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International Seminar

on

Higher Education in Ukraine and the Bologna Process

13-14 May 2004, Kyiv, Ukraine

organized by

the National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES)

in partnership with

European University Association (EUA)
the Council of Europe

and in collaboration with

the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

RECOMMENDATIONS

National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”



1. Background

In response to the request of the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, the National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” organized jointly with the UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) and in partnership with the European University Association and the Council of Europe, an *International Seminar on Higher Education in Ukraine and the Bologna Process* (13-14 May 2004, Kyiv, Ukraine), in order to assess the development of Ukrainian higher education and to address the issues relating to its accession to the Bologna Process.

In addition to participants from Ukraine, the meeting was attended by representatives of European universities and of international governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with higher education in Europe, as well as representatives from ESIB (The National Unions of Students in Europe). (See Annex 1 – List of participants).

The seminar explored the following four themes:

- (i.) the current state of higher education in Ukraine and the objectives of the Bologna Process;
- (ii.) existing quality assurance provisions and mechanisms in Ukrainian higher education and the respective requirements set by the Bologna Process;
- (iii.) public good and social responsibility in higher education;
- (iv.) the European dimension agenda of higher education in transition countries [with special reference to Ukraine].

The Bologna Process, launched by the Ministers responsible for higher education in 29 countries in 1999, aims for the development of a European Higher Education Area by 2010. Since the signing of the Bologna Declaration, the number of signatory countries and the objectives of the Bologna Process have increased. The Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher education, held in Berlin on 19 September 2003, states that “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”. In view of this opening of the Bologna Process, Ukrainian academics and students, policy makers and university leaders expressed their commitment to the implementation of the objectives and principles of the Bologna Process and their readiness to apply for joining the Bologna Process, as the Kyiv international seminar demonstrated.

The main document of the International Seminar was the report “*The Ukraine Higher Education System from the Perspective of the Bologna Process Objectives*” (see Annex 2) prepared by a team coordinated by Professor Michailo Zgurovsky of The National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”, in collaboration with other Ukrainian academics, policy makers and university managers.

The participants appreciate the quality of the report which greatly contributed to the overall success of the meeting. The report presented the current position of the higher education system in Ukraine, the progress made so far towards the Bologna Process objectives and the work that remained to be done, in view of Ukraine's intention to join the Bologna Process.

2. Achievements in the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine

The debates in the meeting highlighted the fact that higher education in Ukraine has a long history of renowned research and of producing specialists in various fields. Ukraine wishes to commit to the European dimension of higher education by adopting measures from the Bologna Declaration, as well as from the Prague and Berlin Communiqués. At the same time, certain issues relating to the Bologna Process objectives remain to be addressed. The achievements of Ukrainian higher education to date include the following developments and measures:

2.1. Legislative provisions for University autonomy have been put in place and the practical implementation of this essential element is now an urgent task.

2.2. Since 1996 a two-tier system of academic qualifications has been introduced in the Ukrainian higher education system. Adjustment to the European academic qualifications framework of Bachelors and Masters degrees has begun.

2.3. The implementation, in more than 60 universities and higher education institutions, of an ECTS-type system of credits has been piloted, and further expansion is foreseen.

2.4. Progress has been made with regard to recognition issues, including the introduction of the Diploma Supplement and the establishment of the Ukrainian ENIC.

2.5. Substantial expansion of the higher education system and diversification of its structure has taken place both in public and private higher education institutions. As a result, the number of students in higher education has also increased from approximately 1.7 million in 1991 to 2.3 million in 2003.

2.6. Cooperation with other European universities has increased, together with more collaboration with international organisations. National research and education networks and joint programs with European institutions have been established.

2.7. Quality of higher education provision has improved with the introduction of a new system of assessing student outcomes. Similarly, a system of accreditation for coping with the diversification of institutions and specific principles for the recruitment of university teaching staff, have been initiated.

2.8. Lifelong learning is also being addressed by improvements in ICTs and distance learning programs together with more and more higher education institutions offering post-diploma courses and re-training programs.

3. Recommendations for the Further Development of Higher Education in Ukraine

While observing such achievements and considering the objectives of the Bologna Process, the progress made by the higher education system on the provisions of these documents and Ukraine's expressed desire to join the Bologna Process, the participants acknowledged the work done to date and recommended focusing on the following specific issues in the future:

3.1. Systemic issues. Further legislative reform is needed to meet the Bologna Process objectives. As a starting point, academic freedom and university autonomy need to be strengthened.

While acknowledging institutional diversification in the Ukrainian higher education system, it is equally important to consider present and future institutional performance, as well as their historical achievements.

It is imperative that national funding for higher education be based on criteria of performance based outcomes (e.g., learning outcomes, research results etc.).

Such issues should also be related to the promotion of new governance and management structures and practices, based on the active participation of academics and students and stipulated in appropriate legal frameworks.

3.2. Quality assurance and accreditation. There is a need for a shift in emphasis from inputs to outputs, by concentrating on learning outcomes and research results.

Institutional quality management should be developed with the involvement of both teachers and students and by the promotion of a quality culture and by the building of information systems that provide evidence of quality achievement.

The system of accreditation should be reviewed, mainly in terms of the so-called "levels of accreditation", making it more compatible with current international practices.

Collaboration between the Ukraine National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency and the European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA) should be an important objective.

3.3. Lifelong learning. Cooperation with industry and the development of lifelong learning strategies should be promoted in such a way as to enhance a spirit of entrepreneurship at institutional and student levels.

Universities and other higher education institutions must be involved in the development of the national and local economy, promoting values of democracy and citizenship, thus contributing to the development of the civil society in Ukraine.

To meet these goals the introduction of information technologies in Ukrainian higher education institutions needs to be expanded, and efforts concentrating on the development of internet technology, provision of guidance, software and hardware for distance learning. One example of this would be to promote the establishment of the CEEVU with the purpose of working on the main objectives and principles of the Bologna Process through cooperation between universities and education systems of Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

3.4. A system of credits. Higher education institutions are encouraged to introduce more widely the ECTS for credit transfer and accumulation.

3.5. Academic mobility. The Ministry of Education and Science and higher education institutions should continue their support for the European dimension of academic collaboration by providing support for cooperation between institutions, mobility of students, joint teaching programs and practical training.

At the same time, and in order to fully benefit from international academic co-operation, universities and higher education institutions in Ukraine should strengthen foreign language training; align academic qualifications and specialisations with those in the European area; improve employability; further promote programs of student and teacher staff exchange with national and foreign universities and expand access to the system of mobility grants.

In the future it will be important to support further mobility of staff and students, while at the same time providing incentives for their return home, for example through the improvement of working conditions for young researchers.

The commitment of all parties is needed to remove existing barriers to mobility.

3.6. Readable and comparable degrees. There are still difficulties with the recognition of qualifications and periods of study in line with the objectives of the Bologna Process. Full use of the Diploma Supplement should be promoted and further collaboration should be assured in the development of a new national qualifications framework and in the application of the provisions of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, known as *The Lisbon Recognition Convention*. This also implies the recognition by Ukrainian authorities of study programs and degrees from other countries.

3.7. Two-tier system. Further changes in the implemented two-tier system of academic qualifications need to be made, particularly transforming the Specialist degree and specifying the Bachelor degree qualification according to the labour market requirements. The number of existing dimensions and specialities related to higher education study programs needs to be reduced, taking into account the needs of different partners and stakeholders.

4. Looking forward

4.1. The seminar provided opportunities for a lively debate and exchange of views on the Ukrainian system of higher education. The changes already initiated very clearly demonstrate Ukraine's commitment to joining the Bologna Process, and to implementing its provisions. Participants strongly believe that Ministers meeting in Bergen in May 2005 will take this into consideration and believe that Ukraine will become a full member of the Bologna Process.

5. Final remarks

Participants expressed their thanks to all organizers of the meeting - the National Technological University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"; UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES); EUA - European University Association, the Council of Europe, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.