

**BOLOGNA PROCESS
NATIONAL REPORT: 2005-2007**

A. Background information on your Higher Education system

Details

Country	GEORGIA
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Main achievements since Bergen

<p>1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.</p> <p>Since May 2005 a number of Bologna-related changes occurred in the higher education (HE) system of Georgia. If prior joining the Bologna process the focus was on adopting the legislation, since 2005 the priority shifted to implementing the law effectively and efficiently. One of the reform outcomes envisaged by the Governmental Document “Basic Data and Directions for 2007-2010 (BDD)” (http://www.mof.ge/?lang=EN) is the increased opportunities for quality and competitive education – accessible and quality system based on values of liberal democracy.</p> <p>In 2005-2006 the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia issued a number of Decrees¹ facilitating introduction of the Bologna principles in HE system of Georgia. They are: 1) "Decree on Approval of Georgian HE Baccalaureate (Bachelor courses) Specialties"; 2) “Decree on Approval of the Internal Assessment Questionnaire for Institutional Accreditation of Georgian HEIs in 2006-2007”; 3) " Decree on Approval of the Form of State Document - Diploma Supplement"; 4) “Decree on Financing Students Enrolled in 2006-2007 Academic Year in the Framework of Social Programmes”; 5) "Decree on Introduction of Special Programme Facilitating Enrolment of Foreign Nationals in Accredited HEIs of Georgia and the Rules of Allocating State Grants to them"; 6) “Decree on Approval of Accreditation Regulations of HEIs" 7) “Decree on Approval of the Statute for the First Elections of Legal Entity of Public Law- HEIs' Managerial Bodies” etc.</p>

¹ The decrees can be downloaded from http://www.mes.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=268 in Georgian Language

On March 17, 2006 amendments had been introduced to the Law of Georgia on HE. Also, further amendments are ready to be submitted to the Parliament. The amendments aim to make the law more compatible with the requirements of the Bologna Process, e.g. the amendments stipulate decentralization of the Centre for Academic Recognition and Mobility (Georgian ENIC) and its integration with the National Centre of Education Accreditation (NCEA); introduction of professional HE (ISCED5b) and the concept of *a college* as a new type of HEI having programmes of professional HE as well as labour market-oriented bachelor degree programmes (Art.2; Art.), HEI being a centre of education and research as well as place preparing for labour market etc.

Inclusion of Georgia in the work of BFUG Board and London Communiqué Drafting Group and the support of the Council of Europe in all these and other activities was an additional incentive for Georgia to contribute to the Process from the perspective of a new member country.

National organisation

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs²
- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

According to the Law of Georgia on HE (Art.7) the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES) include: 1. Implementing a unified policy in the sphere of HE; 2. Developing a basic document reflecting the HE system indicators; 3. Proposing to the Government of Georgia for approval the amount of the state education grant as well as the amount and conditions of financing for the students enrolled in the state priority specialties at HEIs, and for those funded through social programmes; 4. Proposing to the Prime-Minister of Georgia the candidacies of the directors of the National Centre of Education Accreditation (NCEA) and National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC) etc.; In the “Basic Data and Directions for 2007-2010 (BDD)” of the Government of Georgia the mission of MES is defined as developing the education and science system “that gives each citizen the opportunity to develop and realize his/her capabilities, irrespective of age, ethnic origin and social status”. The strategy to realize this mission is:

- Democratisation of the management process and involvement of the society;
- Decentralization of the management system and assuring autonomy of educational institutions;
- Outcome-oriented management of the education sector through quality assurance schemes and resource allocation mechanisms;
- Increasing financing of the education sector and development of its material-technical basis;
- Integration of education and research activities in the international community, development of education and science centres at HEIs;

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia coordinates activities of public HEIs

² <http://www.mof.ge/Default.aspx>

whereas The Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport coordinates HEIs for arts education (5 HEIs in total).

In July, 17 2005 the President of Georgia issued a Decree (# 653,) on Establishment of Georgian National Science Foundation (GNSF). The goal of GNSF is to allocate research grants through open calls based on international peer review and thus reveal the best research projects in the country. <http://www.gnsf.ge/eng/index.htm>;

The Department for Accreditation was separated from MES and on March 27, 2006 independent National Centre of Education Accreditation (NCEA) (former State Accreditation Service of Educational Institutions in Georgia) was established according to the Decree #222 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (www.nea.ge); NCEA holds accreditation procedures for general, professional and higher education. The Centre is the single quality assurance body existing in Georgia at national level. The mission of the Centre is to a) adjust the Georgian higher and vocational education institutions and programmes to international standards and rules, b) accredit education institutions and all relevant activities, c) work out and approve recommendations for self-assessment documentations for education institutions, d) work out and keep the register of academic personnel and students, e) organize trainings, national and international workshops and conferences on the issues of quality assurance and accreditation, f) cooperate with appropriate international organizations and independent experts; g) assure easy access to up-to-date information and publish relevant material.

Other structural changes directed towards the decentralization of education sector include: establishment of National Curriculum and Assessment Centre and Centre for Teachers' Professional Development.

HEIs are financed from the State through student grants, (so called "Money follows Student" model), also special funds for institutional and infrastructure development including targeted funds: a) President's National Programme– “Rehabilitating HEIs”; b) The teaching programme of MES (including Preparation Courses for the Unified National Admission Exams; programme for studying at foreign HEIs); c) The programme for preparation of the Unified National Admission Exams/tests at Master’s level; d) The state programme for support of arts and sport HEIs³ etc.

Other funding sources of HEIs include: (a) Funds received through private grants, contributions or a will; (b) Research grants awarded by the state on the basis of competition; (C) Special state-budgetary programs designed to encourage the enrolment in those specialties of a higher education institution, which represent priority for the state; (D) Program financing allocated by the ministries of a relevant field; (E) Any other sources of income allowed by the Georgian legislation, including the revenues from economic activities (Art 79).

Article 83 of the Law of Georgia on HE stipulates that the research grant is awarded to HEI unit on the basis of competition in accordance with the procedures established by MES. Neither the state research grant nor the state education grant may be used for funding any other activity. The state funding for master’s and doctor’s programmes shall be provided through the state Research Grant funds, in accordance with the priorities set by MES under a special state

³ Source: Georgian Draft Law “on the State Budget for the year 2007”; <http://www.mof.ge/DinamicPage.aspx?cmd=menu&rootid=309>

programme.

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, HEIs are autonomous in their academic, financial and administrative activities (Art. 10). Presently, in a number of HEIs elections of Rectors, academic staff and student self-governance bodies had already been held. Elections in all HEIs will be completed in 2007.

3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

In 2005 there were 117 accredited HEIs in Georgia. Presently as a result of integration/optimisation and the third phase of institutional accreditation the number of HEIs decreased to 43 (32 accredited, 7 newly licensed and 4 - given conditional accreditation). Among them 15 are state and 28 private.

According to Article #9 of the Law of Georgia on HE, the types of HEI in Georgia are university and institute (School of Higher Education), (a concept of a college/professional HEI will be introduced once the amendments to the Law of Georgia on HE is introduced in 2007). A higher education institution may exist as a legal entity of public or private law; The Law of Georgia on HE covers both University and Institute to the same extent.

In 2006-2007 - 15583 (80%) students were admitted in state and 3896 (20%) in private HEIs; In total the number of first-year students is 19479 compared to 17437 in 2005.

Partnership

4. Describe the structure, which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (alongside with HEIs) is responsible for full implementation of the Bologna Process in Georgia; In May 3, 2006, the National Team of Bologna Promoters (NTBP) was established according to the Decree #407 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia⁴. Eleven public and private HEIs, the National League of Student Organizations and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia nominated the members of NTBP; NTBP elaborated an action plan for 2006- 2010. It regularly arranges meetings and seminars at different HEIs of Georgia. The team members took part in training seminars arranged by the European University Association within the framework of

⁴ http://www.mes.gov.ge/files/268_911_691695_boloniis%20brzaneba.pdf

Information Project on Higher Education Reform (<http://www.eua.be/index.php>).

Several members of the NTBP are also members of the Bologna Supporters group that was established within the framework of the project "Towards the European Higher Education Area" funded by Eurasia Foundation/USAID and implemented by the Civil Society Institute. Memorandum of the Bologna Supporters group was signed on 1st December, 2005. The group launched a portal (<http://bologna-supporters.ge/Eng/index.htm>) and elaborated a Work Programme and a comprehensive document called "The Main Directions for Implementing the Bologna Process in Georgia Until 2010". The group translated and published the main documents of the Bologna Process and User's Guide in "European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)" and the Diploma Supplement; The documents had also been written on a CD-ROM and posted on the web pages of the Civil Society Institute and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia: www.civilin.org; www.mes.gov.ge

Several student organizations in Georgia –student self-governance bodies, "The National League of Student Organizations in Georgia", "New Initiative Association", "AEGEE-Tbilisi" "Pirvelebi" etc., actively participate in disseminating information at local and regional level. On May 2006, the National League of Student Organizations in Georgia was elected as a Candidate Member of ESIB. The members of the League take part in seminars and conventions organized by ESIB (England, France, Finland, Austria etc.). Representatives of student organizations participate as observers in the election processes at HEIs.

Another student organization *New Initiative Association* (<http://www.tsu.ge/student/>) set up a student team of Bologna promoters, conducted a survey among students about their awareness on the Bologna Process, printed fliers and information booklets and published a brochure "Bologna Process with Georgian Students' Eyes". Student self-governance of the Tbilisi State Medical University published a book "Towards Better Education" and arranged a conference on the topic; In October 2006 "AEGEE-Tbilisi" hosted student and youth organization representatives from all around Europe in Georgia and arranged an information seminar at MES on the implementation of the Bologna process in Georgia.

On March 17 and 24, 2006, seminars on - "The Role of Students in the Bologna Process" were held at the Georgian Technical University and Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The seminars were co-organized by the local student unions. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, European Commission Delegation to Georgia, ESIB, Civil Society Institute (NGO) participated in the seminar. (Also see Q6)

On 3-5 April 2006 an international conference "Bologna Process in Arts Education" was hosted by Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film University and organized in cooperation with ELIA / <http://www.elia-artschools.org/activities/archive/> . The AEC and ENCATC also contributed to the programme. The conference provided a unique opportunity for Higher Arts Education Institutions from the Caucasian region to get acquainted and explore possibilities for partnership for exchange and joint projects. Approximately 120 delegates participated, including Rectors/Directors from the Caucasian region / Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from over 14 different countries. Universities from Asia and Turkey were also invited. At the end of the conference the delegates endorsed "Tbilisi Declaration" /www.elia-artschools.org/tbilisi.htm/ and Europe Caucasus Higher Arts Education Council was established.

5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

Pursuant to Chapter IV of the Law of Georgia on HE, HEI is made up of the basic educational units – faculties, higher education institution’s library/libraries and support structural units: office of the Rector, office of the Chancellor, Chancellery and secretariats of management bodies; The HEI’s management bodies comprise: Academic Council, Senate, Rector, Chancellor and the Quality Provision Service. The management bodies of faculties comprise: Faculty Council, Dean, and Faculty Quality Assurance Service. HEI shall ensure involvement of academic personnel and students in decision-making; HEI’s representative body shall be the Senate of HEI, which shall be elected from the basic structural units of HEI– faculties, based on the representation. Senate members shall be elected separately from the students and the academic personnel in proportion to their number at each basic structural unit. The Senate shall be elected from within the HEI on the basis of general, direct and equal elections, by secret ballot, in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the higher education institution’s charter. The Senate shall include a representative from the HEI’s library/libraries as prescribed by the HEI’s charter. The Senate may also include the alumni of the HEI and the representatives of the public according to the rules and the proportion prescribed by the charter of HEI. Neither administrative or support staff nor the members of the Academic Council may be elected to the Senate. The Academic Council of HEI shall be the highest representative body of HEI. They shall be elected by the members of the faculties’ academic personnel and those representatives of students’ self-governance who are the members of faculty council, on the basis of direct, free and equal elections, by secret ballot. Each faculty has an equal number of representatives in the Academic Council. This number shall be provided in the HEI charter. Only professors may be elected as the members of the Academic Council. In Georgia staff trade union representatives are not involved in the governance HEIs. Article 17 of the Law stipulates that students shall comprise one-third of the entire body of the Senate (a representative body of a HEI). An assistant professor, who is a doctoral student, participates in the elections as a student. According to the same Law the number of student self-governance representatives in the Faculty Council shall be defined by the faculty statute and shall not be less than 1/4 of the entire membership of the Council. (Article 27).

http://www.mes.gov.ge/files/255_436_600942_DATOS%20FILE.doc

6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.

On October 20-22 2006 Georgian Business Development Center “Caucasia” organized a three-day forum “Education and Job Placement Forum 2006” at the Tbilisi State University. The overall number of forum participants including students and unemployed youngsters reached 5000. Overall, more than 50 companies participated in the forum. Some 200 people have already been employed and this number will double during the year. http://www.georgiatoday.ge/article_details.php?id=1880# . Also, by the initiative of the Caucasus University (former Caucasus School of Business - <http://www.cu.edu.ge/>) Job Placement forum is held twice a year (both at institutional and national level). 26 companies and more than 1000 students participated in the forum.

With the assistance of MES and the World Bank, International School of Economics (ISET)

(<http://www.iset.tsu.ge/>) was established at the Tbilisi State University in 2006. ISET is modelled after similar World Bank-supported centres of excellence in Moscow, Kiev, Budapest and Prague. Establishment of ISET was also funded by SIDA, BP, the Government of Norway, and OSGF.

Student loan system was introduced in Georgia in cooperation with the leading private Banks of Georgia (TBC Bank, Bank “Republic”, “BazisBank” and the “Bank of Georgia”). Also, banks cooperate with HEIs in terms of financing different activities (e.g. at Ilia Chavchavadze State University <http://www.iliauni.edu.ge/en/> banks financed places at Master degree studies etc.)

In cooperation with the European Commission a project “Support to the development of a strategic and legal framework for the reform of the Georgian VET system (AP 2004 – Policy Advice) was launched with the aim to assist the Georgian Government to define a clear strategy and policy for the modernisation of the VET system and support MES to achieve an open debate with relevant stakeholders, for the elaboration of a comprehensive strategic and legislative setting for the reform of the Georgian VET system that constitutes an effective environment of the socio-economic development of Georgia

British Council Georgia under the project Quality Assurance in HE organised a visit of head of National Centre of Education Accreditation (NCEA) to the international conference ‘Institutional Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area’ to Sofia, Bulgaria in June, 2006. In September 2006 British Council managed a visit to Georgia of Isabel Nisbet, Director of Regulation and Standards at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to contribute actively to Black Sea Conference on University Admission and Exams. Also, British Council organised a high profile visit of Sir Michael Barber and Professor David Hopkins to Georgia on 21 October 2006. The aim of the visit was to have high-level discussions with MES on the raft of Georgia’s education reforms and contribute to an evaluation of Georgia’s reform. British Council supports the project ‘Strategic Planning in Postsecondary Education According to Labour Market Demands’ submitted by National Centre of Education Accreditation. The research results will be available in October 2007. British Council is supporting the development of Pre-service curriculum and teacher training for the Departments of Education of the universities. Currently a new pre-service curriculum is being piloted in 4 Universities.

B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.

According to the amendment being introduced to the Law of Georgia on HE *bakalavriati* is an educational programme comprising at least 240 ECTS credits. *magistratura* is an educational programme comprising at least 120 ECTS credits. The percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two-cycle degree system in 2006/07 is more than

75 %. Presently all accredited HEIs have already moved to a three-cycle degree studies. (<http://www.statistics.ge/publication.php?plang=1&pform=-258>)

In 2007 equal to EUR 450 000 will be allocated from the state education budget to redesign university curricula in line with the Bologna requirements, about EUR 250 000 from the total sum will be earmarked for elaboration and management of educational programmes and 200 000 for university textbooks.

(Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of 3rd cycle students following structured doctoral programmes
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes
- are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies
- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

According to the Law of Georgia on HE (Art. 87) HEIs shall fully engage in offering educational programmes envisaged by this law (Bachelor, Master, Certified Specialist's and Doctoral Programmes) and provide the relevant academic degrees no later than the beginning of the academic year 2007-2008.

Currently, in Georgia doctoral programmes function at individual faculties and departments with more than 1134 doctoral students enrolled. These programmes include both taught courses and independent research.

Pursuant of the amendment introduced in the Law in March 2006 - Doctoral Programme is an educational program which should comprise at least 180 credits (Ch. VII, Art. 46), therefore average duration of doctoral education in Georgia is about 3 years. According to Article 49 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education (1) A person holding a master's or an equal academic degree may take a doctoral program; (2) HEI shall provide a doctoral student with a research supervisor, create favorable conditions for conducting work related to the research, which shall encompass theoretical and/or experimental results and facilitate his/her integration into the world research community. (3) Upon completion of the doctorate program and successful defense of dissertation, a doctoral student is awarded the academic degree of a doctor. (4) The academic degree of doctor shall be awarded by Dissertation Council established within a faculty of higher education institution in compliance with the regulations prescribed by the relevant statute. (5) The procedures for awarding the academic degree of a doctor shall be set out in the Dissertation Council Statute to be approved by the Academic Council of a higher

education institution. According to the Law doctoral programs should be introduced in the Georgian HEIs as a third level of HE from 2007-2008. (Although several HEIs of Georgia such as Legal Department of Tbilisi State University, Iliia Chavchavadze State University, State Academy of Arts etc. already introduced or announced admission of students at doctoral level.)

With the support of international donor organization – the HE Support Program of the OSGF, the Centre for Social Sciences (CSS) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the Tbilisi State University held international conferences on Doctoral studies ("Rebuilding Research Universities: Towards European Higher Education and Research Area, Bologna 2010") on June 25-26, 2005 and on June 29-July 1, 2006. All stakeholders involved in HE participated in the conferences (<http://www.tsu.ge/qa/doctoreng.htm>). CSS presented its project Development of Graduate Programs in Social Sciences. A comprehensive "PhD Concept Paper" was prepared within the framework of the project. (<http://www.tsu.ge/qa/doc/PhD%20Concept%20Paper%20eng.pdf>)

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Access⁵ to the next cycle

9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

Only the persons holding the state certificate of full general education or those with equal status have the right to take a bachelor's program. A bachelor or certified specialist of equal status may take a master's program. In the medical field (including veterinary medicine) the degree of a certified specialist awarded after concluding a six-year educational program may be deemed as an equal degree of a master. A person holding a master's or an equal academic degree may take a doctoral program (Art.48-49).

⁵ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

According to the Law of Georgia on HE successful completion of each academic degree gives access to further degree studies. The work to introduce the unified national admission exams has been launched in 2006. The aim of this initiative is to remove obstacles still existing at HEIs and provide equal, transparent conditions for access to master's level for all applicants. <http://www.naec.ge/info.php?t=info.php&f=33&su=raarissamagistrgam&lang=geo>

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA⁶.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared; has a timetable for implementation been agreed?)
- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

The public debate on National Qualifications Framework both for the EHEA and for Lifelong Learning started earlier in 2005. Two events: a conference arranged with the support of the Council of Europe on November 8-9, 2005 “Implementation of the Bologna Process in the Georgian HE System” and a seminar held with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF) on May 10, 2006 at MES stimulated launching of the debate among all stakeholders including students, professors, social partners, NGOs etc.

Within the Action Plan of the European Neighbourhood Policy elaboration of the national qualifications framework is one of the priorities to be launched in the first quarter of 2007.

11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

The amendment to be introduced to the Law of Georgia on HE stipulates that the goal of bachelor's degree is not only professional and theoretical training/preparation leading to further studies (i.e. Master level studies) but also leading to employment.

⁶ A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

In order to increase employability of graduates a number of action lines had been identified: 1. Redesigning the university curricula based on learning outcomes and demands of the labour market; 2. Legislative initiative to introduce professional HE i.e. a short cycle leading either to labour market or to further studies for obtaining the bachelor's degree. 3. Freedom of choice at UNAE, introduction of general aptitudes tests (GAT) that measure intellectual skills and students' abilities to analyse, generalize, synthesize, abstract and operate with verbal, mathematical concepts and figures including critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving and learning potential increase probability for entrants to make the right choice while choosing the future profession; 4. Announcement of state priorities (Dec. N152 of the Government of Georgia) and needs in terms of human resources encouraged entrants to choose professions from the areas of strategic importance for the country; 5. Liaising with the business sector, specifically with the employers who in their turn offer internships and jobs to students and graduates etc. Besides, in-depth study of local labour market is required in order to address the problem adequately.

Some leading HEIs in Georgia regularly publish data on employability of alumni e.g. the European School of Management (ESM)–Tbilisi provide quite high statistics: 98% of graduates have job placement, 95% of graduates get job placement just on graduation and 85% of 4-year students go to work on the side. <http://www.esm-tbilisi.edu.ge/new/index.php?id=23>. However, certainly these data do not give an overall picture of employability of graduates at national level.

Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA⁷

12. To what extent is your national system of QA already in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any deadlines set for taking action to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on HE stipulates that state shall ensure establishment of quality assurance systems including accreditation system and quality assurance services at HEIs. According to the same Law (Art. 10), HEI's faculty, in compliance with this law, shall: Establish a study quality provision service. The law envisages both institutional and programme accreditation. The procedures include: internal assessment, external review, and participation of students and publication of results.

In 2005, the booklet “The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA” was

⁷ <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

translated into Georgian and published by the initiative of MES and the support of the European Commission and the TEMPUS Contact Point in Georgia. The booklets had been distributed among HEIs at various Bologna-related seminars and other activities.

http://www.mes.gov.ge/files/300_819_132420_QA_geo_final.pdf.

On July, 2005, General Education Decentralization and Accreditation Project (GEDA) was launched in collaboration with MES. The GEDA Project is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Research Triangle Institute (RTI), University of Minnesota (UMN), University of Pittsburgh (UPitt). The project will help to develop accreditation systems for general, vocational, and higher education at the national level through the creation of an Accreditation Institute.

In cooperation with UNESCO, MES conducted a conference on „Accreditation in Higher Education“ in Tbilisi, on 3-4 June, 2005 and a seminar on 25-26 October, 2006. European University Association (EUA), in cooperation with TSU and MES conducted a seminar on Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process in December, 2006. Bologna Promoters and representatives of HEIs participated in the training seminar.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education⁸
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
 - internal assessment
 - external review
 - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

National Centre of Education Accreditation (NCEA) operates at national level and holds accreditation procedures for all HEIs existing in Georgia. Until now NCEA implemented three stages of institutional accreditation as a result of which from 248 only 43 HEIs had been granted the institutional accreditation. The law on HE stipulates that by 2008 all HEIs will have to undergo the programme accreditation.

Institutional accreditation serves as a precondition for programme accreditation. State programme accreditation may be obtained for the educational programme of any HEI, irrespective of their organizational/legal status. A state program accreditation certificate

⁸ higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

shall be issued based on the evaluation of a HEI's educational programme. The Law envisages that the State shall recognize only those academic degrees and diplomas that are awarded by accredited HEIs; the state educational and research grants may be awarded only to accredited HEIs and educational programmes.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
 - the governance of national agencies for QA
 - as full members or observers in external review teams
 - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
 - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
 - in internal evaluations.

The Law of Georgia on HE stipulates that the study and research activity of HEI, as well as the process of upgrading the personnel qualifications, is subject to systematic evaluation in which the students also take part and the results of which shall be public and available for any interested person (Art. 25). The same Law underlines: students have a right to make recommendations on improving the faculty/HEI's management systems and quality of studying and present them to the Faculty Council, Senate and Academic Council (Art. 45).

The draft document - "The National Standards of Institutional Accreditation" envisages student participation in quality assurance processes and considers student evaluation as well as their learning outcomes as essential factors for quality assurance in HEIs. Students participate both in internal and external review of HEIs. For example, during the accreditation process at TSU, students actively participated in self-assessment process, special questionnaires had been prepared for them, the responses had been analysed and taken into consideration while modifying both the content and organization of study processes⁹.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance

⁹ The questionnaires and responses are posted on www.tsu.ge/qa

- the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
- the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
- teams for external review, either as members or observers
- membership of ENQA
- membership of any other international network.

The accreditation process envisages participation of international experts in the accreditation process. The team of experts may include the international experts that have a long-standing experience and proven reputation in the field.

NCEA is not a member of ENQA or any other quality assurance body so far.

Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
 - issued in a widely spoken European language
 - free of charge
 - automatically
 - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

According to the Decree #149 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the "Approval of State Document - the form of Diploma Supplement" issued on April 5, 2005. All HEIs are expected to issue DS that is in line with the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format, free of charge and automatically.

A Division of Academic Mobility and Recognition serves as a Georgian ENIC at MES. The division is in charge of monitoring the implementation of the above stated Decree. Three seminars had been held in 2005-2006 on the format and procedures for issuing the DS. HEIs presented the samples of DSs issued in 2005 to the Georgian ENIC.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents¹⁰ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
 - applicants' right to fair assessment
 - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
 - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
 - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

Georgia signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1997 and the Parliament of Georgia ratified it in 1999. The legislation of Georgia is in full compliance with the Convention and all supplementary documents. Recognition of qualifications is stipulated within the Law of Georgia on HE. Article 50 of the Law states: 1. The recognition of study programs taken in a foreign HEI and the results of academic achievements shall take place if the compatibility of such programs with the Georgian HEIs' study programs is established. 2. The formal recognition of educational credentials issued abroad and establishment of equivalence and authenticity of the educational credentials issued in Georgia shall be the responsibility of a National Information Centre for Academic Recognition, which is a part of the European network, after consulting with the relevant services of the relevant HEIs, in compliance with international treaties, bilateral or multilateral agreements and appropriate provisions of the Georgian legislation. Once recognition of the credentials is in place, the decision regarding the continuation of studies or employment in Georgia shall be made by a HEI or an employer respectively. Also see Q.1

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

¹⁰ Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

The Law of Georgia on HE (Ch.XV, Art. 87) stipulates that the HEIs should introduce ECTS before the beginning of the academic year 2009-2010. It is envisaged that in academic year 2006/2007 almost all first and second cycle programmes will already have the ECTS system. A special guideline and the draft decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on calculating the student workload in ECTS credits is posted on the Ministry webpage. The decree will assure that HEIs introduce ECTS in 2006-2007. Since one of the accreditation criteria in 2006 was whether HEIs already started introducing ECTS, presently all accredited HEIs have already met this criteria, however additional support in terms of human, material, and financial assistance is required to make the system operational and effective.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications¹¹? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

The draft action plan for improving the recognition of qualifications had been elaborated. The draft describes the stage of implementation of the article 50 of the law and actions to be taken by the government of Georgia to make the system more effective. The document also describes the existing problems and the possible ways to overcome those problems.

Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

Please include:

- the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.

The concept of prior learning is not envisaged in national legislation however Article 6 of the draft law on professional education stipulates that state recognition of qualifications gained through informal education is conducted commensurate with the rule established by legislation as a result of passing through the attestation.

The recommendations encompassing the experience of different European countries (Netherland and Norway) on recognition of prior learning paths had been prepared at the MES.

The Centre of Training and Consultancy (CTC) (www.ctc.org.ge) existing in Georgia since 1999 established strong links with a number of shareholders working on the issue of Adult education. In 2006 CTC published a booklet in Georgian language "Key Competences for Life-Long Learning - European Framework- Recommendations of European Parliament and The Council of the European Union. The booklet is the collection of Lisbon Process recommendations. (<http://ctc.wanex.net/?l=1&i=16>).

¹¹ ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

To address the problem of corruption, elitism and nepotism Unified National Admission Exams (UNAE) had been introduced in 2005. Every citizens of Georgia who wish to acquire HE may pass the exams.

In September 19-20 the Black Sea Conference on University Admission and Exams was held in Tbilisi, by the initiative and financial support of NAEC, MES and OSGF. High level international experts and decision-makers participated in the conference.

<http://www.naec.ge/links.php?t=links.php&f=20&su=bsconfeng1&lang=eng>.

University programmes in majority of HEIs introduced modular programmes as well as mandatory and optional courses. The legislation of Georgia do not stipulate any articles preventing students from taking different modules at different HEIs. It is up to HEIs themselves to provide students with the opportunities for choosing flexible learning paths.

The EU and German government funded project Folk High Schools in Samtskhe - Javakheti aims at promoting rights of national minorities compactly living in the most multi-national region of Georgia at realization of their legal right to education, and in particular, to non-formal education. The project aims will be accomplished through setting up of Folk High Schools in two districts. All the various courses and consultations together will cover from 5,700 to 6,240 people.

Besides, in 2006 bilateral agreements had been signed between TSU and the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts as well as TSU and The Theatre and Film University. Consequently, students from the Theatre and Film University come to TSU to take courses in philosophy and history and TSU students go to the Theatre and Film University to take courses in the Culture of Speech etc. the credits and exams passed at each HEI are mutually recognised.

Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint¹² degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles

¹² a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

The legislation of Georgia does not stipulate joint degrees as an integral part of HE. However there is no legislative act that would forbid introduction of joint degrees in Georgia. Several HEIs already signed contracts with their European counterparts on introducing joint degree programmes (e.g. in 2006 The Iliia Chavchavadze State University signed a contract with Montpellier University that would result in issuing the joint degrees). Tbilisi State University already has six joint master programmes together with the universities of Germany, Hungary, the USA envisaging exchange of students and staff. Caucasus University provides Dual MBA programme between Grenoble Graduate School of Business (GGSB) and Caucasus School of Business (CSB) and BBA program between Georgia State University and Caucasus School of Business (CSB), the joint venture is a pioneering partnership across America, Europe and South Caucasus leading towards two simultaneous degrees..

During his visit in Germany in November 2006 the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia discussed the perspectives of introducing joint master degree programmes with the representatives of different universities in Germany.

C. Current issues in Higher Education

Higher education and research

23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

Integration of research and HE is underway in Georgia. It is also one of the priorities within the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan (ENP AP).

At present HEIs have only academic, administrative and support positions. The law of Georgia on HE does not stipulate research/scientific positions. However, the law envisages that “HEI is entitled to sign a contract with a research institution to implement doctoral study programmes”(Art.30, point 4). In 2007 about 20 research institutes out of 68 will be integrated with universities. Presently, the share of research conducted in HE is approximately 20-23 %.

In April 2006 the government of Georgia announced a competition for establishing the education and research centre. This will be the first research centre set up on the bases of universities. The project is co-financed by the US Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF). In total US 300 000 is allocated for the project (GEL 90 000 from the state budget www.grdf.ge).

24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?

In 2006 the salaries of research personnel increased three times, but still the amount is not high enough to attract the doctoral candidates. Scientists participating in most successful projects financed by GNSF will receive salaries from grants alongside with the salaries from the state. GNSF has a special grant scheme for young scientists. In 2006, 6070 scientists and 143 organizations participated in the competition. Alongside with Georgian experts, more than 500 foreign experts evaluated the research projects via internet.

By the Law of Georgia on HE doctoral students enjoy a number of privileges that are additional incentives for pursuing research careers, e.g. “a doctoral student may be elected to the position of assistant professor”. He/she takes part in the elections of HEI’s management bodies (Ch. 6, Art. 43, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education) etc. There are special programmes within the framework of INTAS and GNSF for young scientists and doctoral candidates, encouraging their involvement in long-term scientific/research projects. In partnership with international universities, HEIs in Georgia participate in various scientific programmes and projects of TACIS, DFID, WB, INTAS, UNDP, NATO SfP, SfS etc. For example recently, in partnership with 5 European and Azeri and Armenian Universities, Caucasus University successfully participated in INTAS project “South-Caucasian Republics: Research and Development of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy” (SCRIPTS) (INTAS Ref. No: 06-1000017-8811). The EU-funded TACIS project “Creating an Effective Model of Science Administration” was launched in August 2006. It intends to assist MES and GNSF to define a clear strategy and transparent policy for the modernisation of the overall R&D policy system in Georgia and to formulate recommendations to improve Georgian legislative framework towards EU standards.

Until now, majority of doctorates in Georgia mainly go either to business sector or get employed abroad. This would be a positive tendency if the doctorates continued research activities while being engaged in business sector or did not stay abroad for good. The government of Georgia has a special policy to channel the funds accumulated from the private and business sector to R&D by establishing the Research Support Foundation in 2007 and by attracting doctorates working abroad via providing adequate employment and research conditions locally.

The social dimension

25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.

In 2005 and 2006 within the framework of Social Programme, in total more than 500 grants were allocated to socially and economically disadvantaged students. In October 2005 MES announced a competition within the framework of the programme “Preparation for Unified National Entrance Examinations in 2006” Six categories of entrants had been identified:

1. Citizens of Georgia living in conflict zones;
2. Compactly populated national minorities of Georgia;
3. Citizens of Georgia living in mountainous, remote regions and zones of ecological migration;
4. Children of people who died or disappeared during the conflict for territorial integrity of Georgia;
5. Descendants of Samtskhe-Javakheti population deported from Georgia during the communist regime;
6. Foreign citizens with Georgian ethnic origin.

The programme implied covering tuition fee for entrants during the entire preparation period and providing a monthly stipend. 211 entrants were financed by the programme.

A special state programme on assisting foreign citizens to study in HEIs of Georgia was approved (Decree 374 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia) in July 26, 2005. Consequently, 80 state study grants had been allocated in 2005-2006 for those foreign citizens who could not gain state grants on the basis of the scores accumulated at UNAE. Also, the grants had been allocated for citizens of countries where Georgian citizens may receive funding from the local government. GEL 390 000 had been spent for social grants in 2006-2007.

Both in 2005 and 2006 entrants from all regions of Georgia had equal access to all the facilities and information for UNAE. Fourteen examination centres were established in 11 cities of Georgia. Consequently, entrants from rural and remote areas of the country had equal access to admission exams. In 2005 57% out of the total number of enrolled students were from the regions and 43% from the capital.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

Students are awarded state grants for the entire degree programme. This policy also serves as a retention mechanism since students are encouraged to complete their studies in order to preserve the state grant.

In December 2006 NAEC prepared an information brochure for entrants that include the list of accredited HEIs, the list of subjects to be passed at each faculty, information on tuition fees, assistance mechanisms, subject priorities, detailed information of UNAE etc. The brochures were distributed in schools and HEIs free of charge.

http://www.naec.ge/files/416_Saregracio-Gazeti-2007.pdf

Mobility

27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

One of the primary goals of HE in Georgia is to encourage the mobility of students and academic personnel of HEIs (Art3. P.1. Law of Georgia on HE). According to the same law foreign citizens may enter HEI in Georgia without passing unified national admission exams. The foreign citizens have to provide evidence that they may pursue studies at HE level in their country of residence.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has bilateral agreements with a number of

countries like Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine etc. The Ministry annually assists about 50-60 students to continue their studies abroad.

http://www.mes.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=730

HEIs in Georgia have individual agreements with international partners and regularly send students for taking courses abroad. Besides, the US Embassy, British Council and other funding organizations (NUFFIC, CIE, DAAD, UNDP, GRDF, UNESCO, SI, etc) provide different mobility opportunities and scholarship programmes for students, staff, researchers and graduates in Georgia. www.britishcouncil.org.ge, <http://www.cie.ge>, www.irex.ge. <http://www.grdf.ge/programs.htm>.

In 2005 The Development and Reform Fund (DRF) (<http://www.drf.org.ge>) financed postgraduate education of 34 perspective lawyers in the European and US universities. The second stage of the program implied the support in employment. The programme gives the returned lawyers a chance to use the knowledge and experience acquired abroad for the welfare of Georgia. The development and Reform Fund under the President of Georgia continues the implementation of the Study Program in the other fields as well.

In 2005 MES, OSGF and the Centre for International Education (CIE) launched a jointly funded Program for Graduate Study in the USA for Georgian Education Professionals. In the framework of the programme in total 18 students will receive full scholarship (covering tuition fee, travel and living expenses) for master degree studies in education at Harvard and Columbia Universities. The annual budget of the programme is 550 000 (the government covers 50% of the programme). The programme will last for three years.

As for inward student mobility, the major problem is the lack of courses delivered in languages that are widely spoken internationally. However, several HEIs (Black Sea University, CSS, State Medical University www.tsmu.edu) already implement full degree programmes in foreign languages. Many HEIs already started introducing such courses and attract foreign students (to date majority of foreign students are from Turkey, Azerbaijan, India, Pakistan etc.). Georgian language courses for foreigners are delivered at TSU. Some foreign students first learn Georgian language and afterwards continue studying at desirable degree programmes.

According to the Law of Georgia on General Education, “MES shall provide stage-wise transition to 12-years term of general education from 2006-2007 academic year (Cl. 63)¹³”. This shift will further facilitate mobility and academic recognition of students and staff since in majority of European countries 12-year secondary education had already been established long ago.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

Student-centred and grant-based financing model was upgraded in 2006 and GEL 9,5 had been allocated from the state budget for HE student grants compared to GEL 9mln in 2005. Consequently, in 2006, 8271 (almost 50%) entrants got either full or partial financing from the government. Student loan schemes had been introduced in cooperation with the leading private banks of Georgia;

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http://www.mes.gov.ge/files/255_447_425803_255_447_544182_kanoni%20zogadi%20ganatlebis%20shesaxeb%20inglisuri%20targmani.doc

In Georgia there is no difference in tuition fees for one and the same educational program at HEI. In case if the student who holds the state education grant transfers to another HEI, the state shall cover the tuition fees at this HEI within the maximum amount of state education grant. The person who has passed the competition as established by fine arts and sports HEIs having the status of legal entity of public law, and was awarded a state education grant as a result of UNAE, shall receive at least half of the amount of this grant in the form of a stipend from the budget of this HEI. The major obstacle for portability of grants and loans is the difference in tuition fees locally and internationally. Also, grants and loans only cover tuition fees and students have to find additional financial sources in order to fully cover their studies.

29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward staff mobility
- any measures to increase outward staff mobility.

Georgia has a visa free regime for the EU countries as well as US, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Israel, and the Holy Sea. MES regularly assists academic staff in Georgia to facilitate their participation in the mobility programmes mainly through support letters.

A new scholarship scheme within the EU "Erasmus Mundus Windows" is now open for Georgian academic staff as well as students. European Commission will contribute to financing projects (mobility scheme between EU and partner country universities) from mixed consortia of European and Partner Country universities. Georgian students and academic staff could benefit from a minimum of 40 individual mobility flows.

The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

Georgia already introduced or started introducing majority of tools envisaged by the Bologna Process, such as: the three cycle degree system, diploma supplement, ECTS, accreditation mechanisms, Standards and Guidelines for QA in EHEA, national qualifications framework etc. International citizens wishing to study in Georgia may enter the Georgian HE establishments without UNAE. National Team of Bologna Promoters and the Bologna Supporters Group promote the EHEA at national level. Bologna action lines are included in the legislation of Georgia. In accordance to the rules prescribed by Georgia's international agreements and Georgian legislation, the branch of a foreign HEI shall acquire a licensure and/or accreditation in order to operate on the Georgian territory (Art. 14) etc.

The TEMPUS/TACIS project on "Establishment of a Centre for European Studies at TSU" aims to 1. identify selected domains for professional skills (EU law, economics, history and political science) and research, 2. Train teachers in the selected domains, in coherence with the principles of the Bologna Process; 3. Hold seminars in the most relevant European institutions including the EU Court of Justice, European Court for Human Rights, European Parliament, Council of the European Union, European Commission, etc. 4. Define criteria for the selection of students, indicators for academic quality assurance, approaches to assessment; 5. Define and elaborate a Master's degree in European Studies; 6. Establish a library and the necessary pedagogical support in terms of software and access to information etc. Joint degree programmes will also be introduced within the framework of the project.

Future challenges

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

One of the major challenges for Georgia at present is to implement the Bologna reforms in a very short period of time. International assistance and support can play a crucial role in adjusting the system to the Bologna requirements by 2010. In the last couple of years the international assistance was less visible in Georgia in terms of implementing the Bologna reforms. For the next couple of years the following activities are of utmost importance:

1. Elaborating the National Qualification Framework;
2. Conducting programme accreditation at all HEIs;
3. Elaborating university curricula in line with the Bologna requirements and participating in the TUNING project;
4. Training academic staff at HEIs and upgrading their skills in accordance with the contemporary requirements;
5. Creating effective mechanisms for recognition of prior learning paths (formal, non-formal, informal);
6. Increasing student and staff mobility in both directions;
7. Assuring portability of student grants and loans;
8. Establishing quality culture at HEIs;
9. Introducing joint degrees and special programmes for international students;
10. Establishing stakeholder perspective in HEIs and involving employers in the reforms;
11. Linking HE to labour market demands and increasing employability of graduates;
12. Developing effective mechanisms for data collection;
13. Strengthening cooperation between different student organizations and self-governance bodies and promoting their participation in the decision-making process;
14. Protecting Georgian citizens studying and working abroad from political oppression and discrimination etc.