Review of Tempus Structural Measures (2003-06)

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1. Introduction

This report is a result of a *survey of Structural Measures* within *Tempus III (2003-2006).* The main objective has been to review all Tempus Structural Measures financed under Tempus III, to analyse them by leading policy themes as well as by their contents and to draw conclusions on their particular impacts.

Structural Measures have been defined as '*short-term policy advice interventions, aimed at supporting reform processes in higher education, and developing higher education strategic frameworks. Such projects typically address issues linked to the Bologna Process such as quality assurance, and related accreditation systems, credit systems, and restructuring of the qualification frameworks to create a converging and transparent European system, whereby different national education systems would use a common framework.*'[1]

Therefore, the review focused primarily on those elements which can be placed in a more or less direct relationship with the national higher education policy agendas. The most interesting questions within the survey were: how much, in which areas and related to which issues did the structural measures contribute to the national higher education reform goals, to implementation processes, to enhanced international co-operation in higher education as well as to the reception of the Bologna principles in diverse national contexts.

A comprehensive survey was carried out to analyse these issues thoroughly and with various horizons; on these bases the present *Policy Brief* was prepared. Here, the main aim is to summarise the survey findings and draw key conclusions but not to burden the reader with the detailed survey methodology, statistics and analyses. These details are available in the integral *Survey Report* which is available *separately* for those readers who would like more by way of details and backgrounds.

The presentation of the review is organised over three levels. First, the backgrounds and general trends in higher education policy agendas across 'Tempus partner countries'[2] were analysed. Second, a statistical overview was prepared to identify the extent of co-operation with Structural Measures as well as the main areas and issues elaborated. Third, individual projects were analysed according to the issues they covered (e.g. higher education reforms, quality, qualifications, mobility etc.) focusing on some cases of good practice. Again, further details are available from the *Survey Report*; here, the key findings are summarised in – hopefully – an easily readable form together with some general observations and conclusions.

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[1] See http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/projects_en.html#2
[2] 'Tempus partner countries' are the seven Western Balkan countries covered by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, 15 countries of Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East covered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and five countries from the Central Asia, which receive assistance from the Development and Cooperation Instrument. For details, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/countries/index_en.html.

2. Higher education in Tempus partner countries

2.1 Internationalisation in higher education. The concept of *Structural Measures* in today's reforms of higher education systems and institutions should be considered in context. This context has been marked by ever growing co-operation and interdependence on both European and global scales. Co-operation between EU member states and so-called third countries has held double if not triple importance. From the 'internal' European point of view, it contributes to '*the international recognition and attractive potential of our systems*' (the Sorbonne Declaration, 1998) but it is also a way to boost quality in higher education within Europe itself. On the other side, it provides assistance to higher education systems in transition as well as importantly contributes to a better mutual understanding of the diverse national higher education systems.

Internationalisation in higher education has a long history. Traditionally, this co-operation was mainly based on the personal commitment of individual academics. Much has changed in recent times. In Europe at the beginning of the 90's, internationalisation referred to both 'Europeanisation' (i.e. internal European co-operation) as well as 'true internationalisation' (i.e. external or global co-operation). In the mid-1980s, the establishment of the European Commission's action programmes for research and student mobility (*Erasmus* in particular) addressed this issue for the first time in a systemic way and direct, multilateral co-operation among higher education systems of the EU member countries started to quickly grow. These processes were also very important for the 'broad' Europe as well as for other regions of the world. The *Tempus programme* (the 'Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies') was launched in 1990 in an enthusiastic spirit of political changes in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in a readiness to share – at least indirectly – the 'Erasmus philosophy' with non-EU countries. Since then, Tempus has taken a steep development curve.

Over time, the programme's geographical scope has evolved. It was initially established as a programme for co-operation with Central and Eastern European countries which have subsequently joined the EU. It has been renewed three times. The scope of eligible countries expanded and from the beginning of this decade (i.e., Tempus III for the 2000-2006 period), it has enabled universities and other higher education institutions as well as organisations and agencies from EU Member States to co-operate with those in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean partner countries. In addition to reforming higher education systems in the partner countries surrounding the EU, Tempus contributes to enhancing understanding between cultures.

Tempus III projects fall into three categories: the main type, *Joint European Projects* (JEPs), aims to increase co-operation and network-building between actors in higher education in EU member states and partner countries. *Structural and Complementary Measures* (SCMs) are short-term interventions designed to support national higher education reforms and strategic policy frameworks. *Individual Mobility Grants* help staff in participating partner countries to take part in training and conferences abroad, and to assist European teachers deliver training courses in partner countries.

The Bologna Process has become a central reference for higher education reforms in Europe and Tempus is one of the main sources of information on developments in the Bologna signatory countries that are outside the EU, along with other partner countries

that are not (yet) formally involved in the Process. Tempus provides a platform for exchanges and transfer of experiences on a variety of key issues such as curriculum development, quality enhancement, credit system, or mobility issues. In addition to introducing innovative practices at university, faculty or college levels, most Tempus partner countries are incorporating the Bologna principles as part of their overall efforts to modernise their higher education systems, and to align them with current international developments, in order to become part of a larger higher education community.

2.2 Tempus 'geography'. The notion of '*Tempus partner countries'* is a generic term which encompasses a number of geographically, culturally and historically diverse regions and countries on three continents. These diversities are also reflected in higher education. Each country has its own needs and priorities; nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common features and characteristics. For this reason, a special '*Tempus geography*' was drafted for the purposes of the survey; of course, the metaphor is not connected to the 'geography' of these countries *per se* as such but to a specific '*higher education* geography'.

Higher education modernisation and reform agendas differ across countries and regions. However, behind the specific agendas of countries and regions, a common agenda is becoming increasingly visible today. On the global level, this agenda includes issues such as broadening access to higher education, quality enhancement, qualification frameworks, comparability and compatibility of systems, degrees and their mutual recognition, responding to the needs of economies, cultures and societies etc. Since the turn of the millennium, these issues have been addressed in Europe within the Bologna Process. In its broadest meaning, it can also be regarded as a common background for today's various co-operation agendas, including the Tempus co-operation.

The *Bologna Process* is, first of all, of main interest for those countries which joined it. Yet, there are EU as well as non-EU member countries in the Process; therefore, it is normal that the wider 'Bologna Club' is an area of intensive Tempus co-operation. On the other hand, a lot of interest has also been expressed by other countries which are not formal members of the Process and of the emerging *European Higher Education Area* ('EHEA'). Thus, it is well grounded that the higher education modernisation and reform processes in the Tempus partner countries were approached in the survey against the background of the Bologna Process. However, it should be noted that the Process does not cover the European higher education modernisation agenda in total: there are issues like funding, some aspects of governance etc. which are still considered predominantly at national levels. Similarly, certain EU actions (e.g. *European Research Area*) are not directly part of the Bologna Process. These aspects were taken into account in the survey. Of course, regional particularities were also carefully considered. Thus, for the purposes of a systemic survey, the partner countries were organised *in four groups with some common characteristics*.

Tempus III activities were supported by three programmes – CARDS, TACIS and MEDA. These programmes have a distinctive geopolitical background which is, however, not directly connected to particular dimensions of higher education. In this regard, the division of partner countries into 'Bologna' and 'non-Bologna' ones is much more revealing: it reflects important elements of national higher education agendas. However, the demarcation between the groups is not necessary identical to the

organisation of individual countries into one of the three funding programmes. For these reasons and for the purposes of systemic work within the survey, the following four regions were designed:

1. 'CARDS-Bologna' (countries of the Western Balkans, *members* of the Bologna Process);
2. 'TACIS-Bologna' (countries of Eastern Europe, *members* of the Bologna Process);
3. 'TACIS-Central Asia' (countries of Central Asia, *non-members* of the Bologna Process); and
4. 'MEDA' (Maghreb and Mashrek countries, *non-members* of the Bologna Process).

Some *exceptions* had to be made, however:

(1) *Kosovo,* which applied for membership but could not join the Bologna Process at the London conference (2007) due to its formal status, is included in the CARDS-Bologna group;
(2) *Belarus,* which has remained outside the Process and has not applied so far, is included in the TACIS-Bologna group;
(3) *Mongolia*, covered by the TACIS programme (1991-2003; now covered by the ALA programme), is associated with the TACIS-Central Asia.

Some further remarks should be made. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the term 'countries in transition' started to be used as a common name for former socialist countries in Eastern Europe. This term has its historical grounds, yet it could also be misleading for several reasons; when used in this text, it is put in inverted commas. One of common prejudices has been that these countries represented 'a monolithic bloc' before 1990. This is not true in a political sense and even less true when the development of higher education systems in these countries is observed. There has been no 'monolithic bloc'; yet, some common elements across certain groups of countries are visible.

'Countries in transition' (often put on the *East-West* axis) are also proceeding in various ways when higher education is observed: here, the main difference appears today along the already mentioned delineation 'Bologna' vs. 'non-Bologna'. This dichotomy is mainly a formal one – based on a decision from the Berlin ministerial conference of Bologna countries (2003) – but it influences concrete national policy agendas as well as higher education reform implementation processes. Nevertheless, these countries (or at least certain groups of countries) have a common heritage and traditions in higher education co-operation. They also have a similar motivation to co-operate with (or within) the 'Bologna Club'.

A second delineation could be drawn on the *North-South* axis. Mediterranean countries traditionally possess quite specific characters. In today's *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, two transversal issues are fundamental: to encourage interaction and co-operation between social agents from the North and the South, and to generate an image of Europe in the Mediterranean that makes it possible to construct, as expressed by Romano Prodi, 'a friendly neighbourhood with a human dimension.' The MEDA countries are formally outside the Bologna Process, like the Central Asian countries, but they are also connected to the developments initiated by the Bologna Process. The

Catania Declaration signed in 2006 is the best proof of the dissemination of the Bologna spirit in the region.

Let us now focus on some characteristics of the four abovementioned Tempus groups.

2.3 CARDS-Bologna countries

The region of the Western Balkans is the closest periphery to the heart of European integration. Due to the numerous wars and other turmoil of the 1990s, catching up with the economically developed West has been much slower than in the other 'countries in transition'. Unlike the Soviet system, it should be noted that the former Yugoslav public administration (within this group only Albania did not belong to former Yugoslavia) was quite decentralised and that there were certain differences among federal republics, including in higher education governance. One of the most outstanding common features was a *disintegrated university* with faculties as the main academic actor and a separate legal entity. The increased institutional autonomy is a characteristic of the period of recent changes which often meant greater independence from the state administration but also decreasing resources from public budgets.

Croatia joined the Bologna Process in 2001 followed by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in 2003. All of them passed major changes in their *legislation* which provided a framework for the *introduction of the Bologna-inspired reforms*. Their national reports for the Bologna Process (2007) prove that progress has been achieved everywhere. However, European associations of students and universities (EUA and ESU) report some challenges calling for urgent treatment. As in other Bologna countries, the key challenge has become the issue of *implementation*.

The Tempus programme in the CARDS region has led to *capacity-building* in particular. Tempus projects were often mentioned in the Bologna National Reports as a valuable input supporting various aspects of higher education reform. In Croatia, for instance, they are referred to as an '*excellent instrument for the support of the higher education sector reform*'; it was also stressed that the projects involved various stakeholders. In the Serbian Bologna National Report, Tempus projects are also explicitly mentioned, in particular as support for study visits and establishing international networks. Montenegro stressed the development of its national qualifications framework as a high priority and referred to a Tempus Structural Measure as a helpful instrument in this respect.

The national priorities for Structural Measure in this region were formulated as follows:[3]
   o *quality assurance in higher education and/or accreditation; co-operation with ENQA*;
   o *introduction of the ECTS system*; *accumulation of credits gained through formal, non-formal and informal learning*; *study structures in higher education*; *restructuring and introduction of new curricula*; *introduction of joint degrees*; *third cycle (doctoral) studies*; *implementation of lifelong learning courses*;

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[3] Here – as well as later with the other three groups – we refer to documentation available at the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/doc/guide3cards_en.pdf.

o *recognition of degrees and periods of study*, *Diploma Supplement*; *harmonisation of the curricula to comply with the EU directives for regulated professions*;
o *contribution to higher education reform processes and further implementation of the Bologna principles*;
o *support of the university management reform*; *introducing centres of excellence*;
o *promotion of close links with the local and regional economy through technology and knowledge transfer*; *and*
o *equal opportunities for access to higher education*; *care for disadvantaged groups and gender policies*; *multilingualism in higher education as a tool for mutual understanding and regional integration*.

2.4 TACIS-Bologna countries

Having formerly been part of the Soviet Union, all countries of the TACIS-Bologna group share the same institutional setting. Restructuring a system with a strong centrally planned tradition represents a considerable challenge. On the other hand, universities are today overstaffed and under-funded, teachers' salaries are low, the equipment is poor and building maintenance is often problematic. In many cases, state higher education institutions try to compensate these shortcomings by charging fees, accepting 'fee-paying' students alongside 'state-ordered' students. There is an obvious need to democratise and reform the university management.

Russia was the first "TACIS country" to join the Bologna Process in Berlin in 2003. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine followed two years later in Bergen. Since then, reform efforts in the region have been substantially based on the Bologna action lines. Virtually all major strategic goals are inspired by the Bologna Process. National Bologna Reports show that there is a need for more decisive progress in quality assurance, lifelong learning and national qualification frameworks; meanwhile, the ECTS and Diploma Supplement are still in an early stage of implementation. It seems that some higher education institutions are not ready to become equal partners in mobility programmes because of insufficient funding, or weak knowledge of foreign languages. Similarly and as in the previous group, some Bologna National Reports from this group of countries explicitly mentioned the added value of Tempus projects for the implementation of the Bologna reforms. For example, in the 2007 Azerbaijan Bologna Process Report, Tempus projects were explicitly mentioned in the context of developing quality assurance systems.

Tempus national Tempus priorities for region include:
o *implementation of the Bologna Process and integration into the European Higher Education Area*; *creation of National Teams of Bologna Promoters*;
o *adaptation of higher education institutions to the lifelong learning concept*;
o *development of the postgraduate level through best practice*;
o *introduction and/or improvement of quality assurance, evaluation and/or accreditation systems*;
o *introduction of the two-level system on a national level*;
o *development of the ECTS or similar credit transfer systems*;
o *staff training (ministry officials, academics, university administrators)*; *and*
o *project consortia to include regional universities*.

2.5 TACIS-Central Asia higher education

Although countries in the region have a long tradition of public education and training, the higher education system has become obsolete and infrastructures and facilities have deteriorated during the transition period. The result is an unbalanced structure of qualifications with little relevance to economic and social development. As in other 'countries in transition', there has been a huge increase in higher education enrolment levels. Institutions have acquired more autonomy yet, they have also experienced drastic funding cuts. Private institutions have been established alongside public (state) ones. This period has also been marked by the emigration of local professors and students and the rejection of outdated Soviet curricula.

This has been a challenging situation. Pivotal goals of the reforms have been decentralisation and privatisation. In admissions, a standardised nationwide test has been introduced in most countries and quality standards have become a top issue in education. Degree structures have been changed towards a two-cycle system. However, it can also be heard that there are problems in implementation and that not enough attention has been paid to the improvement of the policy debate.

Nevertheless, progress has already been achieved. For instance, in Kazakhstan, reforms were directly or implicitly aimed at adjusting the education system to the needs of the economy while in Tajikistan, which was marked by a specifically turbulent transition period, strategic reforms currently concentrate on ensuring equal access, quality and relevance to the needs of a modern society. From any country's point of view, Tempus Structural Measures fit quite well with national needs and priorities. The main priorities for Structural Measures in this group of countries are synthesised as follows:

- o *introduction of quality management and assessment systems in higher education*;
- o *aligning the higher education system with the Bologna Process*; *introducing elements of the 'Bologna Process'*;
- o *introduction of a three-level education system based on credit accumulation*;
- o *international recognition of higher education institutions and/or recognition of qualifications*;
- o *development of systems to involve employers with a view to increasing the quality and relevance of education*; *and*
- o *development of PhD programmes*.

2.6 MEDA countries

The MEDA countries are 'junior' Tempus partner countries. In 2002, the EU Council of Ministers decided to extend the Tempus programme to the Mediterranean partners: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Lebanon. Thus, the context of MEDA involvement in Tempus is quite different in some aspects from CARDS and TACIS.

The MEDA region is home to the oldest traditions in higher education (Fes; 859) but in modern times various systems, mostly influenced by Europe, have prevailed. Higher education systems increased their importance with national independence after World War II. An important issue raised in this period has remained in the forefront of higher educational policies: it is the international recognition of degrees and qualifications as

well as the modernisation of the content of higher education and its management. There are strong cohorts of young people in all countries of the region; an increase in students' enrolments can therefore be expected in the near future.

The region lies outside the emerging European Higher Education Area, although interest in the Bologna Process is visible in the modernisation processes of the various national higher education systems. For instance, a Bologna-inspired degree reform was launched in Algeria in the 2004-2005 academic year, and most institutions have already modernised their courses. In Lebanon as well, some universities have recently started to switch over to the 3-cycle system. In 2005 the National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency was created in Egypt. In Jordan, the Accreditation Authority was established in 2007 as an independent entity as well as a Higher Education Development Forum.

The strategic goals of all these countries fit with the Tempus approach. Egypt has even stressed in its policy documents that Tempus projects should be in line with the objectives of the Egyptian Higher Education Development Strategy. This obviously strengthens sustainability. In general, the national Tempus priorities identified across the eight countries of the MEDA group are as follows:

o *improvement of contents and management of the higher education sector; establishing Centres of Excellence for Higher Education;*
o *development of quality assurance, evaluation and/or accreditation systems and procedures;*
o *development of a national higher education strategy and alignment of institutional policies; training the staff on the higher education reforming processes; establishment of National Qualifications Framework and certified training centres for technical and vocational training;*
o *university- labour market relationship and university- industry- society partnerships; and*
o *international comparability of the higher education system and dissemination of information on higher education systems; co-diploma exercises and recognition issues; developments in the Bologna Process.*

2.7 Co-operation for mutual benefits

Nowadays, the Bologna Process dominates discussions and developments in European higher education; it importantly influences other regions of the world as well. At this point, a delineation between the 'Bologna' and 'non-Bologna' countries was established. This distinction is also a fact with the Tempus programme. However, the fact that 'Bologna' and 'non-Bologna' countries can work together in a common framework should be seen as an advantage for all. In the last few years, it has been often stressed that 'Bologna' should not symbolise a new fortress but *an open philosophy of co-operation for mutual benefits*. After the London conference of the Bologna Process (2007) Europe is consciously 'looking out': the so-called *Bologna External Dimension Strategy* should open new ways to upgrade and strengthen existing co-operation modes in the future.

The Central Asian and MEDA countries are not "Bologna countries". Nevertheless, they are interested in the 'Bologna' developments and searching for good practices. Yet,

international co-operation is a two-way co-operation and should also be understood as two-way communication. This is a message which is best illustrated by the following quotation:

> *'Arab involvement in the Bologna process is important for many reasons. One is that many specific benefits emanate from specific bilateral and multilateral co-operation projects. Another, more important, is that as Arabs are thinking of developing and modernising their higher education systems, they can learn lessons from the Bologna process. Furthermore, as cooperation within the process allows several partners to meet, Arabs meet other Arabs within the context of European programmes. Engagement with the Bologna process, for Arabs and for Europeans, is beneficial. But should not Arabs develop their own Bologna process?'*[4]

3. Tempus III Structural Measures at a glance

3.1 The survey considered a total of 251 Structural Measures. A sophisticated methodology was developed and, as a result, a colourful picture of Tempus co-operation in the 2003-2006 period was painted. There were two main survey dimensions: on one hand, general characteristic and trends were observed while, on the other, the focus was given to *typical Structural Measures*. In this chapter, a brief report on the first dimension will be provided while the second will be presented in the next chapter.

The survey confirmed that the Tempus programme experienced huge developments during this period: often, important and *positive changes between earlier and later projects* can be found. The Tempus community has been 'growing up': in not so rare cases, consortia reapplied in a next call and ran a new project after the previous one was successfully accomplished. In some cases, strong links have been built between two or more projects; thus, their sustainability has been enhanced.

3.2 Spread of Structural Measures

In general, the number of Structural Measures was rising from one year to another. The biggest share of Structural Measures monitored in this survey belongs to TACIS (one-half) while the share of MEDA remains the smallest (below one-fifth). In most cases, only *one partner country* was involved in one Structural Measure with partners mainly from three EU member states, but there are also some examples when two or even more partner countries were co-operating within the same project. Within the 251 Structural Measures, the survey identified altogether *290 'national teams'* and a great richness of – *altogether 870 – 'international contacts'* (using the survey language) between project partners.
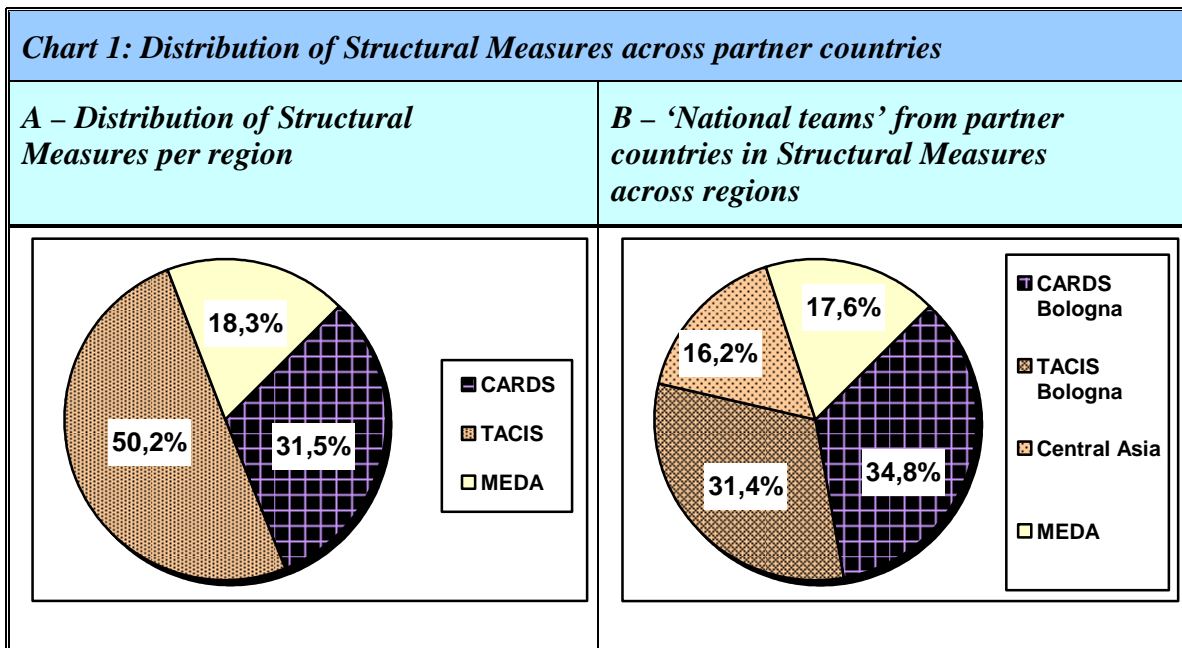
A *two-third of the projects was performed within two Bologna-associated 'Tempus regions'*: CARDS-Bologna and TACIS-Bologna. The biggest share (of over one-third) was performed within the CARDS-Bologna group. Only Albania is represented somewhat less strongly: with five projects (i.e., about 5% of the total) it is equal to

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[4] Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh, *Arabs' own Bologna process*. Jordan Times, April 25, 2008.

Montenegro with a much smaller higher education system. As a particularly active country in this group, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be mentioned, with a share of almost one-quarter of the total co-operation. A little less than one-third of the projects was performed in the TACIS-Bologna region. Two countries, Russia and Ukraine – both having very large higher education systems, the largest among all partner countries in this survey – are represented with three-quarters of the projects performed within this group of countries. Moldova has been involved in one-tenth of the projects; compared to its size, this should be seen as quite intensive. Other countries in this group are represented more symbolically.

One-third of the Structural Measures were carried out in non-Bologna countries. We should be aware that these are relative data, as discussed in the previous chapter. In the Central Asian group, the majority of the 'national teams' were composed in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan while in the MEDA group, the countries are represented in quite a balanced way; only the share of Egypt – the largest system in this group – is higher.

Chart 1: Distribution of Structural Measures across partner countries	
A – Distribution of Structural Measures per region	***B – 'National teams' from partner countries in Structural Measures across regions***

### 3.3 The involvement of EU Member States

The *largest national systems* have, of course, the biggest shares in the co-operation: Germany (14.7%), Italy (10.2%), France (9.5%), UK and Spain (8.3). Some of the *medium-size national systems* have been very engaged, e.g.: Belgium (7.3%), Austria (6.4%), Sweden (6.1%) and the Netherlands (5.2%). With the exception of Luxemburg, all other EU member states took part in at least two projects. As already mentioned, a total of *870 'international contacts'* were established in the framework of Tempus III Structural Measures. Survey findings prove that relatively close *neighbourhood* and *traditional co-operation* between individual EU member countries on one hand and

individual partner countries on the other are *the main building factors of Tempus projects consortia*. For instance, Slovenia has co-operated with neighbouring CARDS partner countries in four cases out of five; this is the highest score of all four groups.

In the TACIS-Bologna group, this mode of co-operation involves mainly Russia and Ukraine, the two largest education systems. It is no surprise that interest in co-operation comes mainly from *large EU countries*. While observing TACIS countries at first glance, one can also conclude that EU countries from the North seem to be more inclined to work with them. Yet, Finland is relatively low on this list while the involvement of large higher education systems from EU countries in Southern Europe is more prominent. In Central Asia, a typical 'national team' from EU member countries comes from a *medium size* higher education national system, from different parts of the EU. Here, the exception is the UK, which is the only large system among the 'top ten' EU countries involved in Central Asia.

In the MEDA group the situation is quite different from the previous three regions: the most engaged EU countries are involved in about one-quarter of the Structural Measures in this region, but they are quite rare. Three-quarters of the work was carried out with three large countries from Southern Europe: Spain, Italy and France. It should be added that ten EU member countries were not involved in any MEDA project at all; such abstinence was not characteristic of the other three regions.

Chart 2: Involvement of EU Member States in Tempus Structural Measures
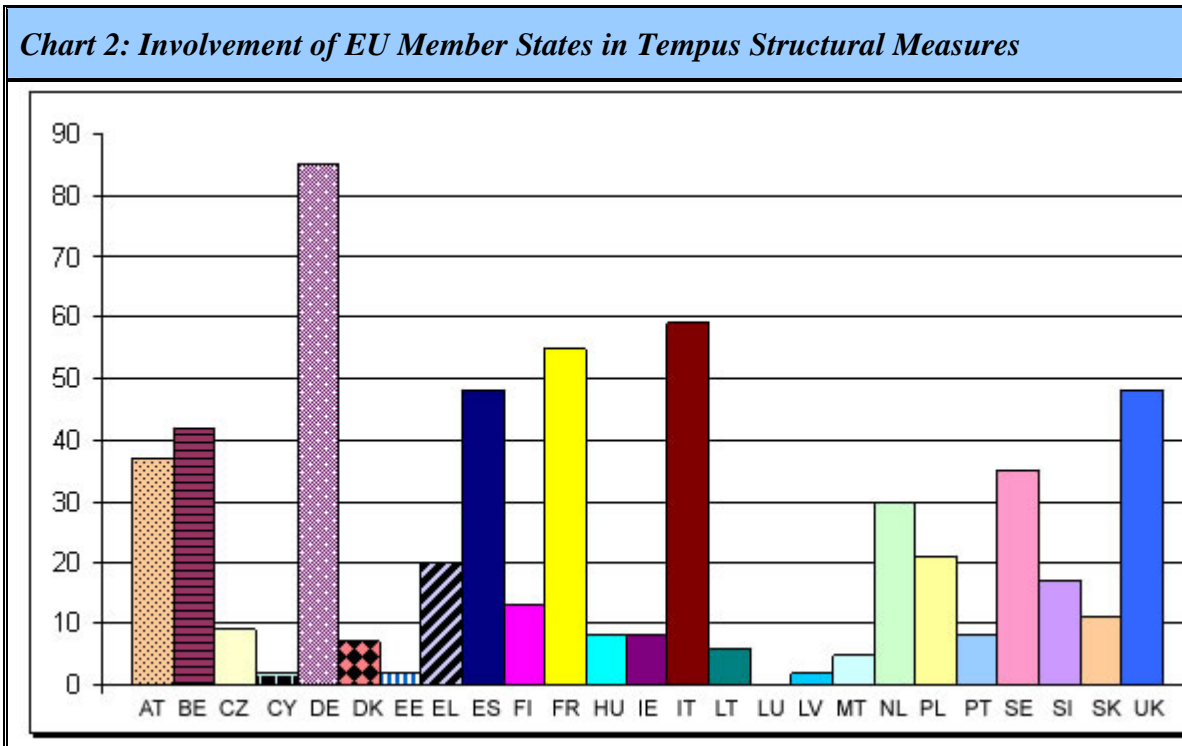
How many 'international contacts' (out of 870) have individual countries achieved? Large systems are, of course, more dominant. Thus, Russia registered the highest number of contacts (10.5% of the total) followed by Ukraine and, surprisingly, the Former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (both 9.1%), Serbia (8.5%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (8.2%), Croatia (7.6%), Kazakhstan (5.4%), etc.

Chart 3: 'International contacts' by partner countries
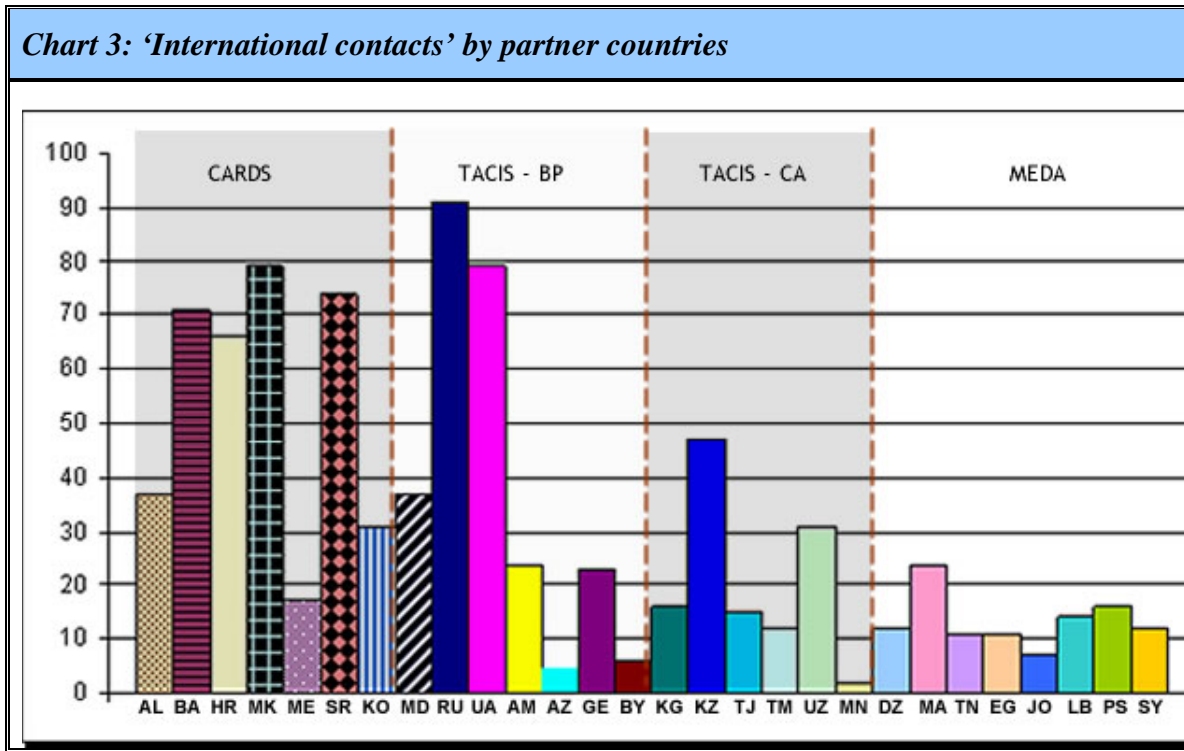
3.4 Some indicators

The survey developed some measurable indicators on the projects' concrete outcomes. As one might expect in a predominantly academic environment, the highest frequency goes to *publications*; however, the frequency of the other four indicators is not so low: *conferences*, *seminars* and *visits* receive almost the same share, while *training courses* are positioned a little lower. Project *websites* were established almost as a rule and are, in most cases, still accessible. Around 400 publications were published within Tempus III Structural Measures; these publications significantly contribute to the wide dissemination of the projects' outcomes.

3.5 Thematic areas

The survey identified the main thematic areas addressed by Tempus Structural Measures. Projects were checked against the following five main reform areas: (1) modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment; (2) modernisation of higher education governance; (3) reforms at universities and other higher education institutions; (4) national reforms (reforms of national higher education systems); and (5) promotion of the Bologna Process. With almost one-third of the total, the most frequent area which the projects focused on is the *modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment*. The *Bologna promotion* and *reforms* (national and institutional) as a 'block' prove to be the second
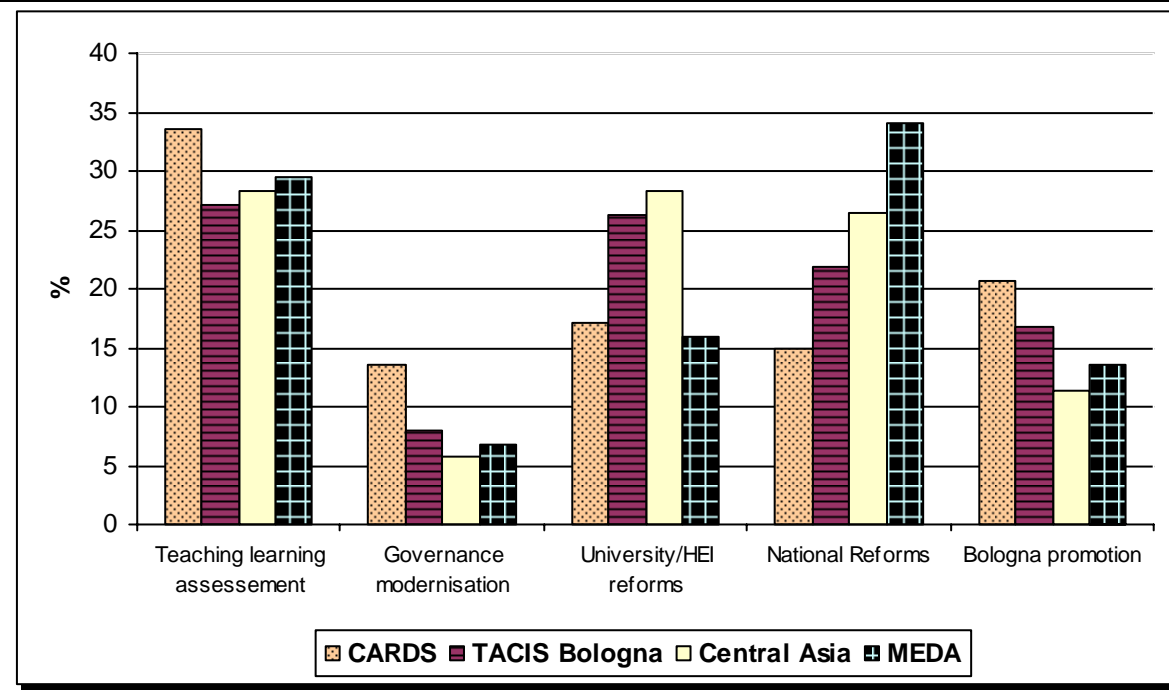
most popular area (with about one-fifth of the total each) while *governance modernisation* (below one-tenth) seems to be quite marginal but still selected by not such a small number of projects.

The picture changes somewhat when the four regions are considered separately. In CARDS-Bologna, modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment is by far the most popular (one-third of the total) while governance is the least (a little over one-tenth) popular area. Institutional and national reforms are at a similar level but the Bologna promotion (which, in fact, is often associated with national reforms) is represented a little higher (around one-fifth of the total). In TACIS-Bologna, the span of areas is narrower; the maximum is again with the modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment but very close to institutional (both a little over one-quarter of the total) and national reforms (one-fifth). Bologna promotion is less popular than in CARDS-Bologna; the minimum is again held by governance modernisation (less than one-tenth).

In Central Asia, the picture is very similar to TACIS-Bologna: modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment and reforms are on the top (around one-quarter of the total). Bologna promotion is lower than in the previous group and governance is at the bottom. Finally, in the MEDA region, national reforms are of highest interest (over one-third of the total) followed very closely by the modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment. Institutional reforms and Bologna promotion receive only one-half of this interest each, while governance is again at the bottom.

**Chart 4: Structural Measures – main areas**

If we compare the four groups, then differences of regional interests in the modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment do not exist. Bologna promotion is a relatively interesting topic in the CARDS-Bologna group and the lowest in Central Asia. However, institutional reforms are the most attractive area (indirectly connected to the Bologna agenda) in Central Asia, while there is least interest in them in the MEDA group. On the contrary, here national reforms are absolutely on the top of the list. Surprisingly, they are at the bottom in the CARDS-Bologna group.

3.6 Main themes

The survey findings show that the Structural Measures have had *quality assurance* as the far most frequent theme (over one-quarter of the total), followed by *credit system* and similar issues (one-fifth) and *degree structures* (below one-fifth). Projects' consortia attributed less importance to the other four thematic clusters tested within the survey: *mobility*, *qualification frameworks* and *employability*, *lifelong learning* and *recognition*.

Chart 5: Structural Measures – main themes
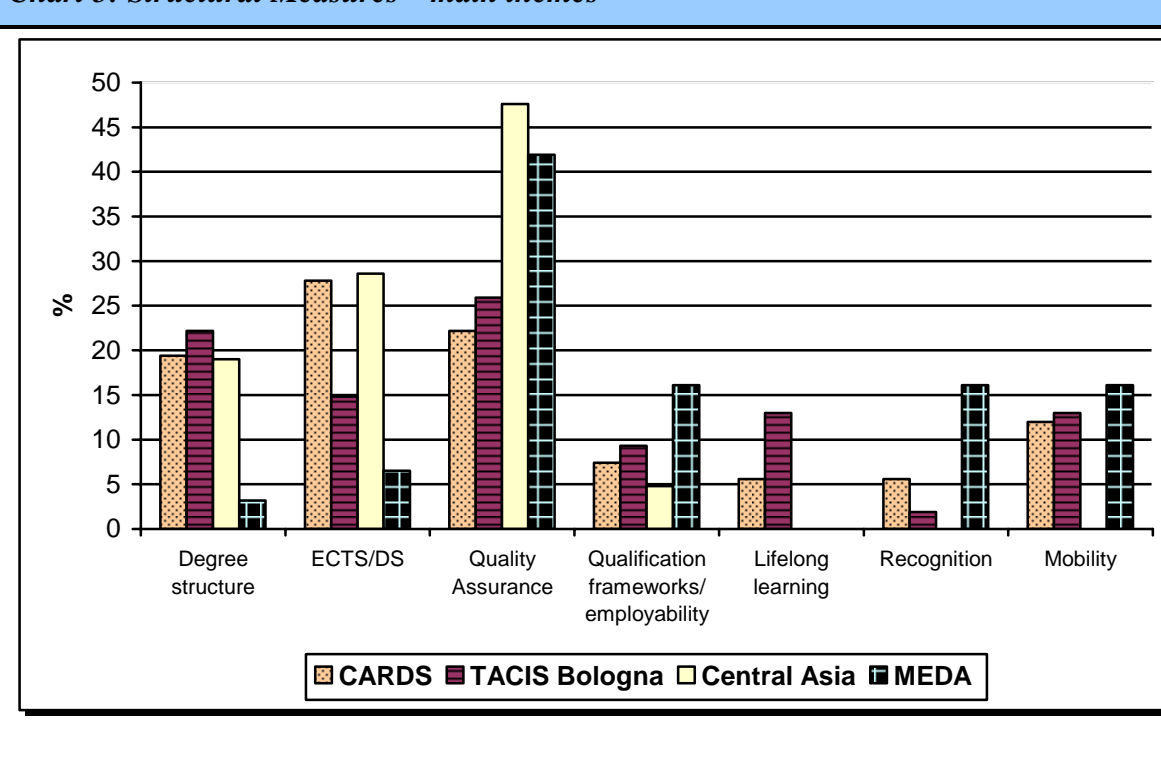
A number of differences can be observed between the Tempus regions. They are in line with the pace of the Bologna implementation. *Quality assurance* is at the top in all regions yet a more detailed observation reveals two distinctive groups. In countries which are not formal members of the Bologna Process, quality issues attracted almost one-half of all projects. Yet, in the CARDS-Bologna region, this theme only comes second, after *credit system* which is the most attractive issue in this region. The credit system is also

high on the agenda of Central Asia while in TACIS-Bologna, the second most attractive theme is the *degree structure*; the credit system attracting much less attention. Degree structure is similarly also attractive in the CARDS-Bologna region and in Central Asia, although it is almost neglected in MEDA, like the credit system.

Interestingly, in countries which are not formal members of the Bologna Process, some themes attracted almost no interest. First of all, this is – surprisingly – the case of *lifelong learning*: in Central Asia as well as in the MEDA region *no Structural Measure at all* was identified as covering this issue. It is the same for *recognition* and *mobility* issues in Central Asia (no projects) while in MEDA there is a noticeable but low interest for these themes. On the other hand, in the formal Bologna members, no theme was totally neglected. Mobility is quite attractive everywhere (over one-tenth of the total in TACIS and CARDS Bologna countries) as well as lifelong learning (over one-tenth in TACIS-Bologna but marginal in CARDS-Bologna), qualification frameworks and employability.

4. Tempus III Structural Measures in detail

In this concluding part, projects are analysed in a more detailed way. Findings presented in the previous chapter are chiefly based on a statistical approach, whereas this chapter focuses more on the content of the projects. The main aim is to present the *rich content diversity of the Structural Measures* and some of the most outstanding achievements which are illustrated in boxes apart from the main text of the report. The presentation which follows is organised along 13 different parameters.

4.1 Modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment

These are *not a typical structural measures*: they focus on 'pedagogy' rather than on 'structures'. Very often, these projects also aimed at the modernisation of teaching, learning and assessment in a particular field of study (e.g. medicine; engineering etc.) and many of them seemed to be 'mini Joint European Projects' for curriculum development than structural measures in the proper sense. However, one should not forget that the key purpose of structures in higher education is *quality teaching and learning* (based on quality research) as well as *sound learning outcomes*. Here, new structures can be tested and/or applied in concrete study fields. Alarm bells can warn when corrections should be made. Last but not least, these topics are included as they proved to represent the most 'popular' single area within Tempus III Structural Measures.

Projects within this cluster focused on several typical dimensions, e.g. *development of ICT in education and Web-based teaching and learning*, or aimed at the improvement of *modern teaching methods and approaches as well as of language skills.* In many cases, they were connected to reforms at institutional and national levels, to the promotion of the Bologna Process, the degree-structure and ECTS. The 'flagship' project in this area is *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe*: "universities contribution to the Bologna Process"[5] i.e. the implementation of the Bologna objectives at the level of higher education institutions and subject areas. Originally, this approach was established as an Erasmus project which has disseminated to other countries via the Tempus programme.

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[5] See http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/.

Although these are not true structural measures – at least not directly – these projects have significantly contributed to the modernisation of higher education in the partner countries.

4.2 Governance modernisation

It seems that institutional and higher education governance issues are still predominantly governmental concerns in many countries, or at least a concern in the discussions between governments and university leaders. They rarely come 'down to earth'. This may be one of the reasons why our survey found that governance modernisation was so rarely addressed by Structural Measures. In total, the survey identified 33 projects which – directly or indirectly – addressed elements of governance modernisation, mainly at universities. Excellent proof that this issue cannot be limited to universities' leaderships only can be given by the project '*Implementation of Students' Parliament in Serbia*'. Governance issues were also partly elaborated within other clusters analysed within this chapter, e.g. in relation to institutional and national higher education reforms, quality assurance, lifelong learning etc.

The project **T044B05** (*University Fundraising in Ukraine*) differs from other projects in its particular aim to contribute to the sharpened financial situation of Higher Education Institutions in the country. Project partners were eight institutions (not all of them universities) from Ukraine and two from Germany and Spain. The main outcomes were an analysis of the experience from the EU, the elaboration of general recommendations and the creation of Fund Raising Units at Ukrainian universities. Within the project, a database of fundraising opportunities was also created. The results were broadly disseminated and can be seen as an important contribution to strengthening Ukrainian universities' sustainability.

4.3 Reforms at university level

It is not always easy to separate institutional, national, European and international aspects of higher education reforms; they are very interlinked. In the projects monitored in the survey, typical examples can be found in human resource development: staff development at universities or seminars on university reform processes for senior academic staff in relation to curriculum development, learning outcome-based study programmes, employability geared curricula, etc. More 'strict' examples can be found in projects aiming at developing internal constituents, e.g. new departments, faculties or units as e.g. media centres and libraries.

4.4 National higher education reforms

Some of the Structural Measures simply aimed at promoting the Bologna Process or some of its elements at national level by organising events, study visits and similar opportunities. The other dimension was to develop national guidelines or recommendations connected to specific reform issues, such as ECTS. Some projects aimed at developing and implementing national reforms by developing policies or draft strategies that were then adopted either by national authorities or higher education institutions. A large number of projects aimed at national reforms in one way or another. A particularly interesting finding is that projects aiming at national reform are

significantly more common in Bologna non-signatory countries, particularly in the MEDA region.

4.5 Promotion of the Bologna Process

Bologna promotion in Structural Measures was identified more frequently in Bologna countries; yet, this does not mean that these aspects were neglected in the non-Bologna countries. Indirectly, the Bologna promotion aspects are probably the most frequent ones in Tempus Structural Measures: in one way or another, the Bologna Process is a visible reference when institutional or national reforms are being discussed between project partners. The largest cluster within this category belongs to the projects aiming at the promotion of Bologna on a national level. In the MEDA group, Bologna promotion is more visible at university than at national level. Often, projects in this cluster aim at supporting 'national teams of Bologna Promoters' including outside Bologna countries, e.g. in Kyrgyzstan.

A good example of interest in and the impact of the Bologna Process in Central Asia is the project **T012B04** (*Creating National Information Centres about the Bologna Process in the Kyrgyz Republic*). This was a joint project between the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science, 11 universities and other institutions and 2 universities from the EU (Pisa and Ghent). The main aim was to assist Kyrgyz higher education in obtaining detailed information on the Process in general, but it was also closely connected to the Tuning project, 'the EU universities contribution to the Bologna Process'. Among the main achievements of the project six newly established centres should be mentioned. Five national Tuning groups were formed within the project (Business Management, Economics, Ecology, Mathematics and Tourism) to exercise and implement the Tuning methodology within Kyrgyz higher education institutions. The project website (http://www.bolognakg.net/) contains a vast amount of information on Bologna (translated into Russian). This project was followed up by a new one: *Extending Centres on the Bologna Process and supporting Tuning Teams in the Kyrgyz Republic* (**T057A06**). Both projects combined represent a kind of a 'flagship project' with regard to the promotion of the Bologna Process in Central Asia.

4.6 Implementing a new degree structure

The degree structure is the pivotal element of the modern European higher education reforms and is also the crown of many other reform elements included in reform ideas based on the Bologna Process. Flexibility, comparability, compatibility, employability, learning outcomes and student workload are only a few of the concepts that can be found in the discourses related to the Bologna degree structure. Indeed, the issue is broad and comprehensive and cannot easily be dealt with in just a year of project life.

A statistical data analysis suggested that projects dealing with the degree structure were more or less concentrated in those countries that had joined the Bologna Process. Just slightly more interest can be observed in Central Asia, perhaps due to the bonds with the former Soviet Union countries that are intensively implementing the Bologna reforms. The discussion on the structure of study is often limited to single-subject areas. As for the thematic networks or the Tuning project, it is possible to trace a tendency to organise separate projects by professional fields. In some cases, the issue of degree structure was

of core importance in the lifelong learning projects, which confirms the complex nature and broad range of the reform elements.

4.7 Implementing ECTS and the Diploma Supplement

Implementation of the *European Credit Transfer System* has been one of the popular themes of the Tempus projects. It seems the implementation of ECTS is relatively clear and tangible, which makes it a handy issue to bring up in a Tempus project. It is particularly true in the countries of the Western Balkans that joined the Bologna Process at an early stage. On the other hand, in MEDA countries, the key Bologna Process tool appears rarely as a separate implementation issue. ECTS elements are also clearly emphasised in the projects dealing with curricular reform. Yet, the *Diploma Supplement* (DS) is a missing area in the Structural Measures.

A positive contribution to the sustainability of the ECTS projects is the trained administrative or teaching staff who are appointed by institutions to assist in implementing the credit system. It appears beneficial to have guidebooks – e.g. *Tuning* ones – in the local language and adjusted to the local specificities. Unfortunately, there is a scarce record of student activists participating and a rather poor focus on raising awareness among the larger student body. It seems that there is little consideration of the fact that the student-workload-centred approach is a relatively revolutionary concept and that it therefore requires considerable effort in order to bring it closer to university stakeholders, especially the students. Even less weight is put on the subsequent monitoring of the adequacy of the attributed ECTS points. This could be interpreted as an unfinished implementation since there is no guarantee that a programme is equipped with the ECTS until the continuous monitoring and adjusting mechanisms are in place. A lot of work for the future!

4.8 Concerns for quality

We already know that *quality assurance* is the most popular area in the Structural Measures projects. On one hand, there are projects that take into account relatively narrow aspects of quality assurance (such as updating questionnaires for internal quality assurance or implementing software for management of external quality assurance); on the other hand, there are also projects that have a much broader scope (e.g. how to set up a national external quality assurance system). These different approaches are understandable since countries and their national contexts are so different from each other, and the topic is so broad that one can choose whichever element to work on.

In addition, there are projects that are more informative in nature (such as informing the stakeholders of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*); projects that set up concrete national quality assurance systems or projects that deal with quality assurance standards for teaching and learning environment in one field of study. In Moldova, for instance, 'Quality Assurance Centres' were established at participating universities. We can also find projects that are closely connected to some other elements of the European Higher Education Area such as the issues of recognition that are based on well-established quality assurance systems.

The projects **C011B05** and **C021A06** performed in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are illustrative examples of a broad and a narrow approach in a national system both resulting in well measurable and important outcomes. The first project (*Quality Assurance and Accreditation System Network*) dealt with the national external quality assurance system. Institutions and national authorities participated as partners in the project. It resulted in a newly developed methodology for external reviews that is compliant with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance; in renewed structures, standards and work of the national agency as well as in application for ENQA membership and in appropriate ICT support. The second project dealt with upgrading of the quality assurance system in one institution – the University of Bitola; thus, it was narrower in its scope. The centre for teaching and learning was established as a result of the project and contributed to the introduction of a new learning environment and methods at the university (see www.uklo.edu.mk/quality).

4.9 Qualification frameworks and the issue of employability

The issue of *employability* was tackled in many Structural Measures as a side issue. This topic is favoured by those countries with relatively short experience in the Bologna Process or not at all involved in the Process. On the other hand, most projects tackling the *qualification framework and employability* were carried out with the participation of the Tempus partner countries that are at the same time Bologna signatory countries. Some projects were also carried out with partner institutions from the MEDA region. There was only one project involving non-Bologna signatory countries in the TACIS region dealing with the qualification framework.

The qualification framework is an advanced instrument proposed by the Bologna Process. However, only a few higher education systems in Europe already contain a developed and functioning qualification framework. It is therefore understandable that this issue was not a highly popular one amongst the examined projects. On one hand, it seems that the qualification framework is considered as an advanced and complex instrument which needs a thorough discussion and the implementation of other reforms first; there is little experience with this element in EU countries and therefore no proper capacity to contribute with experience and good practice examples in projects with Tempus partner countries. A lot of discussions and the inclusion of external stakeholders also proved vital for the success of projects in this field. The relevance of university and professional education to the labour market appears to be a common concern of the partner countries. Quite often, the projects that addressed the issue of employability were devoted to one professional field only.

4.10 Lifelong Learning

Even though the issue of lifelong learning is dominating national policy agendas, there have been relatively few cases of projects focusing frontally on this area. This issue was mainly dealt with in the following countries: Russia, Moldova, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. When analysing individual projects, it was noticed that most of them brought concrete changes and results, such as adopted legislative changes or study cycle implementation and not solely soft skills such as training seminars or capacity-building. Some projects proved to be interesting examples of good co-operation between various stakeholders as well. They would need wider dissemination.

4.11 Recognition issues

Recognition was one of the earliest policy issues addressed in the recent internationalisation processes in higher education. It is the basis of mobility and international co-operation in higher education. A legally binding international document was signed in 1997 to simplify the procedures and bring common grounds to the recognition of qualifications in European region. Therefore it has been an advantage of the countries that have been involved in the process of implementing the contents of the so-called *Lisbon Recognition Convention* to modernise the recognition practice in their system. The Bologna Process took over the principles agreed upon in the *Convention,* but not all of the Tempus partner countries have been involved in either the *Convention* or the Bologna Process. Seemingly, the recognition of qualifications has not been a popular issue for the reviewed set of Tempus projects. Nevertheless, there were also some good cases elaborated in this area.

> The project **M002B03** (*Network for recognition of qualifications*) is an illustrative example of a recognition-focused project based on the principles of the Lisbon recognition Convention of 1997. The activities brought about a thorough reflection on the recognition procedures in the national settings of Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The old recognition mechanisms of a detailed comparison of the curricular components were analysed and a shift towards recognition based on competencies and acquired knowledge was encouraged. The international recognition in the Mediterranean area is shifting towards the recognition of diplomas 'unless substantial difference in qualifications is proved'. The project took inspiration from the European experience of organising information offices and the recognition network (ENIC/NARIC network). An action plan for a similar solution was developed in Morocco, Algeria and Egypt. It has also been promoted through UNESCO (MERIC network).

4.12 Mobility

At first glance one can assume that mobility enjoyed quite some attention in the Tempus projects; however, mobility was surprisingly not much of an interesting issue to deal with. This fact is particularly interesting since mobility is almost the highest priority of most countries and as laics would put it, 'a goal of the Bologna Process'. Obviously this issue is more complex when trying to deal with it in practice. An interesting fact is that a large majority of projects dealing with mobility as (one of) the main theme(s) was held in the Bologna signatory countries and MEDA (the Maghreb region), while in Central Asia and in the Mashrek region this issue was not tackled at all, except in Jordan.

Mobility is chiefly dealt with in connection to other topics; thus, the issue of mobility is rarely addressed on its own. Most commonly it is connected to the overall promotion of the Bologna Process. In Jordan, the participating institutions developed a training course for international officers at the university. In some other cases, a manual and reference book were developed. Sometimes it was connected to the issue of quality assurance, which is logical since such systems are a prerequisite for mobility and sometimes one element can hardly exist without another. There was only a small number of projects that dealt with recognition issues and the qualification framework as grounds for mobility, which is surprising. One would have expected more projects like these.

4.13 University-Enterprise co-operation

Even though the issue of the relationship between industry and higher education is also dominating the policy agenda of many countries, there were only a few cases of projects that focused exclusively on this area. Considerable attention to the labour market and university-enterprise co-operation was paid in projects where the primary issue was lifelong learning or the employability of graduates. Another pattern that can be detected is that the relationship between the needs of enterprises and universities is more emphasised in countries that are less integrated in the European reform processes, e.g. MEDA and Central Asian countries.

However, the relevance of higher education for the world of business and employment appears to be one of the biggest concerns of public authorities of countries in the European neighbourhood. It seems there is a limited responsiveness of higher education institutions regarding this issue. As a positive sign, it should be mentioned that projects which focused on a single professional field and related mainly to the curricular reform usually arose from a specific need of the local labour market and industry. The active encouragement of the government given to segments of public employers to co-operate more closely with universities might be a good icebreaker for the private sector to engage in similar projects.

5. Instead of a conclusion: co-operation in future

At the conclusion it is worth addressing one additional aspect. It was already mentioned that the Tempus III Structural Measures were analysed with regard to their *potential to build international contacts*. In addition to the statistical findings it seems that here is the right place to provide some illustrations and observe the Structural Measures as real support for international co-operation: not only between institutions in EU member states and partner countries but also between the partner countries themselves.

Tempus projects are by definition international co-operative projects. Yet, the whole *potential of Structural Measures* – in particular mutual learning and the exchange of good practices – cannot be activated only in a framework of three to four countries which meet and work on an individual project. The survey identified interesting cases where a larger group of EU and partner countries were working together. This mode of co-operation obviously brings even higher added value.

When several countries of a region join in a common project with a few EU countries, key questions can be addressed at a much higher 'critical mass' and outcomes may be richer in their contents and dimensions. There is extra value added in such cases: *the advantage of cross-border regional co-operation as a potential for better mutual understanding, experiencing common cultural values* etc. It seems that some of the Tempus III Structural Measures have really built broad arenas where this value added has been produced and disseminated.

This is even more important when issues related to young people are discussed. Let us conclude with the project *Student Mobility in the European Higher Education Area 2010* (C003Z04) which brought together participants from the largest possible circle of European countries, 33 of them. Almost all EU member states were represented (except

Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Luxemburg and Estonia), all CARDS-Bologna countries as well as Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine from the TACIS-Bologna group. In addition, Romania (not yet an EU member state at the time) and Norway were also represented. This was a future-oriented project. And Tempus clearly does have a future!