



ATHENA

University autonomy in Moldova

Analysis and roadmap

Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development Unit

European University Association

2012-2015

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Introduction

The focus of the ATHENA project, supported by the European Union's TEMPUS programme, is to contribute to the modernisation and restructuring of university governance by promoting and supporting greater university autonomy and financial sustainability in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Higher education stakeholders broadly agree on the considerable benefits and importance of university autonomy. In several declarations, the European University Association (EUA) has reaffirmed the crucial role of institutional autonomy for higher education institutions and society at large. While autonomy is not a goal in itself, it is a vital precondition for the success of Europe's universities.

It is clear that autonomy does not mean the absence of regulations. While acknowledging that there are many different models, EUA has identified the basic principles and conditions which are important for universities if they are to fulfill optimally their missions and tasks. The Autonomy Scorecard methodology was developed by EUA with the input of its collective members, the National Rectors' Conferences of 29 higher education systems in Europe, between 2009 and 2011. It offers a tool to benchmark national higher education frameworks in relation to autonomy, and enables the establishment of correlations between autonomy and other concepts, such as performance, funding, quality, access and retention (see www.university-autonomy.eu).

The scorecard has since been used in several European countries to support their higher education reform process. The scorecard methodology has thus been broadly acknowledged by the various higher education stakeholders in Europe as an adequate tool to use for reform process development. EUA is therefore making use of its unique position and expertise in the field of higher education research in Europe to the benefit of the ATHENA project.

This document is based on the work carried out in the policy analysis phase of the ATHENA process, in which the higher education systems of Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine have been assessed using the scorecard methodology during 2013-2014. It presents the results of this analysis, and as such has informed the development of the corresponding policy action plan, which goes on to identify ways in which the system can be reformed to bring about enhanced university autonomy. The analysis and the policy action plan take into account the legal changes that were introduced with the new higher education law that was adopted in October 2014 and entered into force in December 2014. In order to show the development, the analysis covers both the situation before as well as afterwards. The policy roadmap brings structured input to ongoing and future legislative reform and the related implementation process as well as for further institutional development.

University autonomy and funding

Many governments, the university sector and the European Commission have all recognised that increasing university autonomy represents a crucial step towards modernising higher education in the 21st century. EUA has monitored and analysed the development and impact of autonomy and governance reforms through a wide array of studies as well as through stakeholder debates, conferences and its Institutional Evaluation Programme. With its study, *University Autonomy in Europe II – The Scorecard* (Estermann, Nokkala, Steinel 2011), EUA has provided data on institutional autonomy, which enables university practitioners and policy makers to compare systems more effectively across Europe. It ranks and rates higher education systems according to their degree of autonomy thereby helping to improve higher education systems. Following extensive consultancy in different European Higher Education systems in the last decade, EUA is now implementing the major Tempus project ATHENA¹. This project aims to contribute to the development, reform and modernisation of higher education systems in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine. As a structural measure, it is designed to support structural reform processes and the development of strategic frameworks at the national level. ATHENA ultimately aims to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education systems in the three partner countries. It fosters the transfer of good practices in order to promote efficient and effective governance and funding reforms and tries to build the capacities of universities in the partner countries to modernise the management of financial and human resources.

Terminology

Perceptions and terminologies of institutional autonomy vary greatly across Europe, and separating the various components of autonomy to ensure that we are looking at like-for-like is a difficult process. There is a vast amount of literature on the topic, which has led to a wide range of definitions and concepts of university autonomy (see for example Clark (1998), Sporn (2001), Salmi (2007), Huisman (2007)).

The rules and conditions under which Europe's universities operate are characterised by a high degree of diversity. This variety reflects the multiple approaches to the ongoing search for a balance between autonomy and accountability in response to the demands of society and the changing understanding of public responsibility for higher education. Indeed, the relationship between the state and higher education institutions can take a variety of forms, and it should be stressed that an "ideal" or "one-size-fits-all" model does not exist. In this Policy Roadmap therefore, "institutional autonomy" refers to the constantly changing relations between the state and universities and the differing degree of control exerted by public authorities, which are dependent on particular national contexts and circumstances.

Why do universities need autonomy?

There is broad agreement between stakeholders that institutional autonomy is important for modern universities. While this notion has been empirically substantiated in various studies, it should also be noted that autonomy alone is rarely enough. Though institutional autonomy is a crucial precondition that enables universities to achieve their missions in the best possible way, other elements are equally necessary to ensure real success.

¹ <http://www.athena-tempus.eu/>

The relationship between university autonomy and performance has been widely discussed. For example, in their contribution “Higher Aspirations: an Agenda for Reforming European Universities”, Aghion et al. analyse the correlation between performance in rankings, the status of autonomy and levels of public funding. They found “that universities in high-performing countries typically enjoy some degree of autonomy, whether in hiring or in wage setting” and that “the level of budgetary autonomy and research are positively correlated” (Aghion et al. 2008: 5).

In addition, autonomy helps to improve quality standards. EUA’s Trends IV study found that “there is clear evidence that success in improving quality within institutions is directly correlated with the degree of institutional autonomy” (Reichert & Tauch 2005: 7). This correlation was confirmed by EUA’s most recent Trends VI study (Sursock & Smidt 2010).

Third, there is a link between autonomy and universities’ capacity to attract additional funding. The 2011 EUA study “Financially Sustainable Universities II: European universities diversifying income streams” found that a university’s ability to generate additional income relates to the degree of institutional autonomy granted by the regulatory framework in which it operates. This link was established for all dimensions of autonomy, including organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy. The data revealed that financial autonomy is most closely correlated with universities’ capacity to attract income from additional funding sources. Staffing autonomy, and particularly the freedom to recruit and set salary levels for academic and administrative staff, were also found to be positively linked to the degree of income diversification (Estermann & Bennetot Pruvot 2011). Finally, by mitigating the risks associated with an overdependence on any one particular funder, a diversified income structure may, in turn, contribute to the further enhancement of institutional autonomy.

It should be noted that policy makers tend to regard autonomy reforms as an important driver of university modernisation. And higher education institutions, too, consider the further improvement of university autonomy as a priority. According to EUA’s Trends VI report, 43% of university respondents viewed autonomy reform as one of the most important institutional developments in the past decade (Sursock & Smidt 2010: 18).

Scorecard methodology

The data with which the situation of Moldova is compared was provided by the National Rectors’ Conferences of 26 European countries. The scoring system used by the University Autonomy Scorecard is based on deductions. Each restriction on university autonomy was assigned a deduction value based on how restrictive a particular rule or regulation was seen to be. A score of 100% indicates full institutional autonomy; a score of 0% means that an issue is entirely regulated by an external authority. In many cases, the law grants universities a limited amount of autonomy or prescribes negotiations between universities and the government. For instance, a system in which universities may determine tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority receives a score of 60% for that indicator.

The University Autonomy Scorecard uses weighted scores. The weighting factors are based on a survey conducted among EUA’s member National Rectors’ Conferences and thus reflect the views of the university sector in Europe. The results of the survey were translated into a numerical system, which evaluates the relative importance of the indicators within each of the autonomy dimensions.

For further information on the development of the scoring methodology and the weighting system, please refer to the full report: [University Autonomy in Europe II - The Scorecard](#).

Country profile

The Moldovan higher education system consists of 34 higher education institutions, the majority of which are public. Of the 104,000 students, over 80% attend public universities. Courses typically have a duration of three-four years for a Bachelor's degree and one-two years for a Master's degree.

Key statistics (2010/2011)²

Number of students	Total	
	103,956	
	Public HEIs	Private HEIs
	84,946	18,611
Number of HEIs	Public	Private
	19	15

Public universities in Moldova currently receive a negotiated block grant from central government, though it is noted that this is due to be changed to a funding formula based on input criteria as part of the ongoing higher education reform process. Nationally, public funding represents 54% overall university income. Alongside this, 43% of income is derived from student contributions. This is principally tuition fees, which are set through negotiations between universities and public authorities. The remaining 3% is derived from other sources, of which around half comes from international public funding. Thus at a national level there is clearly a very low level of diversification of income streams.

Relative to other European systems, there is a very low level of public funding available for research activity. According to World Bank data, only 0.41% of Gross Domestic Product is invested in research and development in Moldova, falling between the two other ATHENA partner countries, Armenia (0.27%) and Ukraine (0.73%). This compares unfavourably with most Western European countries.³ The level of public investment in higher education overall is 1.2%, compared with 1.6% on average across the OECD.⁴

By comparison, data from EUA's EUDIS project on income diversification⁵ shows that on average, European universities receive almost three quarters of their funding from public sources, which guarantee a certain stability over the long term. They also tend to receive a greater proportion of their income from a variety of other sources (contractual research with industry and business, philanthropic income, research funding from international sources).

² TEMPUS Country Fiche "Higher Education in Moldova", Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), July 2012

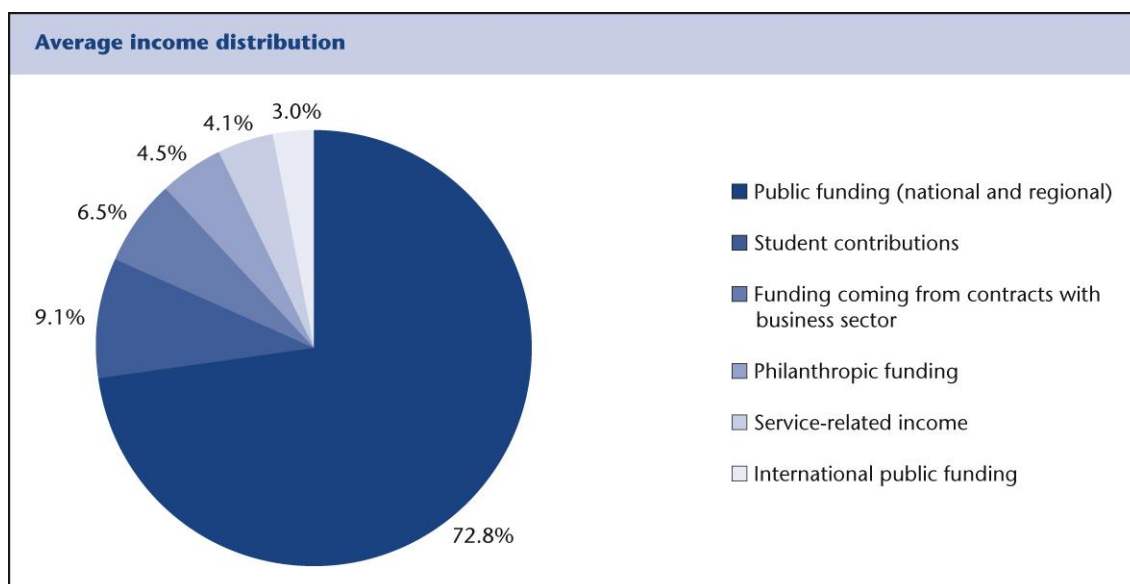
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/moldova_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf

³ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GB.XPD.RSDV.GD.ZS>

⁴ Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators, OECD, 2013

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>

⁵ <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/past-projects/governance-autonomy-and-funding/eudis.aspx>



Report structure

In Part 1, the findings of EUA's analysis of the state of autonomy in the Moldovan higher education system are presented. These are based on the regulatory framework in force in Moldova **until December 2014**. The analysis explores each of the four dimensions of autonomy addressed by EUA's Autonomy Scorecard methodology; organisation, financial, staffing and academic autonomy.

The Autonomy Scorecard ranking and comparison have then been updated in Part 2, to take into account the **new Code of Education** that was adopted in 2014. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the subsequent regulations consolidating the new legislative framework could not be analysed, while the previous scoring included other regulatory acts governing universities in Moldova. The system is indeed in a phase of transition and the way in which of the new regulatory framework is implemented in the medium term will determine effectively the level of autonomy that Moldovan universities can operate with.

Finally, Part 3 of this document highlights the priority challenges to be faced by the sector and the public authorities to further improve the regulatory framework. This action plan has been built by the ATHENA Moldovan taskforce (comprising both university leaders and Ministry representatives) on the basis of the Autonomy Scorecard and its different analytical components of autonomy. This methodology allows the taskforce to identify possible actions to tackle these priority challenges. This is complemented by EUA's recommendations on how to conduct and further pursue the reform process.

Part One: ATHENA Analysis (2013-14)

Organisational autonomy

Analysis⁶

The organisational autonomy of Moldovan universities is limited in a wide number of aspects.

There is noticeable government influence both at the beginning and end of the selection process of the university's executive head. When the position becomes available, a selection committee is established by the Ministry of Education. This committee normally consists of four members of staff from the university and one ministry official, and it is responsible for drafting and circulating the job advert and undertaking an eligibility check of all the applications. A list of eligible candidates is then passed to the university's main governing body (the senate). The senate votes on its preferred candidates, but its choice must subsequently be approved by the government. The various mandatory eligibility requirements constrain the process even further: candidates must be under 60, hold an academic position with 10 years' experience, and hold a doctoral degree. Moreover, the law states that rectors may only serve a five-year term, renewable once. There are a certain number of universities linked to other government ministries which follow a separate process for selecting their rector, whereby a candidate is selected directly by the minister responsible. Taken together, it is clear that universities' capacity to decide on their own leadership is minimal. A further limitation is that the decision to dismiss a rector must be approved by the government.

More positively, the administration of universities is executed in accordance with their charter which is adopted and amended by the senate. The senate may invite external members in accordance with their charter, but these members may not vote. In practice, it is usually the case that representatives of the government and ministry sit on university senates. However, the university senate's control over academic structures is restricted, as government guidelines set out thresholds for what may or may not be considered as an academic unit. These relate to the number of academic staff, their qualifications and student numbers.

Universities are not permitted to establish their own legal entities, in accordance with their 'non-profit' legal status, though they may create 'auxiliary' units such as post-secondary education colleges.

⁶ Analysis of the regulatory framework in force until December 2014.

European comparison

Rank	System	Score
1	UK	100%
2	Denmark	94%
3	Finland	93%
4	Estonia	87%
5	North Rhine-Westphalia	84%
6	Ireland	81%
7	Portugal	80%
8	Austria	78%
	Hesse	78%
	Norway	78%
11	Flanders	76%
12	Lithuania	75%
13	Netherlands	69%
14	Poland	67%
15	Latvia	61%
16	Brandenburg	60%
17	France	59%
	Hungary	59%
19	Italy	56%
20	Sweden	55%
	Spain	55%
	Switzerland	55%
23	Czech Republic	54%
24	Cyprus	50%
25	Iceland	49%
26	Slovakia	45%
27	Greece	43%
28	MOLDOVA	42%
29	Turkey	33%
30	Luxembourg	31%

For organisational autonomy, Moldova ranks at the bottom of the “medium-low” cluster of systems, scoring between 60% and 41%.

In comparison with most other systems, the Moldovan higher education sector is subject to a high level of government interference in organisational matters. Given that the selection of the rector is so tightly controlled by the government, institutional leadership has an indelible link to the public authorities. This has an adverse effect on the autonomy score. Likewise, the inability of universities to establish their own legal entities prevents them from pursuing independent commercial and knowledge-transfer strategies. While it is positive that university senates may include external

members, these members should be able to vote; other systems where external members have been involved in governing bodies for several years have a very positive experience of the impact that this practice has on institutional development. In systems where this practice is most developed, external members tend to be selected in a strategic way, often through search committees. Once selected, these external members also get a broad training to get accustomed to the specificities of the academic environment.

European trends in organisational autonomy

Although higher education institutions in Europe almost invariably operate in the context of an external regulatory framework, the extent and detail of these regulations vary significantly where universities' organisational autonomy is concerned. In the majority of countries, institutions are relatively free to decide on their administrative structures. Their capacity to shape their internal academic structures within this legal framework is more restricted.

In addition, there is a trend towards the inclusion of external members in the institutional decision-making processes, especially where universities have dual governance structures. While this is seen as an important accountability measure, it also clearly serves other, more strategic, purposes. Indeed, external members in university governing bodies are frequently selected to foster links with industry and other sectors.

As far as leadership is concerned, the shift towards more corporate, CEO-type rectors in a number of Western European countries goes hand in hand with greater autonomy in management and the capacity for universities to design their own organisational structures. On the other hand, more traditional models still exist, in particular in Southern and Eastern Europe, in which the rector is a "primus inter pares" who is selected by and comes from the internal academic community.

Finally, dual governance structures – with some type of division of power between bodies, and usually comprising a board or council and a senate – as opposed to unitary structures, are on the rise.

Comparison with ATHENA partner countries (2013-14)

Organisational autonomy	
Armenia	47%
Ukraine	44%
Moldova	42%

Higher education systems in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine are characterised by a low degree of organisational autonomy, as demonstrated in the table above. In all three systems, universities are subject to high levels of government control over their governance and organisation. However, Moldova ranks bottom of all three because of heavier restrictions in various fields of activity, such as the selection of new rectors, internal academic organisation and the composition of governing bodies. There still remains a lot to be done in order to meet the level of organisational autonomy present in most European higher education systems.

Financial Autonomy

Analysis⁷

Moldovan universities face some restrictions in the area of financial management in several key respects. One significant example is the disbursement of funding; although public block grants are allocated on an annual basis, this money is transferred to universities on a monthly basis. This represents a significant obstacle to carrying out effective long- or even medium-term financial planning, given that cash flow forecasting may only be done on a short-term basis. Another such limitation is the fact that universities do not own their facilities (with the exception of buildings developed from entrepreneurial activities), so that they have no financial control over a part of the real estate. Finally, it is noted that universities essentially rely on public funding and tuition fees for the large majority of their funding. Universities can set the level of tuition fees autonomously, with the requirement that they make publicly available the basis for calculation of the fee level. It would be beneficial for the purpose of financial sustainability to ensure greater diversification in the streams of funding, principally by raising the level of income from other sources.

The system does permit autonomy and facilitate sustainability in some other aspects. Firstly, the Moldovan government is in the process of transitioning to a funding formula based on input criteria (cost per student) to determine the level of public funding allocated. This is a positive development, evolving from 'behind closed doors'-type negotiations. Moreover, there are no restrictions on how this block grant is spent, so funding can be allocated on the basis of an assessment of internal needs.

Secondly, as it stands universities have some input over the setting of tuition fees, as they propose a fees structure that the government must approve. This is being reformed to give universities full autonomy over the process. However, it remains to be seen how this reform will work in practice.

Thirdly, universities are permitted to run profits. However, given the relatively low level of public investment in higher education (1.2% of Gross Domestic Product in 2011), it is unclear whether this can be considered a significant tool in providing financial sustainability. In addition, universities are permitted to borrow money on the financial markets up to the value of their property, which normally requires a decision by the university senate. The buildings developed from entrepreneurial activities may thus be used as collateral for bank loans without government approval.

⁷ Analysis of the regulatory framework in force until December 2014.

European comparison

Rank	System	Score
1	Luxembourg	91%
2	Estonia	90%
3	UK	89%
4	Latvia	80%
5	Netherlands	77%
6	Hungary	71%
7	Flanders	70%
	Italy	70%
	Portugal	70%
	Slovakia	70%
11	Denmark	69%
12	Ireland	66%
13	Switzerland	65%
14	Austria	59%
15	North Rhine-Westphalia	58%
16	Finland	56%
	Sweden	56%
18	Spain	55%
19	Poland	54%
20	Lithuania	51%
21	MOLDOVA	49%
22	Norway	48%
23	Czech Republic	46%
24	France	45%
	Turkey	45%
26	Brandenburg	44%
27	Iceland	43%
28	Greece	36%
29	Hesse	35%
30	Cyprus	23%

The Moldovan system falls into the ‘medium low’ cluster for financial autonomy. This recognises the more positive aspects of the analysis, such as the capacity to run profits and freedom to allocate public funding internally, but highlights the fact that Moldova falls behind other European systems in several key respects, such as the state ownership of the majority of property and short-term disbursement of public funding.

There are a number of reforms that could be undertaken to improve this ranking. While the implementation of a funding formula is a welcome development, this would be further improved by including a small number output criteria (related to performance) in the calculation of the block grant.

Transferring the ownership of property to universities and disbursing public funding in larger payments (i.e. for a year at least rather than one month) would enhance financial autonomy further still.

European trends in financial autonomy

While universities in most systems are allowed to borrow money, laws specify certain restrictions, especially in Northern Europe: they may prescribe the maximum available amount, or require the authorisation by an external authority.

Only in half of the surveyed European countries are universities able to own their buildings. Even those who do own their facilities are not automatically able to decide on investing their real estate, nor are they necessarily free to sell their assets. Restrictions range from requiring the approval of an external authority to complete inability to sell.

In many European systems, universities can collect tuition fees or administrative charges from at least a part of the student population. Nevertheless, this does not mean that these fees reflect a significant contribution to the costs of education or an important form of income. In most cases, additional limitations are placed on the ability of universities to set fees as a means of generating income. In particular in Northern European systems where universities have less freedom to collect fees, levels of public funding are very high.

When all aspects of financial autonomy are taken together, Western European countries seem to benefit from greater freedom than their Eastern European counterparts. In general, universities in Western Europe are more autonomous in how they use the public funding they receive, but less so with regards to raising tuition fees. Eastern European countries tend to be less autonomous in the use of their public budgets, but are often able to decide on privately-funded study places and use the fees the latter generate.

Comparison with ATHENA partner countries (2013-14)

Financial autonomy	
Armenia	66%
Moldova	49%
Ukraine	46%

Armenia's superior score for financial autonomy is largely due to the fact that Armenian universities are completely free to set their own tuition fees, so it is expected that this disparity would be removed should Moldovan universities be given the same authority, as is anticipated in the current reform process. Moldovan universities share with Ukraine and Armenia one overarching problem with respect to financial autonomy. In all three states there is indeed a relatively low level of public funding for higher education, in comparison with most other Western and Central European countries. This makes it difficult, in practice, to reap the benefits of financial autonomy. In addition, Moldovan universities should be encouraged to attract more investment from other sources to provide greater diversification of income streams; currently only 3% of university income is derived from other sources.

Staffing Autonomy

Analysis⁸

Moldovan universities have more autonomy in this dimension than in all others. However, it is clear that in several aspects, staffing autonomy is only partial, with various government-set thresholds or approvals limiting the universities' real autonomy over staffing matters.

While universities have some degree of freedom to conduct their own recruitment processes for academic staff, with the university senate taking the final selection decision, these decisions must be approved by the National Council for Accreditation and Attestation, which is itself convened by Presidential decree. Candidates must also meet a number of eligibility requirements set down by law, and employment contracts are limited to a set period of five years. For senior administrators, recruitment decisions only require the authorisation of the rector; previously these were subject to approval by the ministry.

In terms of salaries, universities are restricted by minimum and maximum limits in setting salary levels proceeding from public sources. Even with more freedom over the setting of salary levels, it seems unlikely that universities could use this capacity to attract the most talented academics, given the low overall level of funding. Primary law also dictates the setting of bonuses, stipulating the appropriate circumstances and calculation of these, as well as the exact salary adjustments for academic and teaching staff who take on administrative roles. This effectively leaves no room for manoeuvre for universities to implement tailored staffing policies.

Universities may however take decisions in relation to staff dismissals, in line with national labour laws, facing no additional requirements from public authorities. Likewise, for staff promotions universities can conduct their own processes with the senate approving final appointments.

⁸ Analysis of the regulatory framework in force until December 2014.

European comparison

Rank	System	Score
1	Estonia	100%
2	UK	96%
3	Czech Republic	95%
	Sweden	95%
	Switzerland	95%
6	Finland	92%
	Latvia	92%
8	Luxembourg	87%
9	Denmark	86%
10	Lithuania	83%
11	Ireland	82%
12	Poland	80%
13	Austria	73%
	Netherlands	73%
15	Iceland	68%
16	Norway	67%
17	Hungary	66%
18	Portugal	62%
19	Hesse	61%
	North Rhine-Westphalia	61%
21	Turkey	60%
22	Flanders	59%
	MOLDOVA	59%
24	Brandenburg	55%
25	Slovakia	54%
26	Italy	49%
27	Cyprus	48%
	Spain	48%
29	France	43%
30	Greece	14%

When staffing autonomy is considered, Moldova falls into the ‘medium low’ cluster of higher education systems. This indicates that there remains a lot to be done to improve the state of staffing autonomy, though it is worth noting that it is very close to being classified in the ‘medium high’ cluster.

To improve this score, a number of reforms should be implemented. The mandatory five year contract period, the legal salary limits and stipulations over bonuses and salary adjustments should all be revised or removed. Moreover, it should not be necessary for the external Academy of Sciences committee to approve recruitment decisions.

European trends in staffing autonomy

In many European countries, universities have a greater flexibility in dealing with staffing issues, as staff are being paid and/or employed directly by the university rather than by the government. However, the decisions on individual salaries are often regulated. In almost half of the European countries studied, all or a majority of staff has civil servant status. The analysis also shows that there are significant differences in the recruitment of staff, ranging from a considerable degree of freedom to formalised procedures that entail an external approval, sometimes by the country's highest authorities. Some Mediterranean countries have very little freedom with regards to staffing matters, as they are unable to determine the number of staff they recruit and hence lack control over overall salary costs. Even individual salary levels are determined by national authorities. In a number of European countries, in particular Northern and Western Europe universities have very transparent recruitment procedures in place and developed competitive career policies.

Comparison with ATHENA partner countries (2013-14)

Staffing autonomy	
Armenia	93%
Ukraine	80%
Moldova	59%

While Moldova ranks significantly below the two other ATHENA partner countries for staffing authority, it is worth noting that for this dimension all three systems perform better than in the other three dimensions. This means that, in theory at least, a reform programme following the recommendations presented above to enhance staffing autonomy would not only bring Moldova closer to the two other partner countries, but would also put the country on a similar level to most Western and Central European systems. In practice, as with the two other ATHENA countries, there are two significant obstacles to Moldova achieving greater staffing autonomy. The first is the low level of funding for Moldovan higher education, which limits possibilities for universities to maximise the benefits of autonomy reform. Secondly, the relatively low level of organisational autonomy also has an impact on the level of staffing autonomy, given that government and ministry control over universities' governing bodies can in turn influence recruitment decisions.

Academic Autonomy

Analysis⁹

Moldovan universities are subject to significant external control over a range of academic matters.

Intake for both fee-paying and state-funded students in all disciplines is agreed through negotiation with the Ministry of Education (for Bachelor's and Master's students) and with the Academy of Sciences (for doctoral students). These numbers are then passed to the Ministry of Labour to evaluate whether they meet labour requirements and other ministries in specialist areas (e.g. the Ministry of Health for medical students). Finally the intake numbers require approval by the government. This represents a significant level of external input in the process, in particular as this process is carried out at the level of the various disciplines.

Similarly, public authorities exercise influence over admissions criteria and requirements, setting the procedural aspects and assessment criteria for state-funded places. To establish new courses, universities are required to obtain ministry approval before these can be introduced. Moreover, they must be accredited by the National Agency of Quality Assurance of Professional Education after the first round of graduates. For new courses as with existing courses, there are requirements for the content laid down by law. All study programmes have to include ICT courses, European studies, foreign languages, practical skills/internships, and "basic" skills training. These provisions result from an effort to implement European good practice in the field, but it is questionable whether that should be included in primary law, although it can be understood from the perspective of a higher education system in transition. Institutions are, however, free to terminate study programmes without prior agreement from public authorities (decision by the university Senate).

Moldovan universities are obliged to obtain national accreditation, though they are free to seek additional external accreditation from any internationally recognised agencies. However, as noted previously, the national quality agency is not currently operational.

More positively, there is no restriction on the language of tuition, though Romanian language courses are an obligatory component of study programmes.

⁹ Analysis of the regulatory framework in force until December 2014.

European comparison

Rank	System	Score
1	Ireland	100%
2	Norway	97%
3	UK	94%
4	Estonia	92%
5	Finland	90%
6	Iceland	89%
7	Cyprus	77%
8	Luxembourg	74%
9	Austria	72%
	Switzerland	72%
11	Hesse	69%
	North Rhine-Westphalia	69%
13	Brandenburg	67%
14	Sweden	66%
15	Poland	63%
16	Italy	57%
	Spain	57%
18	Denmark	56%
	Slovakia	56%
20	Latvia	55%
21	Portugal	54%
22	Czech Republic	52%
23	MOLDOVA	51%
24	Netherlands	48%
25	Hungary	47%
26	Turkey	46%
27	Lithuania	42%
28	Flanders	40%
	Greece	40%
30	France	37%

With respect to academic autonomy, Moldova's score puts it in the 'medium low' cluster of higher education systems. This reflects the fact that there are numerous limitations on academic freedom and that there are a significant number of reforms that could be undertaken to improve this. One example would be removing the requirement for approval of public authorities of student intake for individual disciplines, and ensuring that the overall negotiation process is more collaborative. Moreover, the requirement to include specific courses in all study programmes should be removed, so as to give universities control over the curricula. The re-establishment of the national quality assurance agency should be treated as a matter of urgency.

European trends in academic autonomy

In a majority of European countries, universities are essentially free to develop their academic profile, although restrictions remain in other areas of academic autonomy. The introduction of new programmes usually requires some form of approval by the relevant ministry or by another public authority and is often tied to budget negotiations, which demonstrates the interdependence of different dimensions of autonomy. Universities are generally free to close programmes independently; only in a small number of systems does this matter have to be negotiated with the pertinent ministry.

In most countries, admission to higher education institutions tends to be unrestricted for all students that meet the basic entry-level requirements (usually a secondary education qualification and/or a national matriculation exam). On the other hand only in a minority of countries are universities free to decide on the overall number of students. In most cases, overall numbers are either determined by the relevant public authorities or decided jointly by the public authority and the university. This restriction on the other hand reflects in most systems the high percentage of public funding in the overall funding. In a third of the countries analysed, universities can freely decide on the number of study places per discipline. However, the allocation in some fields may be subject to negotiations with an external authority, or set within the accreditation procedure.

Comparison with ATHENA partner countries (2013-14)

Academic autonomy	
Moldova	51%
Ukraine	51%
Armenia	38%

Though Moldova is tied with Ukraine and performs marginally better than Armenia with respect to academic autonomy, it is fair to say that the partner countries share a number of common issues. All three systems must contend with excessive government involvement in the setting of course content, and in Moldova the setting of student numbers per discipline is a particular barrier to autonomy. A great deal remains to be done in all three systems in order to achieve greater academic autonomy.

Summary: ATHENA country comparison

Organisational autonomy		Financial autonomy	
Armenia	47%	Armenia	66%
Ukraine	44%	Moldova	49%
Moldova	42%	Ukraine	46%
Staffing autonomy		Academic autonomy	
Armenia	93%	Moldova	51%
Ukraine	80%	Ukraine	51%
Moldova	59%	Armenia	38%

When the comparisons between the ATHENA countries are taken together, it is clear that Moldova's performance is mixed. However, to put this in context, it should be noted that in organisational, financial and academic autonomy all three systems receive relatively low scores. Moreover, Moldova is already engaged in a reform process, so it is hoped that changes being made will improve its score in a number of areas (see Part Two).

Higher education systems in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine are characterised by a low degree of **organisational autonomy**, as demonstrated in the table above. In all three systems, universities are subject to high levels of government control over their governance and organisation. However, Moldova ranks bottom of all three because of heavier restrictions in various fields of activity, such as the selection of new rectors, internal academic organisation and the composition of governing bodies. There still remains a lot to be done in order to meet the level of organisational autonomy present in most European higher education systems. It is hoped that the reform process that is underway in Moldova will lead to an improvement in this respect, but this depends on the way the reform is implemented in practice.

Armenia's superior score for **financial autonomy** is largely due to the fact that Armenian universities are free to set their own tuition fees, so it is expected that this disparity would be removed should Moldovan universities be given the same authority in practice. One overarching problem facing Moldovan universities is shared with Ukraine and Armenia: in all three states there is a relatively low level of public funding for higher education compared with most other Western and Central European countries. This makes it difficult, in practice, to reap the benefits of financial autonomy. In addition, Moldovan universities should be encouraged to attract more investment from other sources to provide greater diversification of income streams; currently only 3% of university income is derived from other sources.

While Moldova ranks significantly below the two other ATHENA partner countries for **staffing autonomy**, it is worth noting that for this dimension all three systems perform better than in the other three dimensions. This means that, in theory at least, a reform programme following the recommendations presented in this roadmap to enhance staffing autonomy would not only bring Moldova closer to the two other partner countries, but would also put them on a similar level than most Western and Central European systems. In practice, as with the two other ATHENA countries, there are two significant obstacles to Moldova achieving greater staffing autonomy. The first is the low level of funding for Moldovan higher education, which limits the possibilities for universities to

maximise the benefits of autonomy reform. Secondly, the relatively low level of organisational autonomy also has an impact on the level of staffing autonomy, given that government and ministry control over universities' governing bodies can in turn influence recruitment decisions.

Though Moldova is tied with Ukraine and performs marginally better than Armenia with respect to **academic autonomy**, it is fair to say that the partner countries share a number of common issues. All three systems must contend with excessive government involvement in the setting of course content, and in Moldova the setting of student numbers per discipline is a particular barrier to autonomy. A great deal remains to be done in all three systems in order to achieve greater academic autonomy.

Part Two: Legal Changes

A new Code of Education was adopted by the Moldovan Parliament in 2014, which changed the regulatory framework in many significant ways. In certain respects, this has improved the situation as far as university autonomy is concerned, as will be laid out in this section. However it should be borne in mind that the system is currently undergoing a transition phase and that therefore it is difficult to draw definite conclusions from the legal changes introduced. In particular, the subsequent regulatory acts that are expected to complement the new Code of Education were not available for analysis. However, it is those acts that often had a significant impact on the real level of autonomy of universities under the previous regulatory framework. The new “autonomy scores” cannot, therefore, be directly compared to the scoring resulting from the full analysis of the previous regulatory framework.

Organisational autonomy

Although the scoring related to selection and dismissal of the rector is not significantly affected by the new provisions in the law, the perception of the National Policy Taskforce is that the new Code of Education reduces the influence of government in both matters. This is due to the fact that the newly created Council for Strategic Institutional Development (CSID) takes up an important role in the management of the selection process, replacing the selection committee set up by the Ministry of Education. The minimum requirements set in law have been modified to holding a scientific title and having at least five years of experience in higher education (instead of 10 previously). Age requirements have been lifted. The rector is now elected by a General Assembly, including students, but still needs to be approved by the founder. The term of office of the rector is now limited to two consecutive mandates of five years. Government also plays a more limited, or less exclusive, role in the dismissal of the rector. The reasons for dismissal are listed in the law are relate to failure to comply with contractual / public accountability obligations, or with the provisions of the university charter.

A significant change in organisational matters is the switch to a dual governance structures, with the creation of the CSID alongside the Senate. The CSID is a board-type governing body of a limited size (9 members), which fulfils a strategic role and notably oversees financial and staffing matters, in addition to its role in the rector selection process. Importantly, external actors can now take part in the decision making process by being included in the CSID. The law prescribes that the CSID comprises of 5 external and 4 internal members. 2 external members are to be selected by the university, while the other 3 are appointed by the ministries. The law also requests that the CSID includes members with competences in economy and in legal matters. The person appointed by the Ministry of Finance must have financial monitoring and auditing expertise.

However, certain institutions are excluded from this, specifically focusing on military training, where public authorities designate the position of rector. Finally, the new Code of Education refers to other governing bodies of universities, such as the Scientific Council, the Faculty Council and the Administration Council without further describing those – it is understood that a national regulation framework is to be developed for this purpose.

University charters are drafted and approved by the university Senate and must include a series of elements listed in the law. The Ministry of Education needs to endorse the charter within 30 days, which may be regarded as a limited veto right. The one-month maximum delay may be regarded as a mechanism to guarantee a more effective level of autonomy for universities.

One positive step that has been taken in the field of organisational autonomy is the inclusion of a provision granting universities the power to create independent legal entities by decision of the CSID, positively affecting the scoring in this area.

It should be noted that there are many elements that are still designated by primary law while they could be laid down in the university charter, such as CSID rules and remuneration. However as this is a newly created body it is understandable that there may be a need to define precisely the scope of action and characteristics of the Council. It nevertheless remains questionable to include these elements in the Code of Education itself. The practical division of tasks in the new governance structure and the development of processes for selection and introduction of external members to the specificities of the sector remains a challenge for the universities, which can find support in this matter in the ATHENA toolkit on governance models.

Overall, on the basis of the analysis of the new Code of Education, organisational autonomy improves from 42% to 55%, essentially because of the creation of the CSID including external members and because of the possibility for universities to create legal entities. This maintains Moldova in the “medium-low” cluster in this autonomy dimension. Crucially, it is how effectively these measures are implemented that will determine the extent to which autonomy is enhanced.

Financial Autonomy

There are changes in the field of financial autonomy that have been introduced in the new Code of Education. There are a number of advances in the rules which extend financial autonomy, including greater independence in setting budgets and financial management, as well as the execution of entrepreneurial activities.

The new Code enables universities to acquire assets such as buildings on their own, while land and buildings that universities operated with at the time of the legislative change remain state property. The university-owned land and buildings can be rented out or sold, with the restriction that revenues generated in this way must be used for the development of the institution. The decision is an internal one, with the CSID playing an important role in this procedure. One should note that the Ministry representative sitting in the CSID nevertheless has to approve the decision.

On the basis of these owned assets, universities may be able to take on loans, following a decision by CSID and the positive opinion of the Senate.

Regarding fees, it remains uncertain how much room for manoeuvre universities may have in setting the level of tuition fees, as the law refers to the standard cost per student as the basis for the calculation of the fees, which are approved by the CSID. The standard cost per student may be considered as a minimum threshold for establishing the level of fees.

Separate discussions are under way to diversify public funding stream and increase competitive project-based funding. Additionally, it is expected that specific measures grant partial tax relief to universities.

These changes affect positively the scoring in financial matters and brings Moldova from 49% to 57% within the “medium-low” cluster. However, significant hindrances remain, in particular the level and disbursement of public funding. The low level of public investment in the sector severely limits universities when it comes to exercising the new possibilities granted under the new Code. The fact

that public funding is still disbursed on a monthly basis continues to inhibit long-term financial planning.

Staffing Autonomy

It is challenging to judge the extent to which staffing autonomy has been enhanced under the new law. A large proportion of staffing regulations are still set in primary legislation, such as staffing categories (with academic personnel categories now including: teaching, scientific, and scientific-teaching staff)- and corresponding requested minimum qualifications as well as detailed provisions on workloads.

Regarding salaries, the CSID is given the task to decide on the methodology for the remuneration and motivation of the personnel, but the salary band is prescribed in the law for salaries paid from public budget resources. The Senate should develop and approve the methodologies for recruitment, employment, promotion and assessment of the academic staff.

The change in the scoring in this dimension is linked to the promotion of staff, as there does not seem to be any provision on the composition of the selection committee in the law, and the recruitment rules for academic staff, where universities can decide on the number of positions (while this was previously externally regulated). Therefore, the score of Moldova evolves from 59% (medium-low cluster) to 66% (medium-high cluster). Provisions on staff recruitment, appointment, and salaries nevertheless remain difficult to interpret.

Overall it remains difficult to attract talented individuals to academic careers in Moldova given the low starting salaries and bureaucratic difficulties that obstruct career progression. Moreover, real progress in staffing autonomy is limited by the low level of public funding for universities in Moldova. The situation will improve if improvements in organisational and financial autonomy enable universities to generate sufficient income to attract talent.

Academic Autonomy

Academic autonomy remains low in Moldova following the reforms introduced in the new Code of Education. Study programmes at all three cycles must still fall under areas of professional education approved by the Government. The number of places is still subject to control by public authorities (allocated to institutions according to their category and a hierarchy of study programmes). Admission is organised according to the institution's own methodology but the criteria for organising the admission competition must be established through a framework regulation to be approved by the ministry. Minimum eligibility requirements are established by law; the university's senate may decide on additional selection criteria.

An important development in this field is the role granted to the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Professional Education, established as an autonomous body, responsible for the assessment and accreditation of institutions and programmes. The law makes it an objective of the Agency to be listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) within three years.

Evolution in the scoring in this dimension relates to the fact that the law explicitly allows universities to undergo external quality assessment performed by either the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Professional Education or by other EQAR-listed quality assurance agencies. Nevertheless, other provisions in the law seem to exclusively refer to assessment carried out by the National Agency. The scoring is also modified as a result of the fact that there seems to be more autonomy given to

universities to design the content of the programmes, which must be developed in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications (NQF) for each field of education and training and approved by the Senate of institution. In this regard, the development of subsequent orders/decrees may bring the scoring back to the previous situation.

Overall, these changes improve the score in this dimension from 51% to 60%, maintaining Moldova in the “medium-low” cluster (with the caveat referred to above).

Dimension	Previous regulatory framework (2013 analysis)	New Code of Education (December 2014)
Organisational autonomy	42%	55%
Financial autonomy	49%	57%
Staffing autonomy	59%	66%
Academic autonomy	51%	60%

Part Three: ATHENA Policy Roadmap

Priority challenges and actions

Two main issues arise from the discussions of the Moldovan national policy taskforce, in the context of the recent change of regulatory framework which is starting to be implemented in 2015. The first relates to the university governance, and the balance of responsibilities between the different governing bodies, including the newly established Council of Strategic Development. The composition of these bodies, and therefore the corresponding selection process, is a critical point which the ATHENA project tackles, notably through the elaboration of a dedicated toolkit (available on the ATHENA website).

The second main element for discussion in Moldova relates to the mode of delivery of funding to higher education institutions. The intention is to reform the financing mechanisms with a view to incorporate performance-based elements, which requires consultation of the sector to develop indicators and modalities in a way that reinforces the autonomous strategic development of universities. While this topic is formally outside of the scope of the ATHENA project, EUA can provide advice based on the European comparative analysis it has carried out on public funding modalities and performance-based funding to universities.

Methodology

The Roadmap has been developed following initial liaison with Moldovan partners at the Site Visit and Country Workshop. On this basis EUA set up a list of priority challenges and actions to consider, which was then submitted to the partners for comments. Their feedback was analysed and subsequently discussed at a bilateral meeting with representatives of all the Moldovan partner institutions.

In the following tables, the challenges identified by EUA and by the different members of the National Policy Taskforce (“NPT” – all ATHENA partner institutions including the National Rectors’ Conference) are presented under the headings of each dimension of university autonomy, complemented by cross-

cutting challenges. **The challenges have been prioritised on a scale of a 1 (top priority) to 3 (lower priority) on the basis of feedback from Moldovan partners.** Partners were also asked to assess the feasibility (scale of 1 to 3) and timescale required for the suggested actions.

This roadmap proposes in its last section a list of priorities and plan for the next steps to be taken in the reform process.

Alongside the two primary issues detailed above, which the national policy taskforce agreed should be focused on, EUA strongly believes that the question of human resources development should be also taken up in priority. The ATHENA project shows that strategic people management is essential to organisational success, in particular in a context of enhanced autonomy, and that therefore it is necessary to invest in support structures and processes. EUA also encourages all stakeholders to work towards reducing the disparity that has existed so far between the regulatory framework and the practice on the ground in the sector. An important hindrance to universities in exercising autonomy is the lack of funding; it is equally crucial that additional regulations do not hamper or reduce the institutional autonomy which has been generally enhanced in the new Code of Education.

Organisational autonomy

Action plan (state of play Summer 2015)

Organisational autonomy							
Challenge	Priority level	System-level			Institution-level		
		Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe	Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe
Excessive influence of state in selection of rector	3	Transfer authority over selection process and criteria entirely to universities	1	IV Q, 2014	Develop a transparent selection process and criteria for the selection of rectors in the university statutes	1	2014-2015 <i>completed</i>
		Remove requirement for government approval of successful candidate from the law	1	IV Q, 2014			
		Remove mandatory term of office from the law	3	Long term			
		Remove the legal upper age limit and other requirements for rector candidates from the law	3	Long term			
Structure of governing bodies	1	Facilitate and encourage wide range of external participants in governing bodies, including more representatives of civil society and business	1	I Q, 2015	Change practices surrounding selection of external members to identify best candidates	2	2016 <i>ongoing</i>
		Give external members voting rights on governing bodies	1	2015	<i>Draft guidelines for Council of Strategic and Institutional Development election, management and public responsibility</i>	1	I-II Q, 2015
		Introduce a dual governance structure with division of responsibilities between academic and strategic/managerial duties	2	2018	Implement an appropriate induction of external members to their tasks and specificities of university environment		
Universities unable to create their own legal entities	1	Permit universities to establish legal entities	1	IV Q, 2014	Make use of more flexible structures for fundraising activities and spin offs, etc.	2	2016

Financial Autonomy

Action plan (state of play Summer 2015)

Financial autonomy							
Challenge	Priority level	System-level			Institution-level		
		Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe	Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe
Inadequate funding modalities	1	Disburse public funding in longer term payments	3	2020	Develop longer term financial planning strategy	2	2017
		Incorporate a small number of output-related criteria into the calculation of the block grant to incentivise performance	2	2015-2016	Get engaged in a dialogue on the selection of criteria to ensure fitness for purpose	1	
		Permit universities to internally allocate block grant without restrictions	3	2017	Set up a transparent and planned budgeting process and allocation model with principles on allocation, formulae and sums available	1	
Unbalanced income sources for universities and low level of income from other sources	2	Introduce tax incentives to encourage business investment	2	2015	<i>Draft guidelines for diversifying university income streams</i>	1	2015
		Provide incentives to institutions to attract income from other sources (for example indicator in block grant)	2	2016	Recruit or train staff to develop capacities for this	2	2015
		Support staff development to increase capacity for fundraising	1	2016			
Lack of comprehensive financial management services at universities	2	Allocate targeted funding to develop more sophisticated financial management functions at universities	3	2018	Develop transition plan to make use of this funding and establish this function	3	2018
Restricted ability of universities to manage their own assets and financial affairs	2	Transfer ownership of all property to universities	3	2020	Recruit or train staff to develop capacities for this	2	2018
		Give universities full control over renting and selling property	2	2018			
		Provide funding for staff development in facility management	3	2018			

Staffing Autonomy

Action plan (state of play Summer 2015)

Staffing autonomy							
Challenge	Priority level	System-level			Institution-level		
		Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe	Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe
Efficient and forward-thinking HR practices restricted by legislation	1	Remove the five-year contract duration limit for academic staff from the law	1	2015	Develop strategic institutional staffing policy	2	2016 ongoing
		Remove the requirement for approval of academic recruitment decisions by the external CNAA from the law	3	2020			
		Remove stipulations over bonuses and salary adjustments from the law	2	2017	Draft internal guidelines for calculation of bonuses and salary adjustments	1	2015
Modernise human resources practices	1	Allocate targeted funding to develop HR skills across university sector	2	2015	Develop clear career development paths for university staff	1	2015
					<i>Draft guidelines for academic and research workload and salaries planning, incentives tools for performances</i>	1	2015
					<i>Draft guidelines for academic and administrative staff recruitment, development, dismissal and promotion</i>	2	2016 ongoing

Academic Autonomy

Action plan (state of play Summer 2015)

Academic autonomy							
Challenge	Priority level	System-level			Institution-level		
		Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe	Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe
Excessive government influence and control over academic affairs	1	Remove provisions prescribing mandatory study content in curricula and pass complete control to universities	1	2014	Plan for transfer of increased responsibility over academic course planning	1	2014 ongoing
		Remove requirement for state control of intake for individual disciplines	1	2014	Take more active role in student intake planning	1	2014
		Give universities full control over student selection	1	2014	Plan autonomous student selection processes	1	2014

Cross-cutting challenges

Action plan (state of play Summer 2015)

Cross-cutting							
Challenge	Priority level	System-level			Institution-level		
		Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe	Action proposed	Feasibility level	Timeframe
Critically low level of public funding for higher education	2	Develop a long term plan for investment in higher education	3	2018	Engage in diversification activities	2	2016
Lack of sufficient funding for research for universities	1	Set up specific funding schemes to develop research activities at universities	1	II Q 2015	Further develop research capacity and demonstrate value	2	2016
Significant disparity between legislative autonomy and autonomy in practice	2	Set up evaluation of reform processes with independent international participation	2	2018	Reform internal regulations and processes that hinder the use of autonomy in practice	2	2016
Lack of long term strategic planning both at system and institutional level	1	Develop and engage in a dialogue with the stakeholders on a long term strategy for the development of the Higher Education system	1	II Q 2015	Engage in a dialogue with the ministry on a long term strategy for the development of the Higher Education system	1	IIQ,2015
		Implement ATHENA project recommendations	1	2015-2020	Implement ATHENA project recommendations	1	2015-2020

Recommendations for the reform process

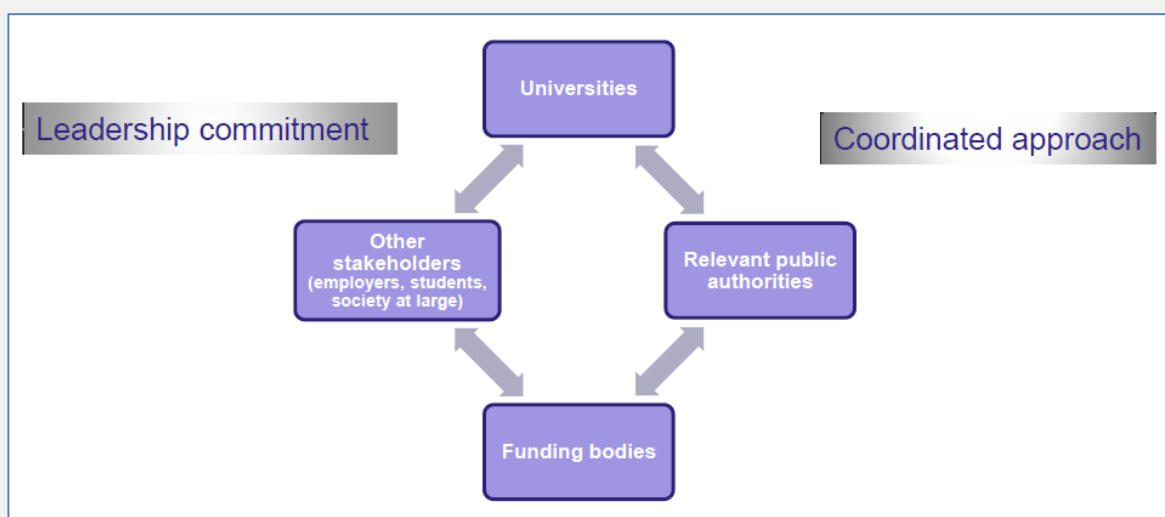
Based on the priorities identified in the previous sections, this final section aims to provide concrete steps to be taken by the project partners in order to stimulate reform in the Moldovan higher education system.

- The first part of this section presents actions that should be seen as pre-requisites for the reform process. These are actions that revolve around building mutual trust and establishing an atmosphere of cooperation in order to ensure that all stakeholders are committed to the process.
- The second part identifies key steps EUA believes require particular attention both at system as well as at institutional levels in order to improve and develop university autonomy. These recommendations also draw from EUA's experience in advising public authorities and universities on higher education governance reform. In addition, it responds to the specific needs of Moldovan stakeholders as identified through the DEFINE project policy analysis.

I. Pre-requisites for the process

Through the policy analysis and development phases of the ATHENA project, it has become clear that certain steps need to be taken to create the conditions necessary for supporting an effective and comprehensive reform agenda.

- Establishing a climate of mutual trust and regular dialogue and consultation to ensure that decisions meet the requirements of all stakeholders
- Ensuring that there is transparency in policy discussions
- Drawing up a plan with clear steps to be taken and a timeframe for this process



II. EUA recommendations: actions and objectives

a) Actions and objectives on a system-wide level

The following actions are proposed by EUA as primary objectives for the ongoing higher education reform programme in Moldova. The new regulatory framework includes some of these elements; however subsequent guidance and processes need to be developed to facilitate their practical implementation.

- 1) Remove government input in the selection of university rectors
- 2) Establish a more collaborative process for setting student intake and give universities a more meaningful say in the decisions
- 3) Create a dual governance structure for universities with division of responsibilities between academic and strategic/managerial duties
- 4) Permit universities to create their own legal entities
- 5) Incorporate a small number of performance-related criteria into funding formula
- 6) Disburse public funding annually rather than on a monthly basis
- 7) Transfer ownership of property to the universities themselves
- 8) Reduce the burdensome level of regulation relating to university employment contracts and remuneration
- 9) Remove government influence over admissions to individual disciplines
- 10) Give universities full control over admissions processes and exams
- 11) Remove legal stipulations pertaining to course content
- 12) Develop a long-term plan to explore how public investment in higher education can be increased
- 13) Provide support to institutional human resource development through targeted funding and supporting the establishment of training academies

b) Actions and objectives at an institutional level

Work is also required at institutional level to help ensure that universities themselves can benefit from future reforms. This is supported by the ATHENA project Training Seminars on financial management, governance reforms and human resources development. Best practices and practical recommendations for each of these topics are gathered into thematic ATHENA toolkits.

- 1) Explore ways of attracting relevant external members of governing bodies
- 2) Develop and build institutional capacity and human resources:
 - a) Introduce a more strategic approach to university management
 - b) Build leadership and managerial skills, including middle management level
 - c) Develop the finance function to address also strategic aspects of financial planning
 - d) Create better defined career paths with a focus on fostering young talent
 - e) Develop a long term succession planning and create an environment to encourage young staff to get involved in management and governance
- 3) Adopt full costing as a principle for financial planning
- 4) Actively explore different avenues for income diversification (including through separate

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- Autonomy Scorecard** (2009-2012): <http://www.university-autonomy.eu/>
- EUDIS** – European Universities Diversifying Income Streams (2008-2011): <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/projects/past-projects/governance-autonomy-and-funding/eudis.aspx>

ATHENA partners

Moldovan National Policy Taskforce

- Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
- Cahul State University
- The Free International University of Moldova
- The National Council of Rectors of Moldova
- The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova

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