientation of education to the meeting the needs of citizens and society in the development of personality, secular nature of education, activities performed by higher education institutions in the formation of moral values, healthy lifestyles, citizenship, patriotism, responsibility, hard work. Establishment and activities of political parties, other public associations pursuing political objectives as well as establishment and anonymous or any other activity of religious organizations contradicting to the legislation are not permitted in educational institutions.
- integration into world education space while preserving and developing traditions of national educational system. The Republic of Belarus actively and consecutively participates in formation of

educational space within a frameworks of CIS, Eurasian economic community, Union State of Belarus and Russia. The national educational system supports and implements all UN initiatives in the field of education which is shown in the report of the Republic of Belarus regarding internationally coordinated goals and obligations in the field of education (07.07.2011).

The absence of status of participant of the European higher education area doesn't allow the national system of higher education to synchronize in full measure the processes of higher education modernization with similar processes within European higher education area.

- enlargement of legal rights of higher educational institutions. This is provided by authorizing the educational institutions to independently define the variant part of educational standard (20% at present, it is planned to increase up to 50% in 2012, and up to 70% for Master programs), joining international organizations (consortiums), selection of teaching stuff, forming of innovative structural divisions, etc.

In accordance with Great university Charter provisions:

- the universities are distributed over all regions of the Republic of Belarus and play the role of centers of science and methodological activity within given region. As a rule the research activity of the universities is aimed at supporting needs (economic, scientific, social, and cultural) of regions and the Republic of Belarus as a whole. To achieve maximum results the higher educational institutions in border regions actively cooperate with the foreign partners, join corresponding intergovernmental regional associations (the program "Baltic university", The Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN), Central European Initiative University Network (CEI UniNet), Interuniversity Centre for Research and Cooperation with Eastern and South Eastern Europe (CIRCEOS)). Due to the fact that for most of higher education institutions 50% of their budget is formed by financial resources earned by higher education institution itself, it is possible to say about their relative independence. At the same time the practice of appointment of heads of higher education institutions is preserved, which in given conditions as a whole corresponds to needs of the state internal policy;

- teachers and students research work at higher education institutions of Belarus is not separated from education. Students are required to write and defend a number of scientific and research works on the completion of each course (course projects, course work) and to complete study at the relevant stage of higher education by defending a diploma project, Master's thesis. At each higher education institution the research work of students under the guidance of professors and academicians of the National Academy of Sciences is organized. In 2010 there were 98 student research laboratories, design-engineering and project offices, more than 1,000 scientific groups at higher education institutions.

The higher education program establishes requirements for the content of academic disciplines that make up an essential component for learning. For a specific discipline, these requirements are presented as model curricula. These curricula are created by distinguished academics, specialists in the field, reviewed by representatives of higher education institutions and approved by the Ministry of Education. The validity period of model curricula - up to 5 years, but their review can be initiated by lecturers themselves at any time. The developed model curricula are recommended for use in all higher education institutions, where the study of relevant disciplines is carried out.

- In order to ensure freedom of research, higher education institutions within their financial capacities facilitate logistical support of the specific research areas. To enhance applied research activities in higher education institutions, the State Program of Higher Education Development for 2011-2015 provides funding for renovation of teaching and laboratory facilities of each higher education institution. Most higher education institutions provide free access to Internet resources and international scientific literature electronic databases for academics and students.

- Recruitment of teaching staff is carried out in accordance with legislation by organizing and conducting a competition for the occupation the position. Among the requirements for the candidate there is a requirement to organize and carry out research work. Academic staff representatives with scientific degree provide annual reports on the research work that allow them to apply for additional financial incentives.

-Higher education institutions provide training and education in accordance with the requirements for educational programs. Each student before starting study confirms compliance with Internal regulations and rules of the educational institution that include rights and responsibilities of teachers, educational institutions and students. Higher education institution guarantees the freedoms of students, prescribed by the Constitution as well as the freedoms specified in the Internal regulations and rules of the particular educational institution. Higher education institution also arranges free cultural, recreational and sports activities for students to achieve their educational and cultural purposes.

-Mutual exchange of information, research projects is carried out through participation in the international student and university organizations, as well as in international research projects, programs. Higher education institutions of the Republic of Belarus are presented in the Eurasian Association of Universities (EUA), the University Network of the Central European Initiative (CEI UniNet), the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE), the European University Association (EUA), etc. In 2010, higher education institutions performed 735 fundamental and applied researches, with 8 projects on creation and development of innovation infrastructure. Higher education institutions support partnerships in the field of scientific and technological cooperation with scientific and educational organizations in 58 countries (about 700 contracts), contribute to more than 130 international projects (7th Framework Programme, Tempus, etc.).

-Promoting academic mobility is carried out within the framework of interuniversity agreements, which number exceeds two thousand, as well as via academic exchange programs (Erasmus Mundus, DAAD programs etc.), “double diploma” programs.

## **2. Public responsibility for higher education**

EHEA Ministers have twice - in 2001 and 2003 - stated that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. Please describe how the public responsibility for higher education is organized and put in practice in your national higher education system. It is suggested that the description comprises a consideration of the role and responsibilities of various actors as well as a consideration of the main challenges in this area and your plans, priorities and timetable for meeting these challenges.

Public responsibility for higher education is realized mainly by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of education:

- establishes the structure of higher educational degrees and related requirements in educational standards of higher education;
- defines the structure and content of specialties and qualifications by creating and maintaining of the Unified State Classifier of the Republic of Belarus “Specialties and Qualifications”;
- decides on opening (changing/cancelling) specialties upon request of higher education institution;
- responsible for organization of admission procedures and ensuring equal access to higher education;
- decides on licensing educational activity, accrediting higher education institutions, establishes criteria for the quality assessment;
- determines the amount of funding and logistical support of state-owned higher education institutions;
- sets limits on the size of tuition fees;
- implements state personnel policies in higher education;
- provides organization of fundamental and applied research, facilitates implementation of the results in economy, innovation development.

The Ministry of finance:

- determines the amount of annual funding for education (in 2011 - 6.1% of GDP).

The Government:

- defines guarantees and compensations for students;
- responsible for the implementation of targeted training of students for the sectors of economy and social sphere with sustained lack of specialists.

Other government agencies:

- develop a forecast of future needs of specialists;
- ensure the provision of the first workplace.

The main challenges for higher education of the Republic of Belarus are the following:

- teaching and logistical equipment of higher education institutions do not fully meet the current requirements of research and training (especially in technical and natural sciences);
- lack of balance between current number of graduates, structure of specialties and qualifications and the demands of the national economy and social sphere;
- insufficient funding for education and research activities;
- incomplete compensation costs of training fee-paying students.

The State Program of Higher Education Development for 2011-2015 was approved by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and is aimed at solving these problems.

### **3. Cooperation among stakeholders and student participation**

Within the EHEA, higher education policies are developed in partnership between public authorities, the higher education community and other stakeholders. Please provide a description of who you see as the main stakeholders in higher education in your country, how these stakeholders are involved in developing higher education at present and what you see as the main challenges in this area, including your plans, priorities and timetable for addressing the challenges. In view of the fundamental role of student participation, the description should be explicit on the role of students in higher education governance at both institutional and system level, including whether student representatives are elected by the student body and whether there is an independent, democratic and representative national student union open to all students

Functioning and development of the national higher education system is carried out in close partnership of government agencies, responsible for education, academic community, employers and society at large. The main stakeholders in higher education are teaching staff, employers and students. The teaching staff is involved in the development of higher education through participation in training and methodological associations in the field of higher education, which carry out the improvement of educational content, make recommendations regarding opening of new specialties, enhancing quality of education.

At the institutional level the teaching staff participates in the self-government activities carried out by the Council of higher education institution. The Council of higher education institution: decides on prospects of development of higher education institution, on formation of students, on educational process organization, on development of science and collaboration with partner organizations, etc. Members of the Council are elected by the academic staff of the institution. Decisions of the Council are mandatory for all employees and students of the institution. A number of management functions is realized by teaching staff through participation in industry trade unions: the regulation of social and labour relations, establishing guidelines for calculating teaching workload, etc.

Employers are involved in the development of higher education through participation in designing higher education standards, work of Councils of higher education institutions, activities under the agreements on cooperation, ordering specialists in specific fields training. Organization under agreement on cooperation with educational institutions ("basic organization") organizes practical training for students, supports development of logistical equipment of higher education institution.

Students participate in the management of higher education mainly at institutional level.

The system of student government in higher education involves student groups, departments, dormitories. The main activities of the student government are: representation of students' interests in relationships with higher education institution administration, Directorate of the campus, deans of faculties, social protection of students, carrying out recreational programs and activities, development of international relations in the field of teaching, research and leisure of students. Forms of student government usually are: student councils of higher education institution, faculty, dormitory, active academic groups. The supreme body of student's government is the Student's Coordinating Council. In

some higher education institutions, the student's self-government includes the following Students' Associations: Student Research Bureau at the Belarusian State Economic University, women's council, voluntary student squad in the Grodno State University named after Yanka Kupala, the Guild of Students at the International State Ecological University named after Andrei Sakharov. In 2010, there were 374 student government bodies at higher education institutions of Belarus with 21 764 student members.

According to the legislation students should be represented in councils of higher education institution (councils of faculties) by at least 25% of the number of council members. Student representatives are elected by open or secret voting in study groups, student associations in accordance with the Charter of the institution. As Council members, students have equal rights with teaching staff to manage higher education institution, speaking about problematic issues, taking part in decision making.

At some universities there are student councils for education quality (for example, at Belarusian State University), whose purposes are promoting the quality of education, improving the culture of relations between stakeholders, adherence to academic freedoms and responsibilities.

Higher education institutions departments of educational work with young people coordinate the work of the student's government. Teaching staff and students group supervisors assist in solving problems of student government.

An official body representing student's interests is the National Student Council of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union. Its mission is to activate the role of students in the development of higher education, to enhance the quality of education. The National Student Council consists of representatives from the student councils of each higher education institution.

Student's government at Belarusian higher education institutions is on the stage of active development associated with finding the most appropriate forms corresponding to the needs of development of Belarusian society and the needs of students. Lack of students participation in decision-making process in higher education is compensated by the introduction of quality management systems that allow students as consumers of education services to have an impact on quality.

In general, the participation of academics, employers and students in higher education governance can be enhanced and intensified by a qualitative change of existing training and methodological associations in the field of higher education, the formation of public associations in higher education (in accordance with the law), participation in the evaluation of the quality of educational programs.