

e-learning course

Encouraging the further development of Higher Education Act

Theme 1

Existing governance models

(from the Collection of the best practices in existing governance models regarding labour market relevance of higher education in the Danube Region)

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1 Existing governance models in the Danube Region

In the selected Danube Region countries, existing governance models regarding labour market relevance of higher education, very much depend on the complexity of country organisation and include various government bodies, laws and bylaws responsible for this area. Also, national legislation in the field of higher education is very influenced by EU policy and regulations. Certain countries have also developed National strategies for higher education which include priorities that should be fulfilled in certain period. More information about specific countries can be found in chapters below.

1.1 BULGARIA

The **national legislation and national policy** in the sphere of higher education are strongly influenced by EU legislation and policy. The Bologna process, the Lisbon Strategy, and the Copenhagen Declaration as well as the later Europe 2020 Strategy, set the framework for the Bulgarian national policy in the sphere of higher education and its correspondence to the labour market demands. Bulgaria has defined as a constant priority of its higher education policy the establishment of a closer tie between education and the needs of the economy, respectively of the labour market (national and global). **Applying a competent approach to education, which ensures the formation of practical skills in students, strengthening the connection between business and educational institutions, and assessment of the training provided by various higher schools based on the realisation of their graduates**, are some of the aims fixed in the programme of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science in fulfilment of this priority and as part of the reform in higher education.

1. In order to implement the programme of connecting the quality of higher education to the needs of business and the labour market, in 2013 the Ministry of Education and Science elaborated a **Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2014 – 2020**, which was approved in 2014 by the Council of Ministers of R. Bulgaria, and in 2015 was unanimously passed by the National Assembly, together with the Action Plan that accompanies it. It is based on this Strategy that reforms in higher education and **amendments in the Higher Education Act** are made.

The strategy puts exceptionally strong emphasis on the building of a sustainable and effective connection between higher schools and the labour market, achievement of a dynamic match between supply and demand of specialists with higher education, and measuring the quality of education according to the practical realisation of students. The strategy estimates that the basic weakness of the current system of higher education in Bulgaria is the lack of an effective mechanism for connection between, on the one hand, higher schools as a place for training and a recruitment source of qualified specialists, and on the other hand, business and public institutions as users of highly-educated staff that can adapt to the structural and qualification changes in the system of employment. The strategy also notes the serious mismatch between the structure and profile of higher education graduates and the dynamics of the labour market in Bulgaria and the EU. It also points out the **basic challenges** to the link between education and labour market needs.

Some concrete measures envisaged by the strategy to overcome the listed challenges are as follows:

- Use of prognosis concerning the supply and demand of labour force in Bulgaria, to be prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy when determining the demand for specialists with higher education and planning enrolment in higher schools;
 - Creating a competency profile for each specialty;
 - To stimulate dialogue between higher schools and business regarding the contents of training;
 - Targeted funding of academic areas that are of strategic importance for the country: priority professional areas and specialties identified according to adopted criteria;
 - Financial incentives for building, in partnerships with business, a scientific infrastructure regarding the specialists in demand;
 - Funding student internships and practices in the course of education through the web system of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) <http://praktiki.mon.bg/sp> and creating additional incentives for employers to provide conditions for practical training and internship after completion of education;
 - Building a working, effective mechanism for assessment of the professional realisation of graduates;
 - Creating a common information network for career centres, associations of graduates, etc.
2. Together with the adoption and start of implementation of the new Strategy for Development of Higher Education in R. Bulgaria for the period 2014 – 2020, MES also prepared, in 2015, a draft amendment to the Higher Education Act, which was passed by the Parliament and published in 2016. **The new amendments to the Higher Education Act** related to the connection between higher education and the labour market envisage the following:

The funding of state higher schools is fundamentally changed: they will no longer be subsidised according to the number of students they teach, and a growingly large percentage of the state subsidy will go to specialties whose graduates have a good realisation on the labour market. For instance, in 2017, 40 % of the state subsidy will go to such specialties, and the percentage is expected to rise in 2018 to 50 %, and in 2020 to 60 %. It is expected thereby that a decrease will be made of the large disproportion between the labour market needs and the specialties that are actually being chosen by many students in Bulgaria (one of the negative effects of giving funding according to numbers of students);

The amendments envisage defining priority professional areas (for which there is predicted to be a need for highly qualified specialists on the part of the economy and society) and protected specialties (i.e., specialties that are important for the social-economic development of society, yet are not particularly attractive for candidate students). At present, such defined priority areas are engineering sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, informatics, pedagogy, and agrarian science. Falling under the protected specialties are nuclear science specialties, exotic foreign languages, etc.

3. Along with working on normative documents, MES also undertakes **concrete practical activities**, aimed at increasing the degree of correspondence between higher education and the demands of the labour market. With the help of financing through the European Social Fund in the framework of Operational Programme Human Resources Development, MES announced in 2012 a procedure for competitive selection of projects under Priority Axis ‘**Improving the Quality of Education and Training in Accordance with the Labour Market Needs to Build a Knowledge-based Economy**’, through a **grant scheme**. The aim of the project is to create a direct link between higher educational schools on the one hand and employers’ organizations, large companies, and key experts on the other hand; so that all these will work together to update study programmes and achieve a better match between higher education and the labour market. Under this competition, the projects of 36 higher educational institutions out of a total of 51 in Bulgaria won and implemented joint activities with employers and representatives of state and local government institutions. The projects were implemented from 2013 until 2015, and the total amount of funding from MES was 11,795,807. 65 BGN. In 31 of the higher schools with

winning projects, new study programmes have already been introduced, elaborated with the participation of businesspersons; the programmes take into account the changes and demands of the labour market.

1.2 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has very complex higher education systems with 14 institutions involved in defining and coordinating policies. BiH is constituted of two entities, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska, and Brčko District. According to the Constitution, responsibilities for education policies are delegated to entities and Brčko District. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is constituted of ten cantons. Responsibilities for education policies are delegated to cantonal ministries of education which are coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. In the Republic of Srpska, higher education policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of education and culture, and in Brčko District higher education is the responsibility of the Department of education. At the state level, the Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for coordination of education policies at lower levels, and education policies adjustment at the international level, as well as promotion between Bosnia and Herzegovina and foreign higher institutions. Governance arrangements regarding the participation of stakeholders in quality assurance processes may play important role. The quality assurance process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is also divided among several institutions, depending on the governance level. Students are not involved in quality assurance procedures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they may be involved in external review teams on a discretionary basis¹. Also, there is mandatory involvement of students in decision-making processes for external reviews. However, student involvement in quality assurance systems usually has little impact. Employer involvement is also a feature of quality assurance systems. There is compulsory involvement of employers in external review teams in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has introduced higher education laws and strategies to institutionalise the adoption of the Bologna principles. It started in 2007, and since then various strategic documents have been issued, several of which aim to align HE policy with the EU **Education and Training 2020 strategy**. Some of them are **Strategic framework for education development in BiH 2015 – 2025, Priorities of Higher Education for the Period 2016-2026, Strategic directions for the development of higher education in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012 – 2022 – Synergy and Partnership, Strategy for education development in the Republic of Srpska 2016 –2020, Youth Policy of Republic of Srpska for 2016-2020, Economic reform programme 2017-2019**.

The document *Priorities of Higher Education for the Period 2016-2026* was adopted by the Council of Ministers. Some of the priorities include the harmonisation of laws on HE with the Framework Law, strengthening research and innovation and strengthening the connection between higher education and the labour market. Regarding strategic and legislative framework this document prioritises following goals (which are in a alignment with the EDU-LAB project): 1. Through active and creative dialogue identify and agree on priority areas and plan the necessary actions, their sequence and stakeholders (including the academic community and students, and provide proper consultations with social partners, employers and the general public) to be included in Higher Education through joint activity, 2. Clearly describe realistic objectives and determine the resources required for their implementation and clearly define goals that HEIs should realise, as well as the indicators of achievement and stakeholders for the next 10 years, 3. Improve and establish clear connections between policies and higher education objectives on all government levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina, authorities and institutions, with each other and with the objectives of the Bologna

¹ Eurydice (2015) *The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

process. Improve and enhance the trust between universities and ministries (Education, Finance, and other ministries). Also, in this document, it is stressed the need to ensure that each study programme should be designed with two outputs (two possibilities for further career development after graduation): for the labour market and for continuation of education.

This document point out a need to continue to explore the impact of existing legislation (legal provisions) in the implementation of strategies, policies, reports, and the Law on Higher Education in BiH, conducted by higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the corresponding bodies at all levels.

The document encourages the connection between labour market and higher education via a modernisation and an increase the number of existing study programmes for qualifications that are in demand in the labour market; developing consultations on careers and providing public information as a way to stimulate the enrolment for qualifications in demand; providing scholarships for deficit curricula; limiting the number of students in programmes where there is overproduction of staff; clearly defining goals that HEIs should realise in relation to the labour market, as well as indicators of achievement; Establishing consultative consortia at all HEIs (employers, employment bureaus, chambers of commerce, etc.) to coordinate strategic objectives.

According to the state *Economic reform programme 2017-2019* adopted in January 2017, higher education, science, research and technological development in BiH, as a common set of activities, must become a national priority, with the ultimate goal of achieving the standards applicable in the EU. A reform priority is improving links between education and labour market at all state levels. According to this reform programme, the re-establishment of effective research and technological development systems in BiH entails full support from all actors, particularly decision-makers at all levels of government because only then it will be possible to successfully develop the "triangle" of a country's successful future: education – science – economy, with positive participation of the government (politics) as a catalyst. Also the strategy stresses enhancement of cross-sectoral cooperation (sector of labour and employment, education, private sector, social partners, etc.), as well as capacity-building in institutions and services. The reform programme envisages the improvement of chances of young people for inclusion in the labour market, first and foremost necessity to harmonise enrolment policies in secondary vocational and higher education, and then to develop career counselling. The strategy further points out: "It is necessary to improve the conditions for the education process, establish partnerships of schools, institutions of higher education and employers, motivate all participants of these processes to take part in trainings and enhance professional training of teachers. Further development of the Lifelong Learning Qualification Framework in BiH would enhance and facilitate more direct networking of the sectors of education, labour and employment. It is well-known that qualification frameworks encompass the development of knowledge, skills and competences based on learning outcomes and represent an answer to the demands of the labour market."

From the European Commission documents, BiH educational laws and strategies at all state levels presented in this chapter it is evident that key problems on relationship higher education provision and labour market needs are identified and an effective measures are suggested. In fact, nine out of ten EDU-LAB commitments to develop chances for young people leading to the *Danubian Charter for Young Talents* are provided in BiH strategies at all state levels. But, what is needed is implementation of these strategies².

² European Commission (2015) *Western balkans platform on education and training*, Progress report, nov 2015

1.3 GERMANY

University Policy

Due to the federal system in Germany, **responsibility for education**, including higher education, **lies entirely with the 16 individual federal states**. The states are responsible for the basic funding and organisation of HEIs. Each state has its own laws governing higher education. Therefore, the actual structure and organisation of the various systems of higher education may differ from state to state. The management structures of HEIs vary, as do the regulations governing the accreditation of new degree programmes. However, in order to ensure the same conditions of study and to guarantee mobility within Germany certain basic principles have been agreed on by the federal state ministers for science within the framework of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. State governments must take these into account when formulating their laws and regulations.

Key actors on national level:

- The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs
The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs is the oldest conference of ministers in Germany and plays a significant role as an instrument for the coordination and development of education in the country. It is a consortium of ministers responsible for education and schooling, institutes of higher education and research and cultural affairs, and in this capacity formulates the joint interests and objectives of all 16 federal states.

<https://www.kmk.org/kmk/information-in-english.html>

The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2013/2014

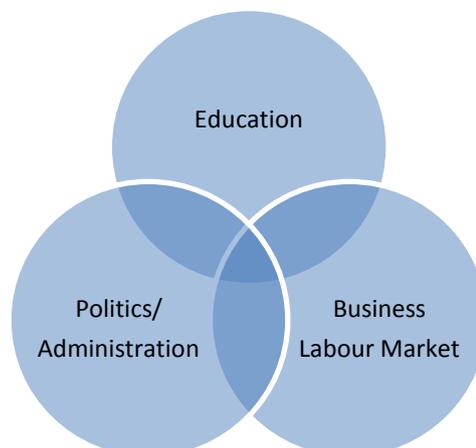
A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe:

<https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/tertiary.pdf>

- The German Rectors' Conference (HRK)
The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) is the voluntary association of public and government-recognised universities and other higher education institutions in Germany. The HRK deals with all issues relating to the role and tasks of higher education institutions in academia and society, especially teaching and studying, research, innovation and transfer, scientific further training, internationalisation, and university self-administration and governance.

<https://www.hrk.de/home/>

In order to strengthen the labour market relevance of higher education, the cooperation of relevant stakeholders is of major importance:



1.4 HUNGARY

Higher education in Hungary governed by the **Higher Education Act** (CCIV. Law, 2011; https://net.iogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A1100204.TV). It declares the higher educational institutes, their operation, structure etc. All the higher institutes should be accredited regularly. This is carried out by the **Hungarian Accreditation Committee** which was established with the country's first higher education law in 1993. It is, according to the 2011 National Higher Education Act, a national body of experts facilitating the control, assurance and evaluation of the scientific quality of education, scientific research and artistic activity at higher education institutions (http://www.mab.hu/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=224&Itemid=733&lang=en).

Daily life is governed by the **Ministry of Human Capacities** through the **State Secretary for Education** (<http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-human-resources>).

All the higher educational institutes are governed by a **rector** and a **chancellor**. The rector is responsible for the education and research, while the chancellor operates the institute.

The **Hungarian Rectors' Conference** is an independent public corporation entitled to represent higher education institutions and to protect their interests. HRC is an independent, consultative organisation with legal personality, which participates in state projects. (<http://www.mrk.hu/en/about/>)

In order to strengthen the labour market relevance of higher education, the cooperation of relevant stakeholders is of major importance. This usually carried out by institutional level, however there are some cooperation in national level. The partner is the **Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. There are regional cooperation with different chambers and stakeholders.

1.5 ROMANIA

In Romania, the educational system is governed by four types of laws:

- the Constitution of Romania;
- the organic law of education ;
- common specialized laws (regarding the accreditation of higher education institutions and the recognition of university diplomas and the Act regarding the Statute of the Teaching Staff);
- Orders of the Minister of Education.

The **Romanian Ministry of Education** is the national institution to which all higher education institutions look for guidance and report to (www.edu.ro).

Romania has a central government office that authorizes and approves educational institutions. Accreditation and diploma certification is in the hands of the National Center for Diploma Certification and Equivalency (<http://www.cnred.edu.ro/>) and the **Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** (ARACIS-<http://www.aracis.ro/>), both coordinated by the Ministry of Education.

In Romania, higher education is provided by universities, institutes, study academies, schools of higher education, and other similar establishments, collectively referred to as higher education institutions (HEIs) or universities. HEIs can be state-owned or private; they are non-profit, apolitical in nature and focused on the public interest.

Starting with 2011 and the implementation of the new **Education Act**, universities were divided into three tiers: *Universities focusing on education (which offer only Bachelor degrees); Universities focusing on education and scientific research and universities focusing on education and art (offering*

Bachelor's and Master's programs); Universities with an advanced research and education focus (which offer Bachelor's, Master's, as well as PhD degrees).

In the wake of the Bologna Agreement most Bachelor's programs take 3 years to complete. However, some programs take longer to complete, for example those in some technical fields, medicine, and architecture. Master's programs take 2 years beyond the Bachelor's degree. Master's programs are a prerequisite for admission to PhD programs. PhD programs usually take 3 years to complete. Under special circumstances, the duration of study may be extended by 1 or 2 years.

There are two basic ways to include labour market relevance in quality assurance: requiring higher education institutions to submit employability-related information to quality assurance agencies before programme accreditation or for the continuing evaluation of institutions and/or programmes, and to ensure employer involvement in the governance, design and implementation of those activities.

For Romania, the first way is the most problematic in the sense that the process of using the collected information is difficult and it can take up to three years to change a curricula (ARACIS procedures do not make it easy) in order for it to respond to the market requirements. In spite of that, Romania has been making a lot of progress in the last few years regarding the efforts of involving employers in the educational process, especially in the higher education, as it can be seen in the best practice examples in the next section.

1.6 SERBIA

Serbian **Law on Higher Education**, introduced in 2005, and with amendments in 2008, 2010 and 2012, provides a legal basis for full implementation of the Bologna Declaration and the Lisbon Convention.

There is ongoing process of public debate on the Draft of Law on Higher Education. The draft of the Law on Higher Education includes many changes and one of the most important is that it foresees that the faculties will be able to hire experts from industry and economy as teachers. These experts should have completed master studies and have the necessary knowledge and experience which will be crucial for students in gaining practical skills. Other important changes that are on the public debate at the moment are: introducing professional management of higher education institutions (by employing professional manager in each HE institution), unique information system which based on creating database with included all students from all universities in the country, establishment of the National Body for Accreditation and Quality in Higher Education, new criteria for employing retired University professors, etc.

In March 2004, Serbian National Assembly ratified The Lisbon Convention.

Serbian National Strategy for the development of education, approved in October 2012, provided a great number of important innovations at all levels of education in Serbia. As far as higher education is concerned, the strategy sets up 2 important goals to be achieved by 2020:

- At least 40% of students who finish the 4 year vocational high schools and 95% of those who finish grammar school should enter the 3rd cycle of studies
 - At least 50% of students who finish Bachelor studies should enrol in a Master degree programme and at least 10% of Master students should get into a Ph.D programme
- [* Source: EACEA and National Tempus Office Serbia]

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/Serbia.pdf

Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020

Comprised of five problem parts, the first part of the Strategy sets a precise context, concept and objectives of the project, its contents, approach to project planning and the foundations on which it was based.

The second part of the Strategy refers to pre-university education (preschool, primary, secondary general and arts education and general education in secondary vocational education, and secondary vocational education) and contains the description of the present condition as well as vision of development of each of the said levels from the aspect of coverage, quality, efficiency and relevance.

The third part of the Strategy reflects to the irreplaceable role that persons with higher education have in modern economic and general development.

The fourth part of the Strategy with the common title “All-embracing strategies of education system development”, focuses on the problem of adult education, funding of education, and a particularly delicate issue of education of individual categories of students.

The fifth part of the strategy covers the education development strategy as its main priority in order to maintain and promote Serbia’s education system.

<http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategy-for-Education-Development-in-Serbia-2020.pdf>

1.7 SLOVAKIA

The Slovak Law defines the institutions of higher education as legal entities, providing education and research in the Slovak Republic . According the character and amount of activities they can be divided into university type institutions, providing education up to the PhD. study, and non-university type institutions, providing education up tlaw on higher educatioo the Bachelor’s level.

The Accreditation Commission as the advisory body of the Slovak Government observes and evaluates the education and scientific or artistic activities of Slovak universities or faculties concerning degrees, levels of study, establishment of a public institution of higher education, its faculties, the approval for establishing a private institution of higher education, on changes in study disciplines and fields of study at these institutions, etc.

There are the three types of institutions of higher education in the Slovak Republic :

Public Institution of Higher Education leestablished according the **Act on Higher Education**. The bodies of the academic autonomy of the institutions are the Academic Senate, the Rector, The Scientific Council and the Disciplinary Commission. They decide on the organization, activities and administration of the institution.

State Institution of Higher Education, established through the Ministries of the Slovak government. The respective Ministry sets the rules for the types of study, administering the financial means, regulating the number of students, the employees etc. supervised by respective Ministry as:

- Police institutions of higher education (established and supervised by the Ministry of Interior)
- Military institutions for higher education (established and supervised by the Ministry of Defense)
- Health care institutions of higher education (established and supervised by the Ministry of Health).

Private Institution of Higher Education, established by non-government institutions or founders, but the providing of education and research must be approved by the Ministry of Education. The approval is based on the approval of the Accreditation Commission or the administration and operation of the institution would harm the laws or regulations of the country.

In 2004, it was mainly the decentralisation of school administration introduced by the passed Act No. 596/2003 Coll. on State Administration in Education and School Self-Governing Bodies. The given act defines the jurisdiction, organisation and role of state administration bodies in education, of municipalities, self-governing regions and school self-governing bodies and stipulates their jurisdiction in the area of state administration in education and school self-governance. It also defines financing of non-state primary art schools, language schools, kindergartens and school facilities.

At the same time, the Act No. 597/2003 Coll. on Financing of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and School Facilities defining financing of schools (primary schools and secondary schools, including special schools) of all founders and special kindergartens, school facilities, as well as school facilities under the founding jurisdiction of regional school authorities.

The Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education (the school act) came into force as of 1 September 2008, which is a piece of legislation long awaited, and which brought a key change in education by introducing a two-level model of curricula consisting of national curricula and school curricula.

In connection with the passing of the Act No. 245/2008 Coll., further pieces of legislation were also approved. **The Act No. 184/2009 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training** defines, until the time of its approval, non-existing mechanisms ensuring participation of employers in vocational education and training and at the same time sets the conditions for improving vocational education and training by establishing advisory bodies for vocational education and training. It has also established a support mechanism for coordination of vocational education and training with the labour market.

The Act No. 317/2009 Coll. on Educational and professional Staff complexly governs the issue of status and performance of educational and professional employees, defines their rights and duties, sets preconditions for carrying out educational and professional activity and introduces professional development, career levels, career positions, attestations of educational and professional employees and a system of continuous education. In relation to the above-mentioned acts, governmental regulations and further executive standards (decrees) were passed concerning education in individual types of schools.

1.8 SLOVENIA

The Act on higher education enables two types of study programmes at **the undergraduate level** (first cycle), which are called the **academic and professional study programmes**, leading to the academic and professional bachelor's degree, respectively. Within the professional study programmes the **internship** within a working environment is **obligatory** and in the academic study programmes it can be included, but it is not obligatory. Graduates of both types of the undergraduate study programmes can enrol to study programmes at the master level (second cycle). An obligatory part of these study programs are **projects in the working environment or/and work within a basic or applicative research**.

Each study year is divided into two semesters, each should contain 15 weeks of organised study. This requirement **disables flexibility**, which would be required to improve the labour market relevance of the higher education.

All the enrolled students benefit from the **additional social transfers** if they are not employed (reduced fees for student dormitories, travel expenses, subsidized student meals, special benefits within student work). This is regulated through the national acts, which are in the domain of the Ministry for work, family, social affairs and equal opportunities. As soon as a student employs or loses the student status, these benefits are revoked. A **new arrangement is required** if one would want to combine/interchange the studies and employment (as, for example, in a dual study system).

2 Examples of best practice (law, bylaw, measure, activity)

Presented activities of selected countries prove that labour market relevance of higher education has been recognised as very important in developing higher education acts, as well as in other activities such as projects, programs, establishing centres for career development, including companies in developing educational curricula, etc. When it comes to financial resources used for these purposes, European funds and national resources are used. It is also visible from the chapters below that only Germany and Hungary have distinction between Universities and Universities of applied sciences where the latter ones are based on practice-oriented education.

2.1 BULGARIA

One example of a good practice that has proven successful and given results is the above-mentioned MES grant programme for higher schools is '**Updating School Programmes in Higher Education in Accordance with Labour Market Requirements**', implemented with financial assistance from the European Social Fund in the period 2013 – 2015. In the framework of these programmes, 36 higher schools in Bulgaria have received financial support to improve the quality of education and training in accordance with the needs of the labour market. In 31 of the higher schools with projects under this programme, new study programmes were introduced, designed with the participation of business, taking account of the demands of the labour market; in five other schools the introduction of study programmes is forthcoming.

Along with this, the various higher schools working on these winning projects are introducing practices aimed at consolidating the connection between education and business. We may point out the following **good practices** that these higher schools have introduced and put to the test in the course of training students – practices aimed at improving the quality of training in accordance with labour market demands:

- Established sustainable ties between higher schools, business and the local regional and municipal government for effective functioning of the 'knowledge triangle' higher school-research-business (labour market).
- The creation of work groups of teachers in higher schools, employers, key experts from business, cooperating to design curricula in order to enhance the practical applicability of the knowledge taught at universities.
- Engaging, on a long-term basis, key experts from business and leading specialists from the practical sphere as teachers and lecturers in education.
- Participation of business in elaborating practical tasks to be included in the training of students. This practice is applied in Varna Free University, Varna;
- Active partnership with business for providing the most adequate environment for practical training of students: organising and conducting practical exercises in a real working environment, conducting seminar exercises for students with the participation of representatives of the sphere of practice, designing projects by students working with employers.
- Participation of business in internship programmes in higher schools.
- Established effective cooperation between higher schools and employers for updating the existing curricula and designing new curricula for priority specialties in accordance with the specific needs of business at regional level, taking into account the needs of business in identifying priority specialties.
- Established effective cooperation with business for professional realisation of graduates at regional level: business representatives and employers are introduced to future candidates for jobs, agreements are concluded on providing jobs for graduate students.

Implementing good practices in higher schools in order to improve the quality of education in accordance with labour market needs is only one aspect of consolidating the connection between education and business. Strengthening the connection between the educational system and business may also have a shaping influence on the labour market itself. The following are some good practices in this direction:

- Participation of the teaching staff and students through established forms of cooperation with business in the designing of regional policies and strategies for development and solution of local problems of economic development and the labour market.
- Established cooperation between higher schools and business for training of workers without absence from production.
- Familiarising businesspersons with the latest theoretical achievements that have resulted from cooperation with higher schools; providing possibilities for subsequent application of these achievements in practice.

2.2 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Centre for Student Career Development at School of Economics and Business University of Sarajevo (<http://www.efsa.unsa.ba/career/>). The Career centre at School of Economics and Business was founded in 2004. The goal of the Centre is to help students with all uncertainties and difficulties they may encounter in the course of studying as well as their first employment. The Career Centre offers service to students, as well as education on technical matters that they are in a need in their career. Students participate in all activities and workshops of Career Centre during the three years of first cycle of studies. By the end of their studies, they remain in active and regular contact with Career Centre and they become some kind of an alumni network, providing opportunities for new generations of students, aware of the important role that Career Centre had in their career development. Beside organisation of educative workshops, the Centre helps companies to find volunteers for work, students to find a company for their students practice which is obligatory in sixth semester of the undergraduate study, and announces vacancies for jobs and internship programmes. A number of Career Start-up with labour market event and seminars with topics like Employment market, Team work, The first job interview, Idea hunt etc. have been organised by the Centre.

Apprenticeship programme for university graduates in Republic of Srpska and Canton Sarajevo. In 2007, Republic of Srpska introduced an apprenticeship programme for university graduates without any work experience that has continued in subsequent years³. The programme subsidises 70% of HE graduates' salaries up to 600 KM per month (in 2011) and 80% of the social contributions. The criteria for award of an apprenticeship subsidy included whether the graduate was employed in agriculture, processing or a service industry, the length of time spent in unemployment, location in an underdeveloped region, and disability. In 2011, 1,000 HE graduates were enrolled in the programme. A major deficiency of the programme has been its focus on apprenticeship in the public sector (mainly municipal administrations), with only one quarter of graduates hired as apprentices by private sector employers. Most of the graduates hired under the programme have had a degree in Economics or Law, rather than science or engineering. The programme has also been criticised for its lack of transparency in the allocation of subsidised apprenticeships⁷.

The same apprenticeship programme for university graduates without any work experience have applied in Sarajevo Canton for a number of years.

³ Djukić, J., Milak, V. and Kremenović, B. (2012) Active labour market policies in Republic of Srpska: good but is it good enough? Example of the apprentices employment project, Published in: *New Challenges in Changing Labour Markets*, J. Zubović and I. Domazet (Eds), Belgrade: Institute of Economic Sciences

<https://www.hochschulkompass.de/en/degree-programmes/choosing-a-programme/types-of-higher-education-institutions.html>

- **Universities of cooperative education**

Universities of cooperative education (UCE) are state-approved educational institutions which have a special position next to the normal universities. The courses take three years, in which theoretical and practical learning alternate. That means that a period of university is followed by a period of practical education in a company which is the educational partner of the UCE.

The degree you receive at a UCE used to be a UCE diploma. But in the meantime several UCEs offer the opportunity of dual studies with the bachelor's degree.

There are state UCEs in the provinces Baden Württemberg, Sachsen, Berlin and Thüringen; in Hessen, Niedersachsen, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Saarland they are financed by private investors.

<https://studieren.de/university-cooperative-education.0.html>

2.4 HUNGARY

There are **three types of higher education institutions** in Hungary:

1. University
2. University of applied sciences
3. High school

Universities:

Universities offer strong theoretical and academically-oriented degree programs and wide range of disciplines. There are 22 state universities and 7 non-state universities.

Universities of applied sciences:

These type of institutes are strongly practice-oriented. The course work provides the theoretical background and prepares students for the real life requirements. Students usually spend some time even a semester in a stakeholder. There are 5 state and 2 non-state universities of applied sciences.

High Schools:

Education in high schools is very similar to the university of applied sciences, but the field of education is more narrow. In Hungary there are 2 state high schools and 28 non-state high schools.

Education in Hungary fits to the European education namely it is a linear education. As a general the BSc/BA level takes 7 semesters, the MSC/MA takes 4 semesters. There is so called undivided education i.e. medical, pedagogical etc.

In the last two years dual type higher education was introduced. This type of education is based on a German model (DHBW) with some modification. The time frame fits to the normal education, but the examination period and the holiday is spent in the stakeholders.

2.5 ROMANIA

Best practice regarding law:

Order no. 3.262 of the Ministry of Education from February 16, 2017 regarding the organization and functioning of student entrepreneurial societies in the higher education system in Romania. This order regulates the organization and operation of entrepreneurial students structure, referred to as SAS, established in higher education institutions (accredited public or private) in Romania. SAS provides a mechanism for supporting development and encouraging entrepreneurship in academia, especially among students and university graduates in order to increase competitiveness of universities and to enable the employability of students. SAS addresses: a) students in higher education institution, in every program of study; b) graduates in their first three years of graduation.

A SAS has the following main responsibilities: development of information and guidance materials for students; organizing mentoring for students who want to establish a start-up; encourage cooperation mentor - student in order to strengthen and develop entrepreneurial skills; organizing projects related to start-up business ideas, etc., in order to select proposals to be submitted to the executive board for review and feedback; organize contests to attract funding to the best projects; coordinating the activities of all business incubators, and other business simulated entities within the higher education institution.

Order no. 94/2014 of the Ministry of Education regarding dual education in Romania. The Ministry of Education has regulated dual education and its organization after consulting employers and at their request, in order to create a strong vocational education system tailored to the needs of the economy and labor market requirements.

In this respect, the Ministry of Education held a dialogue with representatives of employers on the best possible organization of the vocational training system in Romania. Under the new regulations, dual organization of education is at the request of economic agents.

Moreover, organization, duration, content of training programs and certification training modalities are established in consultation with economic operators. Therefore, this form of vocational education is complementary to those operating today and GEO 94/2014 provides the legal framework for its organization, businesses alike can get directly involved in all components of labor training they need.

Best practice regarding employers involvement:

The Advisory Board of the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. In order to adapt the university's curriculum to the economic and social environment requirements, since 2008, LBUS took the initiative to establish the Advisory Board of LBUS. The Advisory Board is a representative structure of the economic and business environment operating under a partnership with the LBUS management team that works to improve the quality of the graduates.

The LBUS Advisory Board identified material resources and ideas to increase the quality of the entire education and scientific research process, and the active participation of the university in the community life for the benefit of all community members and society in general. The Advisory Board has the following prerogatives:

- Performs a continuous exchange of ideas and actions on the continuous improvement of the educational service by updating the curricula of the university programs as indicated by the business partners.
- Proposes solutions to improve university management, using efficient and effective use of human and material resources.
- Develops programs that enable internship programs for its students, in partnership with the business environment.

- Attracts resources through actions of sponsorship, donations, etc..
- Provides students practice opportunities and training for the development of practical skills;
- Supports joint activities (university and businesses) with scientific, cultural and sportive implications.
- Supports academic, scientific and professional proposals that serve in any way the effort of perfectly correlating the university curricula to the market needs.

2.6 SERBIA

After Serbia signed the Bologna Declaration in 2003, a new **Law on Higher Education** was adopted in 2005 distinguishing between academic and vocational studies. The main types of HEIs are **universities colleges of academic studies** and **colleges of vocational studies**. There are also faculties and art academies within a university. Faculties within public universities are independent legal entities. They have substantial autonomy in taking decisions regarding professional, managerial and financial matters . Universities have a dual governance structure consisting of an administrative body, the Council, and an academic body, the Senate.

Serbia is one of the few countries in the region to have a substantial post-secondary vocational system provided by **a large number of specialised colleges**, which provide degree-level qualifications. The largest HEI is the University of Belgrade, a public university with 31 faculties and more than 82,000 registered students in the 2014-2015 academic year (over a third of the total in all HEIs). Some private HEIs have been established in response to increased demand for higher education. The relative number of private HEIs is below the average in the region in relation to population size.

All universities have a **Center for development of carrier** in order to connect academic and business community as well as to provides personal counselling and advice to students on an individual or group basis.

2.7 SLOVAKIA

Modernising higher education

Slovakia is one of the few EU countries where the tertiary education attainment rate – that had risen rapidly over the last decade - did not increase in 2014 compared to 2013, remaining at 26.9%, compared to the EU average of 37.9%. The rate is among the lowest and the Europe 2020 national target of 40% is at risk of not being met. Slovakia is one of the countries with the strongest correlation between tertiary education attainment and the educational attainment of parents: less than 5% of 20-34 year-olds in tertiary education have parents with a level of educational attainment below the upper secondary level (OECD 2014a). The employment rate of recent tertiary education graduates³ remained at 76.7% in 2014, i.e. lower than the EU average of 80.5%. Slovakia remains among the few countries that do not have a quality assurance agency operating independently of the Ministry of Education and where neither completion nor drop-out rates are calculated and monitored systematically. **The Accreditation Committee**, which carries out quality evaluation, is not a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Supporting its membership could possibly contribute to improving the work of the Committee. Slovakia lacks professionally-oriented bachelor's programmes: the vast majority of students continue on to master's programmes (European Commission 2015 and Figure 3). Between 2010 and 2013, Slovakia was the EU Member State with the highest increase in the number of people with a tertiary degree working in a job below their level of qualification (European Commission 2015). This state of affairs is not helping to achieve a higher attainment rate or to use resources in the most efficient manner. Higher education institutions are also under pressure because of the demographic decline, which is

lowering the number of young people entering higher education and forcing institutions to fight to fill their courses. Employers - particularly employers in the automotive sector - point out that graduates do not have the right kinds of qualifications: too many at the master's level, too many from the social sciences and not enough from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This may be partly linked to the fact that the largely per capita funding system does not favour technical universities, whereas the labour market needs more graduates precisely from the technical fields. Various sources (the Academic Ranking and Rating Agency, Eurostat, Eurydice, the National Reform Programme) point to a severe brain drain affecting students, teachers and researchers. Many students prefer to study in the Czech Republic rather than in Slovakia.

Work on a new Higher Education Act has been postponed until after the next general elections in 2016. Nowadays there is expected a small amendment, which incorporates principles of operation of the new accreditation agency for universities. The new Act was supposed to simplify the accreditation process and encourage cooperation with employers, something currently being explored through an ongoing EU-funded project. One of the project's results is a recently-launched portal which helps future students to choose where to study by providing employment rates and wages for graduates from individual universities and programmes. By the end of 2015, the ongoing complex (re)accreditation round following the entry into force of stricter rules for quality assurance in 2013 will come to an end, hopefully bringing qualitative improvements. Funds from the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds will support the creation of profession-oriented bachelor's programmes. The Ministry of Education has also launched grants to encourage Slovak graduates of prestigious universities to come back to Slovakia and work in public administration.

2.8 SLOVENIA

All the public universities in Slovenia have established **Career Centres**, financed by the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Sports (MIZŠ) through the European Social Fund (ESF) system.

Another activity within the ESF is performed through the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarships Fund, which releases calls for the research/professional **projects called "On a creative way to knowledge" (PKP projects)**. The goal of these projects is to connect the HE sector with environment (business, institutions..., i.e. potential employers).

The Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) considers **collaboration with companies** in research work as **an important indicator when approving the research grants**.

In the past, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, financed a collaboration between HE and companies at the research level through the system of "young researchers from business". These PhD students were enrolled to the university PhD study programs and worked in the field of applicative research that a company wanted to develop. They had a supervisor, both at the university and in the company (only companies that had a registered research department were eligible). Unfortunately, this mechanism was cancelled.