

## EUA Quality Culture Project, Round III

### NETWORK 3 REPORT

#### **IMPLEMENTING BOLOGNA REFORMS**

#### **1. Introduction**

Network 3 within EUA QC Round III was a priori established by a group of 9 universities with different traditions, dimensions and positions within their national backgrounds and in the European Bologna process:

- **“Gh. Asachi” Technical University of Iași, Romania (TUI)**, established in 1937 with its root from the old college of landscaping engineering founded back in 1813, presently over 13000 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Gabriela M. Atanasiu*, Network Coordinator and *Dr. Florin Leon*, Assistant Coordinator;
- **Mersin University, Turkey, (UM)**, formally established in 1992, with almost 18500 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Tamer Gök*, Vice-president;
- **The Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece (AUEB)**, established in 1920, the oldest Greek academic institution offering education in economics and business, with about 8.000 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Athanasios Skouras* and *Prof. Dr. Nansi Papalexandri*, Vice rector,
- **The St. Petersburg State University, Russia (SPbSU)**, founded by Peter the Great’s edict in 1724, the oldest university in Russia, with over 25.000 students and 2.000 postgraduate students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Ilia Dementiev*, Vice-president,
- **Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland (DIT)**, statutorily established in 1993, constituted from the six higher education colleges founded since 1887, presently with over 21000 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Frank McMahon*, Director of Academic Affairs and *Dr. Noel O’Connor* ;
- **Åbo Akademi, Finland (ABO)**, founded in 1640 by the Swedish Kingdom, presently with around 8500 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Olle Anckar* and *Mr. Ole Karlsson*;
- **The University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna, Austria (BOKU)**, founded in 1872, with around 5800 students represented by *Mag. Thomas prof. dr. Erika Staudacher* and *Mg. Thomas Guggenberger*,
- **Technical University of Koszalin, Poland, (TUK)** founded in 1968, with around 13000 students, represented by *Prof. Dr. Tomasz Heese*, Vice-president,
- **The University of Prishtina, Kosovo (UP)**, established in 1969, currently the dominant higher education institution in Kosovo, with around 28800 students, officially represented by Destimi Halimi Secretary general, with effective participation of *Mrs. Bardha Qirezi*, in first meeting and *Prof. Dr. Luad Ahma*, and *Prof. Dr. Ferdiqe Etemi*.

Figure 1 illustrates the geographic distribution of the network universities and their number of students.



Fig. 1. Distribution of NW3 participants within EHE area.

The institutions of the NW3 are enjoying different degrees of autonomy.

Within the first group of universities, UP, due to the specific conditions can enjoy only a rather reduced degree of autonomy. AUEB, UM and SPbSU show good incentives for strategic development at institutional level, but their degrees of autonomy are still depending on policies done at national level.

The second group of institutions seems to enjoy an increased academic autonomy especially after Bologna Declaration from 1999, in term of strategic financial and human resources policies. It is the case of TUI where during the latest 2 years the new policies for transparency of financial aspects and good incentives for developing research are in place; likewise for TUK.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> group of universities from NW3 are enjoying academic autonomy. This group is formed of DIT and ABO, and, in the latest 3 years also BOKU, where the strategic direction and human resources are in place and the decision on research and detaching activities is very well performed within the institutional frame.

The project had a smooth and good execution due to a priori appropriate selection of project participants done by EUA. At the same time, despite the different geographical locations, state of the art of organizational quality culture, background and past experiences the group, from the beginning enjoyed the feeling that actually we are all facing together the same extraordinary task of **reshaping** our vision and mission statement in order to give to our graduates the skills and competencies needed to respond to a globalised high-tech and extremely competitive society.

The meetings benefited from the valuable help of EUA facilitators, Dr. Karin Riegler and Dr. Sybille Reichert and a very good monitoring and advice of Dr. Nina Arnhold, and practical support from Dr. Harald Scheutle.

## 2. Main features of implementation of Bologna Process

### 2.1. Implementing the three-cycle structure

A trend that appears all over the network is the quite recent set of measures taken to reorganize the study programs structure into a three cycle configuration (Bachelor, Master, PhD), following the Bologna process requirements. In all NW3 universities, the national context is perceived as an opportunity for these changes, which give the feeling of ensuring a real compatibility with the corresponding European structures.

The programme lengths at the universities in the network are slightly different, but following closely the 3 cycles structure: 6-8 semesters for Bachelor, 3-4 semesters for Master, and minimum 6 semesters, usually more, for PhD, as it is shown in Table 1.

### 2.2. Improving comparability and transparency

In order to identify the patterns to improve comparability and transparency within Bologna our NW3 focussed on: Curriculum changes, ECTS implementation, Diploma Supplement and recently the problem of Framework of Qualification for our graduates.

- **Curriculum**

The new BA-MA-PhD programs supposed a new strategic planning including not only the structure, but also the mindset, the philosophy of study programmes.

There are several possibilities to define the mission and program objectives: internal and external needs analysis, benchmarks and definition of target groups. An important problem to face is that usually professors want good students, while the top management team may want sometimes only an increased number of students, due to financing based exclusively on the number of students. Thus, the trade-off between quality and funding is an important managerial decision that should be addressed by strategic management.

Regarding the rethinking process of the program curricula, needed for new 3-cycle structures, the universities of our network are situated at different stages, some of the universities being more advanced than others. At TUI, the planning aimed to ensure compatibility with similar study programs of European partners' universities within Socrates/Erasmus programme. At UM, department for international and national programs was taken into account from the beginning while developing the curriculum. At SPbSU a teaching-to-learning shift has been considered as needed for traditional educational technologies, but most people prefer traditional programmes instead of Bachelor/Master, which are not so attractive for the moment. Interdisciplinary Master programmes are welcome but the centralised institutional structure of university, together with a less flexible legislation are not in favour yet of the implementation of BA-MA-PhD content in the sense of Bologna. At AUEB, there is the conviction that the first degree (Bachelor) gives the specialization or professional identity. It is believed that reducing the number of years to 3 years will not gain the critical mass for acceptance and the quality of Master and PhD programs will decrease.

Concerning the content of 3 years Bachelor curriculum, the NW3 participants expressed the need of validation for the graduates by the professional associations and the labour market. In order to meet the minimal criteria set up by the national councils, the universities must develop new curricula. An improvement is needed to redesign the mission for Bachelor/Master degrees.

At BOKU, although the new structure 3+2+3 is operational, there are still several objectives that must be accomplished: promoting employability of Bachelor graduates, informing students about the new changes, research-based study programmes, permanent programme updating (especially for Master studies), a demand-oriented approach (change from "push to market" to "pull from market"), competition analysis in local and national context of the university's educational offer (matching demands, that should be done at university site, with international programmes, and with other universities). It is also important to address regional, European and international problems with needs (or market) analysis, taking into consideration relevant employers. At BOKU, qualitative interviews with employers were introduced since 2001, but the process was not so easy, because they have different opinions. The problem is to determine what opinion is more relevant, especially when employers may be behind universities in terms of needs. Also, in some areas it is difficult to predict the future.

In curriculum planning process, the outcome of the study program is needed to be focussed in terms of students' examination results but not only that. However, the evaluation process of students' results by external reviewers should not lead to assessment fatigue (like in Finland or other universities of Anglo-Saxon part of Europe, due to lots of papers). Analysis goals should be clear. Competences needed at the end of the learning and teaching process are knowledge and skills, skills being specified regarding particular subjects or general (transferable) skills for the program. Internal and external examination should be done according to the desired competences. However, practical skills are easy to test, but assessing more abstract ones could be more difficult. Needs of assessment can result from interviews with experts, industry, and peer reviewing. This process can lead in this case to new core curricula, based also on international experts' suggestions.

In Finland the planning of new curricula according to a two cycle system was carried out in two steps. The first phase consisted of national working groups for all the different subject areas (law, economics etc.). At these meetings a general structure for the bachelor and master levels were set up. The structure was based on learning outcomes; thereby securing that all bachelors from the same subject area will have a comparable level of knowledge and skills.

The second phase was to rebuild the study programmes within each university in accordance with the general outlines agreed on in phase one. At Åbo every course was evaluated

and a special effort was put on estimating the workload. A formula was created so that the workload for different types of working methods could be estimated. The estimation was based on what an average student could perform. The evaluation process showed that many courses had too much content in relation to the ECTS-points granted. For that reason the teachers were urged to rank the course content according to the three levels 'must know', 'should know' and 'nice to know'. Contents/material ranked to level three was of course the first to be removed if the workload evaluation showed that the course wasn't in balance. In Finland the planning of new curricula according to a two cycle system was carried out in two steps. The first phase consisted of national working groups for all the different subject areas (law, economics etc.). At these meetings a general structure for the bachelor and master levels were set up. The structure was based on learning outcomes, thereby securing that all bachelors from the same subject area will have a comparable level of knowledge and skills.

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Traditionally, Austrian students had great choice within studies (an average of 5 years to complete their studies), depending on student's initiative. Now the Bachelor system is more structured and most students, around 90%, would want to also continue to Master degree program, which would cause a challenging problem to Bologna process philosophy. Also, in some programmes there are many students, in others too few, and there is a threat that some programmes could be discontinued too soon.

Another issue, related to the previous one, addresses the type of graduates: flexible graduates vs. graduates with focused competences. Bachelor should be more teaching intensive – in the first years there should be more lectures. The Master should be more research-oriented, as it is shared by DIT experience.

The participants agreed that there is no gained experience yet with Bachelor/Master structure (except in the case of DIT which has had many years experience of the structure) and this might lead to a feeling of insecurity among students and at employers' level as well. Maybe the experience of UK universities, where after the 3 year bachelor program, the employer offers *training on the job*, could be useful. In Austria there are discussions of setting performance indicators for the university e.g. some percentage of the Bachelor graduates should go to the labour market.

Requirements of industry may change rapidly. Demands from leaders of industry concerning specialisation and content should be considered with caution. The development in the telecom business in Finland can constitute as an example. At the time when the business experienced a massive boom the companies of the sector urged the polytechnics and the universities to educate engineers with certain skills. The institutions redesigned their study programmes to fit the demand and the intake was increased. To become an engineer still takes 4-5 years. During this time the companies made their own solutions. Engineers from other scientific fields were offered relevant training by the companies, engineers were hired from other countries and some companies moved their factories to countries with lower wages. The consequence of these decisions was that the tailor-made engineers didn't find jobs after graduation as forecasted.

During economic growth, internships in companies interested in hiring students later, work well. In downturn in employment, companies cancel arrangements, because they have too many employers already. Industry works on a much tighter time-scale than universities. In Ireland this proved to be a problem when universities included an industrial stage in electronics programmes but companies were unwilling to offer places when the computer industry declined.

It is important to note that employers who will recruit the new BA/MA graduates are hardly accepting the 3 years bachelor graduate. The 3+2 structure may be based on a mistaken idea (especially in technical fields). Actually the participants agreed on fact that there is no such rule

expressed in Bologna Declaration, there is only the fact that many countries adopted this structure, but in technical field there is a growing wish of having 4 years for Bachelor programmes.

In TUI the project implementation was at right time because of Bergen Conference too. Some of the important milestones in this process were the reorganization of the university study programs in 3 cycles, operational from 2005-2006. In Romanian Higher Education the new Bachelor/Master and doctoral cycles is seeking to ensure a real compatibility with the corresponding European structures. In order to meet the minimal criteria set by a national council, the universities must develop new curricula. An improvement is the need to redesign the mission for Bachelor/Master. Lately within the "excellence research" programs, setting up postdoctoral programs is an opportunity to attract young researchers.

- **ECTS**

The NW3 participants used different ways to set up ECTS depending of the organisational culture in calculation of the workload. However a range of 20 hrs per credit to 25 hours per credit could be identified, which was leading to 60 credits per year and respectively 30 credits per semester.

In order improve and balance the work-load one must reconsider the curricula, as it was done in DIT and ABO. The study programmes have been reviewed and obsolete courses had to be renewed. One has to give new weights for courses (for ECTS), in order to make the number of credits proportional to the amount of work. The problem with this analysis comes from the financial constraints.

ECTS is based on students' workload which in turn is based on student hours: courses, laboratory work, and library study. At DIT a student-centred evaluation is attempted, based on the whole student experience. Students get online support (wireless environment in the library).

Contact hours are not significant for ECTS, learning hours are. Also, one must take into account that in order to define the programme length, most people think in terms of years, not ECTS.

A move from summative assessment (exam at the end of the module) to formative assessment (4 weeks, online) is needed. Even if there is a strong tradition in teaching, there should be fewer lectures and fewer hours in classroom, but more in library and group work. Traditionally, in Ireland, if a student fails at the end of the year, he/she has 3 more attempts (in September, June next year, September) then he/she is expelled. With modularization, there is less emphasis on this, when a student gets a module, he/she keeps it and accumulates the number of modules/credits passed. Now there is a more student-friendly approach, because traditionally, if a student had 7 subjects got 6 and failed 1, he/she had to repeat them all).

At University of Prishtina, until now, the ECTS system works only as an accumulation system, not as a transfer system yet, with the exception of Prishtina Summer University. There are ECTS coordinators at faculty level, being needed at department level too. ECTS is not used in life-long learning, and student work-load is not known. The goal here is to reassign ECTS according to the curricula.

The DIT recommendation here would be that from the start all the courses should have an equal number of credits (e.g. 5 or a multiple of 5), and one shouldn't allow freedom to change (e.g. 3 to 6).

At St. Petersburg University ECTS comes from a statistical analysis, because it is not easy to convert traditional grades to ECTS. There are at least two main problems. The first is the strong faculty resistance (most faculties have staff at least 60 years old). Some experiments started in some schools to scale grades from 0 to 100, or from 0 to 10 etc. Another problem is the government financial support. In order to change the grade system, the law must be changed, and this is not a decision to be made at university level. This year the curricula will be redesigned for ECTS.

In Finland the University Decree states that the workload for an academic year (60 ECTS) is 1600 hours. The academic year is divided in to four semesters. It's anticipated that the students complete courses equivalent to 15 ECTS every semester.

At DIT, the number of contact hours a week varies from 16 to 27. The trend in recent years has been to decrease the number of contact hours. In Finland less than 20 hours are recommended, but an internal decision at Åbo lead to 12 hours a week. On the contrary, Austrian curricula for Bachelor are overloaded. The ESTS system is not fully implemented (it has no ECTS

label yet). In Romania also, there is a stepwise process to decrease the number of contact hours from 32-34 to 28 (against a big resistance), then to 26 at present. In Romania, a Ministry order made the implementation of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) mandatory.

- ***National qualifications framework***

The existence of a national Framework of Qualifications has been deemed necessary by the Ministers of Education meeting in the Bologna process. The DIT experience shows the importance of having this framework for the future graduate, which will be operational in Finland too. The permanent consulting and acceptance of the employers is a good experience in DIT and Ireland generally as well as the orientation of curriculum toward the learning outcomes of the program.

In Finland a proposition for a qualification framework has been accepted by the universities. The Parliament will confirm the framework during 2006. Åbo will use the framework in its evaluations. The students will have the chance to evaluate their learning in relation to the framework. The same idea will be introduced when conducting course evaluations. The learning outcomes of the course chosen for evaluation will appear on the electronic evaluation sheet.

The National Qualifications Framework is designed to provide national standards for qualifications and the recognition of credits for a wide range of knowledge and skills. Each standard registered on the framework describes what a learner needs to know or what they must be able to achieve. Because the standards are nationally agreed, learners' achievements can be recognized in a number of contexts. Their knowledge and skills will be transferable between qualifications and providers. Standards specify learning outcomes. Having qualifications based on learning outcomes is what makes framework qualifications different from other qualifications systems (which are often focused more on outputs such as courses or inputs such as curricula or teaching hours). Each unit standard has a defined credit value and sits at a specified level on the framework. Credits may be accumulated from different learning institutions or workplaces towards a single qualification. All organizations accredited to assess against standards recognize framework credits awarded by others.

From our discussions it appears that only Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Scotland and Wales have a National qualifications framework up to now. In other countries, commissions have been started by the Ministry of Education. St. Petersburg University started a partnership with all 4-5 professional communities to estimate professional standards on the national qualifications framework. However, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education are still rigid. Even if the process should start from the universities, it would be more effective if the Ministry had supported it.

Looking at European level, a single true European qualifications framework will greatly increase the transparency and comparability of awards (so that there should not be any more need for conversions), and it may be an opportunity for those countries not having one yet

- ***Diploma Supplement***

The European Diploma Supplement is a Europe-wide certificate intended to facilitate learner mobility within Europe. It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which the supplement is appended.

St. Petersburg University will issue the Diploma Supplement this year with learning outcomes. In Romania, the implementation of Diploma Supplement is mandatory to deliver for the accomplished study programs, starting with the 2005-2006 academic year. At AUEB, all subjects were translated, and also students write their names in Latin characters (this is important for getting a visa for example). The Diploma Supplement is made automatically, with a short description of the national system in English. Diploma Supplement can be issues in more international languages. However, it is perceived that the difficult part is to accumulate all the grades into a database.

Presently, students going abroad can manage only with a translated transcript of their records; the institutions have always worked with them, and therefore it is unclear if the Diploma Supplement will actually bring something new to help students.

As to the Diploma Supplement introduction it can be identified the operational stage from 2004/2005 in ABO and TUK and in TUI, AUEB, and BOKU. While some Irish universities introduced the Diploma Supplement in 2005, DIT will commence to issue them in 2006.

### **2.3. Mobility issues**

There is a difference in number of students going from West to East or from English-speaking countries to non-English-speaking countries and the other way around. For example, Mersin University receives 1/4 or 1/5 of the number of students and staff sent abroad. At St. Petersburg the ratio of exchange students coming in and going out is 1 to 30. Conversely, at DIT, the number of persons coming in is twice as the number of persons going out. There is an incentive at European level to double the mobility number. In English-speaking countries, since programmes are in English, they are popular among foreign students. If there were more programmes in English in other countries, students would go abroad more.

Programmes such as Erasmus are perceived as having a problem, namely the students get their money rather late. Also, getting visas for students and staff may be difficult. Even in our network, the participants from Kosovo could not attend the meeting in Dublin because they could not get their visas in time.

In the University of Prishtina, student mobility is present only in Summer University. Therefore Summer University or similar actions can be a starting point for institutions interested in developing mobility.

At Koszalin, beside Socrates/Erasmus, and Leonardo da Vinci programmes for students, there is the MOSTECH programme (similar to Socrates but for Polish universities), where students can change the university for one semester.

A good practice can be shared taking example of ABO University where for returning mobile students some extra ECTS are accorded by debriefing.

International cooperation has to be adapted to national and regional demands. In order to do so, study programmes must be modular and attractive for students from abroad.

AUEB also intends to establish international programmes and attract international students. However, given the legal/institutional constraints, this may be feasible only at the postgraduate level (which, at any rate, is also the most appropriate one). Creating international postgraduate study programmes of high quality is the single objective to be given top priority. High quality research work is, of course, complementary to this and must also be pursued concurrently. Similar goals can be encountered at Åbo and BOKU.

TU Iasi has also the objective of redesigning the mission for Bachelor/Master and adopt, especially for Master programmes, measures to enhance international cooperation (adjust curricula and syllabi to match those of international partners).

In Finland, the intention of the Ministry of Education is to increase mobility. For that reason there will be higher requirements on mobility in the next performance agreement. Preparing for the new requirements Åbo has initiated a strategy for increasing mobility. One specific measure is the introduction of extra ECTS-points. Students going abroad can get 4 extra points if the duration is 6 months or 8 extra points if the exchange period is a whole year.

In order to receive these credits a student must fulfil two requirements. Before going abroad the student must prepare a list of goals for the exchange period. After the stay the student must submit an essay comparing the set goals with the experience gained from the exchange. This reflective essay will be evaluated by the international Office at Åbo.

Study Programmes should prepare students for national or international careers. There is pressure from the students for international ones. It is important to get guest lectures at home. It is important to hear non-native accents for future working environments. There can be a long run competitive advantage of Europe vs. USA, because of the niche of intercultural sensitivity, including multi-language.

The procedures and conditions to start an international master programme were also debated. The needs assessment can be identified as the first condition. The programme should have its own profile in a competitive market, or in a niche market. Also, there is the issue of accreditation, which can be bilateral, national and international. Even if the content of such programmes differs, the methodology should remain the same. The main point is to attract students from abroad, which can be accomplished by choosing an international language for

teaching but especially by excellence in research and teaching. Another possibility is to attract labour force into the country of the institution.

A master programme should widen possibilities for students, and this kind of programme is becoming increasingly attractive for local students. The attractiveness could be increased also by joint degrees, given by networks of institutions. Staff mobility could be a quality measurement for an international master programme.

There are several steps needed to establish such a programme: it should start with a research corporation (network), continue with teaching staff mobility, and further develop with student mobility.

Two main quality indicators were suggested: the student demand for a specific programme (resulting from excellence in research and teaching), and a good perspective for students on the labour market. Therefore, the programmes should be demand-driven. The enrolled students should be of good professional quality; therefore the selection standards should be strict from the academic point of view, addressing also the language capacity. The curriculum should be developed in order to gain international recognition. In order to be recognized, it should take into account cues from the best universities, but at the same time it is very important to have a distinguishing character.

Demand-driven programmes may not be the only possibility, because universities can offer any kind of programme which is opening a brand new field. However, such an approach is feasible at national level, but not at international level. A university can create the demand, but national programmes differ from international ones.

## **2.4. Approaches to quality assurance methodology**

Although in our network discussing the aspects concerning how to operate internal quality culture was not explicitly set up as an objective, within the open and very alive discussions we had, some remarks could be drawn, taking into account also the written documents we received from the network participants during the present project: *setting up an office which deals with quality culture issues definitely helps to develop or enhance the quality culture.*

We observe that within the universities where the Quality Departments are operational and developed for more than ten years (e.g. Dublin Institute of Technology and Åbo Akademi) the creation and continuous development of the quality culture is a *top priority* for the university.

Another remark is that to create a new structure for operating Internal Quality is a difficult task from the very beginning and you need a strong leadership and a certain critical mass among the Senate or other leading academic structure in order to overcome the fear of “sharing power” within the university. This remark is valid especially for universities belonging to the European space where the “distance to power” is very high, in the sense mentioned by Hofstede.

We should mention also the example of creation of the new Department for Quality Assurance and European Integration at TU Iași. In order to reduce the threats of “being evaluated” it is recommended to adopt a neutral-motivation goal in subsidiary when aim is to set up such a new structure within the old structural frame of university. The issue of Quality in a university has to be developed step by step, in a smooth way; there must be the acceptance and the critical mass inside the university in understanding the needs of quality incentives development. Also, as could be seen from at Mersin University, AUEB University, St. Petersburg University, TU Iași, the involvement in European projects such as EUA Quality Culture project helps a lot in direct transfer of sharing concepts and best practices in Quality of Higher Education issues.

### **2.4.1. Quality assurance philosophy**

An interesting debate took place in the first meeting, and sharing the experience of all NW 3 participants we agreed to adopt a definition on quality which is actually combining the definitions proposed in the Guideline:

*“There are two kinds of quality, internal and external. Internal quality is an optimal way to use the available resources, quality as a value for money. This should be combined with external quality, quality as customer satisfaction. When you combine internal and external quality you should get as a result a continuous process of changing the institution, quality as enhancement. Quality combines fitness for purpose, customer satisfaction, excellence, transformation and enhancement/process of changing the institution”.*

The institutional organizational cultures are also very diverse in NW 3 group making the debates much more interesting. The institutions identified with none or reduced degrees of autonomy the culture are in a hierarchical order from North to South of the continent and from West to East, since in the decentralized institutions as DIT and Åbo Akademi it is obvious that a collegial culture is at home.

The different cultures represented in our network made the management of this group very challenging. At the same time, despite the various cultures, the participants succeeded in making a TEAM, at least this was the feeling we had during the second project meeting. This fact is a consequence of the “individual quality” of the representatives whose general attitude and concerns for the quality of HE in European space is a vital thing.

The former communist regime acting in countries like Romania, Poland, Russia, Kosovo until 1989 cultivated a “reporting culture” which makes the transition to an “evaluation culture” hard in our HE institutions even now. There are some milestones to be exceeded and some brakes from the human resources especially those over 60 and 65 years of age.

Almost all of our universities representatives mentioned explicitly the needs of training in quality issues for teaching staff and administration and the need of communication which should contribute essentially in implementation of the action plan, such as Mersin University, AUEB University, and St. Petersburg University. At the TU Iași we have organised since the new academic year 2005-2006 a new master programme entitled “Quality management in public institutions” where staff of the students are coming from the own academic and administrative staff of the university.

At Mersin there was resistance in the beginning, which decreased with time, as staff became familiar with the quality issues (after stiffness, dialogue followed). SWOT analysis in each department then went to the president’s office. It was the first time staff became acquainted with quality culture and began to talk about it. SWOT cards were provided, because not many people (other from management etc.) know what quality culture is. The action plan was bottom-up (process-centred approach). SWOT is an end in itself for quality awareness. It is important to have a committee of experts to explain the aims of evaluation and discuss with faculty members. In Romania, workshops were organised to attract people and to explain the evaluation issues.

#### **2.4.2. Involvement of staff**

The Human Resources policies both for academic and administrative lines have been addressed by almost all universities to some extent and concerning especially evaluation and staff development. As examples we should mention the following:

- *New strategies for assessment of staff competency* was an issue addressed by TU Iași in the Action Plan in the chapter “Quality Measures in designing institutional regulations for new doctoral programs in view of the 3rd cycle of Bologna – Bergen Process”;
- *Providing in service training for the academicians*, represent the issue in the area of HR policies proposed in the Action Plan by the Mersin University;
- *Developing incentives* to promote motivation for the staff development in direction of involvement in competitive research, is the issue addressed by AUEB University in Greece. The setting of performance criteria for evaluation the performance of staff in research is an important issue in setting up in Europe a Knowledge based Society, in this millennium of globalisation and IT extraordinary developments;
- *The promotion of in-place incentives to stimulate the attraction of new young staff* is an important chapter for the St. Petersburg University, as well as for TU Iași where the aging of the existing staff became a certain brake on the introduction of reforms;

Carrying out of seminars, training updating sessions, or other forms of continuous education for the top leadership of academic and administrative staff is seen to different extents by each university of our network as a MUST.

DIT had set up a special area within Action Plan: “*Develop institute structures to foster a culture of initiative and empowerment of colleagues*”, which we found very interesting. Some of the measures included in the DIT Action Plan are mentioned as follows (citation from the DIT Action Plan):

- *“embedding the Partnership philosophy and approach within the Institute;*
- *implementing Performance Management & Development System;*

- reviewing the membership, functioning and representation on Academic Council, faculty boards and faculty executives to ensure greater staff representation and involvement in decision-making;
- consider introducing a system of rotation of structured posts, while having regard to the rights and conditions of existing post-holders;
- reducing the levels of bureaucracy within the Institute. There should be a review in this regard with a view to streamlining procedures;
- developing a “customer-focused” charter when dealing with staff and the general public;
- improving the nature and level of feedback to staff unsuccessful in interviews; and,
- developing an international dimension, where appropriate;
- establishing a staff social club.”

TU Iași also addressed during the project implementation the issue of reviewing the mission and the strategic plan of the university, but there is clearly need for growing the quality culture at institutional level and for empowering of new mentality for academic and administrative staff as well.

At Åbo Akademi a set of measures was set up to enhance the role of intermediate leadership, for Vice Dean and other level of decisions.

The issue of internal communication and the need of back and force actions has been mentioned in of our NW3 colleagues reports. The methodology presented by DIT might be considered as a good example to be followed within the network partner. In summary our colleagues from DIT expressed the following (citation from DIT Improvement Plan): *“Findings from the staff focus groups indicated that the Academic Council was perceived to be run by management, there was no opportunity for staff discourse. Concerns were expressed relating to lack of communication and consultation, some felt excluded from the information loop”*

Due to these findings, the communication was identified at DIT as an area of improvement. The action to improve communication processes in the institute has following the proposed measures: further development of the Institute’s communications process, and the introduction of clearly defined procedures for the dissemination of information to staff.

Promoting internal quality and encouraging staff involvement and responsibility requires a structure of incentives for changes in processes and behaviour that are appropriate to each particular institution. Instituting the right incentives is the basic principle for the promotion of quality.

In order to motivate the teaching staff, three points were discussed. First, it is believed that money or salaries is only a part of possible incentives. Another is prestige, and incentives should also address that. Recognition among equals is important. Additional support for teaching should be main-stream. The second point is to find out the teaching load, and give extra money for innovative ways of teaching. Innovation funds can be used for such projects, along with external reviews. The third point is asking alumni about each course and teacher, after 5 years. The results should be confidential and discussed by the president (or dean) and teacher. Student evaluation could lead to easier courses and better grades, but students are usually responsible and tend to be meaningful.

A second principle for the promotion of quality (in addition to the design of appropriate incentives) is the setting of good example by senior leadership. The latter must lead and promote desirable changes in behaviour and processes by its own exemplary behaviour and adherence to the prescribed processes.

The role of senior leadership is of great importance, as it activates and guides the institution. Monitoring is an essential tool for feedback to and steering by senior leadership, while the setting of good example by the leadership confirms and reinforces the motivating incentives and, thus, constitutes a basic principle for leading towards quality improvement.

#### **2.4.3. Involvement of students**

The members of the network recognized that the most valuable assets of the university are the human resources, and especially the students. Developing the university infrastructure is considered to be an important premise for ensuring the competitiveness of teaching and research, as a condition to create an adequate framework for work and scientific emulation, for both the teaching staff and students.

A strong point of the TU Iași is the continuous development of student campus, one of the largest in Romania. Situated in close proximity to the university, our campus can accommodate 20,000 students and offers various professional, social and cultural facilities to students. The students association, among them one important is the local BEST group is very active in the special unit of Student Services. They are supported by the actual leadership of the university in performing numerous activities on their own, such as professional counselling courses for graduates, summer courses and training, etc.

Koszalin University mentions as strengths in its SWOT analysis that students have boarding houses with internet access, they can pursue their hobbies such as: dancing, singing, sports, tourism, science clubs, and enjoy a good relationship with the academic staff. Students have access to special scientific equipment and have also a good relationship with potential employers.

AUEB tends to attract the best students in the country. At the undergraduate level, admission of students to AUEB departments is through the nation-wide annual state exams, which all prospective students are required to take. At the postgraduate level, students undergo a strict selection process and, in addition to top first-degree grades and proven knowledge of the English Language, most programs require further qualifications.

Discussing some weaknesses, probably the most important weakness of the university scene in Greece is the excessive politicization. The institutional and legal framework within which universities operate in Greece and the power not only of the state but also the political parties, through the student party organizations, impose strict limits on the possible improvements in the quality of education. The excessive institutional prerogatives of student party organizations allow political parties to meddle through them in the election of the top university officers (rectorate, deans, heads of departments), thus affecting adversely the quality of university administration. At the same time, student party organizations oppose all quality control on study certificates in the form of stricter exams, course prerequisites, limits on exam failures and duration of studies. This is particularly the case at the undergraduate level, where effective quality control in the production of genuinely qualified graduates is hardly possible. Fortunately, this is not the case for the postgraduate level, which has grown rapidly in the last 10-15 years mostly free from such hindrances. Given the relatively high proportion of postgraduate students in its overall student enrolment, AUEB is thus probably less afflicted and in a better situation than possibly all other Greek universities.

AUEB considers that the only way to insulate postgraduate studies from politics is to build alliances with European universities and to collaborate with them in creating international, European-wide programs of study with strong institutional safeguards. Such an action is not just a matter of ambition on our side but more an action of necessity for the defence of quality in university life.

In Greece, the education system is state-controlled and state-funded. There is resistance to evaluation, every report is positive, but there are few resources to improve, because the universities don't have the right to impose fees. For Master degree cycle they can impose fees, therefore they are better able to improve quality.

In Russia, just like in other centralised countries, the only way to implement reforms at present is top-down. At St. Petersburg few students are involved in decision making, there is very high staff resistance (there are also very many persons involved - 2500 staff), so it is hard to transmit European ideas to them. There are only 4-5 active partner universities in implementing Bologna reforms out of 600 state and 3000 private universities in Russia. Some years ago, the same problems were in Romania in 97-98 when reforms began (there was a very centralized Ministry control). In these situations, it is hard to achieve the critical mass. However, one needs a combined strategy – top-down and bottom-up.

At the University of Prishtina, students are involved in advisory study commissions, one for each academic unit.

Further problems to be solved regarding students (emphasized at Mersin but quite common for many universities) are the insufficient number of elective courses, the insufficient level of foreign language and computer literacy of students, lack of participation of students during the course session, lack of communication with students after graduation, and insufficient cooperation between the university and industry.

A related issue is the employability rate of graduates, which is directly related to the quality of study programmes, and the content of curricula. Ensuring compatibility among curricula of similar departments in European universities and a continuous dialogue with the industry stakeholders is imperative to student mobility and employment nationally and internationally. A difficulty related to implementation of Bologna from this point of view, expressed by St. Petersburg State University, was that labour market is mainly focused on “specialists” (not “bachelors” and “masters”). The same concern is expressed by BOKU, which considers that job opportunities for Bachelors are still unclear, and few job opportunities for Bachelor graduates are expected anyway.

Also, reliable information on employability is hard to obtain since there is short and poor information on the graduates’ careers. A step to overcome this would be to increase the role of Alumni associations in university development.

DIT has also a specific problem, related to the distribution across Dublin city. The Institute is currently in the process of planning its relocation to a single purpose-built campus at Grangegorman in Dublin’s north inner city. The new campus at Grangegorman is less than 2 km from the city centre. All DIT activities will re-locate over the coming decade. Many perceived that the Grangegorman campus would enable consolidation of facilities, staff and resources to provide a better learning environment. A single campus would alleviate many of the current accommodation limitations.

At Åbo, results from student polls were taken into account, especially measuring student involvement in developing courses and study programs. The goal is to give the students better possibilities to take part in course development by introducing electronic course evaluation for every course they participate in. Some of the questions would be the same for the entire university. Also, the course evaluations system will offer students the possibility of sending questions to the teachers. The teachers will be able to create and maintain a “Frequently Asked Questions” page in connection to their courses.

At Mersin, an aim is to focus on the methods to improve student capabilities on team work, research techniques and self learning. At BOKU, due to internationalisation of studies, graduates are better prepared for an international career.

An important issue is to make the system more student-friendly. Some points to be considered are to bring information more easily and efficiently to enrolled students and to potential candidates, and to encourage and develop courses with good student-teacher relation.

At DIT it is considered important to train not only the staff, but also student representatives in the board. They must understand what their role is, how to communicate to the students that elected them, and how to write their reports. In Finland (and also in Romania and Germany) one third of the senate are students.

In TU Iasi, a very good practice was to have in Audit Commission one member - a student from other university in the field of evaluation. Their activity has been very well appreciated by the panel because they brought very good feedback and suggestions from their separate meetings with the students from the evaluated study programs.

At Åbo a frame system was created to offer to students the possibility of asking & sending questions to teachers so that teachers could create afterward a “Frequently Asked Questions” page of their courses.

Also, some chapters concerning Quality Management could be introduced as optional modules or courses for new comers in the university, in order to introduce students to quality in their respective field.

#### **2.4.4. Institutional evaluation**

Even if it is easy to look at quantity, quality is harder to evaluate. Therefore, external boards are needed – from abroad or from other institutions. In Finland for example it is hard to get external evaluators from abroad because few people speak Finnish. There would certainly be problems with the translation of documents. However, since Åbo is a university for the Swedish speaking minority, external evaluators can be found in Scandinavia. In general, external evaluators could come from other universities or from the industry.

A good practice for institutional evaluation is to make a survey (with online questionnaires) of all staff and students regarding aspects of organization and quality in the institution. At DIT, the actions to be taken were summarized by a steering committee (including all levels: directors, senior

lecturers, junior lecturers, students). A report by a committee for every programme goes to the head of school each year, then to faculty board.

Regarding the external evaluation 20 people from different industries were asked about DIT. For every programme there are 2 external examiners, usually 1 academic (British or European professor) and 1 industrialist. They look at courses and student work and issue a report every year that goes to faculty board, highlighting problems about teaching, projects etc. External examiners can also interview students. At BOKU, also, 16-18 interviews with stakeholders (programme coordinators, head of study commissions, students) were carried out for SWOT.

Analysis of feedback is made automatically by statistics. However, it can say *where* people aren't happy with a service, but it more difficult to say *why* they are not happy.

At DIT it has been made mandatory that every lecturer has to do a qualification in teaching, in the first 2 years, or have a significant teaching portfolio. In Romania and Turkey, optional pedagogical training is done during the studies.

It is important that action must follow on quality assessment. People should act on their level of competence. If one cannot act, he/she should report to a higher level. In Finland, if an action plan does not exist, resources are lost. Also, when retirement is discussed, an evaluation of the latest five years activity is made, based on which it is decided if the person should continue teaching or not.

At DIT, if a program is bad, there is the possibility of closing it down. A practice would be to give money only to a program meeting the quality standards. Closing it down should be the ultimate solution, but one can allocate resources according to quality, and also making an improvement plan for the low quality programmes. External evaluators must do the benchmarking. Otherwise, if a program were to be closed down, the internal evaluation would not work. Also, there is the necessity to move from programme evaluation to school evaluation. In Romania, only the Ministry has the right to close a department or programme, based on the results of a national commission.

#### **2.4.5 Students' evaluation**

At Åbo learning outcomes are defined for each course and during evaluation the student is presented with the outcome so he/she can compare the declared goals with what was actually learned. The evaluation system will be web-based (introduced in autumn 2006). Some of the courses will have compulsory evaluation. In these cases the student must fill in the evaluation before he/she can receive the ECTS-credits. A challenge is to keep students motivated to evaluate courses. Åbo considers introducing education for students in the importance of taking part in evaluations.

At AUEB and Åbo there is also a questionnaire for the alumni, asking them how they got the first job and how relevant was the education for getting hired.

At Åbo, DIT, TU Iasi, the students' evaluation is made online. A student should answer only once, the name should go to a database and the answers to another. Someone other than the teachers being evaluated should supervise the evaluation process. Results should go not only to the teacher, but also to the management (e.g. head of department).

Based on the average of student evaluations, top 3 teachers may be rewarded, or the first may get the honorary position of "teacher of the year".

#### **2.4.6. Performance indicators**

In order to build the institutional culture based on evaluation some performance indicators can be adopted in the step by step process at the level of university:

- a) for monitoring the development of new doctoral programmes: number of completed PhD programs within the proposed duration of the third cycle; number of grants obtained by PhD students and young researchers;
- b) for career development of staff: number of publications; requirement of Minimum publications for certain positions; membership in editorial boards; number of papers presented at conferences; changes in the ratio between course workload and Research & Development studies workload through the R&D's favour;
- c) For the Quality enhancement of study programmes and curricula: evaluation of the transfer rate from graduates into employment status within a certain period (an indicator that appears constantly throughout the network reports; however, it depends also on the economic context

of a particular country); changes in course materials and design in the sense of student-centred learning; annual student questionnaire;

- d) For enhancement of quality at course level: the number of interdisciplinary courses and project student centred, number of courses with a team teaching; number of courses held by internal staff in comparison with prior years; number of courses held by external lecturers in comparison with prior years;
- e) Toward improvement of international cooperation, student and staff mobility: number of bilateral agreements and of international projects; number of joint programmes and joint degrees with other European universities; number of international BA, MA or PhD level students; number of students and academicians exchanged each year; number of academicians come from abroad; number of resources in English;
- f) Improvement of data management and information systems within the university: additional information for teachers and students available in the educational information system; number of electronic materials; number of journals; number of usage of the library by students and academicians.

Besides these quantitative indicators, perhaps the improvement of communications among different level of decision, the transparency of processes and also the development of special department or office dealing with quality methodology could help the built of quality culture of an academic organisation.

A summary of the Bologna implementation stages in the network universities is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Bologna implementation in NW3.

University	3 Cycle Structure	Philosophy of implementing Bologna	Mobility	Quality Methodology	ECTS
Mersin University	8 / 4 / 6-10 semesters	Awareness on Quality Culture concepts	2-3 years of exchange students and staff	HE Quality council linked and agreed upon implementation process	Initialization and enforcement of balanced work
DIT	6-8 / 3-4 / min 6 semesters	Considering joint degree initiatives	Double number of coming in than going out, increased via English programmes	Improvement of institutional evaluation	For more than 10 years
Prishtina	6-8 / 4 semesters / not yet PhD	Not yet defined learning outcomes		Only in summer university	Accumulation not transfer system
St. Petersburg	8 / 4-5 semesters / 3 years, increased number of 2nd cycle programmes	Transparency to society	Ratio 150:3000 from 40000 students, most in language departments	Evaluation of interdisciplinary programmes	Started to learn ECTS and to convert traditional grades to ECTS
Koszalin	3 cycles by law, since 2005-2006, new regulations for PhD students	Since 2004 at senate level development of evaluation system on quality of teaching	Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, MOSTECH (PO), bilateral (PO – NL)	Quality Assurance system, evaluation of PhD students work	Experiments ECTS and diversifying grading scale, ECTS since 2005
BOKU	Early transition to Ba-Ma well accepted, 2003-2004, in two steps	Program coordinators, new learning techniques, autonomous learning process	International programmes, joint programmes	Quality of human resources, "career model"	Not ECTS label yet
ABO	6 / 4 / 8 semesters	Radical changes introduced in 2005 to implement an education system in accordance with stipulations in the Bologna Communiqué.	2005: 225 abroad 362 at Åbo Initiative with extra ECTS-credits to inspire students to participate in exchange programs.	Quality Assurance System to be introduced. Primary target is to develop a stronger Quality Enhancement Culture at the HEI.	ECTS since autumn 2005. Workload for 1 ECTS is about 26 hours.
Athens	Political and student opposition				

TU Iasi	8 / 3-4 / 6 semesters, reorganization from 2005/2006	Following quality assurance incentives received from the Ministry of Education	Growing number of students going abroad and increased number of incoming students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2004, institutional development of quality culture within the Department of Quality Assurance and European Integration;</li> <li>• Since 2006, a quality commission at departmental and university level</li> </ul>	60 ECTS per year
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A collection of good practices, difficulties and observations regarding Bologna implementation is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of good practices, difficulties and remarks.

<b>Implementing the three-cycle structure of study programmes</b>	
<b>Remarks</b>	<p>Bachelor should be more teaching intensive – in the first years there should be more lectures. The Master should be more research-oriented</p> <p>There should exist legal incentives to promote the employability of Bachelor graduates</p>
<b>Difficulties</b>	<b>In countries with rigid centralized control, even if master programmes should diversify, there is no way to approve them, since close links are supposed to be between programmes and faculties</b>
<b>Tools and mechanisms to improve comparability</b>	
<b>Curriculum</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	All courses were evaluated at ÅBO with regard to workload for the average student, and content. In order to better design and change the curricula, programme content was divided into 3 levels: “must know”, “should know”, and “nice to know”. In this way it was possible to shorten courses and yet keep quality
<b>Remarks</b>	<p>One must change not only the structure, but also the mindset, the philosophy of study programmes</p> <p>Needs assessment can result from interviews with experts, industry, and peer reviewing. This process leads to establishing core curricula, and then international experts can review the suggestions</p> <p>In setting the curricula, there should be taken into account that industry works on a much tighter timescale than universities; industry has very often a short-term perspective; university should have a long-term perspective</p>
<b>ECTS</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	ECTS is based on students’ workload which in turn is based on student hours: courses, laboratory work, library study. At DIT a student-centred evaluation is attempted, based on the whole student experience
<b>Remarks</b>	<p>Contact hours are not significant for ECTS, learning hours are</p> <p>In order to define the programme length, most people think in terms of years, not ECTS</p> <p>A move is needed from summative assessment (exam at the end of the module) to formative assessment (periodic, online when possible)</p> <p>The DIT recommendation would be that all the courses should have an equal number of credits from the start (e.g. 5), and one shouldn’t allow freedom to change it (e.g. 3 to 6)</p>
<b>Diploma Supplement</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	<p>At AUEB, all subject titles were translated, and also students write their names in Latin characters (this is important for getting a visa for example)</p> <p>Diploma Supplement can be issued in more international languages</p>
<b>Remarks</b>	The difficult part is to accumulate all students’ grades into a database
<b>Mobility issues</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	<p>Procedures and conditions to start an international master programme: needs assessment, setting a specific profile in a competitive market, or in a niche market, accreditation (bilateral, national and international). Even if the content of such programmes differs, the methodology should remain the same. The main point is to attract students from abroad, by choosing an international language for teaching but especially by excellence in research and teaching</p> <p>Steps needed to establish an international master programme: it should start with a research corporation (network), continue with teaching staff mobility, and further develop with student mobility</p> <p>Two main quality indicators for an international master programme: student demand for the programme, and good labour market prospects for students</p> <p>At ÅBO extra ECTS points are given to students going abroad (4 extra points for half a year, 8 extra points for a year). In order to get these points, the students must set their goals regarding what they want to study before they leave, and write an essay about what they learned after they come back</p> <p>At TU Iasi, the objective of redesigning the mission for Bachelor/Master to enhance international</p>

	cooperation implies adjusting curricula and syllabi to match those of international partners
	Summer university or similar actions can be a starting point for institutions interested in developing mobility
	In Poland, beside Socrates/Erasmus, and Leonardo da Vinci programmes for students, there is the MOSTECH programme (similar to Socrates but for Polish universities), where students can change university for one semester
<b>Remarks</b>	There is a difference in number of students going from West to East or from English-speaking countries to non-English-speaking countries and the other way around
	If there were more programmes in English in other countries, students would go abroad more
	There is a long-run competitive advantage of Europe vs. USA, because of the niche of intercultural sensitivity, including multi-language
<b>Difficulties</b>	Programmes such as Erasmus are perceived as having a problem, namely the students get their money rather late. Also, getting visas for students and staff can be difficult
<b>Approaches to quality assurance methodology</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	Setting up an office which deals with quality culture issues definitely helps to develop or enhance the quality culture
	In setting such an office, in order to reduce the threats, it is recommended to have a neutral-motivation goal in subsidiary for setting such a new structure in the old structural frame of university in order to develop step by step, in a smooth way, the acceptance and the critical mass inside the university in understanding the needs of quality incentives development
	SWOT analysis may be an end in itself for quality awareness. It is important to have a committee of experts to explain the aims of evaluation and discuss with faculty members. Workshops can be organised to attract people and to explain the evaluation aims
<b>Involvement of staff</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	Methods to motivate the teaching staff. First, money is only a part of possible incentives; another is prestige, and incentives should also address that (recognition among equals is important). The second point is to find out the teaching load, and give extra money for innovative ways of teaching
	The role of senior leadership: it activates and guides the institution. Monitoring is an essential tool for feedback to and steering by senior leadership, while the setting of good example by the leadership confirms and reinforces the motivating incentives and, thus, constitutes a basic principle for leading towards quality improvement
<b>Involvement of students</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	In Romania, an interesting practice was to have a student meeting to evaluate a programme, with students from other universities, they will present the problems they have, then will go back to the panel and report. In this way new courses can be introduced, at students' suggestions
	In Finland (and also in Romania and Germany) one third of the senate are students
	At ÅBO a system was created where students can send questions to teachers so that teachers can create a "Frequently Asked Questions" page
	It is considered important to train not only the staff, but also student representatives in the board. They must understand what their role is, how to communicate to the students that elected them, and how to write their reports
<b>Remarks</b>	A way to insulate study programmes from political control is to build international alliances with European universities
<b>Difficulties</b>	In countries with a centralization tradition, the only way to implement reforms is top-down
	The excessive politicalization of student organizations can adversely affect the quality in a university
<b>Institutional evaluation</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	Even if it is easy to look at quantity, quality is harder to evaluate. Therefore, external boards are needed – from abroad or from other institutions. In general, external evaluators could come from other universities or from the industry
	A good practice for institutional evaluation is to make a survey (with online questionnaires) of all staff and students regarding aspects of organization and quality in the institution. At DIT, the actions to be taken were summarized by a steering committee (including all levels: president, senior lecturers, junior lecturers, students). It is important that action must follow on quality assessment
	At DIT it is mandatory that every lecturer has to do a qualification in teaching, in the first 2 years, or have a significant teaching portfolio. In Romania and Turkey, optional pedagogical training is done during the studies
	If a program is bad, there should be the possibility of closing it down. A practice would be to give money only to a program meeting the quality standards. Resources can be allocated according to quality, and also an improvement plan should be made for the low quality programmes. External evaluators must do the benchmarking. Otherwise, if a program were to be closed down, the internal evaluation would not work
<b>Remarks</b>	Analysis of feedback is made automatically by statistics. However, it can say <i>where</i> people aren't happy

	with a service, but it more difficult to say <i>why</i> they are not happy
	It is necessary to move from programme evaluation to school (or department) evaluation
<b>Students' evaluation</b>	
<b>Good practices</b>	At ÅBO, learning outcomes are defined for each class, and during evaluation, the student is presented with the outcome so he/she can better compare the declared goals with what was actually learned
	At AUEB and ÅBO there is also a questionnaire for the alumni, asking them how they got the first job and how relevant was the education for getting hired
	At ÅBO, DIT, TU Iasi, the students' evaluation is made online. A student should answer only once, the name should go to a database and the answers to another. Someone other than the teachers being evaluated should supervise the evaluation process. Results should go not only to the teacher, but also to the management (e.g. head of department)
	Based on the average of student evaluations, top 3 teachers may be rewarded, or the first may get the honorary position of "teacher of the year"
	At ÅBO, a student must evaluate the obligatory courses after the examination, and may in fact evaluate any course. However, he/she will get the ECTS only after evaluating the obligatory ones

### 3. Process debriefing

In running of our project taking a look back in a SWOT analysis, we can underline strong aspects as well as some weaknesses. The running of our project in-between Berlin and Bergen conferences was definitely a good opportunity to develop activities since almost in all countries to which our group of universities belong, could be reported a certain effervescence in development or implementation of Bologna process.

Among the strengths of our project we should mention the quality of the human resources chosen by EUA management and respectively by each university from our group to participate in a project with a sensible theme. Another strength which ensured the success was the good balance between advanced institutions from the procedural point of view in issues of quality assurance and universities being in inception phase of quality management in higher education.

Although the concept and design of was very balanced concerning the size of the universities, the geographical representation, and the overall profile of the institutions, there have been some difficulties in managing a number of institutions greater than five.

One of the difficulties we encountered and of which we could not be aware before was the problem of visa formalities for the representative of Kosovo, who could not attend physically the meeting in Dublin. The good part was that we all, due to the IT infrastructure of DIT and the good initiative of the colleagues of DIT, we could experience live, for the first time for many of us, a videoconference in which all participants could react in real time to agenda of the second meeting of the network.

Since our theme was broad to some extent, after consultations in our group we decided to focus on specific issues concerning the reform implementation within Bologna process and to extend the aspects of quality assurance to that level which corresponded to the stage of the quality model existing in each university. From this point of view, maybe we could not do the benchmarking among the participating universities, but we could extract to some extent the stage of the implementation of quality assurance in that university and the level of process it addresses.

Although the diversity in our group was large, which was a very good thing, we could share among us the best practices in the issues of reforming the higher education within Bologna process and we believe that each of our universities gained in this project.

The guidelines of the project have been comprehensive, but one could be taken into account also the following: a narrower theme matching one or two issues in order to ensure the possibility of benchmarking; the need of at least one intermediary meeting; a template for the project meetings which would take into account the responsibilities of each university in presenting their activity; the invitation of local experts with international practice in the field chosen by universities from their own countries along with the facilitator whose role in the first meeting might be very important.

Also we consider that maybe it will be useful in the future for the coordinators to have the possibility to be trained at least one half a day at the launching of the project in project management practical issues. It could be also a suggestion to adjust in a flexible matter from one

meeting to another the management instruments in order to ensure a smooth running of the project.

#### **4. Some final remarks and recommendations**

The network NW3 enjoyed an interesting and stimulating environment built within this project. Due to the professional contributions and motivations of the participants, the level of discussions led not only to the learning and sharing of best experience or sometimes less successful practices but represented also a real platform of intellectual debates on actual patterns for developments of changes within Bologna process. Following the opinion of the participants the final meeting led also to some findings and recommendations born in our wish to send a certain message to the universities of European Higher Education Area. Some of these needs, findings and recommendations are summarised as follows:

- The need of according more flexibility to study programme length, respectively to allow 3-4 years for Bachelor, 2 years for Master, and 3-5 years for PhD, upon the field specifics . Also, in individual cases, there must be a possibility of granting a leave to interrupt studies in agreement with the implementation of life long learning education;
- For the smooth insertion of bachelor graduates into the labour market of all countries signatory of Bologna Declaration, the development of the legal system regarding labour market and implication of professional associations is needed;
- regarding the mobility, there is a real need of balance between the number of outgoing students and staff going from West to East or from English-speaking countries with the incoming students and staff from non-English-speaking countries;
- an increased financial support for student mobility, which is less attractive right now, will increase mobility;
- the inclusions of administrative staff in mobility programmes focussing on Quality management in higher education could help the speed of Bologna process in Europe;
- the existence of a single true European Qualifications Framework could greatly increase the transparency and comparability of certificates and awards, avoiding the fatigue of conversion for countries which have already, and being an opportunity for those countries not having one yet
- need for European or national level of financing schemes to support universities willing to apply for the institutional evaluation exercise done by EUA;
- establishing of a range of possibilities for the training of staff, administration and students in Quality methodology;

Finally the orientation of the university policy towards the introduction of students in issues related to Quality will make them not only more familiar with the Evaluation Culture specific in academic organisation but will contribute to their own professional and social development to the benefit of the whole society.