



Joint project 'Strengthening Higher Education in BiH III'

Report on a fact finding visit to Sarajevo 7-10 June 2010 to review and assess the need for expertise in higher education reform in BiH

by Gerard Madill

1) Introduction

I was contracted by the Council of Europe to undertake a short fact-finding visit to Sarajevo in relation to the implementation of Bologna Process reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The visit took place over four days from 7th to 10th June 2010. A list of the organisations and individuals who participated in the visit is at the Annex. My brief was, within the frame of the joint European Commission and Council of Europe project "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina III" (SHE III), to gain an overview of the higher education system and situation in BiH, to consider the need for expertise in higher education reform in BiH and to propose a strategy and recommend follow up activities under the SHE III project as part of this strategy.

The visit was arranged at relatively short notice, so I was not able to meet all the key players, but those with whom I met were generally very welcoming, courteous and helpful. I am particularly grateful to the CoE team who were very helpful and provided me with all the information and support I needed before and during the visit.

2) Context and recent Bologna-related developments

a) State and governance structures

Governmental authorities of the state of BiH are divided among 2 first-order administrative divisions: the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH (FBiH), the latter being subdivided into 10 Cantons. In addition to these two entities, BiH comprises the internationally supervised Brčko District, an administrative unit under the sovereignty of the state of BiH. Legislative competences in education are attributed to the BiH Parliament, the Republika Srpska National Assembly, the Parliament of the FBiH, the 10 Cantonal Assemblies and the District Brčko Assembly. In BiH, 11 ministries of education (one in Republika Srpska and ten in the ten Cantons of the FBiH) have full competence over education including higher education. In Brčko District, the Department for Education of Brčko District has full competence over education. At state level, the Ministry for Civil Affairs (MoCA) is mandated to coordinate educational policy within the country. The Ministry of Education and Science of the FBiH has decision making competences to adopt standards and regulations for higher education and is responsible to coordinate between the 10 cantonal ministries of education.

Higher education institutions are licensed by the ministry of education in charge of the respective governmental region. 8 public universities and over 20 private higher education institutions exist in BiH. Until recently, public universities in BiH were loose agglomerations of legally and financially independent faculties and a rectorate with very limited authority and responsibility. Some progress is being made here, since the new legislation adopted in 2007 prescribes the integration of faculties and rectorate of each university into one legal body.

b) “Bologna Architecture” in BiH

Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process in 2003, along with other countries from the Western Balkans.

Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Council of Europe/UNESCO (Lisbon) Recognition Convention in 2003.

The Rectors’ Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed in spring 2005. It has a rotating secretariat and no executive body and no institutional memory or ongoing activities, projects or working groups. It remains effectively a means for the rectors of public universities to meet every 2 or 3 months to discuss issues of mutual interest. Any decisions taken require unanimous consent.

After 4 years of discussion and negotiation, the Framework Law for Higher Education was passed in July 2007. This law established, amongst other things, the Rectors’ Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance and the Center for Information and Recognition of Documents. The Framework Law also stipulated a three-cycle degree system, university autonomy and requires each university to become a single legal body (from the existing loose agglomeration of faculties). For full implementation, lower level laws require harmonisation with the Framework Law. Also, relevant laws and regulations for employment need to reflect the new degree structure.

With the support of the joint EU/CoE project SHE II (2006-2008), BiH developed 7 key strategies and guidelines to implement the Bologna Process in BiH ¹. These were adopted by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 2007.

The Conference of Ministers of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2008. This provides a legislative and institutional framework within which Bosnia and Herzegovina can implement educational reforms. The MoU indicates the Conference is the “permanent and highest advisory body to the established structures for the coordination of education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) was established and a Chief Executive appointed in June 2008.

July 2008 – Council of Europe set up a regional network for qualifications frameworks for South East Europe. The main purpose of the network is to exchange experience and promote good practice among the participating countries in the development and implementation of NQFs compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

January 2009 – the European Commission and the Council of Europe launched SHE III. This project was designed in 2007 to provide key assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina to further enact higher education reforms, following the adoption of the Framework Law for Higher Education in Bosnia and

¹ The seven documents comprise the BiH National Action Plan for the Recognition of Qualifications; a template for the BiH Diploma Supplement and a users’ manual; the BiH standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education and a generic framework of higher education qualifications in BiH and corresponding recommendations for their implementation.

Herzegovina and the '7 key strategies and guidelines to implement the Bologna Process in BiH'. SHE III focuses on aspects related to Quality Assurance and Qualifications Frameworks.

A group of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) for Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in April 2009.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Centre for Information and Recognition of Documents (BiH ENIC) was established in 2009.

Ministers of Education of Western Balkans met in October 2009, under the auspices of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. They met to discuss regional cooperation in the areas of: quality assurance in HE, implementation of NQFs, enhancing inter-regional mobility, implementing the Bologna reforms and making a regional contribution to the European Higher Education Area.

c) BiH in the international context of Bologna reforms

BiH has generally had a low profile in the Bologna context. While this is also true of some other countries in the Western Balkans, there is scope for BiH to raise its profile within Bologna, whether by hosting Bologna-related seminars or conferences, or by engaging more actively in, or possibly hosting, SEE regional events. More recently however, BiH has had a higher profile within the Bologna Process and in particular within the BFUG relatively recently and that in June 2008, BiH hosted the first BFUG meeting to be held outside of an EU presidency country.

d) Other externally funded projects

Another project funded by the EU, called "Support to the Reform of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina" was launched in November 2009 and is designed to assist in the area of recognition and university management.

Further support in the areas of research, quality assurance, curricular reform/design and R&D is provided through various other projects through the TEMPUS programme, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the World University Service (WUS/SUS) and others.

3) Overview of Higher Education in BiH

In relation to the Bologna Process, higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina has made good and steady progress in implementing the comprehensive reforms necessary for the creation of the European Higher Education Area. This progress is demonstrated by the regular stocktaking reports prepared for successive Bologna ministerial conferences. BiH has made particular progress in areas such as implementation of the 2-cycle system and access between cycles, as well as implementation of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS. Universities have been reviewing their teaching plans and their programmes of learning. In the universities visited, it was reported that students' progress is monitored during the year and that credits are gained during the year as well as through end of year exams. While such structural changes are being implemented, it was also reported that new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment were still proving difficult to implement.

It is also clear from the stocktaking reports and other relevant reports, that progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina is less comprehensive than the progress made by other Bologna signatory countries as well as that made by other countries in the Western Balkans who joined the process at the same time as Bosnia and Herzegovina. The national stocktaking report for 2009 identifies as challenges for

the future: full implementation of the Framework Law on Higher Education; making newly established agencies in the field of higher education fully operational in the near future; integration of universities; introduction of structured doctoral studies; development of the lifelong learning concept; and financing of higher education.

Some issues regarding the HE sector in BiH were raised by a number of stakeholders and individuals interviewed during the visit. Serious concerns were raised about the funding of universities and in particular, regarding the system of per capita funding. It was suggested that approaches to funding were inconsistent and resulted in huge discrepancies in funding between universities. It was reported that there had been a study on university finance in 1997, which had been followed by 3 subsequent studies, but the situation had not changed. Concerns were also raised about the approach to licensing HEIs and again these centred on inconsistencies in approach. A number of individuals also suggested that there were very strong links between political parties and higher education, in particular that most politicians are also university professors and that this had implications for the impartiality and credibility of professors and of universities.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the development of arrangements for quality assurance. An important milestone was the establishment of the BiH Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) and the appointment of its Director in June 2008 and subsequent appointment of additional staff. Working with external experts and key stakeholders within BiH, the agency has developed a set of criteria for the external evaluation of HEIs in BiH as well as a set of guidelines. The agency is preparing to train a pool of reviewers – a group of over 140 reviewers has been selected. The agency is now an associate member of ENQA and has established links with several international and national agencies.

4) Summary of progress of ‘Strengthening Higher Education in BiH’

Stakeholders spoke positively about the ‘Strengthening HE in BiH’ project and evidence indicates that much progress has been made, particularly in relation to the implementation of the four of the “seven key strategies and guidelines to implement the Bologna Process in BiH” which were identified as priorities for the project.

Significant time and resource has been dedicated to pursuing developments relating to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. The piloting exercise has been taken forward and has involved 8 public and 2 private universities in three subjects from three different disciplines. This work has been quite intensive and has engaged a significant number of academics. As this work progresses, it will not only underpin the Framework for HE Qualifications, it is already generating much needed expertise amongst academics in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A booklet “Guidance on the use and acquisition of academic and scientific titles in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)” was developed and discussed with authorities and academic staff in BiH . It is hoped that this document, along with the outcomes of the pilot projects, will inform the development of the Framework for HE Qualifications and will also assist academics in developing programmes of learning leading to qualifications consistent with the BiH Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and with the EHEA qualifications framework. The development of this document has also helped develop expertise within Bosnia and Herzegovina, amongst HEIs and within the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The project also supported the work of the HEA in establishing external QA procedures and criteria and – as a side effect – with raising awareness about an ENQA/EQAR compatible distribution of responsibilities between the Agency, Ministries and HEIs in BiH.

As outlined in the interim report of the SHE III project, one of the initial aims of the project, to set up a network of HE reform experts, has been superseded by the initiative by the TEMPUS office to set up a National Team of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE experts) in BiH. While this is seen as a positive development, it will be important to ensure that there are good communications between the TEMPUS office and the Council of Europe project to ensure complementarity between the work of the HERE team and the SHE III project. At this stage it is not clear to me the extent to which the HERE experts are individuals with particular expertise or individuals nominated by institutions in order to develop expertise and/or to be trained. The TEMPUS office in BiH has developed an activity plan, although this was developed in discussion with other national TEMPUS offices and before the team of experts was in place, so it is not clear that it addresses the particular context and priorities of the sector in BiH.

5) Structural/contextual challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Meetings with stakeholders revealed a lack of trust, leading to concerns about ‘transfer of responsibilities’ and an apparent resistance on the part of some stakeholders to coordination of developments at country level.

Some of the key stakeholder organisations which play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of Bologna-related reforms in many countries either do not exist in BiH or are not strong enough currently to play such an important coordinating or driving role. The Rectors’ conference does not appear to have established itself as an influential force in BiH. Its role appears to be largely restricted to hosting meetings of rectors, rather than being a strong coordinating or representative body. It has no permanent secretariat and does not yet appear to have developed a culture of working together or even to have established common aims. There is no national student union in BiH and there is little evidence of strong or active student unions at local level, although a student union does exist at entity level in Republika Srpska. There are arrangements in place to gather student feedback, but it was suggested that there is little positive or active interest in the Bologna reforms amongst the student body.

Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still very fragmented internally. Although the Framework Law for Higher Education envisages a greater centralisation of universities and indicates that faculties will no longer be separate legal entities, it was reported that there was little will or action on the part of the relevant ministries to make the necessary changes to put this reform into practice.

There are several examples where universities have been unable to reach agreement amongst themselves. These include for example, attempts between university officials to elaborate a rulebook on “use of academic titles and acquisition of scientific and professional degrees at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, which failed to gain the support of all public universities and required an additional initiative by the Ministry of Civil Affairs to draft a proposal. Similarly, universities were unable to reach agreement on the draft rules and regulations for external evaluation. The overall impression is that there is not yet a common purpose amongst universities or at least not enough of a common purpose to lead them to work together cohesively or coherently enough in order to implement the Bologna reforms sector-wide.

6) Need for expertise

On a short visit, meeting a relatively small cross-section of individuals and interests, it is not possible to make a comprehensive assessment of the expertise available to and required by higher education in BiH in order to take forward the Bologna reforms. Although I repeatedly raised the issue in meetings and interviews, it was clear that no individual player or organisation has an overview of the existing expertise within BiH or of the nature of the expertise required by the sector.

It was generally agreed that there was a continuing need for European expertise to support the implementation of the Bologna reforms within BiH. There was also a consensus that it would be important for a variety of reasons to enlist support and expertise from other countries in south east Europe. As is generally the case, much of the expertise to be developed in BiH will be developed through a combination of training, dissemination of information and perhaps most crucially, through experience of academics, university leaders and administrators as they implement the Bologna reforms and use the Bologna tools in their day to day work.

There is significant Bologna-related expertise in BiH, but it was suggested that much of the more advanced expertise resides within a small number of individuals. It was also recognised that the SHE III project is generating expertise through the work being undertaken to develop criteria and guidelines for quality assurance, through the pilot projects in relation to the development and testing of the national qualifications framework, through the work undertaken in relation to use of academic titles and acquisition of degrees. The work being undertaken by the HEA will also result in significant expertise in both institutional evaluation and in the preparation of self-assessment reports by HEIs. Several other externally funded projects and initiatives have contributed and continue to contribute to increasing local expertise in theory and practice².

There appears to be a lack of information or transparency in relation to the expertise available within BiH, such that most of the players with whom I met found it difficult to make a judgement on existing or required expertise. In particular, people did not have a clear idea of the extent, the level, or the nature of the expertise of the HERE experts. A number of interlocutors suggested that the use of the word 'experts' could be inconsistent and even misleading. It was suggested that there were some 'self-appointed' experts or experts designated by institutions, who might be experts, but who might on the other hand simply be individuals identified for a role, or for training in that role, who might in time become experts.

My initial conclusions would tend to support the focus of the SHE III project, in that the particular needs for expertise that I have been able to identify are predominantly those which are relevant to the focus of the project, namely expertise in internal quality assurance within universities and in external review of universities and expertise and experience in the development of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment which are based on learning outcomes. However, there is evidence of both existing and emerging expertise in these areas within the HE sector and it will be important to document and disseminate information about this expertise within BiH as it develops and grows.

² An EU funded project "Support to Higher Education Reforms in BiH" (2009-2012) assists BiH universities with their integration and capacity building for the BiH ENIC. The TEMPUS program is funding several projects in the area of quality assurance and curricular reform, mainly at institutional level, the Austrian Development Agency provides a direct grant to the HEA for capacity building measures and the World University Service (WUS) and its local branch SUS are supporting BiH universities and the HEA in the area of Quality Assurance and other areas.

Areas where I would suggest there is a need for ongoing input from international experts and sources would include:

- Student engagement – even at the level of understanding the benefits of Bologna and more generally in terms of engaging students in dialogue at all levels;
- the development and practice of learning outcomes, programme development and the development of new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment;
- and mobility and recognition of periods of learning – like many Bologna countries, BiH seems to have more difficulty with internal mobility (i.e. mobility and recognition between universities in BiH) than with international mobility. There is also evidence that there are real difficulties in recognising learning between faculties and programmes within the same university.

It is not clear that students and their representative organisations have an understanding of the Bologna reforms, or of the benefits of the reforms. Aspects such as the accumulation of credit and the recognition of learning, the use of the Diploma Supplement and student involvement in quality assurance are crucial parts of the Bologna reforms, but it is not clear that students and their representatives are aware of these developments or engaged in discussions about the development and use of these Bologna ‘tools’.

7) Conclusions

I have some generic conclusions, followed by some more specific conclusions. Overall, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, despite the obvious goodwill towards the project on the part of stakeholders, this goodwill does not extend to an efficient follow up and implementation of the results by all stakeholders.

Much of the impetus for change in BiH, or at least the drive or capacity to overcome obstacles, appears to be coming from external players. While this further emphasises the positive roles of organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Union, it also reinforces concerns for the sustainability or continuation of Bologna-related reforms once externally funded projects have run their course. One overall conclusion is therefore that there is an abiding need for a strategy for the reform of higher education in BiH. The assistance of international partners – and in particular the Council of Europe – will be required to develop and implement such a strategy but the strategy will not succeed unless the public authorities and the higher education community in BiH take ownership of and engage with it.

On a superficial level, there is a commitment by all the key stakeholders to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s engagement in the Bologna Process. Despite the general goodwill towards the project, there remains a lack of actual commitment on the part of many stakeholders, particularly in terms of action, even at the level of attending meetings (for example those of the project steering board) and there is little evidence of a shared commitment. What commitment exists does not appear to have deep or strong roots.

As with many Bologna countries, there is broad agreement that Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to engage with the Bologna reforms and join the European Higher Education Area, while it is not clear that there is either a shared agenda for reform or a broad agreement as to the actual benefits of the Bologna reforms – as opposed to the benefits of being part of the ‘Bologna club’. For this reason, an important conclusion is that there is an ongoing and urgent need to develop and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of the individual aspects of the Bologna reforms. These reforms are not

simply about complying with a European agenda – they are an opportunity to make changes designed for and for the benefit of the HE sector in Bologna and Herzegovina.

The most striking overall conclusion is that no one body, organisation or individual appears to have an overview of or responsibility for Bologna-related developments in BiH. The result is that there appears to be no overall Bologna vision or strategy, nor even a coordination role. My most important overall conclusion would therefore be that there is an urgent need for a single body to take responsibility for taking forward the strategic implementation of Bologna reforms in BiH. It seems to me that this role most closely fits with the responsibilities of the Conference of Ministers of Education. Not only does it fit with the existing remit of the Conference, but the Conference is also supported by a secretariat provided by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and by financial resources from the Council of Ministers' budget. This is a quite serious issue as the position of BiH within the European Higher Education Area will to some extent depend on its ability to provide EHEA partners with credible and understandable information on the state of developments of the higher education reform in BiH.

The evidence from my discussions and the documents provided to me is that the SHE III project is making good progress and is providing a momentum and impetus for change which would otherwise be lacking. One of the major difficulties which the project faces is that many of the obstacles to progress are outwith the scope or the control of the project. For example, the lack of central authority within most of the universities, the apparently huge variations in per capita funding and in the arrangements for the licensing of HEIs are all outwith the scope of the project, but have all been cited by interviewees as major problems for the HE system in BiH as it seeks to implement the Bologna reforms. It will be essential for the relevant ministries and public authorities to address these concerns if the impact of this and other projects is to be maximised and if the Bologna reforms in BiH are to be implemented fully.

Finally, it is perhaps instructive to note that the countries which, by all indicators, are most developed in terms of implementing the Bologna reforms, all demonstrate a strong consensus amongst stakeholders on the benefits of the reforms per se, as well as the benefits of being part of the European Higher Education Area. They are also relatively small countries, or at least small to medium-sized in the EHEA context. In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is also important to note that these countries are also amongst the earliest Bologna signatories and therefore have had several years to implement change – in many cases they began some of the reforms before the Bologna Process began.

More specific and detailed conclusions are that:

1. There is an acute need for awareness raising – of the purpose of Bologna and the benefits of the individual reforms and tools. Otherwise, there is a real danger that Bologna is seen as at best 'a necessary evil', imposed from outside.
2. There is a real need for a vision for what Bologna reforms can do in and for BiH
3. It would be helpful to develop a distinctive approach for Bosnia and Herzegovina and a country-wide Bologna strategy – informed by, but not steered by European developments
4. The SHE III project has had and is having a positive impact and has been generally welcomed

5. There is no comprehensive information on actual progress on the ground – although the SHE III project has a reasonable overview of developments in BiH related to Bologna
6. No body or organisation is currently taking overall responsibility in BiH for coordinating reforms and hence ensuring that Bologna reforms actually happen – and to inform Bologna partners on the state of development in BiH
7. There is a need to build the capacity of representative bodies: National Rectors' Conference National Union of Students (currently, no Student Union operates across BiH), staff organisations.
8. More work is needed to identify the actual expertise available, to develop a single source of information on expertise available domestically, regionally and at European level and to develop further home-grown expertise
9. There was a general, but not universal view that there is still a significant lack of domestic expertise in some aspects of the Bologna reforms in BiH
10. Some expertise in aspects such as use of ECTS, learning outcomes and the Diploma Supplement/student records, appears to be quite advanced in one or two of the private universities.
11. Relevant international expertise needs to be complemented by domestic expertise
12. There is a strong need for more sharing of information and experience, between different agencies and projects and including between public and private HEIs
13. There is a history of failing to reach agreement/make progress in developments at country-wide level amongst key stakeholders
14. There is a need to make use of both Regional (SEE) and European expertise – the Council of Europe could play a significant role as 'broker' or supporter of expertise exchanges
15. There are divisions and tensions within the HE sector in BiH which militate against cooperation

8) Recommendations

- The Conference of Ministers should take overall responsibility for the development and implementation of a Bologna Strategy for Bologna and Herzegovina, working closely with key stakeholders and building on the 7 key strategies.
- The Bologna strategy should have clear and achievable goals, including: timescales and workplans for implementing the 7 key strategies, and for addressing the various other facets of HE in BiH which need to be addressed in implementing Bologna, such as arrangements for licensing HEIs, funding arrangements, and the development of strong representative bodies for universities and for students. It should also articulate clearly the responsibilities of each organisation for achieving targets and it should include high level internal targets for the

next three Bologna Ministerial meetings/stocktaking exercises, and external targets for achieving visibility for BiH within the Bologna Process – e.g. host 2 official Bologna seminars, chair 1 BFUG working group, host a meeting of EUA or ESU or international university network, etc.

- The Conference of Ministers should establish a Bologna Coordination Group or Forum to review progress, share experience/expertise, allow key actors to plan, organise, work together. Examples of particularly good practice include: Belgium (Flanders); Denmark; Finland; Germany; Hungary; Ireland; Netherlands; Sweden; UK; - see stocktaking reports: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/actionlines/stocktaking.htm>
- The Bologna Coordination Group should take responsibility for implementation of the Bologna Strategy and achievement of its targets. The BCG should ensure that BiH is actively represented in every official Bologna seminar but also at other European conferences, including all EUA events and events such as the European Quality Forum, that participants report back and that these reports are disseminated widely. This requires that funding be put aside to make this participation possible. One example of good practice would be the UK Europe Unit (<http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>), which coordinates involvement of staff and students from UK universities in Bologna-related events and issues regular newsletters and updates.
- If appropriate funding could be found, a study visit should be arranged to one of the countries which is most advanced in implementing the Bologna reforms, in order for key players in BiH to get a better understanding of the positive impact and benefits of the Bologna reforms.
- At every level, the responsible bodies should take steps to ensure that members of groups have the appropriate level of commitment, expertise and of support and influence required to carry out their functions.
- Further work should be undertaken to scope in detail the actual level, extent and location of existing expertise within BiH, with a view to identifying good practice for dissemination as well as any gaps in expertise. Such research should be part of a broader reform project or strategy to ensure viable feed back and benefit for the institutions and/or individuals that are subject of the survey. The information obtained should be made publicly available and accessible.
- The Tempus Office should work more closely with other bodies involved with Bologna reforms in BiH in order to make best use of the Higher Education Reform Experts
- Ministers should engage more actively with their counterparts in other SEE countries to share expertise and experience in relation to the Bologna Process reforms (e.g. through the Council of Europe's SEE Network on Qualifications Frameworks, through organising conferences or similar)
- The BiH Rectors' Conference should consider how to open up its membership to private universities

- The project partners should take steps to build on and disseminate expertise in priority areas of QA and NQFs – e.g. expertise developed in pilot projects
- The project partners should facilitate and encourage the development of thematic/practitioner networks to share experience, problems and expertise – e.g. Registrars might discuss the Diploma Supplement, ECTS and student records issues.
- The project partners, working with the Council of Europe and with the Rectors' Conference, should coordinate the active participation by practitioners from BiH in international and regional conferences to share practice re Qualification Frameworks, learning outcomes, etc.
- The project partners should work with the European Students' Union to explore possible approaches to support capacity building of student unions in BiH (cf ESU assessment of Student Unions in Armenia: <http://www.esu-online.org/index.php/News/news-archive/376-esu-armenia> <http://www.osce.org/item/33041.html>, sparqs initiative in Scotland, which supports students and their representatives in engaging in quality assurance at all levels in HE <http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/>)
- The project partners should work with the European University Association to explore possible initiatives to develop a peer learning mechanism where National Rectors Conferences share expertise on a bi-lateral or multi-lateral basis, possibly coordinated by EUA
- The Rectors' Conference of BiH should establish a permanent secretariat, with a rotating presidency of 12 or 24 months, in order to build strategic and policy capacity and institutional memory. It should focus on areas where a country-wide organisation can add value.
- The Conference of Ministers, working with the Rectors' Conference of BiH, should encourage greater engagement & responsibility of universities, public and private, in taking forward Bologna implementation (c.f. Latvian, Scottish and Swiss Rectors' conferences, which have all taken a pro-active approach)
- Relevant ministries should work together to ensure greater consistency in approach to licensing HEIs
- Relevant ministries should work together to introduce a reliable, transparent, predictable and fair method of funding for public universities

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