

## **HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**

NTO in Albania, September 2005

### **Principles and general objectives of education**

**The education system** in the Republic of Albania is under the jurisdiction of the Albanian Parliament. The education system and the right to education is based on and defined by the Albanian Constitution, which proclaims that education is a national priority.

In the Constitution of the Republic of Albania it is stated that: "Everybody has the right to be educated. According to law, 9- year schools education is compulsory. The pupil must be in school up to 16 years old. In compliance with the law, the members of national minorities have the possibility to teach and learn in their own language, to learn about their history and culture in the framework of school curricula.

The **general principles and objectives** of education include:

- equal rights to education for all citizens, encompassing primary, general and certain vocational education;
- creating conditions for complete personal development, and offering educational opportunities appropriate to the contemporary requirements of young people's development;
- promotion and modernization of educational content in accordance with contemporary social requirements, including scientific achievements and information technology in instruction;
- conforming vocational education with the guidelines of social development and changes in work and production sectors;
- providing conditions for lifelong education;
- increasing education quality and efficiency.

### **Current educational priorities and concerns**

The development of the Republic of Albania, in particular economic, technological, scientific and other reforms, requires further adjustment of education to social needs and establishment and conception of education policy between now and 2008.

Taking into consideration the constitutional orientation according to which the state shall regulate and provide aims and guidelines for development of the economy, science and technology, as well as the conditions for realization of rights of the citizens and general interests in the field of education, the development of education is an integral part of the total development of the country.

The reforms in educational system occurring in Albania during 1992-99 included certain innovations of curricula, new solutions in the domain of foreign language study,

school management, school year, evaluation of teachers' work, etc. were introduced and defined.

Concerning **post-secondary and university education**, the application of new laws led to creating several local universities in Albanian main cities. By adopting the law on post-secondary school in Albania, a segment of non-university postsecondary education has been regulated. The university higher education is realized at universities and other higher institutions.

The domain of education of class teachers (grades 1-4) has suffered the great structural reforms in Albania. Following the world development tendencies referring to the class teacher education and training, the higher education has been introduced as a requirement for this category of teachers. Now those teachers are prepared in the faculties of education located in several Albanian universities.

### **Laws and other basic regulations concerning education**

Passing of laws on education is the jurisdiction of the Parliament. After the multi-party elections held in 1992 and the new Constitution approval which were accepted during 1992-1998, new acts were passed. By these acts, the education sector has been regulated on a new basis and with new characteristics. These acts bring the education system into compliance with the Constitution concerning the rights of citizens, as well as modernization and codification of laws which regulate the domain of education, and the legal regulation of the new education system.

The basic texts of laws concerning education are: Labour Code on Republic of Albania (1995), Private Education (1995), Law on Higher Education on the Republic of Albania (1999) and several amendaments, etc.

### **Administration and management of the higher education system**

According to the Constitution, Government and Parliament Authorities determine educational policy. They formulate and pass laws and other regulations and execute other jobs in the field of education envisaged by law. There are also Ministry of Education and Science and provincial or municipal authorities who take care that certain requirements of citizens in the field of education are met.

The State Administration's activities on education at the level of the country are executed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The competences of the Ministry of Education and Science includes: the implementation of laws and other regulations approved from the Parliament and the Government; decisions on legal matters, management and professional supervision, passing of statutes, and other documents.

Along with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Government executes the tasks of the State Administration. They decide on the establishment of post-secondary schools and universities and other higher education institutions, elaborate the higher education financing standards and handle development requirements in the field of education.

The **Law on Higher Education** regulates the activities of universities and faculties, the establishment and work of managing bodies, way of choosing teaching staff, etc. The role of university, its scope of work and basic work conditions and objectives are regulated by laws, while the overall organization and activities are more closely elaborated by their statute.

The university has managing and professional bodies. The university rector manages the university, while the top managing body of the university is the University Senate, consisting of the representatives of associated members' and founders' representatives.

The universities are distributed in the main cities of Albania.

In Tirana there are the University of Tirana, the Polytechnic University, The Agricultural University, the Academy of Arts, the Academy of Physical Training and Sports and four private universities.

Other universities are in Shkodra, Elbasan, Korça, Vlora and Gjirokastra. On September 2007 other universities are opened in Durres, Berat and Fier.

## **Implementation of the Bologna Process in Albania**

### **1. Adaptation by law of the implementation of the model based on three study cycles**

Albania signed the Bologna Declaration during Berlin conference, on 2003.

During 2003 – 2005 several acts and orders were amended by the Parliament and the Ministry of Education and Science in order to implement the Bologna Declaration, including the study cycles, academic standards in higher education, teaching load, financial autonomy, and university admissions procedures.

From the 2005/06 academic year, all Albanian higher education institutions are working with study programs based on two cycles. The Albanian universities are currently revising their curricula to adapt other fields to the new structure.

Tempus projects helped very much the higher education institutions in order to fit to the Bologna process requirements. Many institutions had JEPs (Join European Projects) and SCMs (Structural Complementary Measures) in the field of curricula development, university management and institution building, several lecturers had IMGs (Individual Mobility Grants) and their curricula were up-dated or written as new ones.

### **2. Adaptation by law of the ECTS system of the credits**

The implementation of ECTS began in 1999. The group set up in the Ministry of Education and Science with university representatives studied many materials and held several seminars in all Albanian Universities in order to help them implement the ECTS scheme.

Actually all Albanian higher education institutions are asked to introduce credits in all subjects

### **3. Adaptation by law of the Diploma supplement**

In 2004, a national seminar on the introduction of the Diploma Supplement was organized by Ministry of Education and Science at national level with representatives of all Albanian universities and a working group was set up within the Ministry of Education and Science, practical implementation of the Diploma Supplement is starting in the 2004/05 academic year. Diploma supplement is issued at the request of the student and is the free service offered by the universities. It is written in Albanian and in English.

### **4. Accreditation, the internal and external quality assurance**

The Accreditation System of Higher Education in Albania was founded on 1999. The Accreditation System is in charge of carrying out Evaluation and Accreditation of the existing Institutions and Programs of Higher Education (HE), evaluation and accreditation of the new courses of study or other new units of HE.

There is an Accreditation Agency on Higher Education and the Accreditation Council, in close cooperation with Ministry of Education and Science (MOES).

Accreditation Agency on Higher Education is a public state-funded institution which is accountable to the Ministry of Education and Science. It was set –up under a Tempus JEP. It is the institution responsible for Evaluation of Quality at HE, drafts and sets the criteria and procedures of Evaluation of Quality of HE, which, after consulting the Higher Education Institutions), submits them to the Accreditation Council awaiting final approval.

In the case of the Non-public HEI, when the report produced by the Agency is negative, the Ministry adopts decisions to the effect of not recognizing the existing course of study or it submits proposals to the Council of Ministers in order for it to no longer recognize the HEI or course.

By virtue of Decision of Council of Ministers of 2001 “For Non-public HEIs in the Republic of Albania”, based on the outcomes of evaluations and accreditation, MOES grants the recognition status to Non-Public courses of study and to the Higher Schools, within 5 years, after receiving the license and after the completion of the courses of study.

Quality Assurance on HE is carried out at the program and/or institutional level. Each process consists of the internal evaluation and external evaluation. Evaluation is done on the basis of procedures prepared by the AAHE which allow for objectivity, transparency and minimization of conflict of interests in the evaluation process.

Internal Evaluation (self-evaluation) is done by the HEIs themselves, while external evaluation is done by a team of experts (peer review) who do not by any means possess conflicts of interests with the institution under evaluation.

The Agency has compiled the full procedure of Quality Evaluation at HE and in collaboration with domestic and foreign experts has prepared the “*Aspects and Indicators for Evaluation of Quality at Higher Education*”.

In terms of evaluations which have been carried out up to now, the ideas of students have been brought in through the various interviews administered by the External Evaluation Team.

## 5. Third-cycle studies

The third cycle of studies has also existed for some time. This cycle has been organized on the basis of criteria laid down in the Decisions by Council of Ministers of 1998 “On the post-university scientific qualification and the classification of pedagogical and research employees” and of 1999 “On Higher Education in Republic of Albania (altered in July 2003). The duration period to be completed varies from 3 to 5 years. All possessing a Masters degree or any other post-university diplomas equivalent to the Master’s, obtained at home or abroad, are eligible to be admitted to pursue the doctorate studies. The process of rendering diplomas equivalent to the domestic ones is taken care of by the institution responsible for running the doctorate studies. Candidates owning only the Bachelor degree can not be admitted to continue with doctorate studies. First they have to complete the Master’s study or any other related program which will allow them at some later stage to qualify for getting started with doctorate studies. For this reason, candidates having a second cycle diploma, which is not quite equivalent to the Master Diploma, have to take extra and complimentary courses in order to complete the program successfully. Only when such complimentary studies are undertaken and when the Master program is fully completed, enrolment in doctorate studies is possible. The preparation phase of the thesis is guided by one or two thesis leaders who have the “professor” or “Associated professor” title, and such a phase is to be overseen, on the basis of an individual program by the Department of the University, where the candidate is registered.

The time needed to prepare a doctorate is currently 3-5 years. The Commission of Scientific Training, which functions at a national level, is responsible to the Council of Ministers, and has managed to determine the institutions which are capable of running the second level programs (master) and doctorate studies.

### Number and percentage of institutions and students concerned, 2004

	Institutions	Students
Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles	All HE institutions are involved in this process	
Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle	7 institutions or 70% of the institutions	535 students are included
Adoption of ECTS	Universities of Tirana.	12190 students or 33% of students
Adoption of the Diploma Supplement	All HE institutions are involved in this process	

Quality Assurance/Evaluation (evaluation of programmes/evaluation of institutions)	-During the 2001-2003 evaluation at 5 programmes at 4 Universities. -During 2004 evaluation and accreditation at all of the Nursery Branches across 6 universities	About 4000 students or 11%
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