

**bologna process****NATIONAL REPORTS 2004 – 2005**

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**1. Main achievements since Berlin*****1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms***

The Ministerial Conference held in Berlin, 18 – 19 September 2003, where Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process, i.e. signed the Bologna Declaration, gave a strong incentive to activities of higher education reform on the state level. Immediately after the Berlin Conference, the Ministry of Civil Affairs initiated and led the process of drafting of the Framework Law on Higher Education. The Draft was completed on 18 December 2003 and introduced into parliamentary procedure.

The main principles of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina are contained in international documents recognised and signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina – the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Academic Degrees in the European Region, the Bologna Charter on Universities, the Magna Carta Universitatum from 1988, the Joint Declaration on Harmonisation and the Establishment of a European Higher Education System (Paris, Sorbonne, 1998), the Joint Declaration of European Ministers of Education (Bologna Declaration, 1999), the Convention of Higher Education Institutions (Salamanca, 2001).

It could be said that the Framework Law, drafted with the assistance of the Council of Europe, OSCE, EC, and other international organisations, incorporates the main principles of higher education which have been or are being established in the European higher education area. Starting from the universal principles of non-discrimination and the right to education, the Law regulates the principles of university autonomy, university integration, student and academic staff mobility, the formation of a national information point, etc.

After intense discussions, the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina decided to support the Law and passed it on to the House of Peoples. Unfortunately, at the House of Peoples, the representatives of Croat caucus put forth an argument of a breach of vital national interests and the Law was sent to the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was competent to determine the future procedure of adoption of the Framework Law on Higher Education. In its decision, the Constitutional Court ruled that the issue of education is a matter of vital national interest of all the three peoples and that future procedure of adoption requires a majority of votes in each caucus in

the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly. After that, the Law failed to win the necessary majority at the House of Peoples (representatives of the Croat caucus voted against). This report gives examples of individual provisions pursuant to the Bologna Process, as contained in the text submitted for parliamentary procedure. It is important to note that the question of vital national interests was raised in relation to the use of language of the constituent peoples, approval of university statutes, a requirement to decide by consensus, etc. Therefore, there were no issues raised in relation to the Bologna Process.

## **2. National organisation**

**2.1. Give a short description of the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their competencies**  
(For example, do higher education institutions report to different ministries?)

According to the current laws and regulations, higher education institutions are financed by the ministries of the entity (in Republika Srpska) or the cantons (in the Federation BiH). All higher education activities are subject to entity (in RS)/cantonal (in FBiH) laws on higher education. The role of the state-level Ministry of Civil Affairs is to coordinate these activities between the two entities.

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

Bosnia and Herzegovina has 8 public universities with a total of approximately 100,000 students. In the past three years, there has been an on-going process of establishing private universities. At the moment, the percentage of students enrolled at private universities is negligible. Private and public higher education institutions are subject to identical laws and regulations.

**2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country**  
(National Bologna group, thematic working groups, composition and activities, stakeholder involvement)

There is a Working Group for Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, comprising representatives from all of the universities, representatives of the state and the two entity ministries competent for higher education, representatives of student organisations and other NGOs concerned with higher education, as well as representatives of international organisations –OSCE, OHR, EC, etc. In addition to that, the Higher Education Committee (which is actually the future Rectors' Conference in Bosnia and Herzegovina) there is a special group which follows the implementation of the Bologna Process.

## **3. Quality assurance**

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

**3.1. National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities**

***of the bodies and institutions involved.***

***Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.***

Articles 46-49 of the Framework Law on Higher Education provide for the formation of CIRQA<sup>1</sup>, a state institution responsible for quality assurance conditions and criteria. CIRQA "ratifies unique norms for the licensing of higher education institutions and establishes clear, transparent and accessible criteria for accreditation procedures, accreditation reviews, quality reviews and quality assessment of higher education institutions."

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

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

The Framework Law on Higher Education (still in draft form) states that accreditation and licensing of higher education institutions is governed by the authorised entity bodies (the entity accreditation agencies). The complete process of quality assurance on the state/entity level is described in Articles 49 – 54 of the Framework Law. Special importance is ascribed to the process and procedures of quality assurance within higher education institutions themselves which, according to this Law, are "primarily responsible for the quality of their courses and curricula" (Art. 51). Further drafting of the Law is taking into consideration the possibility of providing for the introduction of accreditation and licensing at state level.

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

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

CIRQA also appoints expert committees including foreign experts for the implementation of accreditation procedures, quality reviews and quality assessment at higher education institutions. The act of accreditation is decided upon by entity agencies on the basis of conditions and recommendations of CIRQA (Art. 49-51 of the Framework Law). The Framework Law on Higher Education does not specify the composition of the steering boards of quality assurance agencies. It only states that "as part of the international assistance to higher education, a foreign national (in a term of office no longer than two years and excluding nationals of former Yugoslav republics) can be appointed Director of CIRQA" (Art. 47. of the Framework Law).

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

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<sup>1</sup> CIRQA is the Centre for Information, Recognition and Quality Assurance and is, in fact the ENIC/NARIC for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its work and activities are described in Articles 43-48 of the Framework Law on Higher Education.

#### 4. The two-cycle degree system

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

The two-cycle system has not yet been introduced at universities in BiH. There are some attempts, still at the experimental stage. The present undergraduate/postgraduate system exists only at some departments and is considerably different from what the Bologna reforms envisage (See the Stocktaking Report).

#### 5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

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

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is provided for by the draft Framework Law on Higher Education. It is done pursuant to instructions by CIRQA.

#### 6. Doctoral studies and research

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

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

The third cycle (doctoral studies) is still not organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with Bologna principles. The old system of doctoral dissertations/theses is still in force. This old system entails independent research activities conducted for the exclusive purpose of the doctoral thesis. There is no organised doctoral studies programme. It is a general view that doctoral students, during their master's studies and the preparation of their master's thesis (which is the precondition for access to a doctorate dissertation), have gained a sufficient amount of experience to be prepared for completely independent research work at a high level. All that is expected of them is independent scientific research work which will result in an individual contribution to scientific results in a given discipline.

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

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

After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992 – 95) during which most of the research infrastructure was destroyed (or became obsolete), scientific research activities have been significantly reduced and universities have become the main places where research is still conducted. Namely, during the war or right after it, the research and development centres of large companies either stopped operating or were transformed into service centres. Recently, in the past one or two years, there has been a gradual revival of the economy and consequently a return of researchers from the domain of commerce and industry onto the research scene. However, their percentage share in the total activities in science in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still significantly lesser than that of the university research sector.

#### 7. Mobility of students and staff

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

Since Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet implemented the main elements of the Bologna Process, i.e. it has not harmonised its study programmes with those at other European universities (these activities are under way), has not implemented the ECTS, has not completed the formation of CIRQA (which is the ENIC/NARIC for Bosnia and Herzegovina, necessary for the activities of diploma recognition), the mobility of students in both directions is not adequately organised and is generally negligible. In addition to the discord between the Bosnian-Herzegovinian higher education system and the Bologna guidelines and the discord of mobility procedures, other obstacle to more intensive student mobility is the absolute absence of any financial support from the state for effecting mobility. And of course, the third large problem in this sense are visa regulations, i.e. complicated and extensive procedures for acquiring visas.

The mobility of our students is therefore mostly one-way and irreversible – it leads to what is called "brain-drain". Namely, significant numbers of Bosnian-Herzegovinian students leave to study abroad, in other European countries (especially Austria) and a significant percentage of them do not return to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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

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

There is no system of teacher mobility - very limited of mobility does exist, but mainly as a result of individual efforts on the part of teachers to secure grants through international projects. Our teachers visit foreign universities, but mainly as guest researchers -- very rarely as guest lecturers. In most European countries, they cannot survive from their domestic pay checks, not are they able to "transfer their health insurance to foreign countries". The visa regulations of most European countries for our country is another significant obstacle also in the case of teacher mobility.

Participation of BiH in the TEMPUS programme also initiated teacher mobility. Most of the teacher mobility was related to training on content, structure and methodology of teaching in certain areas. In addition to this, several TEMPUS projects resulted in joint degree programmes, which lead to exchanges of teachers to and from BiH. These joint degrees have been developed at the level of master's studies and are recognised by BiH and EU participating institutions. Joint degrees are completed by a single diploma on behalf of all the participating institutions.

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

## **8. Higher education institutions and students**

***8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions***

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

According to the current laws on higher education (the entity law in RS/the cantonal laws in FBiH), higher education institutions only have academic autonomy, i.e. the right to select

their staff according to the regulation of the university and the laws on higher education. They are not financially autonomous and thus cannot decide independently about new staff or new study programmes.

In Articles 13-20, the draft of the new Framework Law on Higher Education provides for a significant extension of university autonomy and university integration (most universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are merely loose associations of faculties which have legal personality).

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

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

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

Students have the possibility of influencing the organisation and the content of education at universities and other higher education institutions. This influence is, however, the same as that of any civic association. Their participation in governing bodies is not defined by any state-level legislation, but rather by the rules of the respective university or faculty.

The real influence of students at different higher education institutions varies, and is directly related to the strength of the students' organisation at the institution (university, faculty)

Students are not institutionally involved in the work of higher education institutions in BiH.

Their participation is mainly based on the 'good will of the governing bodies to meet the students' requests.

**9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process**

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

**10. Developments in lifelong learning**

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

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

**11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education**

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

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

**11.1.2. How have these programmes been organised? (joint admissions, mobility of**

*students, joint exams, etc.)*

*The Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies of the University of Sarajevo (CIPS) currently implements three Master of Arts Degree Programs in cooperation with several universities in the European Union.*

- 1. *European Regional Master in Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe (ERMADHR)*** has been established through joint efforts of several universities in Italy, Austria, and the region of *Southeast Europe*, implemented together with the *University of Bologna*, Italy. *ERMADHER* is an intensive one-year program taught in English, co-financed by the *European Commission*.
- 2. *European Studies (ES)*** is a two-year Master of Arts Program organized in cooperation with the *University of Bologna* and the *London School Economics and Political Science*. It focuses on several research areas related to the European integration process through the analysis of political, social, legal and economic structures in the countries of *the European Union*. *ES* brings together more than fifty world renowned scholar and experts in the fields of law, political science, economy, philosophy, and sociology, and utilizes the BiH academic and expert base to its fullest.
- 3. *Master Program in State Management and Humanitarian Affairs*** has been organized by the *University of Sarajevo*, BiH, *University of Belgrade*, (Serbia and Montenegro) FRY, and *University La Sapienza*, Italy. This two-year Master Program, in English language is designed to prepare students for professional engagement in politics and good management, strategic management in public private and non-profit organisations, crisis prevention and control, human rights and security. Teachers and experts in this programme are from BiH, Serbia and Montenegro and Italy. .

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

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

## **12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**

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

The Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the State Ministry responsible for higher education, has been actively been involved in the promotion of the European Higher Education Area in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Immediately after Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna process in September 2003, a handbook was prepared by SUS BiH (World University Centre in BiH) and SRCe (Students IT Centre). It includes a short introduction and history of the Bologna Process, all the major documents and declarations relevant for the EHEA, and a message from SUS BiH and each of the Rectors

regarding the process and the future of BiH within it. The handbook was promoted in April 2004 and was widely distributed throughout the country, not only to universities, faculties, and academic institutions, but also to the ministries and the state parliament.

Another important step in promoting the benefits of the EHEA recognized and supported by the Ministry of Civil Affairs is engagement in organizing a seminar in cooperation with World University Service Bosnia and Herzegovina (SUS BiH), World University Service Austria (WUS AUSTRIA), and Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, through the TEMPUS-SOCRATES competition. The project is called "Raising Awareness of the Bologna Process in Bosnia-Herzegovina." The main outputs and outcomes of the project are:

1. A seminar for higher education institutions, student organisations and other major stakeholders will be held during the project year. Persons who go through this training will be able to become future members of the National Team of Bologna Promoters, once it has been established.
2. A guide will be printed, with the involvement of students, university staff and other stakeholders in the Bologna Process, to be used in the entire academic community. This practical guide will be widely distributed and used by persons who have not been able to go through a training seminar.
3. The European dimension of the Bologna Process will also be promoted through web-pages of all the institutions, as well as through other printed materials.

### **13. Concluding comments**

#### ***13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies***

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

One of the main preconditions for higher education reform is the adoption of the higher education law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following its adoption, challenges will present themselves in this area, such as the establishment of ENIC institutions, the Financing Council, etc. Also, the implementation of reforms within universities themselves, introduction of ECTS, Diploma Supplements and all other elements of the Bologna Process are indeed a challenge for all the activities to come.