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УСХОДНЯГА ПАРТНЕРСТВА



BELARUSIAN
INDEPENDENT
BOLOGNA
COMMITTEE

REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF BELARUS ROADMAP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

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Prepared by the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee
and Ad Hoc Commission of Belarusian National EaP CSF Platform



Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee (BIBC) and Ad Hoc Commission of Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) continue to monitor the Roadmap implementation and commissioned the analysis of what had been done by Belarusian authorities to fulfill its obligations. This report presents the findings that show where the country stands in terms of the Roadmap implementation.

The used methodology is based on the Roadmap’s sections evaluation in three directions:

1. Compliance with EHEA principles
2. Compliance with the Roadmap time line
3. Transparency:
 - a) information availability on the implementation and its results: implementation information, research and analysis, concepts and projects’ documents
 - b) providing opportunities for interested parties to participate in decision making (public consultations).

I. Structural reforms

a) Qualifications framework

Belarus undertook the obligation to develop the National Qualification Framework that will correspond to QF-EHEA. In order to assess the NQF implementation, EHEA working developed indicator that includes 11 steps. Each of these steps reflects a certain stage of NQF development and implementation while the implementation level is assessed according to number of steps out of 11 implemented. NQF implementation steps turn into results assessment mechanism ([The European Higher Education Area in 2015. Bologna process implementation report. P. 67-68](#)).

Based on this and according to the Roadmap, we used criteria set by EHEA working group for NQF to form and analyse listed below performance indicators for assessing current state of NQF implementation in Belarus.

NQF implementation in Belarus.

Process indicators		
Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
The decision to develop NQF adopted fully at all levels	1. Decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the national body responsible for higher education and/or the minister	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. The purpose(s) of the NQF have been agreed and outlined	
	3. The process of developing the NQF has been set up, with stakeholders identified and committee(s) established	
NQF (its components) are identified and agreed upon	4.The level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), and credit ranges have been agreed	No



with stakeholders. It is approved at legislative level or similar.	5. Consultation/national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders	
	6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy	
All major economy sectors and interested parties are involved into NQF development. Their actions consistency and efficiency.	7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agency (ies) and other bodies	No
	8. Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF	
	9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF	
NQF is established, certified as compatible with QF-EHEA and posted on public website.	10. The Framework has self-certified its compatibility with the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area	No
	11. The final NQF and the self-certification report can be consulted on a public website	
Information availability		No information available
Status indicators		
Number of developed/approved qualification standards		No approved and officially available qualification standards

At the legislative level, Belarus did not progress in terms of creating National Qualification Framework in accordance with the Roadmap time line and based on this we can state that NQF in Belarus is still in its very earlier stages of development. According to unofficial information, it is known that 2 drafts of qualification standards in IT and 2 drafts standards in management are prepared.

b) Quality assurance

According to the Roadmap, the legal framework for establishing an independent quality assurance agency in accordance with European standards and guidelines (ESG) should be completed by the end of 2017. Belarusian side should have presented the timeline on this by the end of 2015 while BFUG would invite experts on quality assurance to assist Belarus in developing the action plan and actually establishing the agency.

Hereby we present a short analysis of Belarusian legislation and current practice compliance with ESG requirements. (Indicators selected for analysis are contained in the second part of the consolidated standards list while some indicators are taken from other its parts but related to external quality control).



ESG implementation in Belarus.

№ по ESG	Indicator	Legislation compliance with ESG requirements
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1.10	Cyclical external quality assurance Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.	Yes
2.1	Consideration of internal quality assurance External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance described in Part 1 of the ESG.	No
2.2	Designing methodologies fit for purpose External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.	No
2.3	Implementing processes External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a self-assessment or equivalent;- an external assessment normally including a site visit;- a report resulting from the external assessment;- a consistent follow-up.	No
2.4	Peer-review experts External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).	No
2.5	Criteria for outcomes Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.	Yes
2.6	Reporting Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.	No
2.7	Complaints and appeals Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.	Yes
3.1	Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance	No



	Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.	
3.2	Official status Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.	No
3.3	Independence Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.	No
3.4	Thematic analysis Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.	No
3.5	Resources Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.	No
3.6	Internal quality assurance and professional conduct Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.	No
3.7	Cyclical external review of agencies Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.	No

The Roadmap implementation status: Quality assurance

Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
Planning	1. Till the end of 2015 the plan on developing legislative framework for establishing independent quality assurance agency in accordance with European standards. The guidelines are prepared by the end of 2017.	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. International experts are invited by BFUG to work on independent agency establishment	Not implemented fully and properly
Projects' development	3. Legislative provisions (guidelines) on establishing independent quality assurance agency developed	No
	4. Independent quality assurance agencies rules of procedures developed	No
Discussion	5. Public discussions and international consultations held	No



Approval	6. Developed documents submitted for approval in accordance with established procedures	No
	7. Establishing documents and agency's rules of procedures approved. The information is available on public website.	No
Final action	8. Independent quality assurance agency established	No
Information availability		No information available

Conclusion

Belarusian legislation and practice only partially comply with ESG provisions.

In spite of the fact that Belarus has an open access to its regulatory framework for licensing and accreditation, invites independent experts to participate in accreditation process, publishes agency assessment report in limited format, we can conclude that ESG standards are not complied with to large extent especially in the part of Independent quality assurance agency established.

c) Recognition

According to the Roadmap, by the end of 2016, review legislation and practice with a view to identifying any modifications needed to bring them into conformity with the obligations undertaken by Belarus as a State party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention should be completed. By the end of 2017, Belarus should implement any required modification of practice that does not require amending legislation and develop a timetable for the implementation of required legislative modifications.

The table below presents findings based on the analysis of main documents regulating recognition procedures in Belarus (Education Code (art. 102 and art.122) and the Republic of Belarus Council of Ministers Resolution #981 from 21.07.2011 "Regulation on the procedure of documents on education recognition issued in foreign countries, and defining their equivalence (correspondence) to the Republic of Belarus documents on education, recognition and correspondence of the study periods, higher education courses in a foreign states organizations") compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions set in accordance with most important indicators. The secondary legislative acts, recommendations and other documents were also taken into account.

Lisbon Convention provisions implementation in Belarus

#	Indicator	Compliance with Lisbon Convention
1	2	5
1.	Appointment of authorized body	Yes
2.	Adoption of national recognition procedures	Yes
3.	National Informational Centre establishment and providing its with needed resources	Incomplete
4.	Terminology	No



5.	Discrimination absence on irrelevant to recognition circumstances	No
6.	Providing access to higher education	Yes
7.	Applying the evidence discrepancies principle	No
8.	Refugees and displaced people qualifications recognition	No
9.	Informal education results recognition	No
10.	The use of "substantial differences" in accordance with the European practice	No
11.	Full implementation of the Lisbon Convention provisions for national students studied abroad, including included training	No
12.	Applying "Code of Good Practice" in case of providing transnational education (6 June 2001)	No
13.	Applying Convention Committee recommendations on the Recognition of Qualifications related to higher education in the European Region from June 9, 2004, "On the recognition of joint degrees"	No
14.	Applying revised recommendation on criteria and procedures for assessment of foreign qualifications (23 June 2010)	No
15.	Applying recommendations on QF use for foreign qualification recognition (19 June 2013)	No
16.	Using European guide on recognition for higher education establishments (2016)	No
17.	Applying guide on qualification recognition for people without documents (7 March 2016)	No

Belarus has the system for recognition of the documents on education, which functions in accordance with Lisbon Convention provisions but only to some extent. However, Belarusian system doesn't consider any documents that were adopted in developing this Convention further because it will require Belarus to amend current legislation on national level and all guides on recognition significantly. The understanding of substance and specifics of the Convention development through its own amendments and other documents (Convention Committee strategy) remains at the level of the end of 90th. That's why we can confidently conclude that national regulations and procedures on qualification recognition don't comply with Convention's requirements in terms of higher education in European region (Lisbon Convention).

The Roadmap implementation status : Recognition

Enlarged process indicators	Steps	Status
Evaluation, planning	1. Determined implementing agencies for assessment, planning and amendment to legislation and law enforcement practices	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. Analysis of current practices in recognition, legal provisions and other legal documents in recognition as well as Lisbon Convention provisions in order to	Step are not implemented fully and properly



	identify those practices that need to be revised without amending laws and those that require law amendment.	
	3. Consultations with stakeholders including ENIC/NARIC and Committee on Lisbon Convention provisions implementation, making necessary changes	Not implemented fully and properly
Amending laws and law enforcement practices in order to bring them up to the obligations undertaken by Belarus as a state that joined Lisbon Convention on qualification recognition	4. Implementing necessary changes into practice without law amendments	No
	5. Developing laws amendment schedule	No
	6. Amending laws	No
	7. Practice and laws are in accordance with Lisbon Convention	No
Access to the information		No information available
Practices compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions		Not implemented fully and properly
Laws compliance with Lisbon Convention provisions		Not implemented fully and properly

Step 1 - the Ministry of Education authorized the National Institute for Higher Education to carry out evaluation, planning and introduce changes into legislation and law enforcement practices.

Step 3 - Belarus consults ENIC/NARIC and Committee on Lisbon Convention provisions implementation but this is hard to assess its effectiveness, as there is no information available for public access.

Conclusion

Although, Belarus developed its documents based on the Lisbon Convention provisions and complied with its requirements to some extent, we don't see any steps taken and revisions made developing it further while the European regulations are constantly updated and distributed as Convention's annexes.



d) Transparency instruments

Belarusian side undertook obligation to prepare a plan on incorporating ECTS into educational process by the end of 2017 based on ECTS Users' Guide and based on learning outcomes, curricula structure, their implementation and evaluation as well as its use for mobility programs. Similar plan is to be developed for Diploma supplement availability (free of charge) in accordance with Council of Europe, EC and UNESCO developed format in commonly used language other than Russian.

Transparency instruments implementation in Belarus The Roadmap implementation status: Transparency instruments

Enlarged indicators	Steps	Status
Introduction of three-tire higher education system in accordance with Bologna model using ECTS and LO. Decision making entirety, its implementation effectiveness. Information availability.	1. ECTS implementation plan by the end of 2017 developed. Educational levels, descriptors (LO) and credits range (ECTS) approved	Not implemented fully and properly
	2. Changes and additions to the legislation and other legal provisions establishing three-tire higher education system in accordance with Bologna educational model made. Development of other legal acts regulating the measurements of higher education complexity in credit units in accordance with ECTS (in cooperation with NIHE during 2016)	
	Gradual folding of existing 5-year I tire and transitioning to bachelor degree that equals to 180-240 ECTS	
ECTS introduction in accordance with ECTS Users' Guide Availability of electronic courses catalogue on higher education institution website. Availability of courses catalogue in hard copy. Information access.	Implementing measuring students workload in credit units (ECTS) in accordance with ECTS Users' Guide	Not implemented fully and properly
	Revising curriculum and educational programs based on the learning outcomes and SCL (2015-2017), its implementation, assessment and use for mobility programs	
	Developing documentation for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (courses catalogues that includes general information about educational establishment, its resources and services as well as about its programs and individual study	



	programs, cooperation agreement, educational certificate and internships agreement at working place)	
Plan for automated and free of charge Diploma Supplement issuance by the end of 2017 and its implementation. Access to information.	Developing Diploma Supplement sample in accordance with Council of Europe, EC and UNESCO format on common language (other than Russian). Final version of Diploma Supplement should be available for viewing on public website.	No
	Securing the algorithm of Diploma Supplement issuance by laws. Issuing Diploma Supplement (new version) free of charge	
	Developing plan for automatic free of charge issuance of Diploma Supplement by the end of 2017	
Access to information		Not implemented fully and properly
Status indicators		
Number of students with new Diploma Supplements		Not issued
ECTS depth of penetration into the educational process: Availability on universities' websites local legal acts/documents/materials including: - university's programs including awarded qualification, program duration, credit units and learning outcomes; - awarded qualification level in accordance with NQF and QF-EHEA; - curricula, educational courses including credits (60 ECTS/academic year at full-time program), form of learning (full-time, vocational, e-learning); - admission procedure and criteria including language policy and registration procedure; - participation in international academic mobility program;		Not implemented fully and properly



<p>mandatory or complimentary mobility periods;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition procedures for mobility and prior education (formal and informal); - ECTS credits distribution principles; - individual learning path principles; - conditions for students with disabilities and special needs; - procedures, methods and assessment criteria as well as used assessment scale; - information about given documents of education and qualification, Diploma Supplement (joint, dual or multilateral) 		
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Conclusion

We can conclude that in Belarus ECTS is still perceived as an instrument to transfer national system to so-called European language and is not used as the main instrument of programme design, delivery and monitoring. According to higher education legal and regulatory framework analysis, Belarusian higher education institutions hadn't begun full transition from calculating students' workload in academic (including classroom) hours to calculating it based on ECTS principles oriented towards students' learning outcomes.

II. Mobility of higher education staff and students and internationalization

In autumn 2015, launch work on a plan to facilitate, develop and diversify the international mobility of staff and students to as well as from Belarusian higher education institutions. Such a plan would be expected to include changes to the current system of mobility permits, to allow longer periods of mobility within the EHEA for both staff and students, without ministerial approval. The plan should be completed by the end of 2016 and should outline policy measures as well as any required legislative measures required to increase and diversify academic mobility from Belarus to its partners in the EHEA. Any required legislative measures should be introduced by mid-2017.

The indicators selection or assessing academic mobility and internationalization are based on the corresponding chapter of the Bologna process implementation report in EHEA. ([The European Higher Education Area in 2015. Bologna process implementation report](#))



Develop and diversify the international mobility of staff and students

Indicator	Status on 30.06.2016
Process	
Work starts on the plan to ensure development and diversification of the international mobility for faculty and students coming to and going from Belarusian universities	No information available
Information on plan implementation and results (analysis, publishing, plan's concept, etc.)	No
Real opportunity to influence decision making by all interested parties provided (for example, in a form of public consultations and debate)	No
Plan as a whole or certain areas of academic mobility and internationalization development presented in a form of State Development Programs chapters, Ministry of Education programs	Partly
Higher education plan (national internationalization strategy) including qualitative and quantitative indicators accepted in EHEA	No
According to the Roadmap provisions, amendment of the rules and procedures to travel abroad to boost academic mobility: eliminating approval procedures at the Ministerial level	No
Special budget allocated for development of higher education internationalization	Not implemented fully and properly
Joint educational programs	Not implemented fully and properly
Developing centralized website to supply everyone traveling to and from Belarus with all needed information	Not implemented fully and properly
Establishing universities' branches abroad	Not implemented fully and properly
Specific objectives for developing degree mobility	Not implemented fully and properly
Specific objectives for developing credit mobility in accordance with EHEA criteria	No
Some objectives related to students mobility (students coming to study in Belarusian universities)	Not implemented fully and properly
Separate mobility program for faculty and staff mobility	Not implemented fully and properly
Separate mobility program for faculty and staff traveling abroad	Not implemented fully and properly

Conclusion

It is clear from the analysis above that Belarusian higher education system doesn't correspond to vast majority of indicators for developing its internationalization. On the other hand, we can note some progress in creating the informational channels such as website containing information for



student who travel abroad as well as setting specific objectives for internationalization including faculty and staff mobility. However, there is no change in the current system on mobility permits issues, on allowing longer mobility periods for both staff and students, without ministerial approval.

III. Lifelong learning and the social dimension of higher education

The Roadmap set precise objectives and time line related to acknowledging previous and other forms of education results as well as to reassessing social dimension value in higher education development. It was set that the plan of how to recognize previous/other education results should have been developed by the end of 2015 and implemented by the end of 2017. The Roadmap also stated that mandatory acceptance of the first work place imposed on state supported students should be revised limiting this practice to professions with low demand by the end of 2016. There is also important element related to students financial support that needed to be revised in order to ensure social justice regardless of sex, race, color, disabilities, language, religion, political and other views, nationality at birth (country of birth), ethnical or social origin, association with national minorities, estates and other status. Based on these objectives, the indicators were developed to demonstrate how Belarusian higher education accommodated it.

The Roadmap implementation status: Lifelong learning and the social dimension of higher education

#	Indicator	Status
1	2	5
1.	Acknowledging previous and other forms of education results ECTS USERS' GUIDE 2015 "5.2 Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience Higher education institutions should be competent to award credits for learning outcomes acquired outside the formal learning context through work experience, voluntary work, student participation, independent study, provided that these learning outcomes satisfy the requirements of their qualifications or components. The recognition of the learning outcomes gained through non-formal and informal learning should be automatically followed by the award of the same number of ECTS credits attached to the corresponding part of the formal programme."	No
2.	Changing rules of procedures related to mandatory work placement: saving/reducing the number of students categories for mandatory work placement	No
3.	Introducing alternative mechanisms to enhance graduates employability (work places quotes and other)	No



4.	Students financial support that needed to be revised in order to ensure social justice regardless of sex, race, colour, disabilities, language, religion, political and other views, nationality at birth (country of birth), ethnical or social origin, association with national minorities, estates and other status:	
	a) Increasing the availability of preferential educational loans for students	No
	б) Changing stipends awarding procedures in order to ensure its accessibility for underrepresented groups of students	No
	в) Providing affordable accommodation (dormitory) to students at the rate below market rental prices	Yes

Conclusion

The absence of any amendments to current legislation in terms of Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience and its public discussion allows us to conclude that Belarus hasn't started the implementation of this Roadmap provision.

In terms of graduates mandatory work placement, 2015/2016 academic year again demonstrated that practice of graduates mandatory work placement is still in place and there is not much changed in terms of compliance with EHEA principles and requirements. The Ministry of Education didn't offer any platforms for public discussion on graduates mandatory work placement arising problems, neither offered any alternative ways to handle it using other European countries expertise and practices or how to reform the existing system to ease the tension. Besides, if there are any plans in working on this matter, the Ministry didn't seem to involve any public representatives in it. Academic community, independent experts and civil society representatives were not invited to take part in discussing this issue. The time line for introducing changes into the graduates mandatory work placement may not exist and if it exists, it is not open for public thus it is impossible to access whether this Roadmap obligation would be fulfilled or partially implemented at least.

Regarding students financial support schemes, we didn't notice any substantial changes so far.

1. The criteria for obtaining educational loans aren't changed. The practice of landing for educational purposed maintained.
 Presidential Decree № 616 from 17.12.2002 «On providing citizens of the Republic of Belarus with preferential loans for receiving the first higher education degree in State higher education institutions, higher education institution of consumer cooperation and higher education institution of Belarusian Trade Union Federation on a free of charge basis» is discriminatory as it implies the financial support to students who study only at state (non-private) universities and



envisage the start of loan repayment right after the graduation irrespective of whether the graduates are employed or not.

2. The stipends allocation mechanisms and principles have not changed. Stipend is mostly awarded to students who study on full time basis at state supported places, which constitutes just above 40% of student population in Belarus who may receive stipends.
3. Providing students with affordable accommodation in dormitories, which is less expensive to compare to commercial rentals, is another way of financial support for students and is used by $\frac{3}{4}$ of students in a need of accommodation including underrepresented groups of students and studying on a full time basis. This could be called as an achievement in proving financial support to students but there are some differences, which depend on geographical location of the university, form of ownership, barrier free access for people with disabilities, etc. It is important not to forget that the university authorities use allocation of dormitory places as an instrument of pressure on students demanding their loyal attitude to them, which means that discrimination by political views, is still in place.

IV. Fundamental values of the EHEA

The Roadmap sets time lines and framework for education legislative reform. That requires Belarus to fulfil its obligations undertaken at Yerevan Summit in accordance with Yerevan communiqué. It also requires analysis of national legislation and submission to the Parliament recommendations to amend existing laws to ensure Magna Charta Universitatum principles as well as the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 7 provisions on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The Roadmap also sets straight the need to ensure legal framework allowing students and faculty to establish organizations and register them freely along with other needed legal acts revision to ensure fundamental academic values.

1. Currently, only 5 Belarusian universities out of 52 signed or will sign the document at the next Ceremony of **Magna Charta Universitatum**. However, we have to keep in mind that Grodno State University is among those universities, which going to sign the Charter is well know for its scandalous academic repressions in the recent past.

2. Indicators listed in Recommendation **CM/Rec (2012) 7** interpretation was based on methodology that measures European University Association (EUA) institutional autonomy and The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1997



Fundamental Academic Values incorporation into Belarusian legislation

	Indicator	Status
1.	Securing in law the rector's election procedure and rector's dismissal procedure as responsibility of the university Collegial governing bodies.	No
2.	Establishing maximum office terms for Rector	No
3.	Powers redistributions in the universities in favour of collegial governing bodies in terms of decision making on financial, academic, human resources and organizational matters:	
03.01.	Decisions on academic structure changes	No
03.02.	Establishing legal entities	No
03.03.	Budget allocation and budget reserves as well as other financial means independently of their origin	No
03.04.	Setting tuition fees for all students	No
03.05.	Establishing recruitment, promotion and dismissal procedures for faculty and staff	No
03.06.	Setting salary range for Rector, academic and administrative staff	No
03.07.	Setting students number and admission procedures	No
03.08.	Opening and closing educational program	No
03.09.	Study language selection	No
03.10.	Selecting quality assurance procedures and their provider	No
03.11.	Curriculum (content) design for all educational levels	Partly
03.12.	Awarding doctoral degrees	No
03.13.	Determining university mission and priorities	Partly
4.	Securing in law budget period for university of 3 to 5 years	No
5.	Securing in law block budget methods for higher education institutions	No
6.	Securing in law university's buildings and other real estate ownership	No
7.	Securing in law fundraising procedures for universities from other than state donors	No
8.	Securing in law a mechanism of constant monitoring of fundamental values implementation	No
9.	Securing in law guarantees for equal social partnership in higher education, stakeholders equality and their rights to participate in university management	No
10.	Applying rule of law to all university regardless ownership form	No



Securing in law academic freedom		
11.	Cancelling the regulation on positions substitution for faculty that enables Rector unilaterally set contract terms and conditions for faculty selected on competitive basis	No
12.	Introduction of unlimited contract (tenure) for faculty	No
13.	Exclude from the article 18 of the Education Code term 'state ideology'	No
14.	Banning equating academic and senior administrative staff to state servant in order to limit their academic freedom	No
15.	Securing in law the procedure to enable student to participate in quality of education monitoring	No

Conclusion

In condition of informational vacuum we do not have an opportunity to assess the Ministry of Education plans regarding Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 7 provisions implementation as well as other obligations related to fundamental academic values. However, we can confidently state that formal signing Magna Charta Universitatum by Belarusian universities doesn't prove that situation with academic freedom and institutional autonomy in Belarus has changed.

We can expect certain expansion of the universities' academic autonomy through the right to self-generate up to 50% of the curricula in the first cycle and 70% - in the second one.

There is no public evidence that confirms legal framework change, which will enable students and faculty to establish organizations and register them freely along with other needed legal acts revision to ensure fundamental academic values.

In addition to that, we do not witness evidence of laws amendment in respect of state obligations to guarantee academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Low rating for Belarusian universities academic freedom and institutional autonomy level indicates that Belarusian higher education and Belarusian universities, in particular as public institute, represents other value – regulatory complex than traditional European universities do. Belarusian higher education cultivates other values largely opposite and hardly comparable with academic freedom and institutional autonomy and this value system replacement to another won't happen without poignant conflict.



Final remarks

The monitoring results of the Roadmap provisions implementation were discussed at the International conference “**Public participation in Higher Education modernization: civil society role in the implementation of the Roadmap for higher education reform in Belarus**” held in Minsk on September 23-24, 2016.

The conference participants endorsed the Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee recommendations to amend the Education Code of the Republic of Belarus in order to implement the Roadmap provisions and accelerate Belarusian higher education modernization.

1. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to higher education institutions structure, National Qualification Framework (NQF), transparency instruments (Diploma supplement) we suggest to amend the Education Code, which will:

- commit to transitioning to three-tire educational model and will describe each tire content and graduates qualification in details;
- commit to transitioning to credit system when forming the curricula and taking into account learning outcomes as well as provides its detailed description;
- commit to implementing NQF;
- describes educational standards that are based on ECTS system and NQF including educational program duration and required workload for each educational cycle.

2. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to higher education quality assurance we recommend amending the law allowing the establishment of independent Quality Assurance Agency in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). Therefore, we propose to introduce a new definition of those parties participating in quality assurance process (Independent agencies, Ministry of Education and Council of Ministers), to outline their authority, to provide their activities description, frequency of those activities, internal quality assurance principles.

3. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to academic mobility and higher education internationalization, we propose to prepare descriptive Development and Diversification Plan (National Strategy) in this area based on the Bologna implementation criteria and indicators. We also propose to amend Education Code provisions by introducing international cooperation goals, identifying parties involved, adjusting the definition of academic mobility, committing to establish Special Fund for developing Belarusian students, faculty and administrative staff academic mobility.

4. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to social dimension, we propose to amend the law that will enable higher education institution to revise existing practice graduates employment studying at state funded places. Instead of ‘forced’ employment, we propose to develop a mechanism that will provide all graduates irrespectively of the study form with the first work place based on work places quotes as well as introduce professional orientation system, which will allow graduates to adjust to the situation on the labour market.



We also propose to introduce in law the commitment to ensure recognition of credits, acquired as a result of learning outside the formal education.

We recommend to establish the system of preferential loans for education available for all categories of students with the repayment schedule starting in two years time after graduation.

5. In order to implement the Roadmap provisions related to fundamental academic values, we propose to introduce into the Education Code a clause based on the Magna Charta Universitatum principles and Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 7 provisions on the responsibility of State for ensuring academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Experts' recommendations focused on providing:

- a. Universities independence from political and economic influence;
- b. Inherence of educational process from research in the universities;
- c. Freedom of teaching, research and learning;
- d. Reciprocal learning and multicultural cooperation.

They include exact recommendation on law amendment allowing:

- to guarantee to institutions and individuals the rights of protection against external interference by authorizes;
- to secure higher education institutions organizational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy in full;
- to conduct continuous monitoring of fundamental values implementation;
- to guarantee power redistribution in higher education institutions in favour of collegial governing bodies.

Recommendations of the Bologna Committee experts' include precise articles and points of the Education Code where the amendments should be made. This allows to harmonize the national legislations and to bring it closer to the standards prevalent in European Higher Education Area as much as possible.