higher education in the republic of macedonia – present situation and strategy framework
(for the implementation of the bologna declaration)

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1. Present situation in HE

1.1 Legislative framework

The laws regulate the following topics:

- ➢ The legal status and autonomy of the universities in compliance with the Constitution;
- ➢ Establishment of public and private HEI and necessary conditions for their registration;
- ➢ Introduction of QA systems (evaluation and accreditation of HEI);
- ➢ Establishment and liquidation of HEI;
- ➢ Organisational units of the HEI and forms of cooperation among them;
- ➢ Bodies of the HEI and their responsibilities;
- ➢ Development, financing and property of the HEI;
- ➢ HE activities;
- ➢ Scientific/research, teaching and cooperational titles;
- ➢ Students;
- ➢ Diploma recognition;
- ➢ Supervision of the activities of the HEI.

1. Financing of HE and institutional financing management

Table 1: Sources for financing the Higher Education in EUR for 2003

Type of Sources	Budget
State funding	18,112,590
Self financing activities	25,252,614
Foreign donations	2,237,427
Total:	**45,612,631**

Fig. 1 Percentage of HE financing by type of sources in 2003

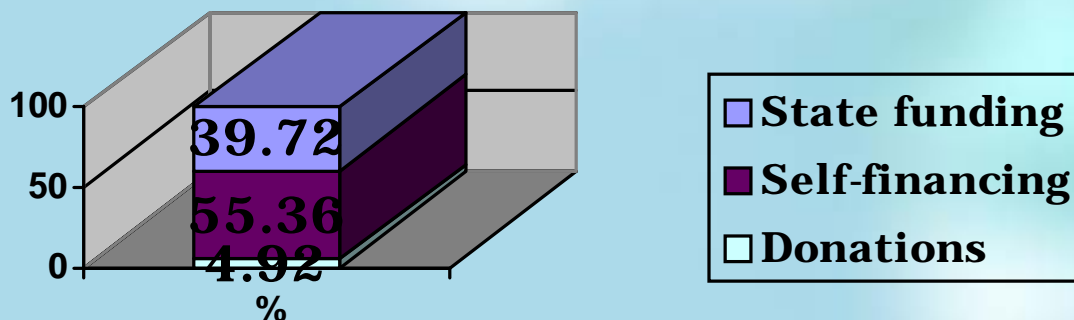- State funding
- Self-financing
- Donations

39.72
55.36
4.92
%

Table 2: Support to the students from the state budget for the year 2001

Category	Number of students	Type of support	Total per year
Talented students (average grade >8.50)	2,430	52 Eur monthly x 10 months	1.275.292
Scholarships for study abroad for professions in demand	280	79 Eur monthly x 10 months	220.421
State scholars	70	52 Eur monthly x 10 months	36.737
Student credits, average grade >7,50 and low family income	5,400	35 Eur monthly x 10 months	1.889.321

1.2 The structure of the system

Table 3: The University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius University" – Skopje
Established in 1949
1. 23 Faculties 2. 7 faculties in technical sciences, natural sciences and mathematics 3. 6 faculties in social and humanities 4. 4 faculties in medical sciences 5. 3 biotechnologies 6. 3 arts. 7. 1 Interdisciplinary Studies in Environmental Protection   11 Scientific institutes (5 with the right to provide postgraduate and doctoral studies)
Number of students: 36,131 (2002/03) Number of teaching staff: 1,607

Table 4: The University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola

Established in 1979

1. 5 Faculties
2. 1 faculty of technical sciences
3. 3 faculties in humanities and social sciences
4. 1 faculty in biotechnologies
5. 1 Higher Vocational School in Nursing
6. 1 Interdisciplinary Studies in Public Administration
7. 3 Scientific institutes (1 with the right to provide postgraduate and doctoral studies)
8. 1 Student residence
9. 1 University Library

Number of students: 9,528 (2002/03)
Number of teaching staff: 161

Table 5: South-East European University (SEE University) – Tetovo

Established in 2001

➢ General academic skills training
➢ Discipline training and specialisation in:
  ➢ Legal Studies
  ➢ Public Administration
  ➢ Business Administration
  ➢ Communication Sciences
  ➢ Teacher Training
➢ University Library
➢ Three student dormitories
➢ Two computer centres.

Number of students: 2,250
Number of teaching staff: 151

1.4 Curricula, teaching and learning

Organisation of education:

➢ Pre-school education (1-6 years of age)
➢ "Zero-th year" (6-7 year of age)
➢ Elementary education (7-14 years of age)
➢ Secondary education (15-19 years of age)
➢ Art schools (music, ballet, fine arts)
➢ School for children and young people with physical and mental disabilities
➢ Education of adults and informal education
➢ Complementary instruction for citizens of the country living abroad

Degrees in Higher Education:

I.   Undergraduate studies, with duration of 4 to 6 year full time studies.
     Diploma is awarded to students who have successfully completed the
     undergraduate studies.
     Postgraduate studies Master's Degree studies, duration 3–4
     semesters
     Doctor's Degree can be achieved either by doctoral studies and a
     dissertation   defence, or by application and dissertation defence.

II. Undergraduate studies for professional education with duration less
     than 4 years.

III. Postgraduate professional studies (specialisation). Duration: not less
     than 9 months.

IV. Doctoral studies, continuing education, studies for upgrading of the
     knowledge

University management bodies:

➢ University Senate – members: the rector, vice-rectors, deans and the faculties, directors of higher schools, scientific institutes and of other institutions-members of the university, 3 representatives of the founder appointed by the Parliament, and 3 student representatives, appointed by the Student Union of the university.

➢ Rector, Rector's administration

Student participation

1.Teaching staff and students

Table 6: Staff distribution by categories at the state universities:

	Number
Teachers	1,155
Teaching assistants	613
Administrative staff	987
Total:	**2,755**

Table 7: Distribution of students at the state universities in the academic year 2002/03

Category	Number
Full-time students enrolled in an academic year for first time	26,193
Full-time students enrolled in an academic year for second time	9,584
Self-financing students	2,955
Part-time students	6,927
Total:	**45,659**

Fig. 2: Distribution of students in the academic year 2002/03 per study years

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
%	32	27	20	18	2	1
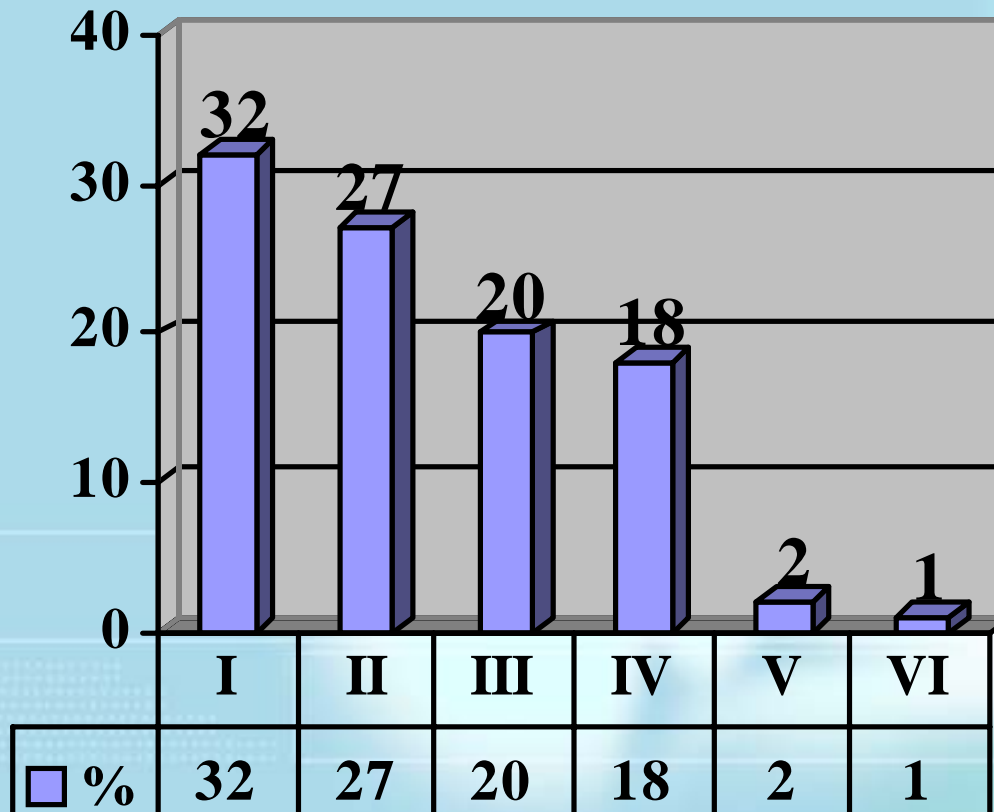
Insufficient and low quality of knowledge acquired during the secondary education.
Low interest of the students for the study programmes.
Length of studiese.

1.5 Norms and standards for establishment of HEI

➢ Standards for determining a study fields
➢ Norms for necessary space and equipment for HEI
➢ Norms for sustainable level of financing of a private HEI and its study programmes
➢ Norms for a good quality financial guarantee for establishment of a private HEI
➢ Norms for the number of teaching staff in a higher education institution
➢ Norms for the number of teaching assistants and other collaborators
➢ Norms for the number of students in a group for lectures
➢ Norms for the number of administrative staff employed in the HEI
➢ Norms for duration of agreements for renting space for a HEI

1.6   Regulations concerning financing and the budget

Important role in the reform processes will have the **HE Development and Financing Council**, introduced with the Law for Changes and Amendments to the Law on HE. The Council was established in October 2003 with decision of the Council of Ministers.

➢ Number of accredited study programmes;
➢ Number of students according to the public interest recognised by the state according to subject areas;
➢ Deficitary study programmes;
➢ International applicability;
➢ Length of studies;
➢ Propulsion to upper years of study.

Upon a proposal prepared by the HE Development and Fi-nancing Council, the Government will adopt a Programme for Higher Education Development.

➢ Prepare a programme for investments aiming at enlargement of the spatial capacities of the HEI and the dor-mitories;
➢ Propose abolishment of the financial participation for all students that belong to the state financed quota;
➢ A common price list for administrative services for students will be introduced;
➢ Establish grants for support to students to the "non-attractive" study programmes and faculties.

1.7. Quality assurance and study programs development

Accreditation Board

➢ determines whether, by the project on the establishing of a HEI and the relevant documentation submitted, requirements have been met regarding the HE activity performing;

➢ decides on the accreditation of a scientific institution wishing to perform postgraduates and doctoral studies;

➢ determines whether the HEI fulfils the conditions for organising new study programmes and determines the capacity for studying at the HEI;

➢ accredits study programmes;

➢ keeps records on HEI it has decided to have accredited and for the other accreditation;

➢ and performs other tasks provided for by the Law on HE.

Self-evaluation is performed by HEI. **The Evaluation Agency:**

➢   On the basis of the commission report on the evaluation of a HEI, monitors the work of HEI to which accreditation have been issued;

➢   Once in every five years, assesses the status and operation of HEI and, on that basis, proposes to the Accreditation Board extension or withdrawal of accreditation;

➢   Issues recommendations necessary for the improvement of norms and standards for higher education activity performing;

➢   Proposes measures to improve the network of HEI;

➢   On the basis of the quality assessment of the academic staff undertaken at the HEI assesses the quality of the academic staff at the universities and other HEI in the Republic of Macedonia and proposes measures for its improvement.

➢   The Evaluation Agency adopted *Guidelines for Quality of HE* in the Republic of Macedonia, for the external quality assessment procedure, upon a proposal by the Inter-University Conference.

➢   Inter-University Conference adopted also *Guidelines for Evaluation and Evaluation Procedure* at the level of Faculty/ HEI/ Research Institute, for self-evaluation procedures.

1.8. Macedonian National Informative Centre

➢ Devising general description of the educational system: legislation, ranking of HEI, admission requirements, programs, qualifications, titles;
➢ Devising legal regulations for recognition;
➢ Implementation of the international legislative within the home legal system;
➢ Collecting information on foreign educational systems, focusing on HES;
➢ Acquiring knowledge on foreign educational systems including non-formal and non-traditional education such as lifelong learning or distance learning;
➢ Clarifying the presence or absence of major differences between foreign and native qualifications;
➢ Description of the recognition procedure accessible for applicants, the transparent assessment methodology, length of the procedure, right to appeal (Commission, Ministry, Supreme Court), costs of the procedure, application of translation, application for essential documents;
➢ Identifying instruments for recognition of institutions and programs in the sense of devising tools such as: ECTS and Diploma Supplement, criteria and procedures for assessment;
➢ Identifying forged documents and qualifications-authentication;
➢ Verification (HEI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Apostil);
➢ Creating a database in the field of recognition;
➢ Promoting the Lisbon Convention and fulfilling the main objectives;
➢ Promoting the Bologna Declaration;
➢ Networking with the other ENIC/NARIC information centres.

2. Strategy framework for the implementation of the Bologna declaration

2.1. Establishing of a regulatory context

➢ The Republic of Macedonia recognises HE as public good and public responsibility. The Government takes over the public responsibility for the framework of HE, including:
➢ The degree structure;
➢ The institutional framework;
➢ The framework for quality assurance and
➢ Authoritative information on the HE framework.
➢ Enhancement of the university-faculty relationship-promotion of an integrated university of which universities are constituent parts. Taking into consideration that this would be the most important structural intervention the law would foresee a five-year period, during which the necessary transformation would be completed.
➢ Establishment and recognition of joint degrees;
➢ Increased student involvement in core institutional functions and processes;
➢ Increasing of life-long learning, including the recognition of prior learning will be updated.
➢ Establishment of legal basis for portability of national loans and grants.

Agreements for participation of Macedonia in EU and other international programmes relevant for HE and research development will be signed.

Signing of agreements for bilateral cooperation with countries signatories of the Bologna declaration at national, institutional, organisational or individual level will be supported, too.

Quality Assurance

➢ Definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved;
➢ Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal asses-sment, external review, participation of students and publication of results;
➢ A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures;
➢ International participation, co-operation and networking.
➢ The small size of the HE system of the Republic of Macedonia could be overcome by regional networking in QA and co-operation with ENQA.
➢ The country will pay special attention to development of qualified staff for support to the QA system.
➢ Majority of the evaluation processes (the external evaluation in particular) is significantly donor sponsored. Such a process will not be sustainable in medium-to long-term. The Ministry will start planning finances from the national budget or other funding sources for continuous quality evaluation. The plan will include national financial support for the Evaluation Agency and the Accreditation Board, too.

Degree structure: Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles

➢ First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs.
➢ First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Promotion of mobility

➢ Intensive East-West and West-East mobility is immanent to Tempus activities. Be it East-West or West-East mobility (over 230 grants have been awarded to academic staff, administrative staff, ministry officials since 1996), or massive motilities of academics, administrators and students in framework of the Joint European Projects and the Compact Measure Projects.

➢ The best illustration for strengthening of mobility of young people and academic staff in the CARDS region would be the currently running project for postgraduate studies in the field of Earthquake Engineering, involving students from Albania, Croatia and the Republic of Macedonia. Synergy with the DAAD financed postgraduate studies project has been achieved, bringing together students from the three above mentioned countries, but also students from Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Serbia and Montenegro.

➤ Involvement of students in the Joint European Projects, and in that context, promoting student mobility will be Tempus priority in the coming years.

➤ It is worth mentioning that, since 2002, Tempus has opened a possibility for representatives of students associations to participate in the Individual Mobility scheme, too. The country will continue supporting all possibilities for intensifying mobility in higher education.

➤ The Republic of Macedonia will continue the discussions with the EU Member States, candidate countries and others, for removing the formal obstacles to mobility (e.g. the visa regime) etc.

Establishment of a system of credits

➢ The most significant example is the completed university management project for implementation of a credit transfer system comparable with the ECTS at the University " St. Kliment Ohridski", and in particular, at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Bitola.

➢ The first pilot credit transfer system at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University " St. Cyril and Methodius" was developed with a project for restructuring the training and retraining system for teachers and trainers in the reformed VET system.

➢ A complex university management project in biotechnologies with participation of the universities in Skopje and Bitola, addressing: preparation for student mobility with introduction of credit transfer systems, innovations of educational methodologies, development of QA systems, as well as strengthening of university-enterprise cooperation is in a process of finalization.

Recognition of degrees: Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

➢ The ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in April 2003 opened a possibility for further adjustment of the recognition procedure in the Republic of Macedonia in accordance with the process of building the EHEA.

➢ In accordance with the Berlin Communiqué, the Republic of Macedonia will assure that, starting from the year 2005, every graduated student receives the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge. The use of Diploma Supplement will improve the transparency and flexibility of the HE degree systems, by fostering employability and facilitating academic recognition for further studies.

Management and administrative structures: from higher education policy to institutional management and planning

➢ In this context, reforming the current organisation of universities, most of which function as weak associations of legall-y autonomous higher education institutions, will be crucial in the coming years.
➢ This refers both to changing the national legislation and to its implementation by changing the structures and governance & management of the institutions.
➢ Expected structural reform would be giving the university responsibility for its faculties and all other constituent parts.
➢ The faculties and other constituent parts would have decision-making power to decide on their teaching and research and to take care of their internal management within their allocated budget.
➢ Strategic management and institutional development planning will have to become essential in future reforms. Since they have not been in the focus of the reforms, intensive training of the management structures at university/faculty/institute level will be necessary. The lack of appropriate knowledge and skills have been identified by different international partners (the World Bank, the European Commission, UNESCO-CEPES, etc.) The HEI and the Ministry should develop training programmes that would be financially supported by donors.

Higher education institutions and students

➢ Improvement of the studying and living conditions for the students, thus helping them to complete their studies on time without obstacles related to their social and economic background, will be priority area of the Republic of Macedonia.

➢ Strengthening student role and participation in core institutional functions and processes, including governance of HEI will be supported. Improvement of student services, including development of relevant in-formation systems will be priority area of the Republic of Macedonia.

➢ Special information systems with data relevant for the social and economic situation of students should be developed and used for optimisation of the support to the students.

Promotion of the European dimension in higher education

➢ The regional Tempus cooperation started in the year 1998, with a project for development of common curricula and teaching materials in Law and Economics courses at the universities in Skopje (the Republic of Macedonia) and at the universities in Tirana and Skodra (Republic of Albania). Sustainability of the cooperation established with this project was supported with a new Tempus project on EU institutions, law, history and human rights, widening the partnership with involvement of the University in Sarajevo.

➢ The support to development of Euro dimension in accounting education, resulted with improved undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Economics of the University " St. Cyril and Methodius" -Skopje and in development of a certification programme.

➢ A postgraduate programme in European Integration targeted at civil servants was established in the year 1999.

➢ The first interdisciplinary studies in public administration at the University " St. Kliment Ohridski" -Bitola, started in the academic year 2001/02.

➢ The University "St. Cyril and Methodius" is finalizing a project for establishing interdisciplinary European Studies.

➢ The recently finalized project for postgraduate studies in international management, incorporating distance education could be a basis for development of regional cooperation.

The project for improvement of veterinary education is in a process of finalization, and a running project covers the restructuring of medical studies.

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area
The HEI are encouraged to maximise participation in the EU scholarship programmes for students from third countries.

Lifelong learning
The urgent needs for providing different forms of training courses for public administration employees and civil society building have been covered with several projects:

➢ Regional project with participation of universities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Macedonia for training of judges with a view to develop a "European judge".
➢ Advanced training courses to fight organized crime. Short courses with different modules are provided to public administration officers in the field of interior, customs public prosecutor, judges etc.
➢ Short courses in the field of agro-economics developed and run for civil servants in the field of agriculture.
➢ Establishment of a training center for assessment of pressure equipment, providing training to administration and technical personnel.

b) Technology transfer centers

➢ A technology transfer center in chemical and textile engineering was established at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy of the University " St. Cyril and Methodius", providing opportunities for benefiting from different forms of LLL courses.

➢ A project for establishment of a Croatian center for technology transfer in biotechnology and in applied economics for the countries of South-East Europe, involving universities from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia is currently running.

➢ The Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" is developing an office for international technology transfer.

➢ The Faculty of Fine Arts of the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" is finalizing a project for developing partnerships with public and private companies for production of handmade paper.

European Higher Education Area and European Research Area – two pillars of the knowledge based society

➢The Republic of Macedonia supports the need for closer links between the EHEA and the European Research Area.

➢The HEI are encouraged to work on development of doctoral studies as part of the Bologna process. They are encouraged to use the EU cooperation programmes (Tempus, the Sixth Framework Programme), COST, UNESCO etc. for achieving these goals.

➢The HEI are encouraged to increase the international cooperation in doctoral studies and training of young researchers. Development of Macedonian centres of excellence and their involvement in networks at doctoral level will be country priority.

➢The Law for Changes and Amendments to the Law on Higher Education from August 2003 opened possibility for recruitment of young teachers and researchers.

Stocktaking

➢ The Republic of Macedonia is committed to mobilise all stakeholders in the Bologna process to work on maximisation of the achievements in the three intermediate Bologna process priorities (QA, two-cycle system and recognition of degrees & periods of studies). The efforts would result with a satisfactory report that would be prepared in framework of the stocktaking process and submitted to the Conference of the Ministers Responsible for HE in 2005.

2.2. Mission of tertiary education

2.2.1. Aims

➢ Basic aim in Macedonia is r*aising the number of citizens with completed tertiary education*.
➢ Consensus at all levels - Governmental, institutional and individual (including academic staff, administrative staff and students) - on the need for *reform of tertiary education along the lines of the Bologna Process* is evident.
➢ *Increased percentage of citizens, especially secondary school graduates, enrolled in tertiary education.*
➢ Achieving *equitable access to tertiary education.* The complexity of the Macedonian multiethnic society and the necessity to open the tertiary education to all *social* groups (ethnic communities, handicapped people, different age or gender groups) justify the high priority of this aim.
➢ R*aising efficiency of tertiary education* - Strengthening policy making capacity, changed budget allocation process and improved accountability and transparency would lead to achievement of this goal.

2.2.2.   Principles

➢Making policy decisions more effectively and efficiently.

➢Restructuring resource allocation to coincide with policy objectives and

➢Improving transparency.