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State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Partner Countries

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Preface

Since its launch in 1999, 47 countries have signed the Bologna Declaration, which aimed to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The EHEA was launched in 2010 but the Bologna Process continues with Ministerial level meetings taking place every two years. It is the reference point for higher education reforms, facilitating international cooperation and academic exchange, the mobility of students, graduates and staff working in higher education institutions. The EU-funded Tempus programme has been operating for over 20 years, providing support for the modernisation of higher education institutions and systems in the EU's neighbouring countries, Russia and Central Asia. The programme's priorities reflect closely the Bologna reforms and the EU's Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education. Thus, the Tempus Programme and the Bologna Process have gone hand in hand, supporting the reform process in the EU and its neighbouring countries over the past decade.

As a result of their international cooperation and in particular their participation in EU programmes like Tempus, certain Tempus Partner Countries have been spurred into reflecting on their higher education systems. They have started initiating reforms, using the Bologna Process recommendations and tools on a voluntary basis, as a source of inspiration (even though these countries have not signed the Bologna Declaration).

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for managing the Tempus programme, through powers delegated by the European Commission. In order to help improve programme implementation, EACEA also gathers information on higher education in the countries where the programme is working – hence this report. It describes how and to what extent, the Bologna Process is being implemented in the Tempus Partner Countries.

This report follows the first EACEA report on the implementation of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Partner Countries, published in 2010¹. It helps chart progress made in this domain since then and covers a wider range of topics.

The picture provided in this report demonstrates the attractiveness of the concepts and tools promoted by the Bologna Process. It also highlights the efforts made by certain countries, who have not signed the Bologna Declaration, to implement reforms promoted by Bologna.

I am convinced that this report will make a valuable contribution to the third Bologna Policy Forum to be held in Bucharest on 26-27 April 2012 and will help promote further policy dialogue and cooperation between partners beyond Europe. Indeed, the theme of the forum is "Beyond the Bologna process: Creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education spaces".

Moreover, this continuing analysis of progress made towards implementing the Bologna reforms, will also help the Tempus Partner Countries refine their strategies and optimise the implementation of the programme in higher education institutions and systems. Hopefully, this will also contribute to the development of ambitious regional and cross-regional cooperation strategies between these countries. A structured policy dialogue is already under way with the Eastern neighbouring countries, in the context of Platform 4, "People to people", of the Eastern Partnership since 2009, and with those in the Western Balkans, with the launch of the Western Balkan Platform on Education and Training on 7 March 2012. The European Commission also intends to lead a similar exercise with its Southern Mediterranean neighbours. The results of the present report will be very useful in this respect.

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¹ "State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Countries, 2009-2010", a Tempus Study, Issue No 2, March 2010, EACEA, Brussels.

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Tempus offices in the Partner Countries

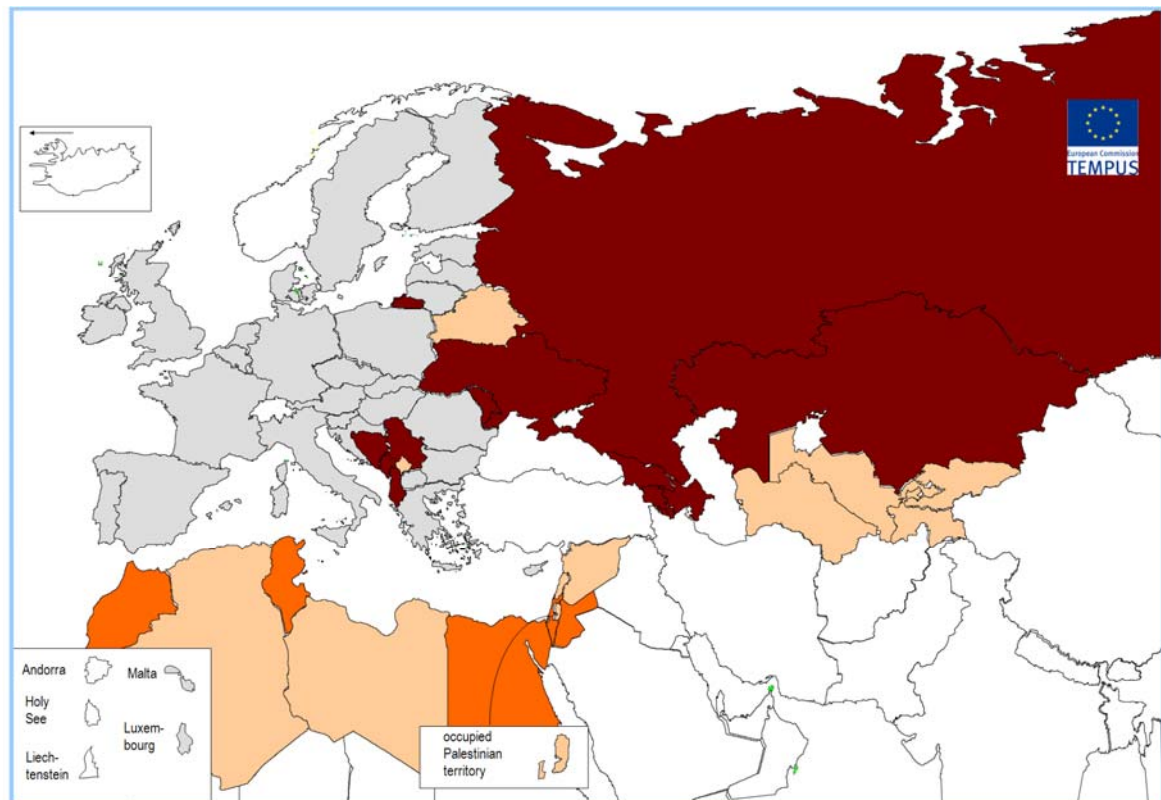
The Tempus Series

Introduction

The aim of this study is to describe the extent to which the Bologna Process is being implemented in the Tempus Partner Countries having signed the Bologna Declaration, and the extent of voluntary convergence with the European Higher Education Area and the influence of the Bologna principles on higher education systems and processes in all 27 Tempus Partner Countries².

Eleven Tempus Partner Countries have signed the Bologna Declaration (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine). Among the remaining 16 non-signatory countries, five participated in the Bologna Policy Forum in March 2010, to discuss how worldwide cooperation in higher education could be enhanced through the Bologna Process (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) (Map 1).

Map 1: Tempus Partner Countries and the Bologna Process, 2011



- Bologna-Signatory Countries
- Tempus Partner Countries which have participated in the 2010 Bologna Policy Forum
- Other Tempus Partner Countries
- European Union Member States

² See glossary.

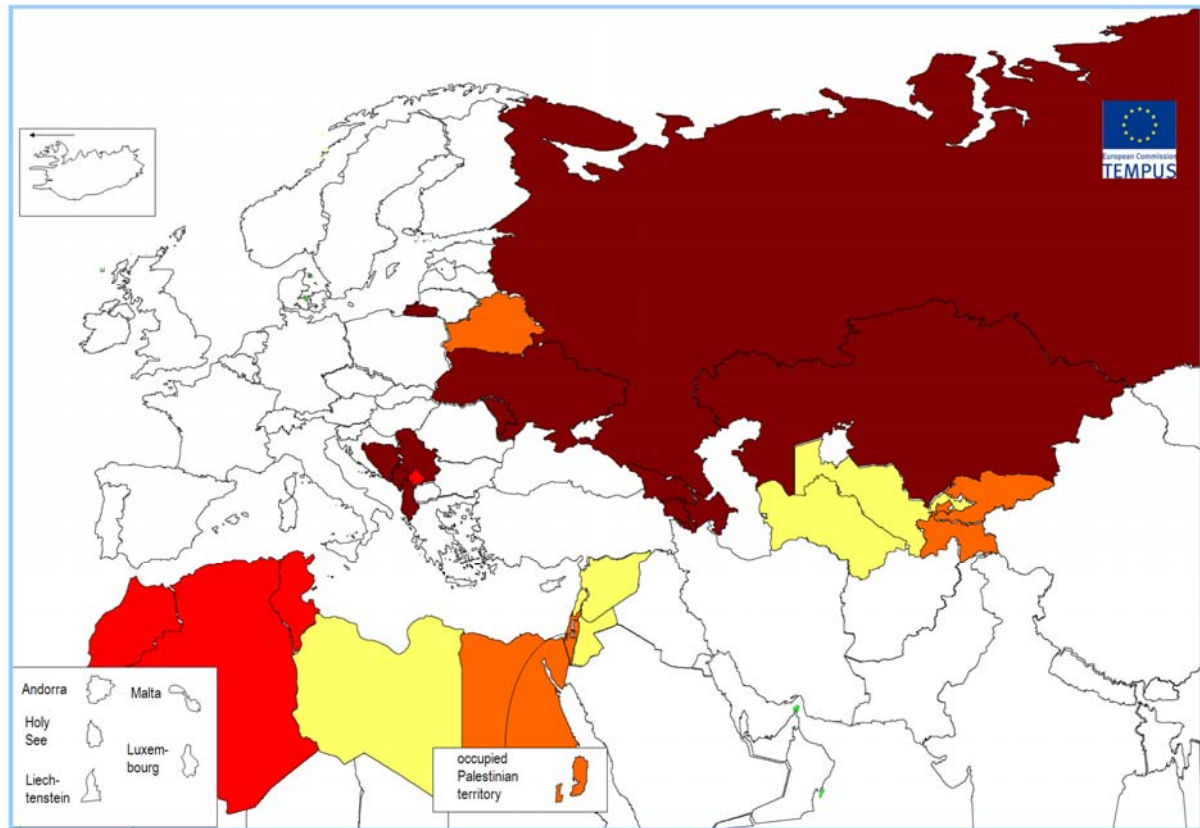
Whereas the eleven Tempus Bologna-signatory countries are formally committed to the Bologna Process, notable differences are evident in the mode of implementation in the other Tempus Partner Countries (Map 2).

In Algeria, Kosovo³, Morocco and Tunisia, the Bologna Process is officially embedded in their education systems. It has been introduced in the legislation and has become part of the national strategy.

In contrast, the Bologna Process is currently implemented on a voluntary basis using incentive mechanisms in Belarus, Egypt, Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Ad hoc groups, including the Tempus Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) and Commissions, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, often play a major role.

In Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, there is no specific mechanism for supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process apart from the Tempus Higher Education Reform Experts, who disseminate information on Bologna to both institutions and Ministries.

Map 2: Methods of Implementation of the Bologna Process, 2011



■ Bologna-Signatory Countries

Non Bologna-Signatory Countries:

■ Bologna Process officially embedded in the education system

■ Bologna Process being implemented by ad hoc groups under the supervision of the Ministry of Education

■ No particular mechanism supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process

³ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

This study was carried out using methodologies and tools developed by Eurydice, the network on education systems and policies in Europe. Two groups were identified; signatory and non-signatory countries and data gathered accordingly. For the 11 Bologna-signatory countries, data had already been collected by Eurydice, in collaboration with the Bologna Follow-up Group⁴, while preparing the publication entitled, "The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report", published in 2012. For the remaining 16 non-signatory countries, data was collected with the support of the National Tempus Offices, in close cooperation with the national authorities and the EU Delegations in the relevant countries.

The data was collected during the winter of 2011-2012 and it describes the situation of the academic year 2011. This report is intended to build on the study carried out in 2010 and thus, a similar approach has been adopted for comparative purposes. It investigates the extent to which the following tools and approaches have been implemented or adopted:

- Bologna three-cycle structure
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- Bologna Diploma Supplement
- National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)
- Quality assurance mechanisms
- Recognition of foreign qualifications.

For each of these items, precise criteria have been defined, which reflect different stages in the implementation of these tools. A comprehensive description of the current state of play has been given. By adopting such an approach, useful data for comparative analysis between these countries can be revealed.

This study is especially targeted at policy makers in the Tempus Partner Countries, to help inform their strategies and provide them with external perspectives on their higher education systems, to complement their analysis. This publication should also be useful for current or future Tempus beneficiaries, providing them with an overview of the situation in the Partner Countries, to help develop relevant projects.

It will also prove useful for the future development of the Tempus programme, providing information on the current state of play, to tailor it further to the political context in the Partner Countries, where it is being implemented and improve its effectiveness and impact.

It should be borne in mind, when comparing the different countries, that the adoption of Bologna principles and approaches is a voluntary process. Countries started to get involved at different stages and the pace of reform varies, depending on the local context. Libya joined the Tempus programme only in 2010 and is participating in this study for the first time.

⁴ The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) consists of Ministerial representatives of all Bologna signatory countries and the European Commission as full members. The role of BFUG is to follow up on the implementation of the Bologna Process. It includes also consultative members such as the Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher education (ENQA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), Business Europe and Education International.

Executive summary

The aim of this report is to map, for the second time, the state of play of the higher education reforms in accordance with the Bologna Process in the 27 countries participating in the Tempus programme. The 2010 edition described the situation at that time and concluded that all Tempus Partner Countries are following the process to some extent, have adopted some of its main elements and have started implementation of Bologna reforms. The current report intends to follow on from the 2010 analysis and highlights the latest developments.

This report re-confirms some of the previous conclusions. In particular, it demonstrates that the non-signatory Tempus Partner Countries are clearly influenced by Bologna developments and are on their way to adopting tools and approaches, promoted by this Process. Being a voluntary process, the pace of adoption varies, depending on local circumstances and policy priorities.

Moreover, this report confirms again that certain geographical areas with common cultural and historical backgrounds tend to apply the Bologna Process in a similar way. This is particularly true in the Maghreb countries (with the exception of Libya), where the higher education systems are relatively similar and have been influenced by their long-standing relations with Europe. It also holds true for the Western Balkan countries, characterised by their common aspiration to accede to the EU.

The report highlights that the three-cycle degree structure and ECTS are the most well-known tools, whereas the introduction of the Bologna Diploma Supplement, the development of a National Qualifications Framework and the setting-up of independent bodies for quality assurance in higher education have not been fully integrated into national policies.

Nevertheless, the report shows that progress has been made during the last two years, especially in implementing ECTS (notably in the Tempus Bologna-signatory countries) and the Bologna Diploma Supplement. Progress has also been made in the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF), in particular in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. However, the implementation of this concept is still at an early stage in many other countries. Only a limited number of countries (notably those in the Western Balkans) have formally adopted a legislative framework (refer to the section on the NQF below) upon which to build their own NQF.

The same applies to the setting-up of independent quality assurance agencies. Apart from the Western Balkans where almost all countries have now established independent agencies for this purpose, little progress has been made in the other countries in this respect. The vast majority of Tempus Partner Countries still do not have an independent body to deal with quality assurance.

These recent trends confirm that the Western Balkans countries are motivated to promote the Bologna Process as part of their larger policy objective to be integrated into the EU and in their aspiration to improve their higher education systems and to compete internationally. With the recently launched EU initiative of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training, regional cooperation at all levels of education is expected to increase among these countries and with the EU. It is only natural that improving their already advanced level, will allow them to integrate better with EU Member States and participate fully in EU education and research programmes in the future.

In contrast, the recent events in the Arab world have interrupted the pace of reforms in these countries. Prior to this, top-down reforms had often been imposed on stakeholders. A new consensus needs to be reached in these societies before recommencing the reform process. In some of these countries, the so-called "Bologna reforms" even generated protest and opposition. A new policy dialogue is being initiated, between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries, focusing on education, complementing the EU's overall enhanced commitment to the region via its external policy. The degree of cooperation will of course depend on the interest and commitment from the countries themselves.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, reforming higher education is a long process and conditions are not always favourable to change, due to the past heritage and local political context.

The EU has been engaging the countries of the Eastern Partnership in a regional policy dialogue on education, research, culture and youth since 2009 and more resources have been allocated to this region. The benefits from this enhanced support should bear fruit in the coming years. However, the legislative frameworks permitting the implementation of some Bologna reforms remain the responsibility of the countries themselves. Signs from most Ministries of Education in the countries in Central Asia are encouraging, in that they seek closer cooperation with developments in the EU and convergence with Bologna. Kazakhstan is in fact a member of the Bologna Process since 2010. A newly funded EU project will include sharing the experience of the Bologna Process and thus increasing regional dialogue.

From the findings in this report, the Tempus Partner Countries can be divided into three main categories. The Western Balkans countries are the most advanced in implementing the Bologna Process (including Kosovo, in spite of the fact that it has not signed the Bologna Declaration). The countries in the Maghreb region (with the exception of Libya), Eastern Europe and Central Asia have adopted certain elements of the Bologna Process, but are still far from full implementation. Finally, countries in the Middle East are at various stages of implementation. These countries are not Bologna signatories and their education systems have traditionally been influenced mainly by Anglo-American models. They are therefore the least in line with Bologna principles.

The Bologna Three-Cycle Structure

One of the main components of the Bologna Process is the division of higher education programmes into three consecutive levels - first, second and third cycles - leading to three kinds of qualifications and degrees: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate.

A common model has been developed for Bachelor and Master programmes, whereas the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities, with no attempt to introduce further regulation within the Bologna Process.

In the majority of the Tempus countries, the Bologna cycle structure for Bachelor and Master levels is fully or extensively implemented in most institutions and programmes. This is the case for all the Tempus countries which have signed the Bologna Declaration and interestingly, is also the case in a number of non-signatory countries (Algeria, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tajikistan, Tunisia) and Kosovo.

At Bachelor level, two main models have been adopted in the Tempus Partner Countries: programmes designed on the basis of 180 ECTS credits (lasting 3 academic years) and programmes of 240 ECTS credits (4 years). The choices made in the different countries seem to reflect their geo-political context and the historical similarities between countries in certain areas. For example, the 240 credit model is

predominant in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in which the higher education systems have a common historical background with a longer length of studies for all degrees. On the other hand, countries such as Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia have opted for the 180 credit model, which reflects their close relations with the education systems of certain EU countries. It can also be noted that several countries of the Middle East apply a three-cycle structure, which is not fully in line with Bologna, since Bachelor programmes in many of these countries are longer than those following the Bologna model.

At Master level, the 120 ECTS credit model (2 academic years) is used in the vast majority of Tempus countries, including those whose systems do not comply with Bologna.

When looking at the different Bachelor and Master reference models, two groups can be identified:

- 1) Albania, Algeria, Kosovo, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco and Tunisia, where the 180+120 credit model (3+2 years) is preponderant;
- 2) Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, where the 240+120 credit model (4+2 years) is most commonly used.

No model seems to be preponderant in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel and Serbia, nor in Belarus and Moldova and there is flexibility shown in the use of both of the above models, depending on studies and institutions.

At the Doctoral level, developments are at a very early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify (as is the case in Europe).

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning attained throughout higher education. The system aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes and facilitate the recognition of studies. In practical terms, it facilitates comparisons and provides a clearer understanding of the workload involved in programmes/courses. It is also an essential tool in facilitating student mobility and study periods abroad. In practice, 60 ECTS credits represent the workload of one year of full-time formal learning (academic year) and its learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do, after the successful completion of a learning process. Whereas the Middle East countries (except Israel and Syria) as well as Egypt, Libya, Turkmenistan and Tunisia have not developed the learning outcomes concept at national level, all other Tempus countries have defined it in their national steering documents and it is even enforced by law in eight of them. However, the way credits are allocated varies considerably and the concept of learning outcomes is still far from being the reference used to define credits.

Almost all Tempus Partner Countries have adopted a credit system and the majority of them are currently implementing ECTS, at least to some extent. However, harmonised implementation is still far from being a reality and there is room for improvement. For instance, there is still no common method for measuring ECTS credits. One ECTS credit may vary from 20 to more than 40 hours of student workload or from 10 to 15 teacher-student contact hours among countries.

Nevertheless, eight countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine) and Kosovo have reached a high degree of

implementation, with ECTS being applied in more than 75% of their programmes and higher education institutions, for the purpose of both credit transfer and accumulation and credit points are based on both learning outcomes and student workload.

Several countries have their own national credit systems (Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria and Uzbekistan) whereas Libya and Turkmenistan are the only ones which do not use any, so far.

Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS)

The Bologna Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma, which aims to improve international transparency and facilitate the academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It consists of eight sections, describing the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in the country. In other words, it provides the context of the diploma and helps its bearer to illustrate further his/her qualifications.

Apart from Jordan, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory and Syria, which do not use any type of Diploma Supplement, all the other Tempus Partner Countries have either adopted a national DS or the Bologna DS.

Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan just use their own national Diploma Supplement. The other Tempus Partner Countries are committed to using the Bologna Diploma Supplement and differing levels of implementation have been reported.

A partial introduction of the Bologna DS in higher education institutions (adopted by 25–75% of institutions) has been reported in Armenia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Russia, Tunisia and Ukraine. Egypt is at the initial stages of adoption.

According to Bologna principles, the Diploma Supplement should be issued automatically and be given free of charge to graduates at the end of their studies. This principle is currently applied in six Tempus Partner Countries (Albania, Algeria, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Tunisia) and Kosovo. Nevertheless, it is issued in return for payment in five countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Russia and Ukraine), whereas it is issued upon request and free of charge in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon and Kazakhstan.

Concerning the language in which the Bologna DS is issued, the majority of Tempus Partner Countries issue it in the language of instruction and/or English (as per Bologna guidelines).

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. It aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications for the labour market and civil society. It describes the different qualifications and other learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other.

On a scale of five, to establishing and implementing a National Qualifications Framework, none of the Tempus countries have reached the highest step. However, nine countries (Western Balkan countries, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Tunisia)

have reached the level where a National Qualifications Framework for higher education has been formally adopted and the implementation process has started.

The process is underway in another nine countries, where the purpose of the NQF has been agreed and various committees have been established to work on its definition and establishment. The remaining countries have either, not started or just started the process.

National Quality Assurance systems (NQA)

In the context of this report, quality assurance refers to the process of evaluating, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of higher education systems, institutions and programmes. At national level, this type of external evaluation should ideally be carried out by an independent body, which is autonomous in its operating methods from the government and other authorities.

Whereas the principle of independent quality assurance is becoming embedded world-wide, apparently it has not yet been widely adopted in the Tempus Partner Countries. In most of them (20 in total), quality assurance falls under the responsibility of either a government-dependent body or a Ministry. Nevertheless, in a number of countries, the situation is evolving and reforms are ongoing.

In contrast to these countries, one single or several independent national bodies for quality assurance exist in six Tempus countries and Kosovo (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territory and Serbia).

The main outcomes of the evaluations carried out by these agencies are decisions granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate or teach at certain levels and advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality in specific areas.

It is worth noting that in certain Tempus Partner Countries (Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Russia, Syria, Tunisia) and in Kosovo, higher education institutions can choose a quality assurance agency from outside their own country.

Not surprisingly, in the majority of Tempus Partner Countries, academic staff have a decision-making role in the external quality assurance process, whereas the participation of stakeholders beyond the academic community is still far from the norm in most countries. For instance, the majority of Tempus Partner Countries have no formal requirements to involve international experts or employers in external quality assurance processes.

Moreover, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Lebanon, Moldova and Montenegro are the only Tempus partners where students sit on the quality assurance governance structures and have an actual decision-making role in the external quality assurance implementation process.

Albania, Armenia, Israel, Moldova, Kosovo, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory are the only Tempus beneficiaries where international experts are members in governance structures and have a real influence in decision-making.

As regards the focus of external quality assurance, it is interesting to note the variety of areas covered, ranging from teaching to internal quality assurance and management systems, including research and support services to students.

Nevertheless, it seems that lifelong learning provisions and the employability of graduates are assessed less, reflecting an insufficient interest in these.

Internal quality assurance is a growing concern in most countries. The extent to which formal requirements exist for higher education institutions to develop such tools varies from country to country.

The recognition of foreign qualifications

Recognition has been at the heart of the Bologna Process and is a means of promoting the mobility of individuals worldwide and of boosting the employability of graduates.

Among the different tools available, the Lisbon Recognition Convention is an international convention, which allows qualifications granted in one country to be recognised in another country on the basis of defined standards. The Convention has been elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and it has already been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond. It is addressed first and foremost, to Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been widely ratified by the Tempus countries, in particular by those which are Bologna-signatory countries and also members of the Council of Europe. In total, 15 Tempus Partner Countries have signed the Convention. The principle of recognition of foreign qualifications is nevertheless applied in most of the other Tempus Partner Countries as well.

In practice, Ministries of Education are usually in charge of recognising foreign qualifications for both academic study and employment purposes. The ENIC/NARIC⁵ networks may also play a major role, as is the case in Kosovo.

Joint programmes and degrees

At global level, the development of joint programmes and degrees is becoming an essential part of internationalisation strategies and is seen as a major component of institutional cooperation.

In the Tempus Partner Countries, joint programmes are foreseen by legislation in 16 countries and joint degrees in 12.

Nevertheless, joint programmes and degrees are not mentioned yet in legislation in ten countries, namely, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Russia, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

Obviously, implementing the Bologna Process in the Tempus Partner Countries is a long and complex process, as is also the case in the European Union. Nevertheless the Bologna Process is a reference in most countries neighbouring the EU and it is often considered as a pre-requisite for reinforcing institutional collaboration and for the exchange of students and staff with counterparts in the EU. In many countries, the Bologna Process is also seen as a catalyst for wider reform. Designed as an important instrument to enhance the internationalisation of higher education, it is de facto, an

⁵ European Network of Information Centres on Academic Mobility and Recognition (ENIC Network) and National Academic Recognition Information Centres network (NARIC Network).

essential driver for wider reforms, since it also questions the legitimacy of current governance structures and mechanisms. In this respect, it is fully in line with the ambitions and objectives of the Tempus programme, which has proved to be an important instrument in promoting Bologna tools and approaches.

Part 1 – The Bologna three-cycle structure

The three-cycle degree structure is the component of the Bologna Process which the signatory countries are most committed to implementing, to help create the European Higher Education Area. The three-cycle system is considered as an important means of addressing fragmentation of degrees and programmes in Bologna Partner Countries, to make them more understandable, visible and attractive in Europe and beyond. Easily readable degrees and programmes help increase student and graduate mobility. They also make university cooperation more structured and integrated, leading to joint, double and multiple degrees. They also enhance international university-business cooperation. This explains the success of the initiative launched in 1998 by four countries⁶ - the Sorbonne Declaration - and its progressive extension beyond the borders of the EU ever since, to influence even non-signatory countries.

The two main challenges associated with the design and implementation of the Bologna structure were:

- (i) organising studies and programmes into three levels, with easily identifiable learning outcomes, leading to degrees giving access to the labour market
- (ii) defining the duration of each cycle necessary to acquire these skills and competences.

The Bologna Process provides a flexible framework to implement such changes, without being over-prescriptive. The Bologna Declaration (1999) merely states that first cycle studies should last a 'minimum of three years'. Subsequent Bologna discussions on the second cycle have concluded that a Master programme may range from between 60 to 120 ECTS (representing one to two years in practice⁷). The development of the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities, with no attempt to introduce further prescriptions through the Bologna Process.

In practice, the first cycle qualifications typically comprise of three to four years of academic study, equivalent to 180 to 240 ECTS credits and the second-cycle qualifications, 90-120 ECTS credits (one to two years study), with a minimum of 60 credits. The initial idea was to break the traditional long study programmes, lasting four, five or even six years and replace them with Bologna Bachelor and Master levels. These long programmes are not considered 'Bologna compliant'.

At this stage of the process and despite the variety of situations, a number of Tempus Partner Countries have begun to converge with the Bologna cycle structure at Bachelor and Master level.

At Doctoral level, many developments are at an early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify (as is the case for Europe).

Three-cycle structures converging gradually with the Bologna structure

The Bologna Process is widely influencing the neighbouring countries of the EU and Central Asia (Map 3). In the Tempus Bologna-signatory countries, the Bologna cycle structure is now fully implemented in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Montenegro, Russia and Serbia. In Russia, for instance, the Bologna cycle structure, which was introduced by law in 2007, became mandatory in 2011. It is interesting to observe that this

⁶ France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

⁷ An academic year typically comprises 60 ECTS credits (see part 2).

category also includes some Tempus non-Bologna-signatory countries such as Algeria, Israel, Tunisia and Kosovo, which have fully adopted the Bologna cycle structure in most of their study programs.

In the remaining countries, the Bologna three-cycle structure is being gradually introduced and such study programs progressively adopted. This is the case in several Bologna-signatory countries (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine) and countries which are not part of the Bologna Process (Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tajikistan). It is worth noting that in Kazakhstan, a major step has been reached in 2011, with the official adoption of the three-cycle structure.

Egypt, Jordan, Libya, the occupied Palestinian territory and Syria have their own national three-cycle structure. However, this structure cannot be considered to be in line with Bologna, since Bachelor programmes in many cases are longer, lasting usually four to five years, as was the case in most European countries a decade ago. In these countries, the minimum duration of four years for Bachelor level is the norm, whereas under Bologna, it is rather the upper limit. The three-cycle structure in the Middle East has mainly been influenced by the Anglo-American system. However, in these countries, like in Europe, Master programmes last one to two years, but they are usually part of the steps towards a Doctorate.

Uzbekistan also belongs to the category of countries where the system is based on a national three-cycle structure. Bachelor degrees last four years and Master degrees, not less than two years. The third-cycle postgraduate education includes the *Candidate* qualification (*Fanlar Nomzodi*) and the Doctorate (*Fanlar Doktori*).

Turkmenistan is the only Tempus country which does not have a three-cycle structure. Following the Presidential Decree of February 2007, basic university studies consist of 5-year programmes, except for medicine and some programmes in arts, which last six years. After three years of additional study, graduates can obtain a degree of "Candidate of Sciences", followed by a "Doctor of Sciences".

Various Bachelor structures reflecting the geo-political context

In many countries, the implementation of the three-cycle structure is leading to lively debates on the extent to which it is necessary to take into account the national specificities of the labour market, institutions, programmes, disciplines and qualifications. As is the case in the EU, medical studies and related fields, as well as architecture and engineering, are examples of disciplines where long study programmes are often still the norm.

In terms of how the Bologna cycle structure is actually implemented, the analysis below focuses on the structures which have most commonly been implemented in the Tempus countries. Official rules at national level may leave room for some flexibility, in order to take into account the need for particular institutions, programmes or disciplines, to fulfil their mission and role. Nevertheless, in the majority of countries, there is a clear reference model (if not a single compulsory model) that applies to the majority of institutions and programmes.

With regard to the Bachelor programmes (Map 4), two main structural models have been adopted (as in the EU): Bachelor programmes usually designed on the basis of 180 ECTS credits (of three-year duration) and programmes comprising of 240 ECTS credits (of four-year duration).

Nevertheless, unlike the EU, the 240 ECTS credit model seems to be preponderant in Tempus Partner Countries. This is the case in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine and the countries of the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia).

On the contrary, Lebanon and the Maghreb countries have adopted the 180 ECTS credit system, being influenced by their long-standing relations with certain EU Member States. In the Western Balkans, the situation is somewhat mixed. Various combinations exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, whereas Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro have mainly endorsed the 180 ECTS model. Combinations of various models are also used in Belarus, Israel and Moldova.

As a result and not surprisingly, the Bachelor structure, which is the backbone of any higher education system, appears to be largely embedded in the geo-political context and Map 4 reflects this.

The 120 ECTS credit model (2 academic years) is commonly adopted for Master programmes

For Master programmes (Map 5), the 120 ECTS credit model (of two years duration) is used in the vast majority of Tempus countries, as is the case in the EU. This model is the most commonly used reference to design programmes in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Southern Caucasus. It is also the case for Albania, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Russia and Tajikistan.

Ukraine and Serbia are the only Tempus countries in which the 60 ECTS model (of one-year duration) for Master studies is the most frequently used, but where many institutions also implement Master programmes of 120 ECTS.

In Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Montenegro, no dominant model prevails at Master level.

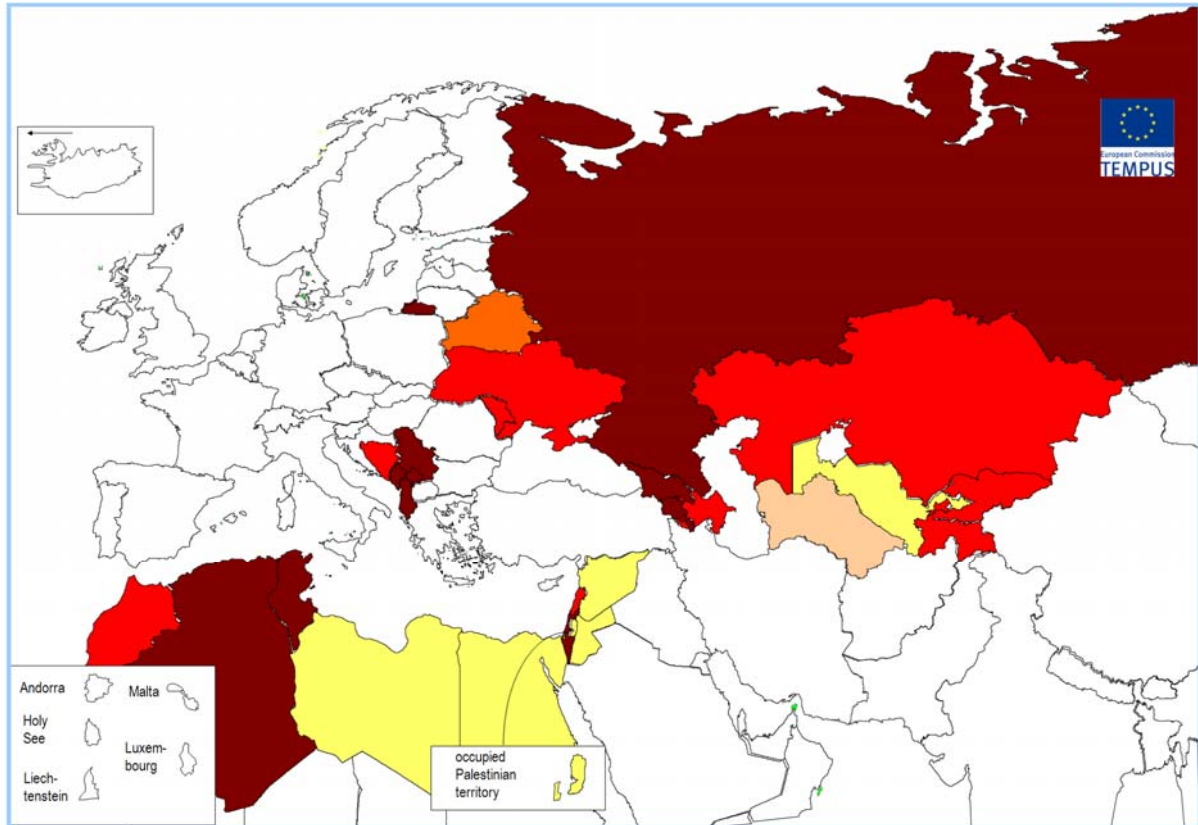
Two main models to characterise the overall Bachelor/Master structure

Finally, the combination of Bachelor and Master reference models, makes it possible to identify two main categories, to describe the overarching higher education structure in the Tempus Partner Countries (Map 6):

- The 180+120 credit model (3+2 academic years), which is preponderant in the EU countries, is evident in six Tempus Partners Countries, Albania, Algeria, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Kosovo.
- The 240+120 credit model (4+2 academic years) which is commonly used in seven other countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

The 240+60 credit model (4+1 academic years) is the main model in Ukraine, whereas in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Moldova and Serbia, no model seems to be preponderant. The programme structures depend largely on the institutions and fields of study concerned and combine the various possibilities offered. In Serbia, higher education institutions independently decide on the model that they consider most appropriate. Therefore, the 180+120 ECTS and 240+60 ECTS models may be implemented for the same kind of study programmes.

Map 3: Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process, 2011

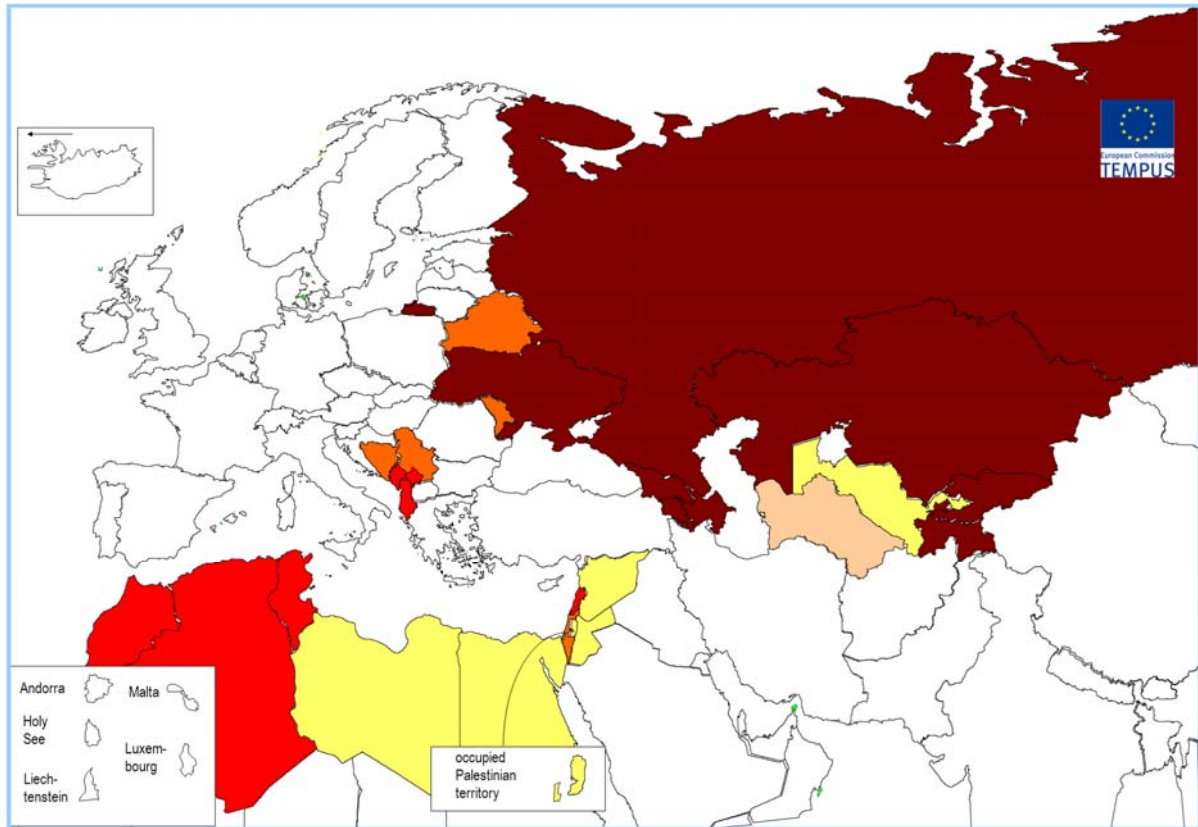


- Bologna structure fully implemented in all or most fields of study
- Extensive but gradual introduction of Bologna structure/ongoing adaptations or enlargement
- Partial/limited introduction of Bologna structure
- Another three-cycle structure exists
- No three-cycle structure

Explanatory note

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This map tries to capture this situation.

Map 4: Student workload/duration for the most common Bachelor programmes, 2011

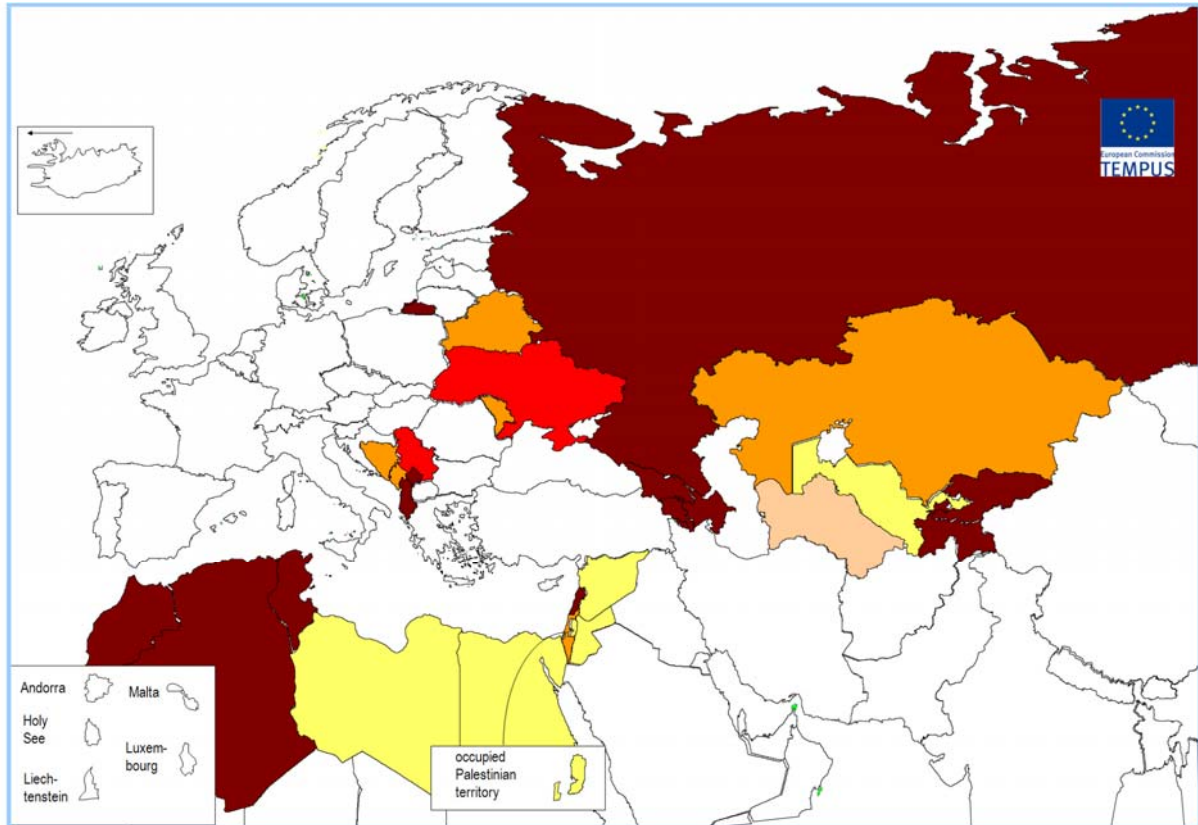


- 240 ECTS (4 academic years)
- 180 ECTS (3 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Another three-cycle structure exists
- No three-cycle structure

Explanatory note

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This map tries to capture this situation.

Map 5: Student workload/duration for the most common Master programmes, 2011

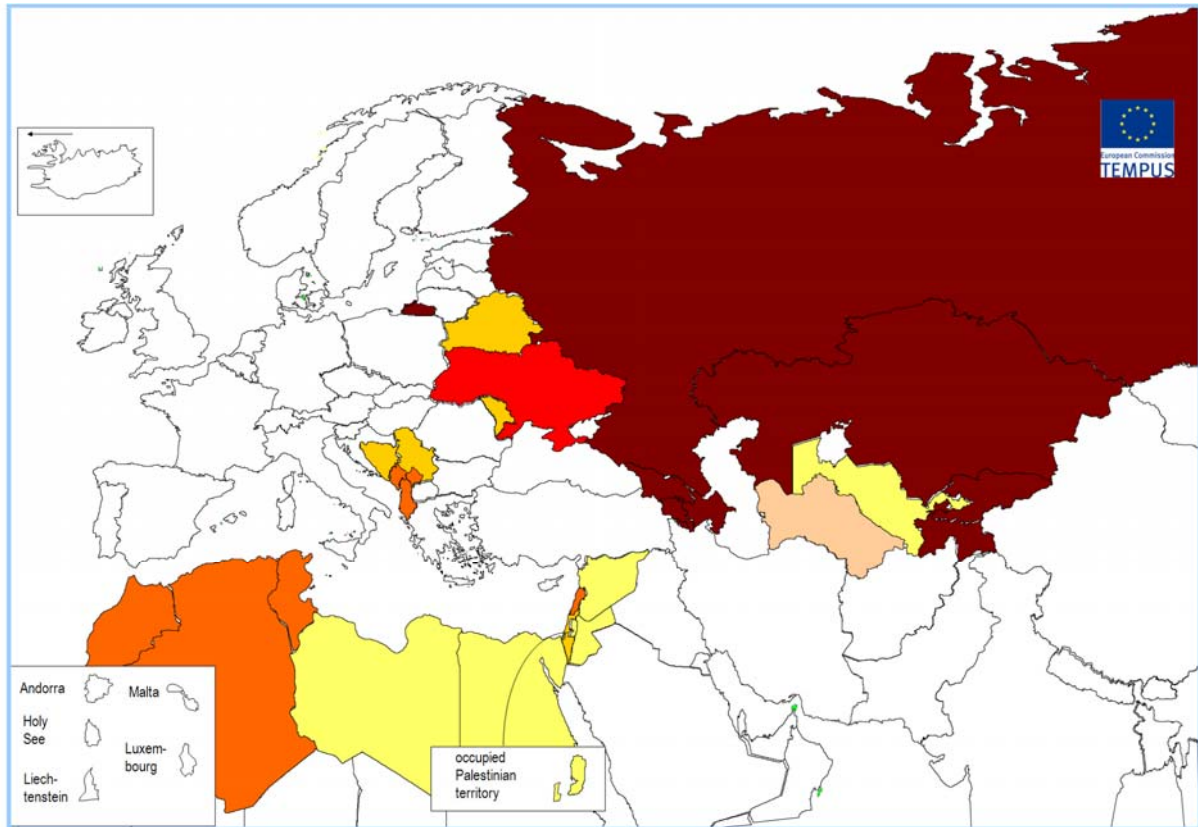


- 120 ECTS (2 academic years)
- 60 ECTS (1 academic year)
- Various combinations
- Another three-cycle structure exists
- No three-cycle structure

Explanatory note

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This map tries to capture this situation.

Map 6: Bachelor-Master models most commonly implemented, 2011



- 240+120 ECTS (4+2 academic years)
- 240+60 ECTS (4+1 academic years)
- 180+120 ECTS (3+2 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Another three-cycle structure exists
- No three-cycle structure

Explanatory note

Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. This map tries to capture this situation.

Part 2 – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The ECTS system was initially developed at the end of the 1980s, at the time when the Erasmus Programme was launched in the EU. Initially used for credit transfer to facilitate student mobility, it also became a credit accumulation system, promoted by the Berlin Communiqué in September 2003.

ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning achieved in higher education. It is a learner-centred system, which aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning. As a result, ECTS makes teaching and learning more transparent and facilitates the recognition of studies, whether formal, non-formal or informal. It also serves curriculum design and quality assurance, by facilitating the comparison of programmes and structures.

ECTS credits are based on the workload⁸ needed in order to achieve expected learning outcomes⁹. In practice, 60 ECTS credits are associated with the workload of a full-time academic year of formal learning and its associated learning outcomes. In most cases, one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work¹⁰.

ECTS is one of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process and it is increasingly used by institutions in other continents. It thus plays a role in the growing global dimension of the Bologna Process, as illustrated by the situation in the Tempus Partner Countries.

The analysis below tries to capture, to which extent, the concept of learning outcomes and ECTS are used and illustrates the way in which different countries understand the system. Experience shows that there is considerable diversity in the interpretation of ECTS at national and institutional level.

Implementing the concept of the learning outcomes

Most Tempus Bologna-signatory countries define learning outcomes in their national steering documents (Map 7). Among these, Georgia, Moldova and Serbia have defined the learning outcomes in their laws and regulations.

The rest of the Tempus Bologna-signatory countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Russia and Ukraine) outline learning outcomes in their national steering documents, but use softer measures, such as recommendations and guidelines to implement them.

As regards the Tempus non-Bologna-signatory partners, it is worth noting that in Algeria, Belarus, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the adoption of learning outcomes is enforced by law. By contrast, Israel, Morocco, Syria and Tajikistan apply softer measures for implementation, such as recommendations. The Middle East countries (except Israel and Syria) as well as Egypt, Libya, Turkmenistan and Tunisia have not developed the learning outcomes concept at national level. Nevertheless, in Egypt, according to a decree of the Supreme Council of Universities, learning

⁸ Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

⁹ Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do, after the successful completion of a learning process.

¹⁰ European Commission (2009) – ECTS Users' Guide, DG Education and Culture

outcomes should be defined for all new or re-accredited programmes. Moreover, Egypt participates in the World Bank / OECD AHELO project aimed at setting up standard learning outcomes for certain disciplines.

A long process until full implementation of ECTS is achieved

Among the Tempus Partner Countries, the concept of 'credits' seems to be widely used, as only two countries out of the 27 do not use any credit system whatsoever (Map 8). These are Libya and Turkmenistan.

All the other countries have adopted a credit system and the majority of them are currently implementing ECTS, as defined by the Bologna Process.

An analysis of the level of implementation of ECTS, reveals wide divergence in practice and confirms that harmonised implementation is far from the current reality. The introduction of ECTS is a long process and full implementation will still take some time for most.

For the purposes of this report, ECTS is considered 'implemented' when more than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes and when it satisfies the requirements of credit points based on learning outcomes and student workload. Only a limited number of Tempus Partner Countries have reached this level. This is the case for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine and also Kosovo.

In the second category which includes merely Russia, the credit point system determines student workload only. Contact hours (hours spent by students on activities guided by teaching staff) are no longer the reference to define credits and they have been replaced by student workload. Nevertheless, learning outcomes have not yet become the standard reference for the Russian system, as in the above category.

In a third category of countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tunisia) contact hours or a combination of contact hours with student workload are still used as a reference to define the credits. Nevertheless, as in the previous category, more than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes.

In the fourth category, which Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan belong to, a limited number of institutions and study programmes implement ECTS. For instance, in Lebanon, no one model is preponderant. Certain higher education institutions use ECTS and others, the American credit system.

The remaining Tempus Partner Countries (Belarus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territory, Morocco, Syria and Uzbekistan), have their own national credit systems. In some cases, recent developments tend to bring the system into line with ECTS and ECTS may also be used as a source of information for transfer purposes, at least in some institutions. For instance, in Egypt, the Supreme Council of Universities has officially recognised programmes built on ECTS, provided they comply in particular with requirements of the national credit hour system. This decision has led many "European oriented programmes" to define tables of equivalence between the Egyptian system and the ECTS system.

Heterogeneous standards to measure ECTS credits

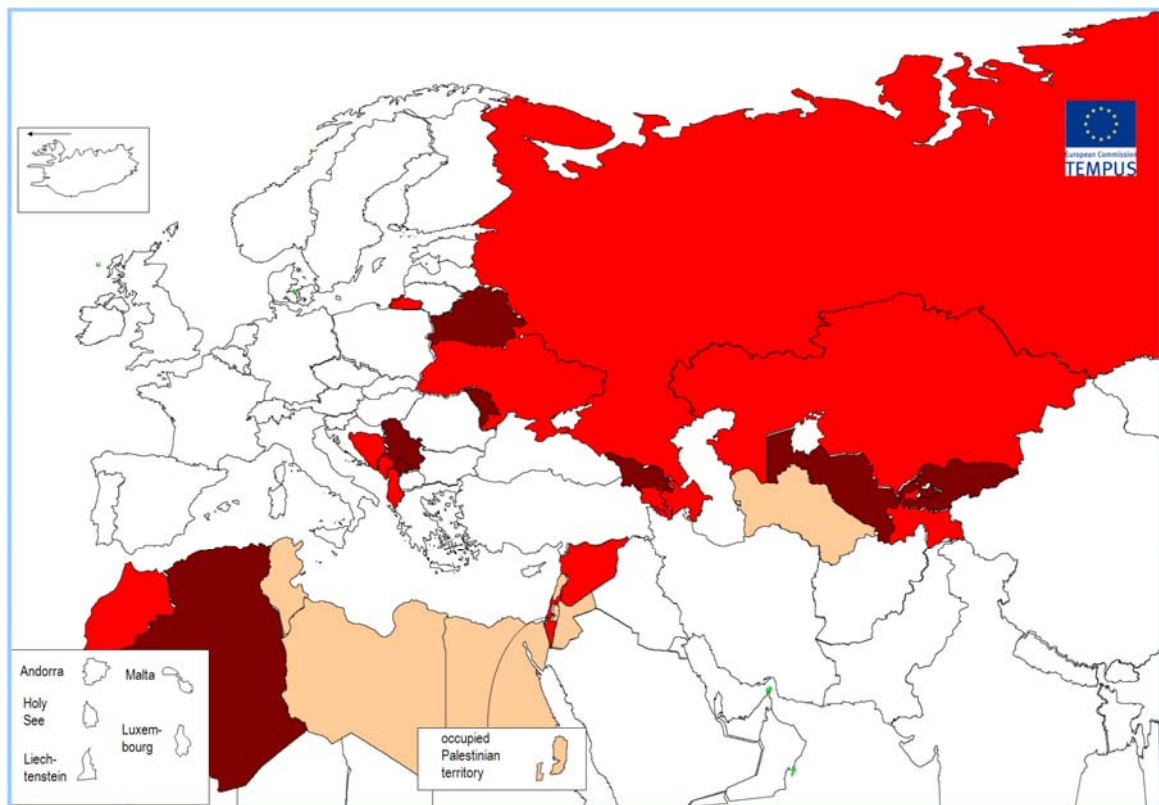
Even though many countries use student workload and contact hours as a standard to define ECTS, they do not do so in a unified way in these countries (Map 9). Different numbers of hours and different levels of student workload correspond to one ECTS.

In Kazakhstan, one ECTS corresponds to on average 45 hours of student workload, whereas in Montenegro, Moldova, Serbia, Russia and Ukraine, one ECTS is equivalent to 30-40 hours.

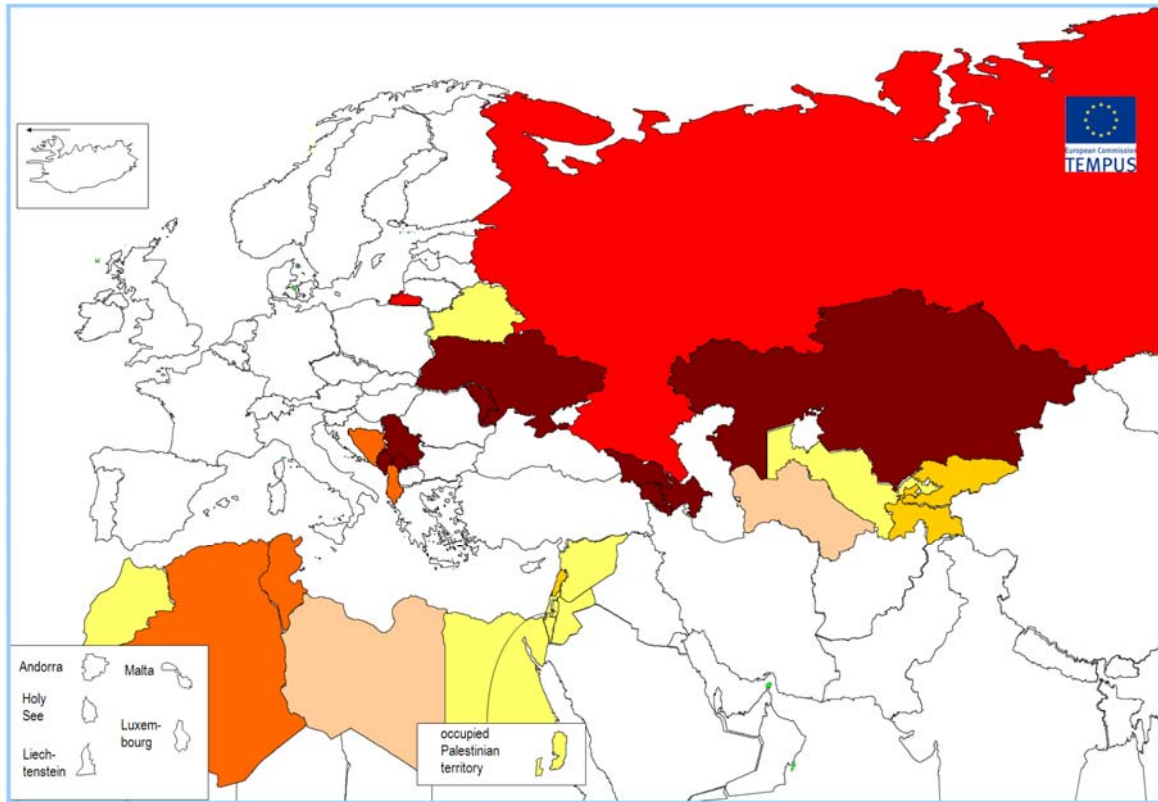
In Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo and Tunisia, one ECTS corresponds to 20 to 30 hours of student workload.

As far as teacher-student contact hours are measured, one ECTS varies between 10 and 15 hours in Algeria, Kyrgyzstan and Tunisia. In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, one ECTS is defined as being around 12 contact hours.

Map 7 – Definition of the Learning Outcomes Concept, 2011

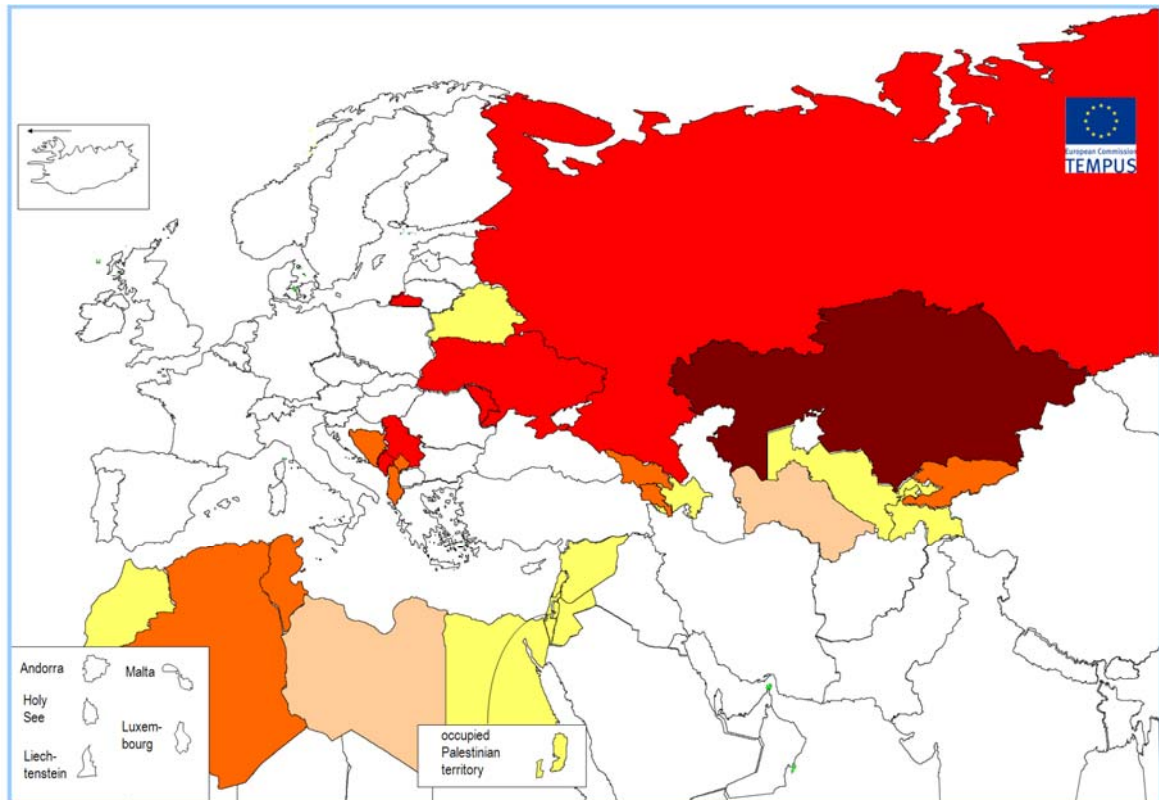


- Learning outcomes are defined in national steering documents and implemented through laws and regulations
- Learning outcomes are defined in national steering documents and implemented through guidelines and recommendations
- No definition of learning outcomes at national level

Map 8: Level of implementation of ECTS, 2011

- More than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on learning outcomes and student workload.
- More than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on student workload.
- More than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on contact hours, or a combination of contact hours and student workload.
- 75% or less institutions and/or 75% or less programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Various references are used to define the credits.
- Another credit system
- No credit system

Map 9: Number of hours of student workload corresponding to one ECTS, 2011



- 1 ECTS = 40 – 50 hours
- 1 ECTS = 30 – 40 hours
- 1 ECTS = 20 - 30 hours
- Another credit system or student workload not in use to define ECTS
- No credit system

Part 3 – The Bologna Diploma Supplement

The Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS) is an instrument developed jointly by the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It has become one of the major Bologna tools to describe qualifications in an easily understandable way and relate them to the higher education system from which they emanate.

The importance and relevance of the Bologna Diploma Supplement was reinforced in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), where Ministers of Education from the countries involved in the Bologna Process stated that, starting from 2005, all graduating students should receive this document automatically, free of charge and in a widely-used European language.

The purpose of the Bologna DS is to improve understanding of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual to facilitate academic mobility or to provide employers with relevant information. It is a standard document attached to a higher education diploma and consists of eight sections describing the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in that country.

A partial introduction of the Bologna Diploma Supplement

Apart from Jordan, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory and Syria, which do not use any type of Diploma Supplement, all the other Tempus Partner Countries have either adopted a national DS or the Bologna DS. In this case, differing levels of implementation are reported (Map 10).

Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan use exclusively their own national Diploma Supplement. This is an official document providing information on the academic subjects studied, the degree awarded and the final thesis. It is issued upon request (or automatically as is the case in Belarus or Uzbekistan), free of charge and in the language of instruction or in other languages, depending on the country. In Israel, each institution issues its own type of supplement upon request but not always free of charge.

Among the other Tempus Partner Countries, nine issue the Bologna DS to students in more than 75% of institutions and study programmes. This is the case for Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Moldova and Montenegro.

The Bologna DS is partially introduced in higher education institutions in Armenia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Russia, Tunisia and Ukraine (adopted by 25–75% of institutions).

Egypt is at the initial stage of adoption of the Bologna DS (in less than 25% of institutions). The current Diploma Supplement is a certificate issued per academic subject studied and a description of these subjects in terms of curricula and learning outcomes is included. A number of joint and double degree programmes involving European universities are currently experimenting with the Bologna Diploma Supplement.

In the latter-mentioned countries, higher education institutions benefit from national incentives and support mechanisms to implement the Bologna DS. These include

training, information campaigns, handbooks and activities carried out by Bologna experts or Tempus Higher Education Reforms Experts and EU-funded projects.

The Bologna Diploma Supplement usually issued automatically and free of charge

In line with the commitment made by the Education Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), the Bologna DS should be issued automatically and free of charge to graduates at the end of their studies. However, in practice, this is still not the case in all countries.

In 6 Tempus Partner Countries (Albania, Algeria, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Tunisia) and Kosovo, the objective is indeed to issue the Bologna DS automatically and free of charge (Map 11).

In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lebanon and Kazakhstan, the Bologna DS is issued upon request and free of charge.

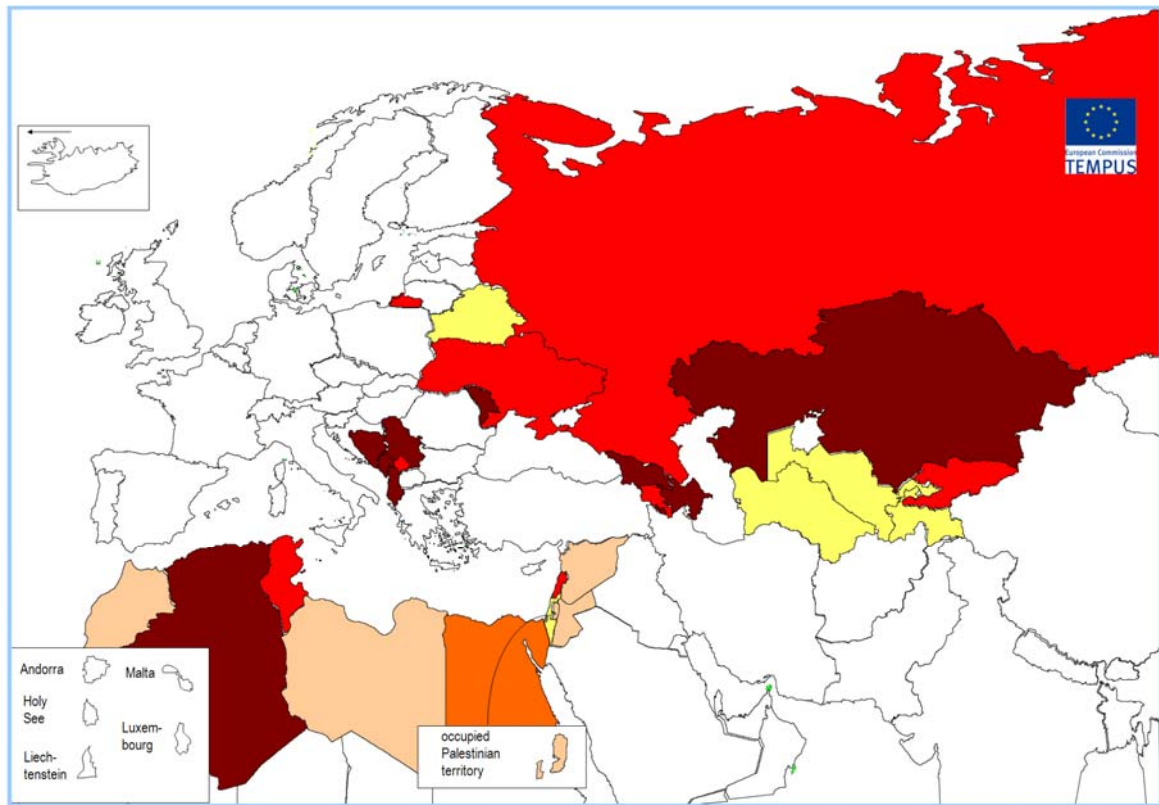
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bologna DS is issued automatically upon payment, whereas in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine, the DS is issued upon request and upon payment.

The Bologna Diploma Supplement mostly issued in the language of instruction and/or English

Regarding the language in which the Bologna DS is issued, the majority of Tempus Partner Countries issue it in the language of instruction and/or English (this is the case in the Western Balkans, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and the Southern Caucasus countries) (Map 12). In Montenegro, Moldova, Serbia and Russia, the Bologna DS is issued in the national language and in English, as well as in the language of instruction, in cases where a different language is used (e.g. minority languages).

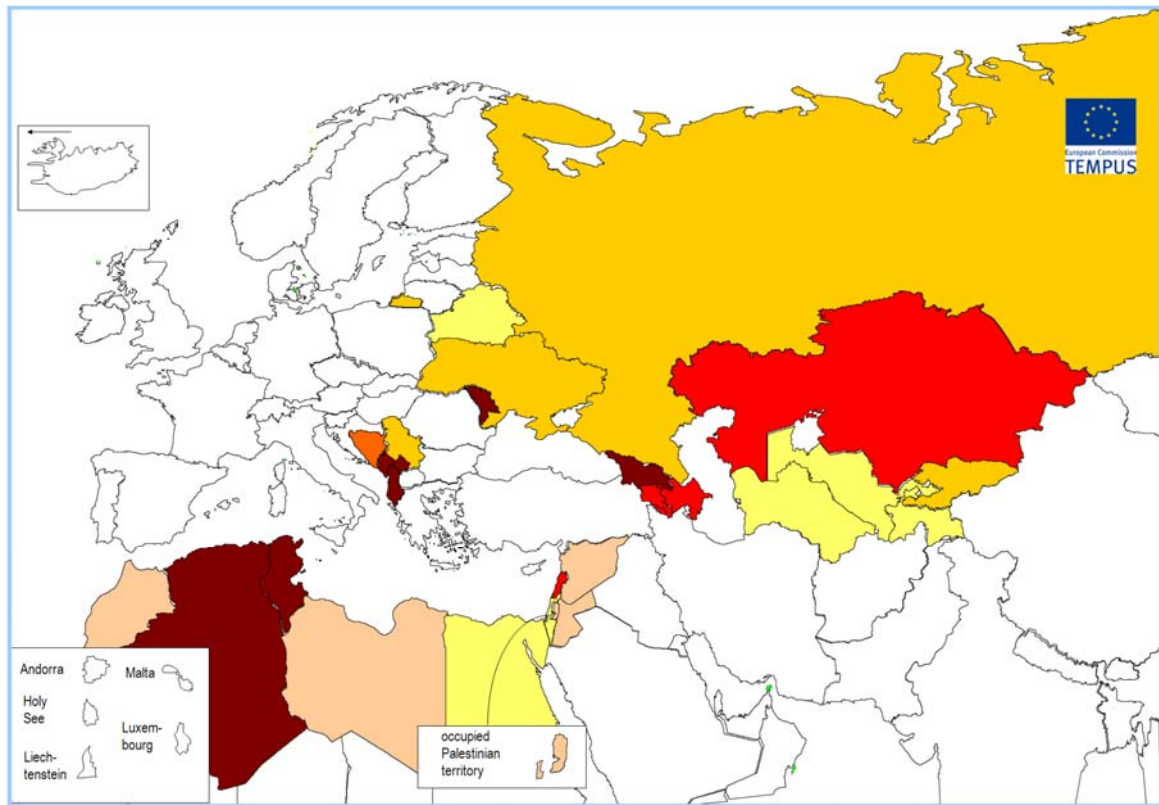
In Algeria, Kazakhstan, Lebanon and Tunisia, the Bologna DS is issued in the language of instruction and/or other official languages. For instance, in Algeria and Lebanon, the DS is issued in Arabic or in French. In Tunisia, the DS is only issued in French for the moment, but it will also be made available in Arabic and English.

Map 10: Level of implementation of the Bologna Diploma Supplement, 2011



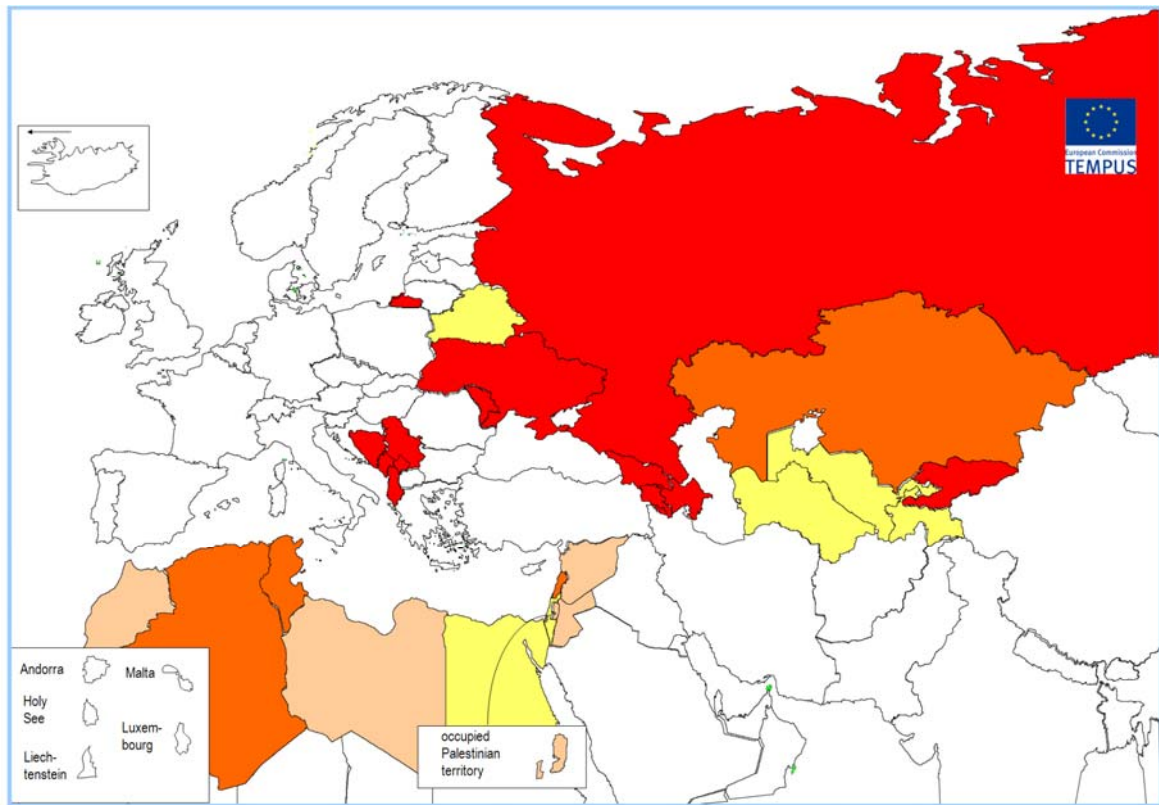
- Bologna DS is issued to students in more than 75% of institutions and study programmes
- Partial and gradual introduction of the Bologna DS (25%-75% of institutions)
- Initial stage of adoption of the Bologna DS (less than 25% of institutions)
- Another type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement issued

Map 11: Conditions under which Bologna Diploma Supplement is issued, 2011



- Bologna DS issued automatically and free of charge
- Bologna DS issued on request and free of charge
- Bologna DS issued automatically and in return for payment
- Bologna DS is issued on request in return for payment
- Other type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement

Map 12: Languages in which the Bologna Diploma Supplement is issued, 2011



- Bologna DS issued in the language of instruction and/or English
- Bologna DS issued in the language of instruction and/or more official languages
- Another type of Diploma Supplement
- No Diploma Supplement

Part 4 - Stages towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for classifying qualifications according to criteria for specific levels of learning achieved. It aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications for the labour market and civil society. It describes the various qualifications and learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other. It shows what a learner knows, understands and is able to do, based on a given qualification and how learners can move between qualifications.

Qualifications frameworks play an important role in developing degree systems and study programmes in higher education institutions. They are also important instruments to compare different national systems and make them more transparent. They also facilitate learners' mobility. These instruments reflect the shift from traditional input-based approaches for categorising qualifications, to a focus on learning outcomes, credits and the profile of qualifications.

The development of National Qualifications Frameworks has been encouraged in recent years by a range of initiatives and processes. In the context of the Bologna Process, European Ministers of Education adopted the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ – EHEA) in Bergen (May 2005) and also agreed that National Qualifications Frameworks should be set up by 2007 and implemented by 2010 in all Bologna-signatory countries. These National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education should include reference to the Bologna three-cycle study structure and the use of generic descriptors, based on learning outcomes, competences and credits, for the first and second cycles.

In parallel to the above-mentioned process, a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning has been developed in the context of the Lisbon strategy and adopted by the European Council and Parliament in 2008. The main purpose of the EQF is to act as a "translation device" and neutral reference point for comparing qualifications across different national education and training systems.

The process of adopting a National Qualifications Framework is underway in the majority of Tempus Partner Countries

In order to categorise the stage of Tempus countries in their NQF development and make a clear distinction between the formal adoption of the framework and its implementation, Map 13 classifies the countries according to five main steps in the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework. These steps have been defined on the basis of the ten-step scale, used in the recent Eurydice publication¹¹.

For the moment, none of the Tempus countries have reached step four or five on the scale, but the Western Balkan countries, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Tunisia have reached step three, which means that they have formally adopted a National Qualifications Framework for higher education and started implementing it. For instance, in Georgia, compliance with NQF became one of the criteria for the accreditation of programmes, which started in 2011.

¹¹ Eurydice (2012) – The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report.

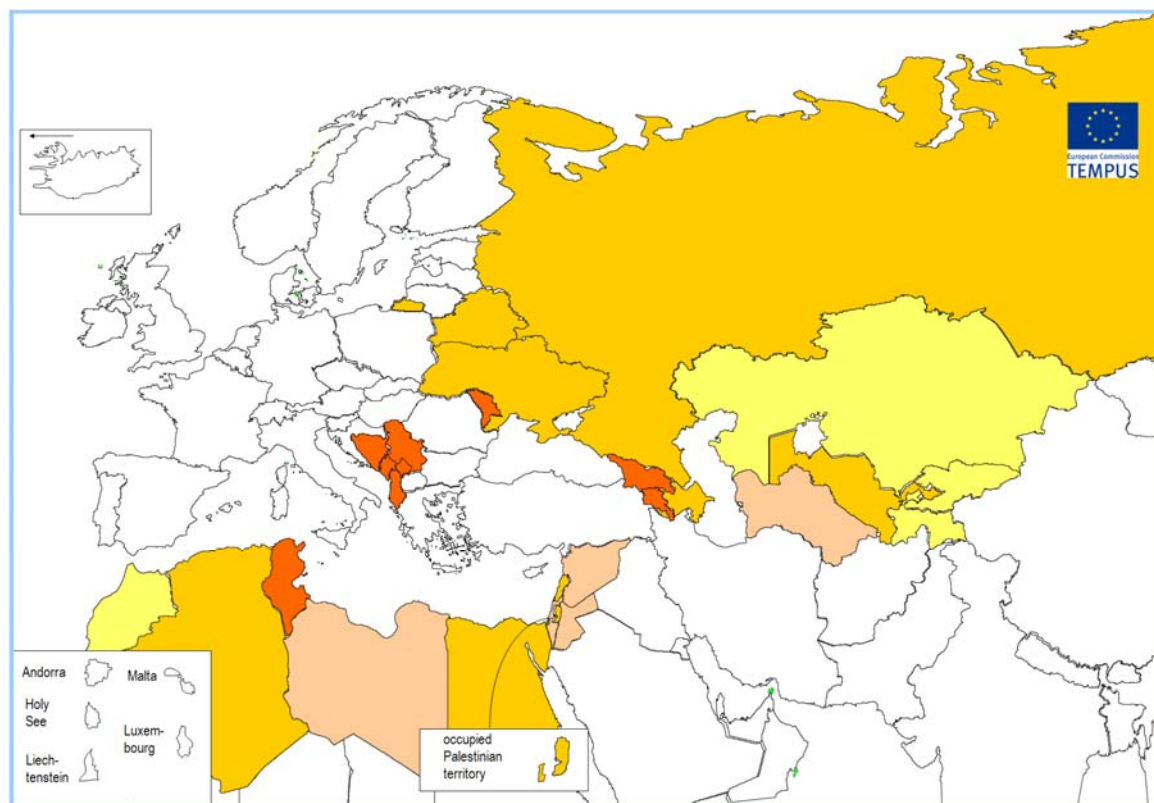
In addition, in nine other countries, the process is underway and the purpose of the NQF has been agreed and various committees established. These countries are: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The countries which have not yet formally started the process or are just at the beginning of it, are all non-signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration, with the exception of Kazakhstan, which joined the Bologna-signatory countries in 2010.

Five Tempus countries (Israel, Jordan, Libya, Syria and Turkmenistan) have not decided formally on the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework and another four (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Tajikistan) are only at the very beginning of the process. In Kazakhstan, the decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the Ministry of Education and the purpose of the NQF has been agreed and outlined.

It can be concluded that Tempus Bologna-signatory countries have not reached the goal of fully implementing a National Qualifications Framework in 2011. Implementation is still in its initial stages. Nevertheless, it appears that the concept of National Qualifications Frameworks is increasingly capturing the attention of national authorities in most of the Tempus non-Bologna-signatory countries, when compared with the situation in 2010.

Map 13: Stages in establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), 2011



- Step 5: Overall process fully completed, including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.
- Step 4: Redesigning the study programmes is on-going and the process is close to completion.
- Step 3: The NQF has been adopted formally and implementation has started.
- Step 2: The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is under way including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
- Step 1: Decision taken. Process just started.
- Not started formally / not foreseen.

Part 5 - Quality Assurance Practices

It is generally accepted that in higher education, the term '*quality assurance*' refers to policies, procedures and practices that are designed to maintain or enhance 'quality', (depending on how quality is defined in the national or local context). '*Internal quality assurance*' refers to quality assurance measures carried out by university departments, faculties or institutions themselves. '*External quality assurance*' refers to quality assurance measures carried out by bodies external to the higher education institutions.

Adopting commonly accepted evaluation and accreditation criteria and methodologies facilitates the mutual recognition of degrees and diplomas between countries.

Designated bodies at national or international level should be nominated to take responsibility for external quality assurance and their objectives and composition should be clearly defined. In order to ensure that the methods used for quality assurance are objective, it is now commonly accepted that the bodies responsible for this task should be independent and autonomous. Their evaluations and reports should not be influenced by third parties. The independent nature of the body should be clearly stated in its statutes and founding documents, such as legislative acts or governing instruments. Being a thoroughly independent body is also one of the criteria to be accepted as a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area produced by ENQA are a widely-used reference.

When a national body is formed without an independent status, it is usually formed as a council, commission or agency, directly answerable to public authorities at the highest level.

Most of the Tempus Partner Countries have a government-dependent body or Ministry responsible for quality assurance

In 20 Tempus countries (Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), either a government-dependent body or a Ministry is responsible for quality assurance activities in public and private higher education institutions (Map 14). In most of these countries, it is the Ministry which deals directly with quality assurance.

For example, in Montenegro, the Council for Higher Education, established in 2003 as part of the Ministry of Education and Sports, is responsible for external quality assurance. It operates as an accreditation body and conducts external evaluations through its commissions.

In Israel, the Council for Higher Education established a quality assurance system in 2004 (in addition to its accreditation system), operated by its Quality Assessment and Assurance Division. This Division evaluates higher education programmes by means of international evaluation committees, composed of leading professors in the field. Departments prepare and submit self-assessment reports which are used as the basis of the evaluation.

In a number of countries, the situation is evolving and reforms are ongoing. This is the case in Moldova for example, where the responsibility for quality assurance in higher education falls, since 2005, under the Department on Evaluation and Accreditation of

the Ministry of Education. The new Education Code foresees the establishment of a National Agency for quality assurance.

In Kazakhstan, there are currently various government agencies but the system is undergoing major reform, towards a fully-fledged independent quality assurance body.

In Lebanon, a new draft law for the creation of a national Quality Assurance Agency for higher education has been submitted to the government. Until this law is ratified, the Directorate General of Higher Education is responsible for licensing higher education institutions or new programmes and is exercising a simple process of auditing, based on quality assurance principles.

In contrast to these countries having a government-dependent body or Ministry, one single or several independent national bodies for quality assurance exist in six Tempus countries, namely Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territory, Serbia, and Kosovo. These national independent agencies are usually responsible for institutions and programmes from the public and private sectors. They perform both evaluation and accreditation tasks.

For example, the quality assurance system in Serbia has been developed to promote a culture of quality within higher education institutions themselves. Serbia operates an integrated national quality assurance system, complying with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is in charge of quality assurance in higher education. The Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assessment (CAQA) is legally responsible for organising and monitoring quality assurance in all higher education institutions.

Evaluations by independent quality assurance agencies usually result in permission to operate or advice for improvements

In Jordan, Kosovo, the occupied Palestinian territory and Serbia, evaluations result in decisions granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate/teach at a certain level or undertake research (Map 15). In Albania, evaluations result in both decisions and advice.

It is worth noting that in certain Tempus Partner Countries (Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Russia, Syria and Tunisia) and in Kosovo, higher education institutions can choose a quality assurance agency from outside their own country (Map 16). However, certain restrictions may apply. For instance, in Albania this is possible provided the agency is a member of ENQA / EQAR¹². In Moldova, this is possible only for institutions which are already accredited at national level. In Kosovo, the approval of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is necessary. In the remaining Tempus countries, it seems that such a possibility is not offered to higher education institutions.

Quality assurance procedures not open yet to external stakeholders

Not surprisingly, in the majority of Tempus Partner Countries, academic staff has a decision-making role in the external quality assurance process (Map 17). It is only in Tajikistan, that there is limited participation.

¹² EQAR: the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.

In Algeria, Morocco, Syria and Turkmenistan, no formal procedure has been put in place to involve staff in quality assurance processes, which does not necessarily prevent them from participating in any case. Algeria has recently established a National Evaluation Committee to define and manage quality assurance procedures.

The participation of stakeholders in external quality assurance processes from outside the academic community is an important challenge in higher education. Indeed, what is necessary is for higher education institutions to develop appropriate links with the labour market and the wider world at large, outside their gates and to become accountable for the resources used and the outcomes achieved inside.

For instance, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Lebanon, Moldova and Montenegro are the only Tempus partners where students sit on quality assurance governance structures and have an actual decision-making role in the external quality assurance implementation process (Map 18). In Azerbaijan, Serbia and Tunisia, students have limited participation in the process. In all other Tempus Partner Countries, students do not participate whatsoever.

Albania, Armenia, Israel, Moldova, Kosovo, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory are the only Tempus beneficiaries where international experts are members in governance structures and have a real influence on decision-making in quality assurance processes (Map 19). In general, they are full members in external review teams. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Tajikistan, international experts may contribute but have more limited power. In the other Tempus Partner Countries, the participation of international experts is not foreseen.

As regards the involvement of employers in external quality assurance processes, the majority of Tempus Partner Countries have no formal obligations to involve them. These include Azerbaijan, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the occupied Palestinian territory, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Kosovo. Those countries which have provisions promoting a more inclusive participation of employers in external quality assurance processes are Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Ukraine, representatives of employers may be involved. This involvement is foreseen in the "Regulation on expert teams and licensing expertise" and the "Regulation of the State Accreditation Commission".

Insufficient focus on lifelong learning provisions and employability of graduates by external quality assurance procedures

It is interesting to note the variety of areas covered by external quality assurance (table 1). While a large number of countries focus the external quality assurance procedures on teaching, internal quality assurance and management systems, research and support services to students, less countries focus on lifelong learning provisions and employability of graduates, thus reflecting the need to raise awareness about these topics in the Tempus Partner Countries.

Table 1: Issues typically included in external quality assurance evaluations

Components of external quality assurance evaluation	Tempus Partners										
	Bologna-Signatory Members										
	AL	AM	AZ	BA	GE	KZ	MD	ME	RS	RU	UA
Teaching	√	√	√	√	√	√	na	na	√	√	na
Student support services	√	√	√	√	√	√	na	na		√	na
Lifelong Learning Provisions	√					√	na	na		√	na
Research	√	√	√	√	√	√	na	na	√	√	na
Employability of graduates	√	√				√	na	na	√		na
Internal quality assurance/ Management system	√	√	√	√	√	√	na	na	√	√	na

na: not available

Components of external quality assurance evaluation	Tempus Partners								
	Non Bologna-Signatory Members								
	BY	DZ	EG	IL	JO	KG	LB	LY	
Teaching	√	√	√	√	√	na	√	na	
Student support services	√	√	√	√	√	na	√	na	
Lifelong Learning Provisions		√				na		na	
Research	√	√		√	√	na	√	na	
Employability of graduates	√	√		√	√	na	√	na	
Internal quality assurance/ Management system	√	√	√	√	√	na	√	na	

na: not available

Components of external quality assurance evaluation	Tempus Partners								
	Non Bologna-Signatory Members								
	MA	OPT	SY	TJ	TM	TN	UZ	XK*	
Teaching	√	√	na	√	√	√	√	√	
Student support services		√	na		√	√	√	√	
Lifelong Learning Provisions		√	na	√	√	√			
Research	√	√	na	√	√	√	√	√	
Employability of graduates		√	na		√	√	√		
Internal quality assurance/ Management system	√	√	na	√	√	√	√	√	

* Kosovo

na: not available

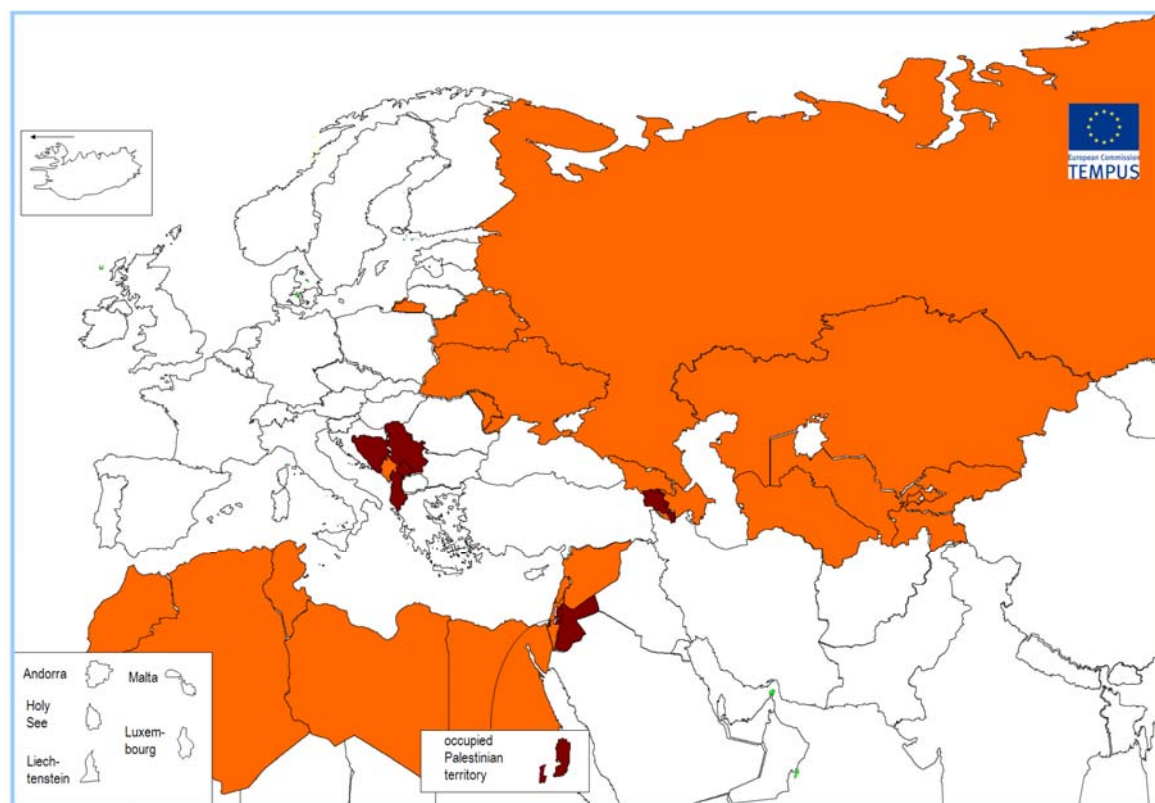
Internal quality assurance: an increasing concern in most countries

Internal quality assurance is also an important part of quality assurance measures. The extent, to which formal requirements exist for higher education institutions to develop internal quality assurance, varies from country to country.

For instance, in Israel, there are no formal requirements to develop internal quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the Council for Higher Education encourages internal quality assurance processes and the higher education institutions are responsible themselves for creating and implementing such processes, including defining their focus.

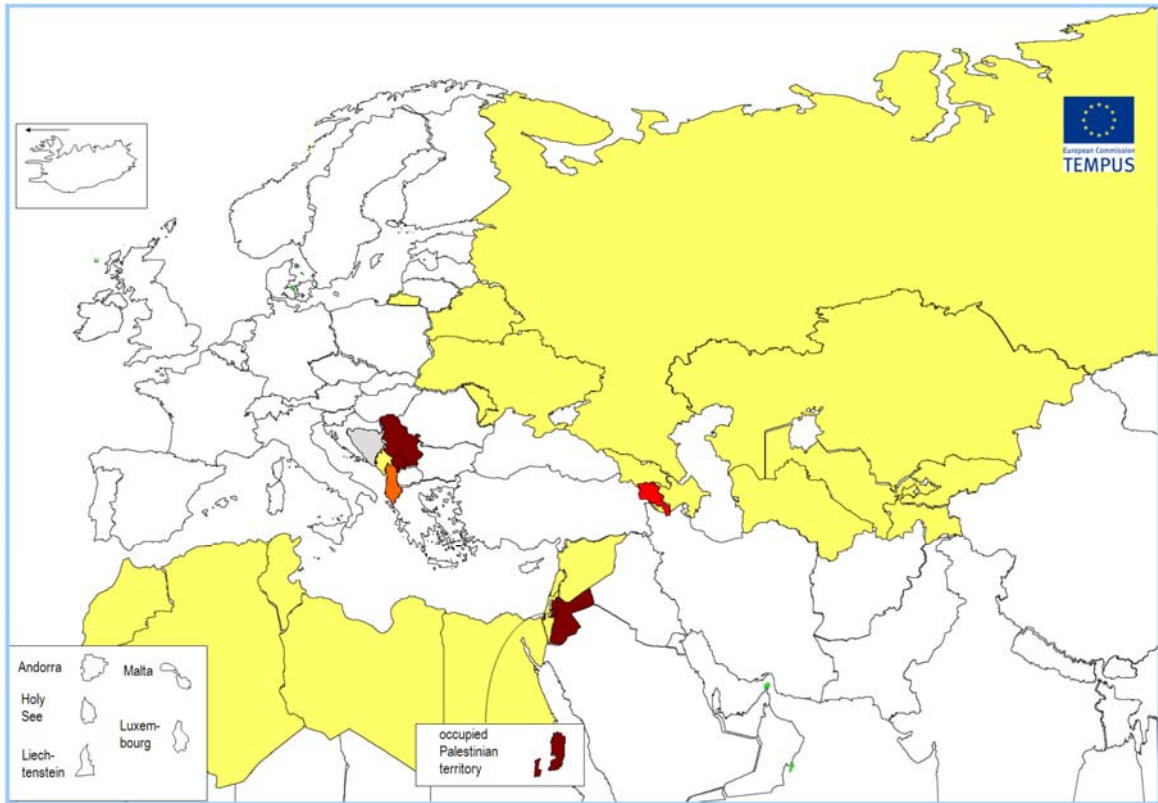
In all the other Tempus countries, internal quality assurance systems are being developed to promote quality improvement. In these countries, the bodies actually responsible for deciding the focus of internal quality assurance in higher education institutions or precisely which quality assurance mechanisms should be developed, vary from country to country (Map 20). Higher education institutions decide this in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Tunisia and Ukraine. In Belarus, the focus is decided by the quality assurance agency. In Algeria, Azerbaijan, Montenegro and Turkmenistan, the Ministry decides the focus. In Armenia, Morocco, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria and Uzbekistan, the situation is more complex and these different bodies play a complementary role.

Map 14: National quality assurance bodies (NQA), 2011



- A single or several independent national bodies for quality assurance have been established
- A Government-dependent body or Ministry has responsibility for quality assurance

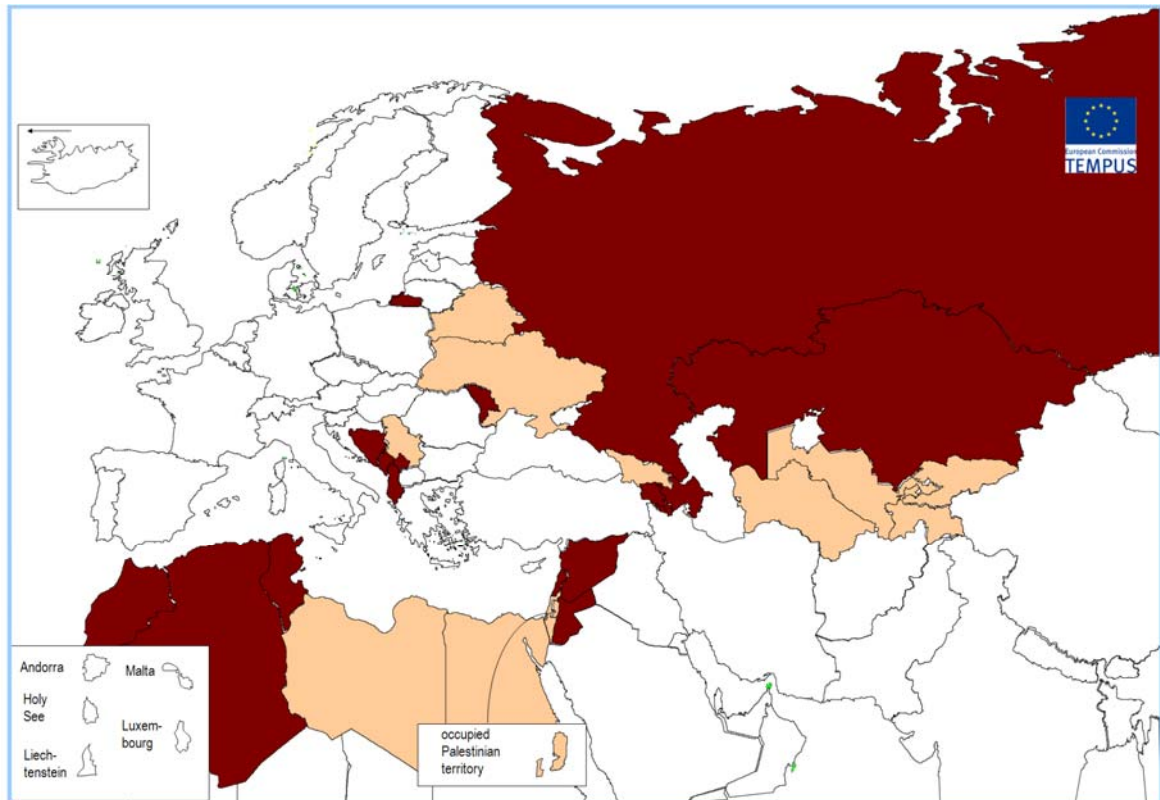
Map 15: National Quality Assurance agencies – main outcomes of evaluations, 2011



Main outcomes of the evaluations carried out by independent quality assurance agencies:

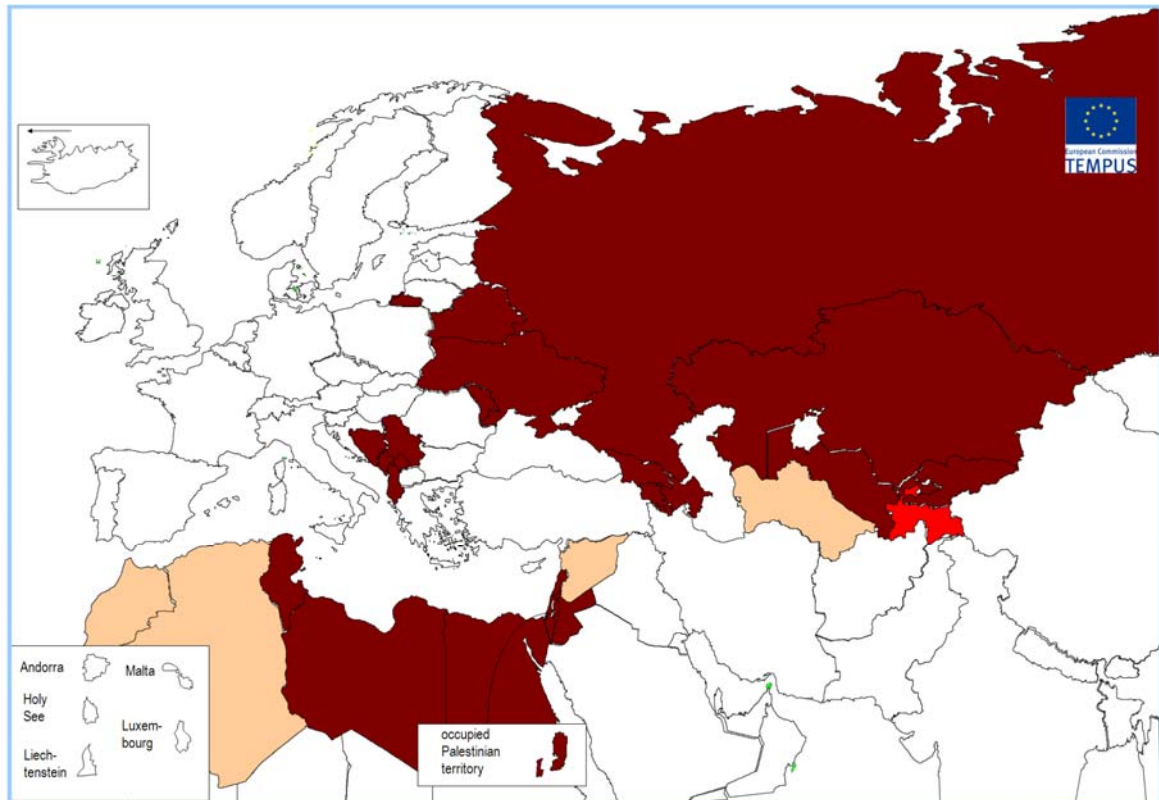
- A decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate
- Advice on how the reviewed institution/programme can improve quality
- Both permission and advice
- No independent national agency for quality assurance – government-dependent body or Ministry responsible for quality assurance
- Not available

Map 16: Cross-border evaluation: Possibility to choose a foreign quality assurance agency, 2011



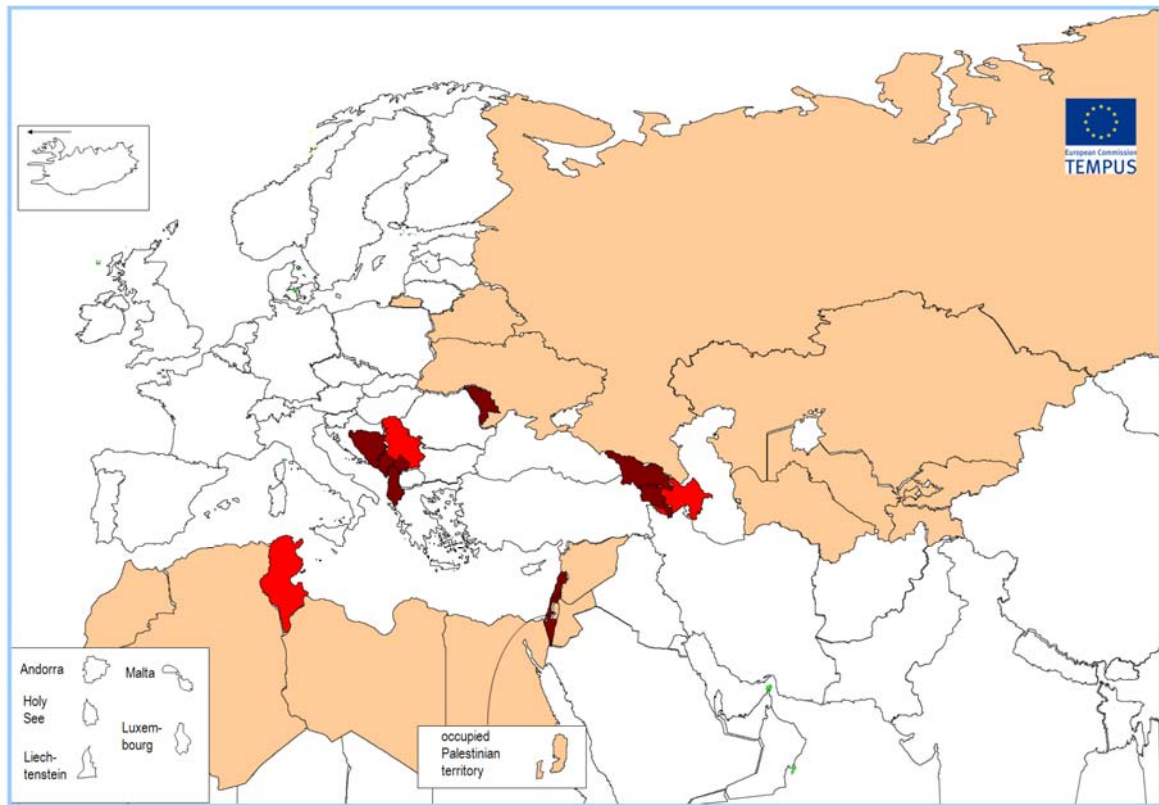
- Institutions are allowed to choose a foreign quality assurance agency
- Institutions are not allowed to choose a foreign quality assurance agency

Map 17: Academic staff involvement in the external quality assurance process, 2011



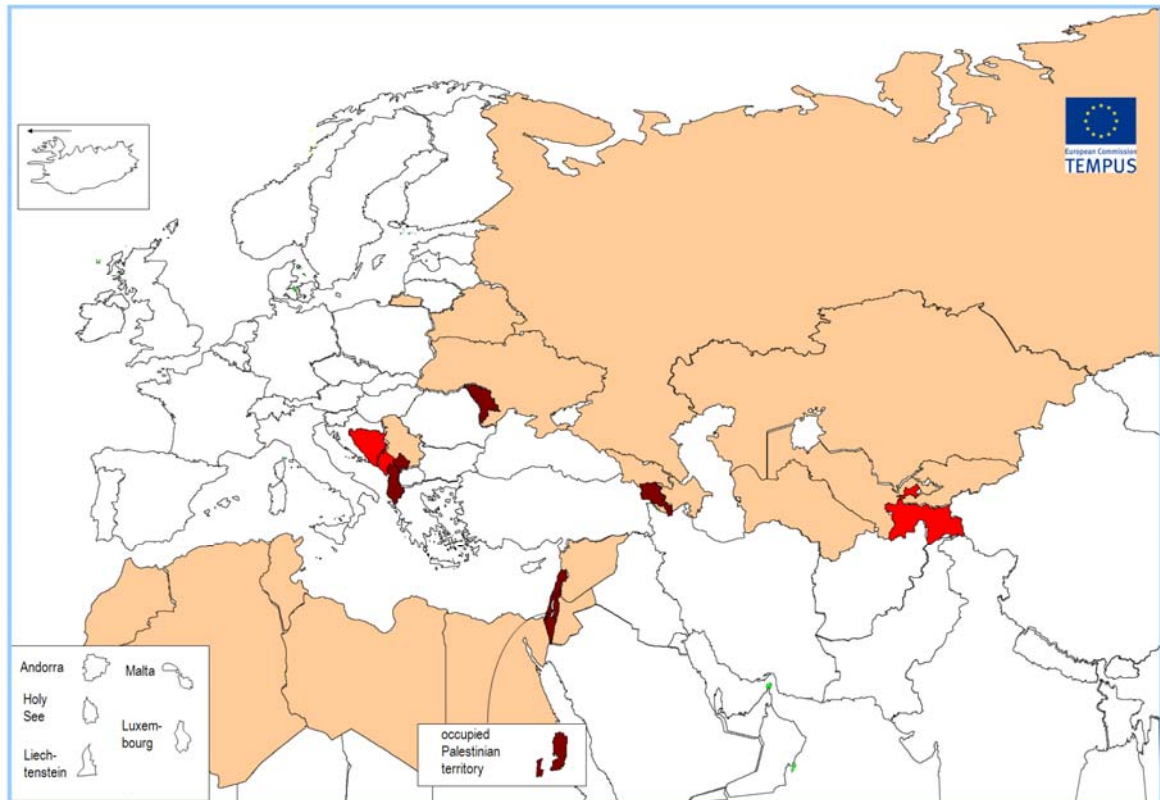
- Decision-making role in the external quality assurance process
- Participation in the external quality assurance process
- No formal procedure to involve academic staff in quality assurance processes

Map 18: Students' involvement in external quality assurance processes, 2011



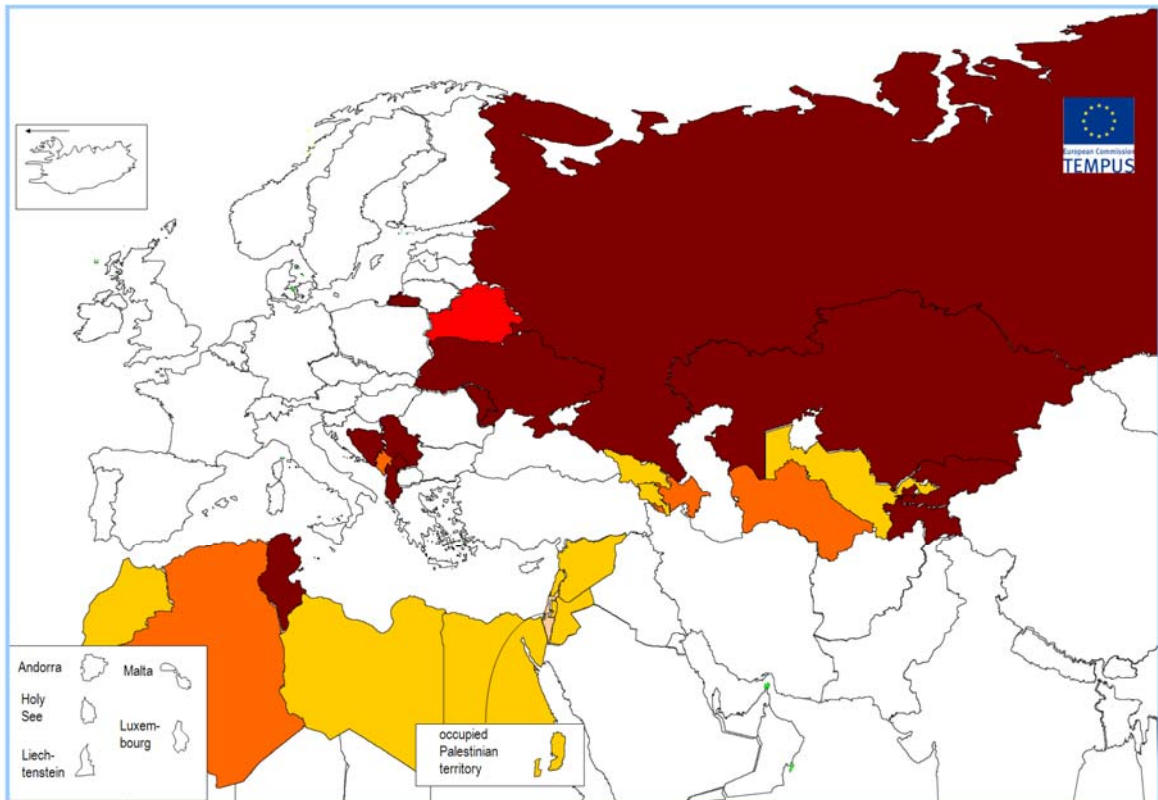
- Decision-making role in the external quality assurance process
- Participation in the external quality assurance process
- No participation of students in the external quality assurance process

Map 19: International experts' involvement in the external quality assurance process, 2011



- Decision-making role in the external quality assurance process
- Participation in the external quality assurance process
- No participation of experts in the external quality assurance process

Map 20: Institutions responsible for deciding the focus of internal quality assurance in higher education institutions, 2011



- Higher education institutions
- Quality assurance agency
- Ministry
- Combination of the above
- No formal requirements to develop an internal quality assurance mechanism in higher education institutions

Part 6 – The recognition of foreign qualifications

Recognition has been at the heart of the Bologna Process and is an instrument to promote mobility of individuals and boost employability of graduates worldwide. Improving tools for recognition is a major component of current higher education reforms. The possibility for students to study abroad has been recognised as an essential element of European integration since the foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949.

Among the different tools available, the Lisbon Recognition Convention is an international convention elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO¹³. It concerns mainly the Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region. Since 1997, the Convention has been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA).

The text has entered into force, once ratified, at various points in time for each country since 1999.. It allows qualifications, granted in one country, to be recognised in another, based on defined standards¹⁴. The Convention has become a key instrument of the Bologna Process to achieve the European Higher Education Area.

The Convention stipulates that degrees and periods of study must be assessed and recognised in another country, unless substantial differences are proved. Students and graduates are guaranteed fair procedures under the Convention.

Two bodies have been established by the Convention to oversee, promote and facilitate its implementation. They are the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications and the European Network of Information Centres on Academic Mobility and Recognition (ENIC Network). This network was complemented in 1984 by an initiative of the European Commission, called the National Academic Recognition Information Centres network (NARIC Network). The two networks are intertwined and cooperate on all recognition issues.

The Committee of the Convention is responsible for promoting the Convention and overseeing its implementation, whereas the ENIC Network supports the national authorities in enforcing it.

The Lisbon Convention: a Convention widely ratified in Tempus Partner Countries

Tempus Bologna-signatory countries, which are also members of the Council of Europe, have ratified the Lisbon Convention (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine). Tajikistan signed the Convention in 2011 and the Tajik parliament ratified it very recently, in January 2012. Most of these countries have adopted laws or regulations to implement the Convention (Map 21). Nevertheless, in Armenia, the amendment of national regulations and laws is still underway and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the relevant laws and regulations have not been adopted in all parts of the country and the Convention is therefore implemented in different ways within the same country.

¹³ The Council of Europe and UNESCO have agreed on the need to coordinate the Council of Europe's activities in academic recognition and mobility with those of the UNESCO Europe Region.

¹⁴ Such as: the applicant's right to fair assessment of his/her qualification; recognition of qualification provided that no substantial differences can be proven; in case of non recognition, demonstration of substantial difference by the competent authority; introduction of Diploma Supplement, etc.

The Convention has also been signed by Belarus, Israel and Kyrgyzstan, which are not Member States of the Council of Europe but members of the UNESCO Europe and North America region.

The remaining Central Asian Tempus countries (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan) are not parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In order for them to join, they must follow a special procedure (stated in the text of the Convention) and request accession.

The remaining Tempus countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria and Tunisia) and Kosovo are not part of the Lisbon Recognition Convention either but this does not prevent them from applying its principles, as is the case for Kosovo.

Ministries of Education are usually in charge of recognising foreign qualifications

In practice, Ministries of Education or dependent bodies are usually responsible for recognising foreign qualifications for academic study purposes, in most Tempus Partner Countries (Map 22). However, in a few such as Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Israel and Serbia, academic study is recognised by higher education institutions themselves.

Concerning the recognition of foreign qualifications for employment purposes (Map 23), these are recognised at central level in most Tempus Partner Countries as well. In Lebanon for instance, the recognition of foreign qualification is carried out by a body established in the Ministry. Social partner organisations and professional bodies actively participate in it.

In Jordan, social partner organisations or individual employers themselves are responsible for recognition, whereas in Georgia, recognition is carried out not only by the Ministry but also by social partner organisations or individual employers.

It is worth noting that in Kosovo, the ENIC/NARIC network plays a major role in both academic and professional recognition.

Joint programmes and degrees - room for improvement

At global level, the development of joint programmes and degrees is becoming an essential component of internationalisation strategies. It is seen as an important part of institutional cooperation and much effort and commitment is invested in it by participating institutions.

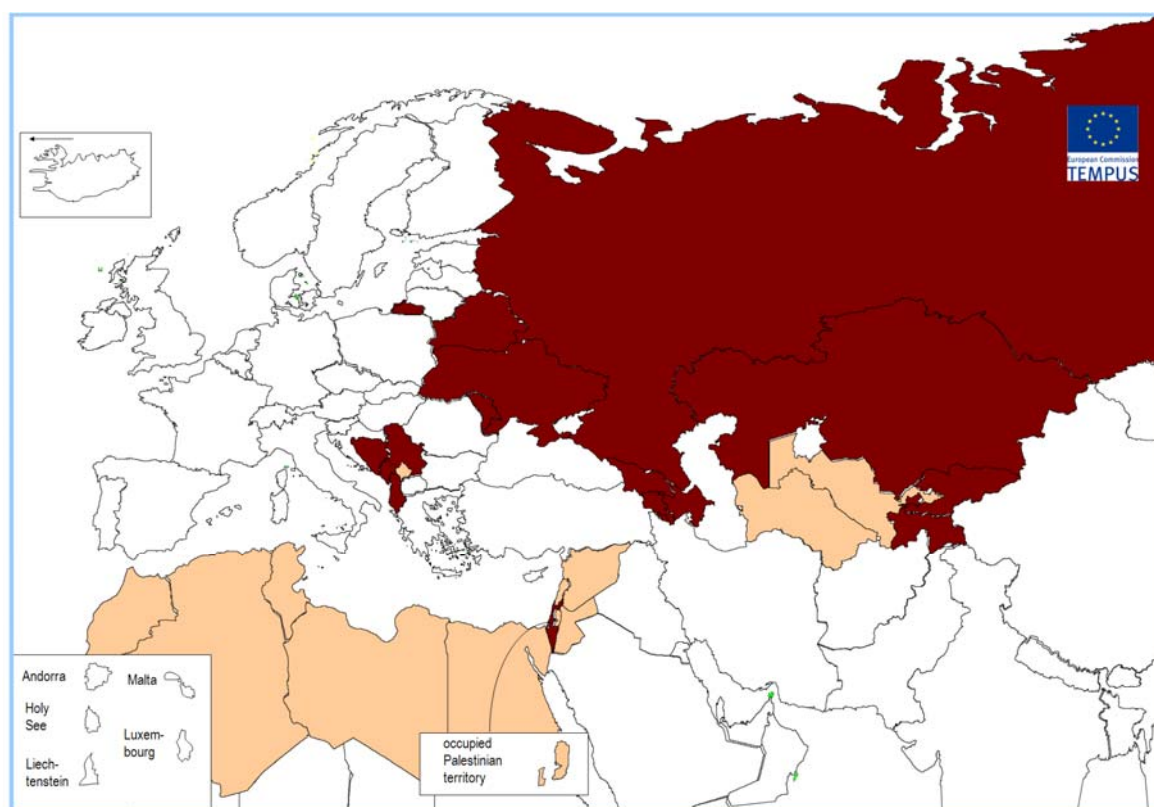
Joint programmes and degrees¹⁵ are endorsed by higher education legislation in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Libya, Montenegro, the occupied Palestinian territory, Serbia and Syria (Map 24). Joint programmes are allowed in Armenia, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan as well, but joint degrees are not yet endorsed through legislation.

¹⁵ A 'joint degree' is one which is developed or approved jointly by several institutions. Students from each participating institution spend part of the programme at other institutions and periods of study and exams passed at the partner institution(s) are recognised fully and automatically by all institutions and countries involved. The Bologna Process has paved the way for increasingly innovative, cooperative, cross border joint study programmes and degrees.

In Lebanon, joint programmes and degrees are mentioned in the legislation, but certain aspects of this legislation concerning concrete implementation measures still need to be fine-tuned.

Finally, it is interesting to note that joint programmes and degrees are not mentioned in legislation yet in Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Russia, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Nevertheless, this is not preventing the development of such programmes in Russia at present.

Map 21: Recognition of qualifications: Signature of the Lisbon Convention by Tempus Partner Countries, 2011



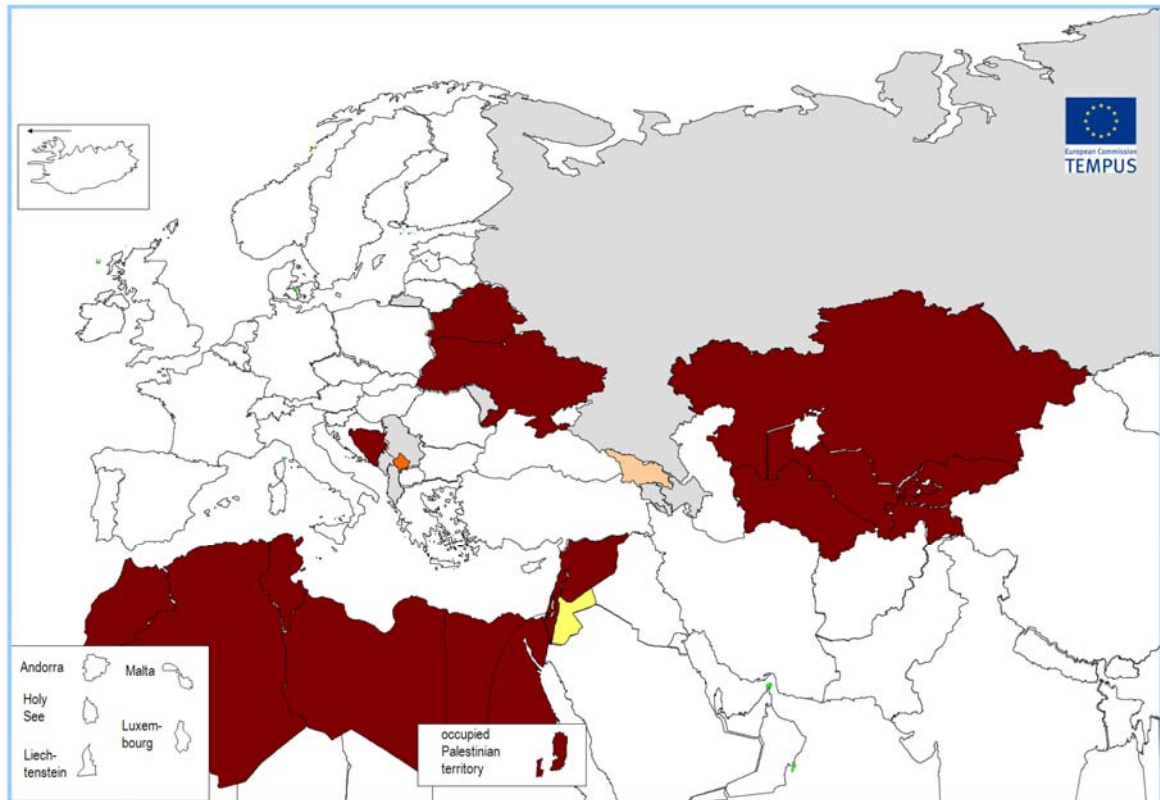
- Tempus Countries who have signed the Lisbon Convention
- Other Tempus countries

Map 22: Recognition of foreign qualifications for academic study, 2011



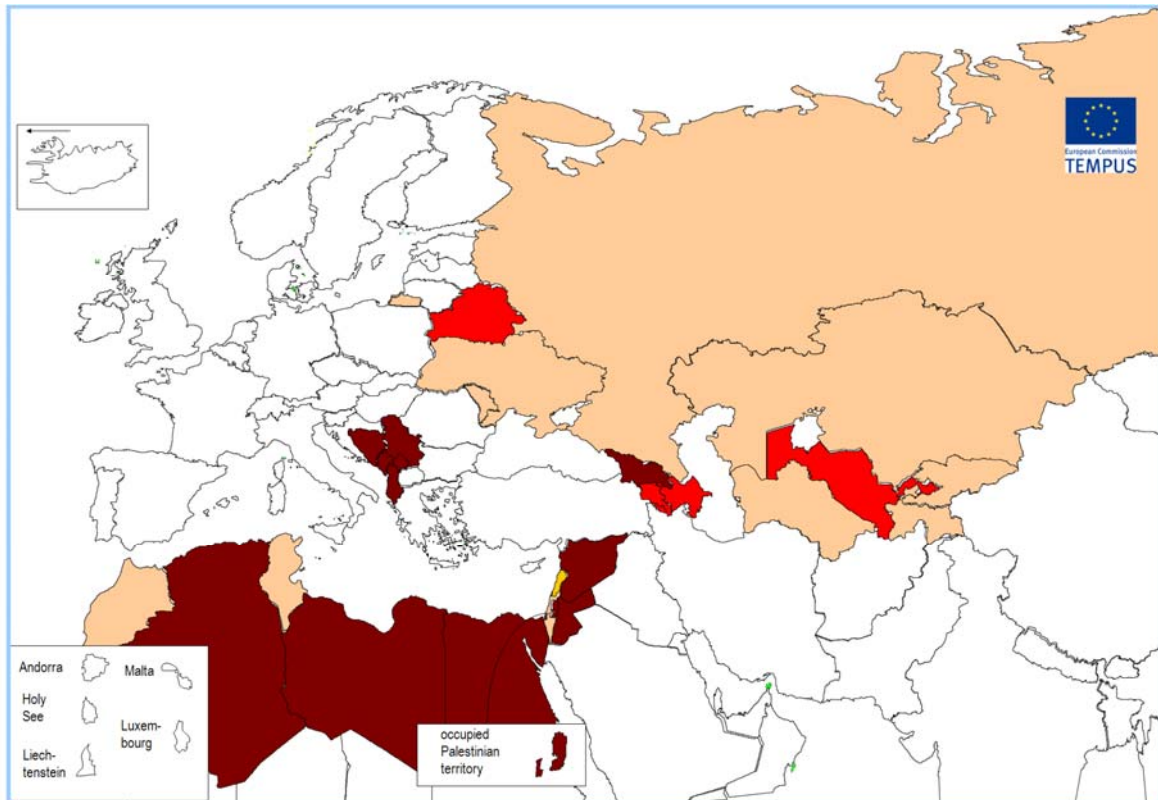
- Recognition for academic study by central or regional governmental authorities
- Recognition for academic study by higher education institutions
- Major role played by national ENIC/NARIC networks

Map 23: Recognition of foreign qualifications for professional employment, 2011



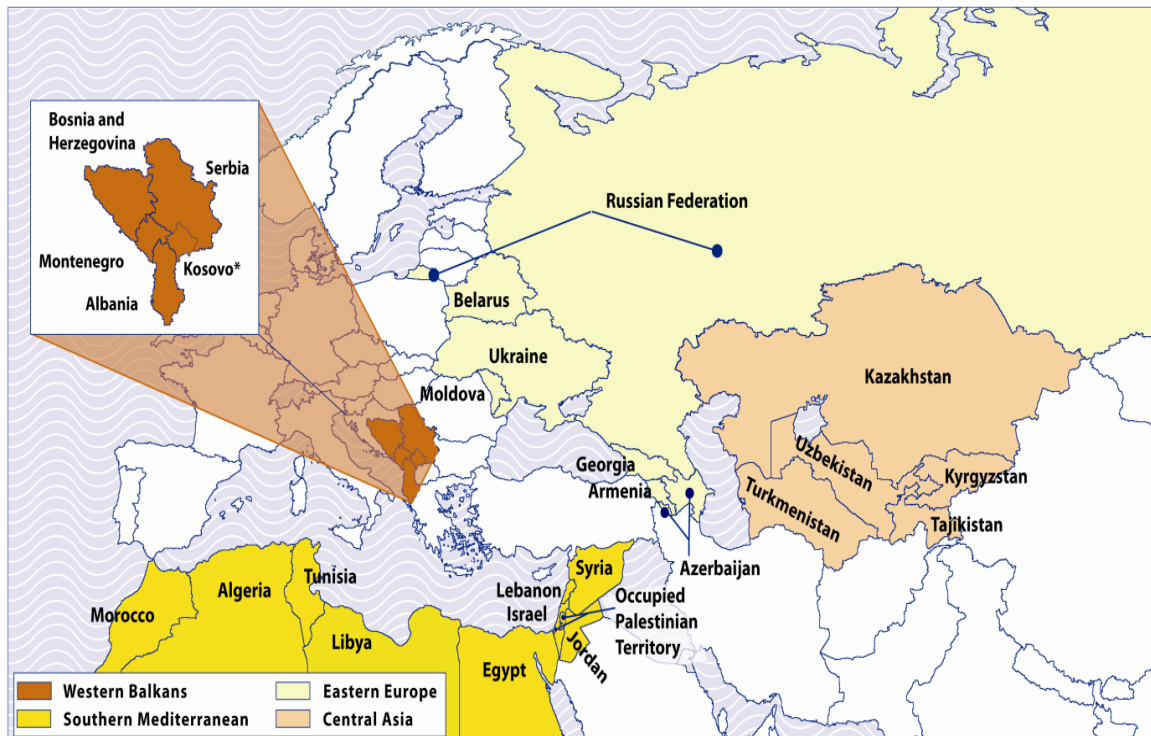
- Recognition for professional employment by central or regional governmental authorities
- Major role played by national ENIC/NARIC networks
- Recognition for professional employment by social partner organisations or individual employers
- Combination of central or regional governmental authorities / social partner organisations or individual employers
- No information available

Map 24: Establishment of joint degrees and programmes in higher education legislation, 2011



- Joint programmes and joint degrees are allowed in the higher education legislation.
- Joint programmes are allowed in the higher education legislation. Joint degrees are not foreseen in the legislation.
- Joint programmes and joint degrees are mentioned in the higher education legislation but provisions need to be defined.
- Joint programmes and joint degrees are not mentioned in higher education legislation whatsoever.

GLOSSARY OF COUNTRIES



* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Brief overview of the Tempus programme

Tempus is the EU's external cooperation programme that has been supporting the modernisation of higher education systems in the European Union's neighbouring countries for over 20 years. The number of Partner Countries involved has changed during this time. At present, the programme covers the 27 countries in the Western Balkans, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East¹⁶.

Since its creation, Tempus has contributed to promoting cooperation between higher education institutions in the European Union and the Partner Countries, through various capacity building activities. It also promotes the voluntary convergence of higher education systems in these countries with EU policies and processes in higher education, including the Bologna Process. Indeed, the Bologna Process has become a reference for most of Tempus Partner Countries, by setting in motion a series of reforms, to modernise higher education systems and to make them more compatible and comparable.

Background

Initially covering countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the first phase of the programme was launched in 1990 and lasted until 1993. During this period, Tempus sought to contribute to socio-economic reforms, through cooperation in higher education. These countries were later to join the EU itself.

The second phase of the programme, Tempus II, covered the next six years (1994-2000). During this period, the programme was extended to certain countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. National priorities for the Programme, defined by national authorities were introduced for the first time.

The third phase of Tempus was implemented from 2000 to 2006. The concept of cooperation between different countries in the same region was introduced during this time. In the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, Tempus III was extended to North Africa and the Middle East, with a view to contributing to promoting socio-economic development of this region. The programme also aimed at promoting inter-cultural understanding as a means of sustainable growth, peace and reinforced the 'intercultural' and 'civil society' dimension of the EU's policies in these regions.

Since 2007, Tempus has entered its fourth phase, which runs until 2013. It puts emphasis on regional and cross-regional cooperation and reinforcing links between higher education and society. The programme currently covers 27 Partner Countries and territories. The programme is integrated into the European Union's 'Neighbourhood', 'Enlargement' and 'Development' policies, which aim to promote prosperity, stability and security.

Tempus is funded by three financial instruments: the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

¹⁶ Tempus partners (2012): Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kosovo.

Main characteristics of Tempus

Tempus was designed to contribute to reforming and upgrading the higher education institutions and systems in the Tempus Partner Countries'. Through cooperation at higher education level, the programme also aims to strengthen civil society, promote democracy, as well as enhancing mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue between the EU and its partners. It promotes a "bottom-up" approach, since the content and methodology of the projects are left to project beneficiaries to define (within the priorities set by the Call). However, the Programme can also be described as "top-down", since the national and regional priorities are established by the national authorities in each Partner Country, to maximise the impact of the Programme on the higher education reform process.

Tempus IV supports three types of projects:

- *Joint Projects* target higher education institutions and fund multilateral partnerships between these EU and Partner Country institutions, to develop, modernise and disseminate new curricula, teaching methods and teaching materials. They also aim to enhance quality assurance mechanisms in institutions, modernise the governance and management of higher education institutions and strengthen their contribution to lifelong learning and the 'knowledge triangle' of 'education-research-innovation'.

- *Structural Measures* aim to reform higher education systems in the Partner Countries and to enhance their quality and relevance to the world of work and society at large. They promote further convergence with EU developments in the field of higher education. They focus on issues linked to the reform of governance in higher education institutions (qualification systems, quality assurance mechanisms, autonomy of institutions...) and foster links between higher education, the world of work and other sectors of education. They can also include studies and research, the organisation of national, regional and thematic conferences and seminars, the provision of training, policy advice and the dissemination of information.

Both Joint Projects and Structural Measures are funded through Calls for Proposal. The grant awarded varies between 0.5 to 1.5 million EUR.

- *Accompanying Measures* are funded through Calls for Tender or Framework Contracts. They comprise of dissemination and information activities such as thematic conferences, studies and activities which aim to identify and highlight good practice or consultation of stakeholders. They are also used to fund the National Tempus Offices and the activities of the group of 'Higher Education Reform Experts' in the Tempus Partner Countries.

Management of Tempus

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for both the management and the implementation of Tempus, under powers delegated by the European Commission. The Directorate-General for Development and Co-Operation - EuropeAid and the Directorate-General for Enlargement allocate funds directly to the Executive Agency to manage the Programme and thus have the formal responsibility for supervising its activities. The Directorate-General for Education and Culture brings its expertise and facilitates links with the European Union's internal higher education reform policies. The European External Action Service contributes to the strategic orientations of the Programme.

Overview of the Bologna Process

*History of the Bologna Process*¹⁷

The Bologna Process is the product of a series of Ministerial meetings on higher education, at which policy decisions have been taken, with the goal of establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The European Commission is a full member of this process. The Council of Europe and UNESCO – CEPES, along with a range of other stakeholder organisations, are also involved as consultative members. The following organisations ensure the full and active partnership with higher education institutions in the process: the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). Students are represented by the European Students' Union (ESU), academics by Education International (EI) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and employer organisations by Business Europe.

Since 1998, eight Ministerial conferences, devoted to mapping out the Bologna Process have been held in different European cities, namely Paris (at the Sorbonne University), Bologna, Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve and Budapest/Vienna.

Sorbonne Declaration (1998)

The basic precepts of the Bologna Process date back to the Sorbonne Joint Declaration on Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System, signed on 25 May 1998 by the education Ministers of four countries: France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom.

The Sorbonne Declaration focused on:

- Improving the international transparency of programmes and the recognition of qualifications by means of **gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study**;
- Facilitating the **mobility of students and teachers** in the European area and their integration into the European labour market;
- Designing a **common degree level system** for undergraduates (bachelor degree) and graduates (master and doctoral degrees).

Bologna Declaration (1999)

The Bologna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area, largely inspired by the Sorbonne Declaration, was signed in June 1999 by Ministers responsible for higher education in 29 European countries. This Declaration became the primary document used by the signatory countries to establish the general framework for the modernisation and reform of European higher education. The process of reform came to be called the Bologna Process.

¹⁷ Eurydice (2010) – Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010 – The impact of the Bologna Process

In 1999, the signatory countries included the then 15 EU Member States, three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and 11 EU candidate countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). International institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and associations of universities, rectors and European students also participated in drafting the Declaration.

The Bologna Declaration also formulates the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education and stresses the need to ensure that this system attracts significant interest around the world.

In the Bologna Declaration, Ministers affirmed their intention to:

- Adopt a system of **easily readable and comparable degrees**;
- Implement a system based essentially on **two main cycles**;
- Establish a **system of credits** (such as ECTS);
- Support the **mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff**;
- Promote **European cooperation in quality assurance**;
- Promote the **European dimensions in higher education** (in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation).

Prague Communiqué (2001)

In May 2001, the meeting in Prague was convened to assess the progress accomplished to date (particularly as indicated in the respective national reports) and identify the main priorities that should drive the Bologna Process forward in the years ahead. 33 countries participated, with Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey accepted as new members. Liechtenstein was also included, having committed to the Process between the Bologna and Prague conferences and the European Commission also became a member.

The education Ministers also decided to establish a Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), responsible for the continuing development of the Process. The BFUG is composed of representatives of all signatory countries and the European Commission and is chaired by the rotating EU Presidency. The Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), later renamed the European Students Union (ESU), take part as consultative members in the work of the BFUG.

The Prague Communiqué emphasised three elements of the Bologna Process:

- Development of **lifelong learning**;
- Involvement of **higher education institutions and students**;
- Promotion of the **attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**.

Berlin Communiqué (2003)

Held in September 2003, the Berlin Conference was an important stage in the follow up to the Bologna Process. With the inclusion of seven new signatory countries (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro), 40 countries were then involved.

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers charged the BFUG with preparing detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities and organising a stocktaking process before the following ministerial conference in 2005. The UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) joined the work of the BFUG as a consultative member.

With the Berlin Communiqué, the Bologna Process gained additional momentum by setting certain priorities for the next two years:

- Development of **quality assurance at institutional, national and European levels**;
- Implementation of the **two-cycle system**;
- **Recognition of degrees and periods of studies**, including the provision of the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge for all graduates as of 2005;
- Elaboration of an overarching **framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area**;
- Inclusion of the **doctoral level as the third cycle** in the Process;
- Promotion of closer **links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area**.

Bergen Communiqué (2005)

By May 2005, the Bologna Process was extended to 45 signatory countries with the inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Ministers responsible for higher education met in Bergen to discuss the mid-term achievements of the Bologna Process. The commissioned Stocktaking Report was submitted by the BFUG on this occasion. The Bergen Conference also marked the adoption of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA).

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Education International Pan-European Structure and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE, later to become Business Europe) joined the BFUG as consultative members.

In the Bergen Communiqué, Ministers enlarged their priorities for 2007, which now also include:

- **Reinforcing the social dimension** and removing obstacles to mobility;
- Implementing the **standards and guidelines for quality assurance** as proposed in the ENQA report;
- Developing **national frameworks of qualifications in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area**;

- Creating opportunities for **flexible learning paths in higher education**, including procedures for recognition of prior learning.

London Communiqué (2007)

The London Ministerial meeting, held on 17 and 18 May 2007, provided a landmark in establishing the first legal body to be created through the Bologna Process – the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). This is to become a register of quality assurance agencies that comply (based on an external evaluation) with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. London also saw developments in two key areas – the social dimension, where Ministers agreed to develop national strategies and action plans and the global dimension, where Ministers agreed on a strategy to develop the global dimension of European higher education.

The country membership expanded to 46, with the recognition of the Republic of Montenegro as an independent State in the European Higher Education Area.

In the London Communiqué, Ministers:

- Welcomed the creation of the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**;
- Committed to completing **national frameworks of qualifications** in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area by 2010;
- Promised to report **on national action to remove obstacles to the mobility** of students and staff;
- Pledged to implement and report on **national strategies for the social dimension**, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness;
- Adopted a strategy for the European Higher Education Area in global setting.

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009)

The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial meeting, held on 28 and 29 April 2009, took stock of the achievements of the Bologna Process and laid out the priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade.

Looking back over the last ten years of European higher education reform, Ministers emphasised the achievements of the Bologna Process, highlighting in particular the increased compatibility and comparability of European education systems through the implementation of structural changes and the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. Acknowledging that the European Higher Education Area is not yet a reality, the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué also established the priorities for the next decade until 2020.

The organisational structures of the Bologna Process were endorsed as being fit for purpose and Ministers decided that in the future, the Bologna Process would be co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU country.

In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, Ministers agreed that:

- Each country should set **measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing the participation of under-represented social groups** in higher education by the end of the next decade.

- By 2020 at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a **study or training period abroad**.
- **Lifelong learning and employability** are important missions of higher education.
- **Student-centred learning** should be the goal of ongoing curriculum reform

Budapest/Vienna Communiqué (2010)

The Budapest/Vienna ministerial meeting, held on 11 and 12 March 2010, officially launched the European Higher Education Area, as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, based on trust, cooperation and respect for diversity and aimed to make it internationally competitive and attractive.

The Ministers committed to the full implementation of the agreed objectives and the agenda for the next decade, set in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. They acknowledged that the Bologna action lines are implemented to varying degrees and that Bologna aims and reforms have not always been properly implemented and explained. Ministers emphasised the need to listen to the critical voices raised by staff and students and to work on improving the process and communicating it more effectively.

In particular, Ministers fully support staff and student participation in decision-making structures (EU, national, institutional) and student-centred learning. Ministers reconfirmed their commitment to academic freedom, as well as the autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions.

They also reaffirmed that higher education is a public responsibility and despite difficult economic times, are committed to ensuring that higher education institutions have the necessary resources and can provide equal opportunities for quality education, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups.

The country membership expanded to 47 with the recognition of Kazakhstan as a new participating country.

In the Budapest/Vienna Communiqué, Ministers agreed:

- To ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to propose measures to facilitate the **implementation of Bologna action lines**, among others by developing additional working methods, such as peer learning, study visits and other information sharing activities.
- To intensify policy dialogue and cooperation with **partners across the world**.

Beyond Europe, the Bologna Policy Forum

In 2007, Ministers and European Union representatives decided to develop a strategy, specifically for the external dimension of the Bologna Process. Two years later, in 2009, the first Bologna Policy Forum was held to encourage closer cooperation with countries outside the process. This meeting immediately followed the Ministerial meeting on 29 April 2009 and was attended by higher education Ministers or their representatives from 15 countries around the world, including the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, China and several Tempus Partner Countries (Egypt, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Tunisia).

The first Bologna Policy Forum provided the opportunity to discuss how worldwide cooperation in higher education can be enhanced through the Bologna Process. The final Declaration highlighted the consensus that a more permanent and structured dialogue between "Bologna" and third countries would be of mutual interest. It stated that the recognition of studies and qualifications, as well as the issue of quality assurance, are key elements for promoting mobility that go far beyond the Bologna-signatory countries. It also concluded that the Bologna Policy Forum should become a regular event.

The second Bologna Policy Forum took place in Vienna on 12 March 2010, right after the Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference. More than 20 countries from all over the world were invited to attend and to join this open dialogue along with the European Higher Education Area countries. Five Tempus Partner Countries attended this event (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia).

Debates focused on how higher education systems and institutions respond to growing demand, but also on mobility, including the challenges and opportunities of "brain circulation" and the balance between cooperation and competition in international higher education.

It was decided that each country would nominate a contact person who would serve as contact point for a better flow of information and joint activities, including the preparation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at Ministerial level.

The Policy Forum will continue to promote dialogue and cooperation among higher education institutions, staff and students and other relevant stakeholders across the world. In this context, the need to foster global student dialogue is acknowledged.

Cooperation based on partnership between governments, higher education institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders is at the core of the European Higher Education Area. This partnership approach should also be reflected in the organisation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at Ministerial level in Bucharest, 2012.

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