

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (hereafter named the University and abbreviated UKIM). EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated the University in 2003, with the report submitted to the University in November 2003. In 2008 the University requested that IEP carries out a follow-up evaluation, the report of which was submitted in May 2008.

In 2010, IEP was approached by the World Bank in the context of its Institutional Evaluation Programme to contribute higher education capacity-building in the Balkan region and asked to carry out two institutional evaluations, one of them being at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The university wanted a follow up.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme and follow-up evaluation process

The IEP is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture.

In line with the EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the institution itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution submits a self-evaluation report that describes its progress since the original evaluation and which might also indicate barriers that might be hindering progress.

The follow-up evaluation is an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities. As such a follow-up evaluation already took place at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in 2008, the Evaluation team decided, in agreement with the World Bank and the University, instead of following up the implementation of previous recommendations in a systematic way, to focus on providing recommendations taking into account how the institution evolved since 2008, especially in the fields of: a. The integration of faculties into one university; b. The implementation of the ECTS system and the Bologna reform; c. Internationalisation.

As for the original evaluation, the follow-up process is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 The Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and the national context

UKIM is by far the largest university in the Republic of Macedonia¹, with over 31 000 students enrolled for the academic year 2010-2011.

This figure represents a fall of about 5,000 students compared with 2006-2007. In appendix 3 of the SER it is suggested that the main reasons for the fall are the increase in the number of private higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country and the transfer of two UKIM faculties to a new State University in Stip. More recently, student numbers have increased; the 2010-11 total being some 4% greater than the previous year while first year enrolments increased by 18% over the previous year. The SER indicates that the university needs to investigate the factors that contributed to the increase.

At national level there seems to be a greater interest on the part of high school graduates to pursue a university education because the high unemployment rate makes it difficult for them to find employment. Another relevant factor is that there are not as yet within the Macedonian higher education attractive alternatives to universities such as vocational schools or polytechnics.

The Macedonian higher education sector now consists of more institutions than in 2003: instead of three state universities, there are now four (UKIM, St. Clement of Ohrid in Bitola, the State University in Tetovo, and the Goce Delcev State University in Stip), and private HEIs have been developing in recent years. The South East European University, previously considered as the largest private institution, now also receives public support. The increased number of institutions had an impact on funding: each institution, and reportedly especially UKIM as the largest public one, has seen its share in public funds decrease as the overall state funding for higher education has not significantly increased during the same period of time.

UKIM now comprises twenty-three faculties and five institutes, plus one faculty (the St. Clement of Ohrid Faculty of Theology in Skopje) and four public scientific institutes considered as affiliated to UKIM.

The Republic of Macedonia formally joined the Bologna process in 2003. In 2008, the IEP follow-up report emphasized how the 2008 law on higher education will have a major impact on HEIs across the country, especially in defining autonomous higher education institutions (applicable to all legally established institutions, whether public or private), and in granting the capacity of legal personality to the university itself, while the legal functioning of its units would derive from the authorisations determined by the University Senate. This change proved to be a major one for UKIM, given the high level of independence enjoyed by its faculties throughout the history of the University. The impact of the so-called integration process at UKIM will be further developed in section 2 of this report.

¹ For the purpose of this report and for the sake of consistency with the two previous IEP reports, the Team has chosen to use "Republic of Macedonia" to refer to what is also known as the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM).

Since IEP visited the institution in 2008, there have been eight amendments to the Macedonian law on higher education, and a new law was finally adopted in February 2011. Its main features are:

1. Precise criteria for assessing students and professors, with a scale of corrective measures for the latter in case of no compliance;
2. New doctoral regulations, especially for supervising doctoral candidates, with minimum criteria set for staff to act as supervisors and a maximum number of candidates per supervisor;
3. Enforcement of the higher education quality assessment and assurance system, in particular through the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board.

The general view expressed during the site visit is that Macedonian HEIs have been operating under a considerable level of uncertainty over the past three years, as they have been obliged to adapt to new and newer regulation changes regularly and with a rapid pace. The dominant impression among students interviewed, however, was favourable towards the new law, which is seen to be a positive step towards further improvement in quality of teaching.

1.3 The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a self-evaluation committee of nine members from various faculties (including five professors, one assistant professor and three students), chaired by Professor Svetlana Petkovska-Onchevska.

The self-evaluation process took place between November 2010 and March 2011, during a busy period for the institution, and although there is no doubt that the process was taken seriously by the University, the Evaluation Team's first impression was that the process would have been of greater benefit to the university, had a more reflective and self-critical approach been taken. However, the self-evaluation report (hereafter SER) and its appendices provided the Team with valuable explanations on the complexity of the change processes that had taken place since the last IEP evaluation.

1.4 The Evaluation team

The University's self-evaluation report along with the appendices was sent to the Evaluation team in March 2011. The site visit of the Team to Ss. Cyril and Methodius University took place on 11-14 April 2011.

The Evaluation team (hereafter the Team) consisted of:

- Henrik Toft Jensen, team chair, former Rector, University of Roskilde, Denmark
- Richard Lewis, former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Open University, United Kingdom
- Alina Gavra, student, West University of Timisoara, Romania
- Thérèse Zhang Pulkowski, team coordinator, Programme Manager, EUA, Belgium

The Team would like to thank the Rector, Professor Velimir Stojkovski, for having initiated this evaluation as well as for the continued trust granted to IEP. The Vice-Rector, Professor Elena Dumova-Jovanoska, who acted as the contact person for this evaluation, should be thanked for her commitment and dynamic liaison work, as well as her colleagues Ms Katerina Petreska, Mr Zoran Kordoski, Ms Maja Anastasova Hristova and Ms Kostadina Mokrova, who provided all facilities to ensure a smooth and pleasant visit. The Team also would like to thank the members of the self-evaluation committee for their work, and all members of the university community who agreed to participate in interviews and thus contributed to this evaluation. Finally, the Team is thankful to Mr Gordan Tanaskov, the interpreter, for his contribution during the meetings as well as during the oral presentation of the evaluation findings.

2. Governance and strategic planning

2.1. The integration process

The higher education law of 2008 took away the legal entity status from the faculties and transferred it to the University as a single legal entity. This regulatory change had a major impact on the functioning of UKIM, and the University undertook a significant process, known as “integration process”, for harmonising the functions and areas of activities across the whole institution. The faculties’ work is now submitted to regulations that codify their relations within the University and their functioning in accordance to the Statute of the University. The regulations were adopted by the University Senate and approved by the national Parliament in 2008. The full implementation of the integration also involved new regulations related to a new organisational structure (where central governing bodies and management units have been reinforced), changes in academic procedures, and a joint financial model.

The complexity of such a change process should not be underestimated, given the high level of independence previously enjoyed by the faculties. The SER also underlined additional constraints posed by the national legislative environment, such as the lack of additional public funding for supporting the integration.

Following the organisational restructuring under the integration scheme, the highest governing body of the University is the Senate, which is presided over by the Rector. Equally important in terms of governance is the Rector’s Board – which consists of the Rector, the Vice-rectors, the Faculty Deans, and the Directors of the subunits, the Academic Councils, commissions and other bodies.

The university is to be commended for the level of student involvement in its governance. There are ten student members of the Senate (18% of the total) while 10% of faculty committees are students who are also well represented in all major bodies such as self-evaluation committees. An independent student union was created in 1991, and the law restructured it as a student parliament in 2008.

Under the joint financial model, all faculties (which, beside the receipt public funding, may generate additional resources through the setting of higher tuition fees, services provided to the society and income from publications) must assign 5% of their additional income to the University – which means that those faculties with greater opportunities make a larger contribution to the University’s central resources. The way in which these additional resources are used is a matter for the Senate to decide. It may be used to improving facilities, such as the repair and maintenance of buildings of those faculties with more limited resources, or increase opportunities at University level (for instance, for allowing more students and staff to attend international conferences or seminars). These resources cannot be used to increase the salaries of academic staff, which must be generated through public funds assigned for this purpose supplemented, up to a limit, by the faculty’s own funds.

The Team would like to praise the progress the University has made, and the planning underpinning these changes. Whilst increased responsibilities were allocated to the institutional leadership (mostly, the University Senate, the Rector and the Rector's Board), an appropriate level of autonomy has been retained at faculty level for key areas such as conducting research projects, shaping teaching processes, deciding on student exchanges or managing the faculty's own financial resources. This balance between the central and faculty levels was essential to the success of the integration process, and it seems that UKIM has succeeded in managing the "paradigm shift" in this regard. The new financial model has also achieved a good level of consensus across the University. Although there had been some scepticism at faculty level at the beginning of the process, the feedback was unanimously positive in that the integration process is perceived as being of real added value for the faculties:

- Harmonised procedures for teaching and learning has increased the transparency of academic activities and improved academic record keeping. These are widely perceived to have beneficial for the quality and modernisation of teaching;
- It helped improve teaching by instituting comparable processes (e.g. assessment of professors);
- It initiated projects that would not have been possible to undertake by single faculties or units;
- A number of activities such publishing and IT benefited greatly by being managed at institutional level;
- And, last but not least, the integration process is geared towards building up and reinforcing a University identity, which faculties see as more and more helpful in promoting their own work outside the institution. The number of international projects has increased since the change, and the image of one single and strong University identity was also said to be beneficial in competing with private HEIs.

Furthermore, the Team was positively impressed by the thoughtful views expressed by the senior administrators at central level. The commitment of the staff engaged at institutional level is of utmost importance in the framework of the integration process, and the current situation appeared to the Team as promising, although further effort should currently be devoted to reinforcing the staff in place.

The Team also would like to underline the challenges observed for this process, for which further attention should be paid:

- Increased paperwork and workload related to procedures at faculty level;
- Some faculties (e.g. medicine), have because of their specific features, to devote more effort and find more creative ways in order to fit into the integration process;
- There appears to be an increasing number of faculties and institutes within the University whose relevance to the overall goals of UKIM is in decline. There have been some mergers since the last IEP visit but a programme of further mergers can only be beneficial to the University in terms of cost-efficiency. This matter is regulated by law and discussions are ongoing with the Ministry. The Team would recommend the University to explore **further possibilities for merging institutes with related faculties**

as well as **encouraging increased cooperation between entities with similar scopes** (e.g. increase collaboration between teachers and researchers of related disciplines based in different faculties, synergies in research or internationalisation projects, etc.);

- Reinforcing the administrative staff will be needed in the near future, in order to address properly the challenges ahead: this means an increase in human resources' capacity, both quantitatively and qualitatively (through appropriate training, etc.);
- In order to use fully the possibilities offered at University level, **trans-faculty learning opportunities** could be further developed into study programmes including a major and a minor, or even double degrees. The Team will also address this topic in section 3.1 of this report.

2.2. The University's strategic planning

The Team learnt that the period of the most recent strategic plan for the institution ended in December 2010. The University Senate, which is the highest decision making body at institutional level, did elaborate a strategic plan for 2011-2018, which was planned to be adopted in January 2011. But as the new law on higher education was adopted in February 2011, the strategic plan is now on hold because of uncertainties surrounding the upcoming by-law for higher education.

Whereas the Team understands that the many changes occurred at national level in the last three years have created a "wait-and-see" attitude towards any kind of middle or long-term planning, it still sees this situation as not optimal, because it hinders the possibility of the institution creating and further implementing an action plan related to its strategic planning. The Team would therefore recommend that the University Senate **adopts the strategic plan** for the upcoming years taking into account the most recent changes, prepares contingency plans to address alternative management scenarios, should they arise, and arrange any necessary amendments over time and as the regulatory situation evolves.

2.3. Quality assurance

The responsibility for quality assurance (QA) is at faculty level. The University does not have an integrated approach to QA at institutional level. The responsibility for QA is part of the autonomy of the faculties, which therefore handle it separately. Results from all faculties' self-evaluations are consolidated at the University level and submitted to the University Senate for examination. In order to reach consistency across faculties, guidelines for conducting the self-evaluations were issued at the institutional level for the whole University. These guidelines date back to 2002; the Team believes that new guidelines should be drafted in the near future. Members of the faculties who participate to the self-evaluations receive training. Every four years, these results also contribute to the external evaluation report that is issued by an independent institute at national level.

In addition to these self-evaluation processes, some faculties have other procedures such as QA for service to society. Those, again, vary from faculty to faculty according to their specific profiles.

In addition, the Team was informed that data collection and information systems can greatly vary by faculty. This constitutes a serious issue to address in the near future, should the University wish to further develop any kind of fact-based strategic planning, where the situation would be monitored and future needs anticipated. The self-evaluation committee also underlined this feature as the biggest challenge as regards QA tools.

The Team would also like to highlight positive features and promising developments. There is a general agreement that student surveys have become common practice. Students also notice that changes are made subsequent to their feedback, even if there is no official communication on the further steps that the deans intend to undertake. Students usually receive an average of 12 surveys to fill in per year (2 per year per subject, one of those being for the professor and the other for the teaching assistant – each of them with approx. 5 questions). With regard to data collection, a call for collecting electronic record for all faculties and all students is ongoing. This is a first step towards a centralised structure for data collection at University level.

The Team would recommend the following for enhancing the QA framework at UKIM:

- Build a **comprehensive central QA policy and framework** without removing the responsibility of the faculties, by introducing a “support centre” at University level;
- **Support alumni organisations and further develop graduate tracking** as a QA activity across the University;
- Further reflect and develop a **QA policy for research** (beyond the number of publications and similar quantitative indicators) **and service to society**. QA for research, in particular, should be taken seriously at institutional level with regard to the new doctoral regulations to be enforced for, and by, the whole University (and not by faculty) – see also section 3.3 of this report;
- Use of **different types of external evaluators** as part of the QA processes;
- **Systematic data collection of key performance indicators** (KPIs), especially those of relevance to the University management and QA. The Team would emphasise in this regard the importance of avoiding unnecessary paperwork and procedures for staff members: KPIs should be thought through so as to include what the institution needs to know in order to carry out strategic planning and activities of quality (as opposed to what would be nice to know). Again, this emphasises the need for strategic planning in QA, in accordance to short, middle and long-term objecting regarding quality enhancement in UKIM.

3. Academic life

3.1. ECTS and the Bologna process

In 2008, the principles from the Bologna reform in Republic of Macedonia were applied to all programmes, and all of them were subsequently re-accredited. At UKIM, the ECTS system is implemented at the level of the whole University. There is one ECTS coordinator per faculty, whose task is to deal with all issued relating to credit accumulation, transfer and so on. In addition, related to this change, students can now choose options in another faculty, up to a certain percentage of total credits granted by a study programme. However, this does not mean that the students will graduate with major and minor subjects as such. Further inter-faculty exchanges could be fostered in this regard, with the aim of introducing, for example, inter-faculty programmes or double degrees.

The Team found unequal understanding across the University as of what learning outcomes actually are, and how they could help improving teaching and learning processes. Yet, a better understanding would greatly help the academic staff and the students to further explore the concept of student-centred learning, as well as to create possibilities of cross-faculty and inter-institutional exchanges. Likewise, the Team found the implementation of provisions related to a qualification framework still work in progress. Faculties, for instance, should try to **describe their education in terms of learning outcomes, competences, and the appropriate qualification framework**.

As regards the remaining issues related to the implementation of the Bologna principles, the Team would recommend that an initial step should be to clarify what the ECTS and the Bologna process actually represent. In many European countries, the process has been used by governments to introduce and/or achieve reforms that are not really related to Bologna.

3.2. Modernisation of teaching and student involvement

The new regulations related to the appointment of academic staff, as well as new regulations on teaching in general (including transparency in student assessment), were introduced in the aftermaths of the integration, and their outcomes were welcomed by the students as an improvement in teaching methods as well as a step towards increased transparency and quality. Smaller class groups and a harmonised assessment procedure for teachers, in particular, were pinpointed as positive changes, although students still perceive that “barriers” exist between some teachers and their students.

The student parliament was also positive about additional changes related to the modernisation of teaching:

- One was the introduction of a student ombudsman at University level, with a deputy in each faculty: before 2009, the ombudsman was a professor. Since then, the student parliament launched a call for selecting an ombudsman with a certain number of criteria (among others, being a UKIM student in law). The selected ombudsman is nominated by

the University Senate for two years. Since a student has taken this role, the number of cases I dealt with increased from 22 cases in 6 years to 75 cases in one year, illustrating a better connection in solving issues and potential conflicts.

- The corruption present at UKIM, and especially as regards student assessment (as noticed by the IEP Team in 2003), may well, according to students and staff, have been eliminated. At most, there remains the danger of too close a relationship (through family or other connections) between assessors and students. These cases usually find *ad hoc* solutions at faculty level.

The Team would like to recommend the following regarding the modernisation of teaching:

- Find ways to **remove the student view of “barriers”** between teachers and students;
- **Modernise teaching methods**, possibly by using incentives provided by the Bologna process (see also recommendations under section 3.1. above). Students should be aware however that student-centred learning requires commitment and action from both parties: teachers and students;
- Develop a **more explicit approach to staff development**, including training programmes and schemes.

3.3. Regulations for doctorates

The new law of 2011 will introduce new regulations related to doctoral studies. In particular, criteria for supervising a doctoral candidate will be set by law, with academic requirements to be fulfilled in order to qualify as a supervisor. The new law, which is expected to be implemented in 2015, will present major challenges for the University, one of them being the possible shortage of academic staff entitled to supervise students under the new criteria. In addition, the ageing academic staff is a continuing cause of concern, already underlined by the first IEP report in 2003². The problem could be exacerbated in that it will take some time for newly appointed staff to satisfy the academic criteria³ and because of the limit, three, of doctoral candidates that can be assigned to a supervisor. It will therefore be a real challenge for UKIM to find appropriate academic staff for ensuring the supervision of doctoral cohorts, should they further grow. The Team noticed that the University already took measures by encouraging PhD candidates to undertake doctorates under joint supervision, with the main supervisor based in a foreign university. However, remedying to shortages of academic staff in-house should include more strategic options.

Doctoral studies are the first area where the University as a whole acts as a single entity under an integrated scheme. A new Board for Doctoral Studies was put in place, which is composed by the Vice-rector for Teaching (chair), the Vice-rector for Research, and five academic staff

² According to the SER 2010-2011, there are almost no academic staff members younger than 35, and over 75% of professors are over 45 years of age, with great discrepancies across faculties.

³ According to art. 7 of the new law, a supervisor for doctoral thesis shall have at least six published reviewed scientific and research papers in international scientific journals or international scientific publications, of which at least two papers in international journals with impact factor, in a given field, in the last five years.

members from various disciplines, and senior research associates and research counsellors (of which at least one must come from the research institutes). The Board discussed various issues, including the sharing of responsibilities at each level (i.e. transferrable skills education to be organised by the University and disciplinary and research skills to be organised by faculties) and the question of fees and funding for doctoral candidates. Following a number of discussions organised at University level, there seems to be a consensus that a UKIM School of Doctoral Studies would be the best model for organising doctoral studies.

The University is now facing a period of considerable uncertainty regarding doctoral programmes. The new law has introduced a new model for doctoral studies and while the Senate approved in June 2010 a number of new programmes based on the new model, they have, because of legal uncertainties, not yet been put into effect. Meanwhile the University is continuing to operate the old model, in accordance with the new higher education law, which allows so until December 2011.

In order to foster the development of doctoral studies, the Team feels that, despite legislative uncertainties, the University needs to decide how best to respond quickly to new demands and changing circumstances. The Team would recommend that:

- The University puts the two models (new programmes and old model) in place and promotes the new one as forward-looking with regard to international and European trends as well as offering better possibilities for graduates;
- The University **plans ahead its PhD education programme** taking into account subjects, estimation of the number of future candidates interested by the new programmes, living expenditures including potential incomes from research projects and need analysis for sustainability. It should also prepare contingency plans taking into account the current situation, several possible schemes of evolution and worst case scenarios.

4. Mobility and internationalisation

4.1. Mobility of staff and students

Mobility schemes are based on available funding arrangements for students and staff in which UKIM participates, namely:

- the BASILEUS (Balkan Academic Scheme for the Internationalisation of Learning together with EU Universities) programme, coordinated by Ghent University under Erasmus Mundus. BASILEUS provides the most attractive grants for both students and staff
- the Joint EU-SEE programme, also funded by Erasmus Mundus
- The Erasmus mobility programme, funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus)

The Team met several Erasmus coordinators as well as the staff of the Office responsible for mobility at the University level. There is a developed system of Erasmus coordinators at faculty level, who should be praised for their commitment. Whereas the Team is aware that all mobility figures should be assessed in relation to the size of the country (and its higher education critical mass) as well as quotas given by external bodies (such as in the case of the number of Erasmus or Basileus grants available for Macedonian students), it would still like to point out that the number of exchanges seems to be very small.

Most of interviewees agree in this regard that the number of exchanges should be increased. They also generally acknowledge that mobility is being improved and that there are continuing efforts to achieve further improvement. Recognition differs from discipline to discipline, and there is a close coordination between Erasmus and ECTS coordinators based in faculties. Some students expressed their concern that credits acquired abroad are not being recognised, but most agreed that they receive the appropriate information before organising their exchange experience. Moreover, although a fair number of classes are organised in English, there is no specific language class for preparing outgoing students.

Finally, UKIM is the first Macedonian university to organise joint degrees with several other European universities in Italy, Germany, France, Sweden, and elsewhere. Teaching is provided in both places and teachers from partner institutions sometimes visit UKIM. This is confirmed by many of students interviewed, who have on occasion been taught by visiting international staff.

The Team would recommend that the University **increase the number of exchange students** by offering more courses taught in English language (in order to attract more incoming students) and further explore grant schemes (e.g. provided through donations, partnerships with the industry, multinational companies, foundations, alumni associations and public authorities). Likewise, **staff exchanges should be promoted** through grant schemes to be developed for staff, and by using the participation in staff exchanges as a factor for career promotion. More generally, mobility seems to be perceived at UKIM management level as only related to funding, whereas it also should be related to strategy and policies to be put in place at institutional level.

In particular, the University **needs to develop a plan to be implemented after the Basileus programme ends** (by 2014).

4.2. Towards an internationalisation policy

The Team commends UKIM's participation in several projects supported by European funds, which allow working at trans-national level. There is no doubt that various initiatives flourish at each level of UKIM. Faculties, or individual staff members, seem to make good use of their contacts and resources for establishing cooperation schemes that could be beneficial to their students, to staff members, as well as to the further development of UKIM (and in particular of its research activities). Good examples such as the establishment of a regional South Eastern European Centre for Law, which promotes itself as a specialised "niche" in the region and is based on trans-national expertise, should be underlined and praised. UKIM would certainly gain from **collecting examples of good practice** and organising platforms for **sharing them** at the level of the institution.

On another level, the Team would like to point out that an internationalisation policy, especially when it touches upon balancing future institutional challenges (such as in the case of joint doctorates with institutions abroad, see above section 3.3), should not be limited to mobility schemes and funding. The Team would see as useful to focus on the possibility of **envisaging the University's internationalisation policy** as an all-encompassing and horizontal feature across the institution, and going beyond the summing up of individual initiatives collected at the faculty level. Such a policy could, for instance, include an action plan based on an exhaustive analysis of needs that could be met through internationalisation, clear patterns of potential partnerships that could be realistically carried out within the framework of UKIM's current autonomy and funding schemes, mid-term and long-term goals in terms of mobility numbers, etc. Finally, an Office for Internationalisation established at institutional level would be necessary as a tool for such a strategy, as well as providing an interface between faculty initiatives (which should certainly be encouraged) and the institutional leadership.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Team would like to congratulate the University for its achievements over the past years. Changes that took place since the first IEP evaluation in 2003 were noticeable. The dynamism and commitment of all those involved in change processes within the institution should be praised.

The Team would like to encourage strongly the University to continue and further develop its forward-thinking attitude, instead of awaiting national and legislative developments and present itself as a pioneer institution, proud of its identity and able to offer forward-looking and innovative solutions in a changing environment. Communication with the external world (including the business world, future students and their families, etc.) should emphasise the contribution it can make to Macedonia and the wider regional community.