

Brief overview of the experts' observations in the countries visited

Eastern Europe

Russian Federation

A strong link between national efforts to modernise and reform Russian universities and the Tempus programme was apparent and confirmed by all interlocutors. International cooperation and compatibility are among the country's top priorities with ambitious benchmarks for the international market share and international rankings. Emphasis is further put on growing independence of the quality assurance system, increased university autonomy and responsibility and the implementation of new outcome-based higher education standards and curricula and the involvement of social partners in the assessment and development of curricula.

The Russian Federation has joined the Bologna Process in 2003. The overall goals and action lines of the EHEA and Bologna Process remain a source of orientation for various system reforms, as the three tier system (perhaps with the exception of the third cycle which is not considered applicable by many), an independent quality assurance system, qualification standards and frameworks, ECTS, Diploma Supplement, recognition.

In this context the Tempus programme is well tailored to meet needs defined in the national reform agenda. At the same time the possible impact of Tempus must be considered with a view to the dimensions of the Russian Federation, its social, cultural and economic diversity and the corresponding diversity in its education sector.

In terms of regional cooperation Tempus is considered a door opener to Central Asia. Russia is often seen to have a flagship role for EHEA convergence and EU integration in Eastern Europe since regional cooperation is an important basis for the region's successful association with the EHEA.

Georgia

The encounters during the country visit confirmed that the full implementation of the objectives of the EHEA/Bologna Process is a top priority for the country. As far as the national policies are concerned, the country has chosen a fairly liberal approach to higher education: A number of regulations and goals are implemented in the frame of accreditation by the national agency. Besides, endowment funds were put in place to support the financial autonomy of HEIs and to support the establishment of joint programmes and joint research projects.

In this context Tempus is highly praised as a unique opportunity, properly targeted and sufficiently flexible to accommodate various and changing needs of different stakeholders and institutions.

In Georgia – perhaps also due to its relatively small size - the impact of Tempus was particularly evident at individual and institutional level, for example in terms of capacity building and the

application of new approaches, methods and tools, more practical orientation of study programmes, and cooperation between universities and the socio-economic environment. The observed innovations coincide with accreditation requirements for study programmes and institutions, displaying a productive combination of Tempus objectives and the aspirations of national quality assurance.

South Mediterranean

Egypt

The visit to Egypt illustrated how a number of the country's higher education reform objectives correspond with the Tempus objectives and actions in the country. Egypt is not a member of the EHEA. Still, the visit's findings clearly indicated that the EHEA and Bologna action lines contain important strategic orientations for the higher education sector, such as quality enhancement, relevance of higher education to the socio-economic environment, lifelong-learning, internationalisation and capacity building. These aspects have gained momentum with the evolution of accreditation procedures and requirements.

Other notions of the EHEA/Bologna Process haven't gained much ground, for example degree structure, ECTS, learning outcomes, independent quality assurance, student participation, the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. But – not least due to the Tempus programme - these notions and their benefits for the system are increasingly acknowledged.

The interlocutors in Egypt generally acknowledged that the programme's emphasis on regional cooperation was beneficial for Egypt's regional relations. However, the academic benefit of regional cooperation for the country is considered to be rather weak in comparison to the number of projects, persons, institutions and costs involved. The political motivation and benefit of this priority for Egypt – in particular the people to people approach and the potential to promote Egyptian higher education in the region – was widely acknowledged.

Morocco

In Morocco, the priority issue emphasised by all stakeholders for higher education policy and development is the inter-linkage and relevance of higher education to the world of work and society. The Moroccan authorities established measures to involve the private sector in the design of university course programmes and scientific research, for example through corresponding accreditation requirements.

Even though Morocco is no EHEA member, a number of EHEA goals and Bologna action lines are in the focus of attention; for example the three-tier system, quality assurance, internationalisation, and institutional responsibility. Other areas are less advanced, such as the recognition of qualifications and study periods, the Diploma Supplement, the introduction of an ECTS-compatible system of credits and the establishment of double and joint degrees.

Against this background, Tempus is considered a highly relevant and useful tool to attain these objectives while decision makers frequently mention a number of other priority areas that can't be

addressed by a program of the scope of Tempus, in particular related to the country's demographic development and the increasing student population.

Western Balkans

The countries of the Western Balkans joined the Bologna Process in 2003 and have all engaged in wide-reaching reforms of their higher education systems. The modernisation of teaching and learning is really coming to the fore in Serbia and Albania, mostly connected to implementation of tools and strategies recommended by the Bologna Process, such as a credit system, student workload, learner-centred approaches and changes in curricula. These developments testify and highlight the importance of the Tempus programme for the entire region.

The field visits pointed out that the system of higher education in Serbia and Albania required reforms regardless of the Bologna Process context, due to the region's political and economic transition, due to the legacy of the wars in the nineties and in order to address new developments such as the massification of higher education and the emergence of the private higher education institutions.

Serbia

Serbia is gradually implementing a wide range of reforms informed by the EHEA objectives and Bologna action lines. Current priorities are to create a lifelong learning strategy that encompasses all other factors relevant to shape the country's future education system. Serbia has formally adopted a National Qualifications Framework and recently launched its implementation.

Discussions during the evaluator's visit to Serbia indicate that student participation could still be further developed in line with EHEA trends and requirements. A number of other challenges were emphasised by the interlocutors for the modernisation of the higher education system, among others a frequent lack of substantial infrastructure, ineffective technological means, continuing brain-drain and the aging of academic staff. Furthermore, Serbia does not seem to have sufficient support for human resource management at national level.

All in all, the evaluator gained the impression that Tempus substantially contributes to strengthening the European dimension in higher education in Serbia while even more support could be given to human resource development of academic and administrative staff, the enhancement of institutional management capacities and strengthening internal and external quality assurance.

Albania

Since joining the Bologna process, Albania has reformed its higher education system, legislation and in doing so, sought to respond to national needs. Tempus has supported the transition to the three-cycle system, the corresponding harmonisation of higher education legislation and the development of unified curricula in line with Bologna. It has been observed that due to the Bologna process approach to higher education the number of students has increased in the last 5 years. The Tempus programme remains one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Education of

Albania. However, the main challenge to Albania in the near future is the consolidation of the financial autonomy of HE institutions.

The conducted field visits confirm that along with the above, the challenges which Albania needs to meet seem to be comparable to those of Serbia, such as substantial infrastructure, ineffective technological means as well as the aging of academic staff. However, the visit points out that Albania, with long and turbulent transition challenges, does push forward the human resource development by implementing strategic priorities, and supporting collaborative action from both the national and institutional level.

Central Asia

Tempus has had a substantial impact on the higher education system in Central Asia. Moreover, the Bologna process and EHEA have contributed greatly to transform higher education in these countries, through sustainable supply driven chains, strategic context-based programmes, impact mobility investment, etc.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is implementing its higher education reforms oriented by the EHEA objectives and Bologna action lines and engaged in special efforts towards internationalisation and international compatibility of the country's higher education system. One of the main national priorities is reforming the higher education system to meet the needs of a modern competitive economy. To this end the National Accreditation Centre (NAC), Centre of International Programs (CIP), National Centre of Education Quality Evaluation (NCEQE), have been established to create an educational system evaluation process, quality evaluation, program certification and accreditation.

Further support is needed towards a clearly defined internationalisation strategy (at national and institutional level), an increased higher education performance, a harmonisation of progress and competitiveness across the different regions of the country, towards sufficient institutional autonomy to enable higher education institutions to better adapt and respond to the needs of students, society and economy and towards strengthening research, development and innovation.

The most frequently mentioned added value provided by Tempus to Kazakhstan's reform agenda was related to

- ✓ Participation in international processes, for Kazakhstan as part of the EHEA/Bologna Process and adoption of international standards for higher education
- ✓ Creation of centres for the development and promotion of international cooperation
- ✓ New curricula and programmes, effort towards comparable degrees

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has not joined the EHEA Bologna process to present while the country has committed to internationalisation and international compatibility of higher education. The higher education sector is characterised by an ongoing reform process and the implementation of a 'National Programme for Personnel Training', which provides a long-term strategy for strengthening

education, developing a continuing education system and reinforcing the multi-level higher education system.

The government pursues a strong emphasis on university management, quality assurance, and regional cooperation, as well as support to strengthen the relevance of higher education for the socio-economic environment - by improving cooperation with employers and university-enterprise cooperation.

Two important national priorities of Uzbekistan for the Tempus programme have been “partnerships between universities and enterprises” and the ‘knowledge-triangle’. Both have been maintained in order to encourage the Uzbek universities to introduce advanced and modern models and approaches for further integration of education with industry and science. Tempus projects provided support to establish University-Industry Liaison departments at the HEIs, Educational Scientific Production Laboratories and Career Centres. Furthermore, the Uzbek HEIs have strengthened international cooperation through a number of bilateral agreements with universities of the European Union in the framework of the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window.

Tempus is the only programme of this scope providing opportunities for long-term intensive inter-university cooperation and improving the universities’ technical infrastructure in the country.