

Tetovo University Report, Second Site Visit

The second site visit to the University of Tetovo (TU) took place on November 7, 2012 from 9:30 – 16:00h

Present:

Experts:

Moss, Christopher, Marburg University

Kraljic, Mladen, University of Maribor,

Prof. Dr. Werner Schaal, Marburg University

Members of Tetovo University:

Prof. Dr. Vullnet Ameti, Rector of Tetovo University

Prof. Dr. Serafim Tomovski, Prorector for Financial Affairs

Prof. Dr. Arber Celiku, Prorector for International Relations

Prof. Dr. Fehari Ramadan, Prorector for Teaching

Adem Beadini, General Secretary

Prof. Dr. Afrim Alili

Halili Bashkim, interpreter from English into Albanian/Macedonian

Rector`s report

Rector Ameti was elected only three months ago after the former Rector resigned. He gave a short overview of TU's history: After it had existed from 1994 – 2004 as an initiative of Albanian intellectuals, Albanian political parties and numerous supporters of higher education in and outside the country it became institutionally accredited by the state government. Right from its official beginning it worked as a fully integrated university, the only one in the region.

- a) While in most of the eight WB university partners of the MOREMS project non-integration is one of the main problems the situation looks different here. The Rector started with the discussion about the autonomy of TU. He reported that the budget consists of two parts, one part coming from the government, the other part from own income. This year the government provides 240 million dinars altogether, 150 million for salaries of teaching and administrative staff, 75 million for all kinds of investments (1 euro ~ 60dinars,

which means that the government budget amounts to 4 million Euro).

According to the real needs of the university the Rector and his Prorector for Finances applied for roughly 500 million dinars (about 8.3 million Euro) and both of them claim that this amount is really needed by TU and they did not exaggerate with their demand for such an amount. But government not only gave them only 50% of what TU needs, in addition it also reduced the upper limit for fees which TU is allowed to charge from students (€ 200 per student and year except of medical students who have to pay about double of this sum). Consequently TU has to pay the salaries for about urgently needed 370 academic positions from its own income. It should be mentioned that fees are the same all over Macedonia meaning there is no competition between the state universities (five of them) concerning this financial obligation of the students. The 370 additional positions mentioned above have their reason partly in the government's demand of five dislocated positions of TU to serve regional requirements. TU has about 260 full time academic and 180 administrative staff; 300 people come from outside and are working part time only. Because TU does not have enough full time tenured positions it has to work with part time positions, people coming from Skopje, Pristina, Tirana, Sofia and other places. Those people have timely restricted contracts and are paid by the hour.

It should be summarized that the total budget of the university amounts to at most 10 million Euro, salaries included.

The university has about 16.000 students enrolled (11.000 in 2010). 95% of them are Albanians. The Secretary General states that a course is partly given in Macedonian if more than 20 non-Albanian students are in it. Moreover, non-Albanian students have the right to be examined in Macedonian language.

The university is entitled to create new and additional study programs if either the government provides for the necessary additional staff or the university is able to pay this staff out of its own income.

b) Rector, Prorector for Finances and Secretary General report that the university is extremely short in space. So, teaching is restricted to few rooms and research seems to be nearly impossible, the latter also for financial reasons. TU rents buildings from government. It is responsible, however, for their restauration and maintenance.

- c) There have been changes in university laws in recent times. One of the most important is the formation of a University Council having mainly monitoring obligations concerning finances. This council consists of 5 persons, nominated by the university, 3 persons nominated by the state parliament, 1 person from the chamber of commerce and another person coming from the community of Tetovo. This shows that the influence from outside is quite considerable. But it is important to state that the Rektor is elected by the Academic Senate only, meaning that the university is fully autonomous in this respect. Deans, of course, are elected by the faculties only and are not represented in the Academic Senate. They belong, however, to an advisory board for the Rektor.
- d) The university has to have accredited their study programs by an independent agency and, in this respect, is autonomous. Costs are paid partly by the government and partly by the university.
- e) University works together with the state university in Skopje as well as with the private university SEE, very close to it.
- f) When inspecting the university library during our first site visit we realized that it is in a very poor condition, worse than in any other university we had seen before. We are told now that these circumstances have not changed essentially meanwhile. A floor in the new building shall be used for the library in the near future. In addition there are plans to build a new library.
- g) It is a deplorable situation that there is nearly no research at TU. As a consequence there don't exist PH.D. programs and students wanting to work on a PH.D. thesis have to leave their university and go elsewhere. But it is noteworthy that five international scientific conferences took place here in the last three months. It is a well-known fact, moreover, that good teaching requires research.

Internationalisation

The EU experts discussed internationalisation at the University with the Rektor and with the Prorektor for international affairs. Both confirmed that internationalisation has high priority for the university which wishes to be a European university with a place in the network of European universities. To this end, the University has joined the European Rectors Club and was represented at Bologna at the Magna Charta meeting. The principles of the Bologna Process have been applied from the start.

The University uses European higher education funding projects and is involved in several TEMPUS projects as well as ERASMUS. Mobility of students as well as teaching and administrative staff are encouraged. The University has a fair number of outgoings including students following bachelor's and master's degree programmes. The Prorector for International Affairs has close links with German universities which is clearly reflected in the mobility which is realised. The University participates in the Fulbright Program. Visiting professors come for a short period – usually one week – and teach block courses. There have been professors from Germany under the Herder Programme. As yet the University has not applied for a Jean Monnet chair.¹

The tools of ERASMUS are used and understood although there are some problems with learning agreements. There was also a problem with ERASMUS when Macedonian participation in ERASMUS was suspended by the EU. The University did manage to send students to partner institutions through direct exchanges.

The University is currently writing an internationalisation strategy which will be presented to the Senate very soon. One aspect of this strategy is language policy. Most courses are taught in Albanian but when there are sufficient numbers courses are also taught in Macedonian or Turkish. International students mainly come from neighbouring countries. The University is looking to promote connections with Western Europe.

In the appointment of teaching staff, foreign experience is a consideration, although it is clear that for historical reasons this was not readily available to all staff. The University does not have any courses which require a period of study abroad. The structure of Macedonian degree courses is an obstacle here.

1

The Club of Rectors of Europe (CRE) is a non-governmental public organisation dedicated to furthering communication and the exchange of ideas between rectors, deans and senior academics.

Complete information: www.ebaoxford.co.uk/cre/

The EU experts found the positive attitude of the Rectorate Council encouraging and would suggest that after the Internationalisation Strategy has been passed and acted on, that the University should apply for an external appraisal of Internationalisation. (e.g. European Universities Association).

Bologna

The University runs Bachelor degree courses with both 180 and 240 credits and Master courses with 60 or 120 ECTS credits. Employers tend to prefer the 240 credit courses. More than 50% of students leave the University after completing their first cycle degree. The University does not currently offer third cycle (doctoral) degrees. All new courses have to go through an accreditation process. They are competence based. The principle is fully understood in the University and is clearly documented in a Diploma Supplement which is automatically issued to all students. ECTS credits are also clearly documented and transcripts of records are issued in accordance with the principles of ECTS. Workload is adjusted simply if found not to correspond to the number of ECTS credits. This is facilitated by the fact that the University has an ECTS coordinator. The principles of Bologna are clearly understood and it is fortunate that the current Prorector for International Relations is also a local Bologna expert and has close connections with other institutions that support Bologna implementation.

The EU experts were encouraged by the generally positive attitude to Bologna that prevails in the University which means that its students will receive internationally readable degrees.

Final remarks by the experts

It is obvious that TU made considerable progress since the last site visit in March 2010 and that conditions improved remarkably. We, therefore, have confidence in the Rector's visions concerning their realization in the not too far future. On the other side the government Tetovo has to change its politic concerning TU. The budget is just too small, especially if compared with the other state universities. Moreover, a modern university needs full autonomy and politicians should let Tetovo University have its own way trusting that it uses this autonomy in a responsible way.

We wish Tetovo University all the best for its future.

Christopher Moss

Mladen Kraljic

Werner Schaal

