The application of the lifelong learning principle has been one of the central activities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development [1] in recent years.

Strategy for the Development of Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia [2] and Action Plans for its implementation – adopted in 2009, provided the relevant preconditions for the introduction of the lifelong learning principle into the structures of general and vocational education, primarily related to accessibility of education and training to all categories of adults, and the establishment of institutional and programme pluralism in the educational system.

Through the Law on the Education System Foundations [2], the Vocational Training and Adult Education Council [1] has been established, which is, among other, in charge of proposing the National Qualifications Framework to the Minister of Education, for the level of secondary vocational education, vocational training and other forms of vocational education. The preparation of NQF is carried out by the Vocational Training and Adult Education Centre [1] within the Institute for the Improvement of Education [1]. In September 2010, the Vocational Training and Adult Education Council adopted a decision by which the development of NQF for the level of secondary vocational education, vocational training and other forms of vocational education was initiated, thus setting into motion the application of the lifelong learning principle in the system of vocational education.

In the field of higher education, contribution to the development of lifelong learning system has been made through the implementation of Tempus project “Lifelong Learning System Development in Serbia” 2009-2012. In the course of 2010, draft strategies for lifelong learning at universities were prepared and the following conferences were organised: “Bologna Process and Lifelong Learning” and “Development of Lifelong Learning: Challenges for the Education System”. In addition, a social dialogue was initiated between the representatives of economy, local authorities and educational institutions in Kragujevac, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš and Novi Pazar. A survey on employers’ needs for various forms of trainings has been carried out, on the basis of which modules and courses have been defined. Five centres for lifelong learning have been established at universities, training plans and programmes have been developed on the basis of short courses and the realisation of trainings has begun. The process of networking of university centres at national level is ongoing, as well as their integration into regional and international networks. The implementation of the abovementioned activities has contributed to the promotion of the lifelong learning concept and its relevance for the new role of universities in knowledge economy. With the aim of popularisation of the lifelong learning concept, a large number of brochures and advertising material have been published.

The principles of lifelong learning have also been implemented in the field of labour market active policy measures and employment policy. This primarily refers to the organisation of trainings for the needs of labour market and those initiated at the request of employers. At annual level, upon completion of public procurement procedure, the National Employment Service [1] organises around 80 different courses for the unemployed, in accordance with the National Employment Action Plan.
A number of educational institutions, not only university institutions, but also primary and secondary schools was interested and participated in the by-programmes in the framework of the Lifelong Learning programme. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development [1] does not keep specific records on this, and institutions are not required to report thereon to the Ministry.

Participation of individual university institutions within Lifelong Learning programme is based on close cooperation of universities in Serbia, and of certain faculties with European universities, established through multilateral projects and networks within the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, but also through the former intergovernmental programmes in educational, cultural and scientific cooperation.


In October 2013, document proposal National Qualifications Framework in Serbia - National Qualifications System Levels I–V [2] was produced. “The purpose of developing the NQFS is to regulate the system of qualifications obtained through education and training in accordance with the requirements of socio-economic development, to support the implementation of the concept of lifelong learning and to enable greater mobility of labour.” The document also states that “The ‘Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning’ has invited all member states to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by referencing their qualifications levels to relevant EQF levels by developing national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice. As a country that aspires to the EU membership, by accepting these recommendations, Serbia makes a step forward on this path.”

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Links
[1] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/institutions-34_en