



**Reflection on success and challenges in
implementation of the Bologna Process during
the past ten years and looking forward to 2020
– lessons learnt**

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Croatian higher education before 2004

Problems—within the higher education system

- Very long time required to graduate – the average of 7,5 years for pre-Bologna graduates (2005-2010 Development Plan)
- Very high drop-out rate (only 33% of enrolled students graduate)
- Limited mobility
- Practically no clearly defined outcomes nor programme objectives

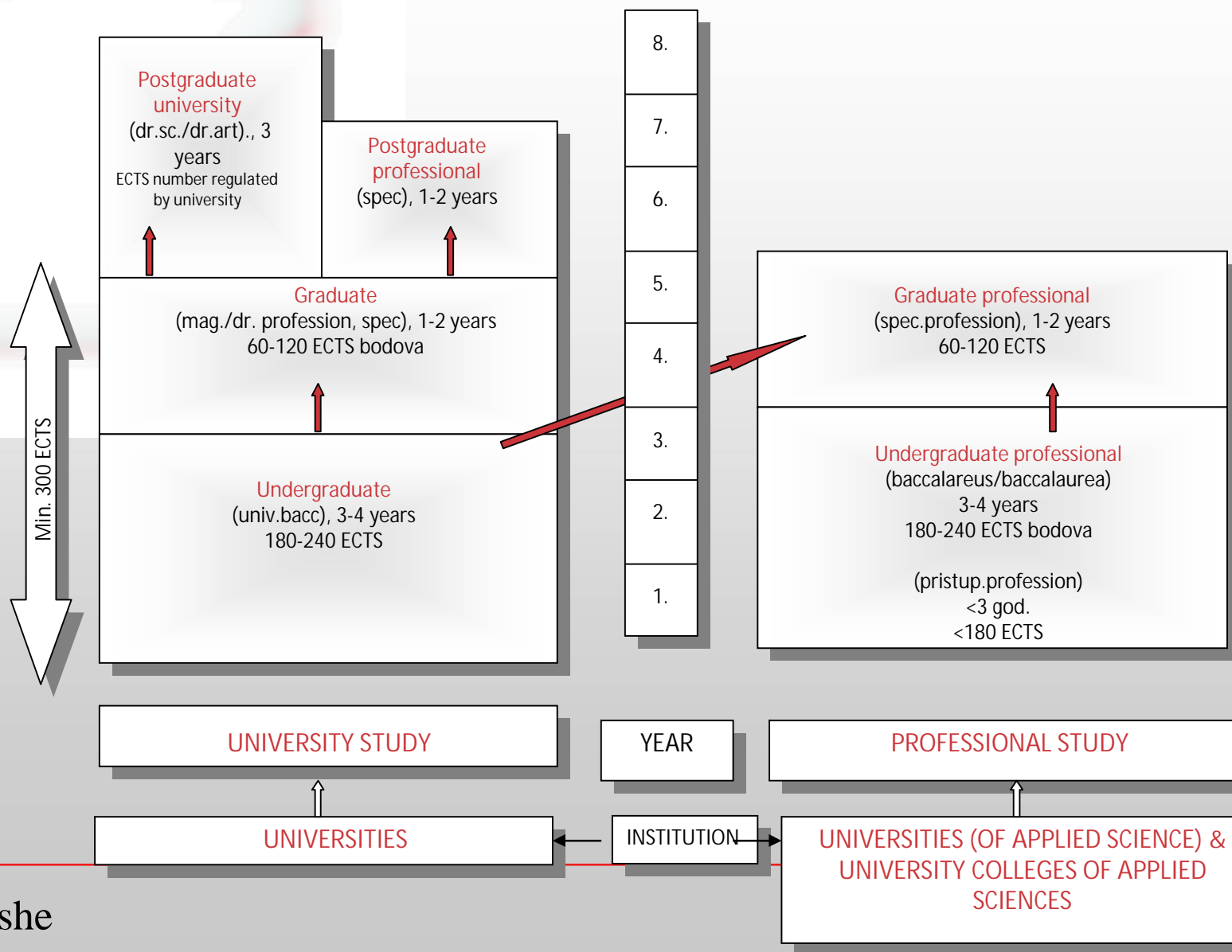
Problems –caused by the issues within the system as well as the higher education policies

- Employers not satisfied with students' competences (*Further Bologna*, 2006)
- Weak competitiveness at the European level
- Weak educational structure of the population

Education System Development Plan 2005 -2010

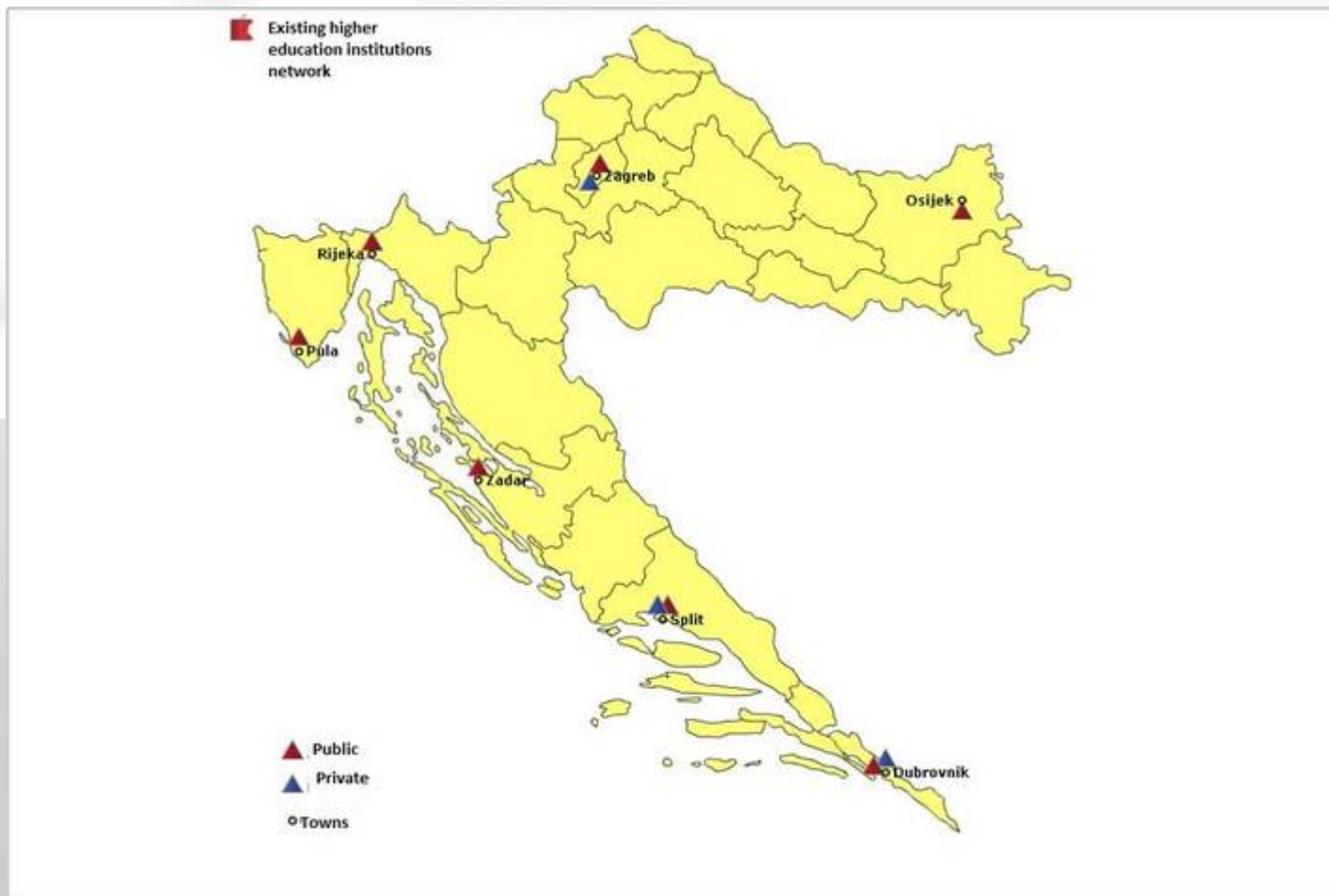
- **Priorities in higher education:**
 - 1. Improve quality and efficiency of education.
- **Objectives:**
 - Establish a quality assurance system for higher education in the Republic of Croatia by 2006
 - By 2010, decrease the drop-out rate to 50% and decrease the graduation time to 6,5 years (at universities)

Scheme of studies in Croatia



ashe

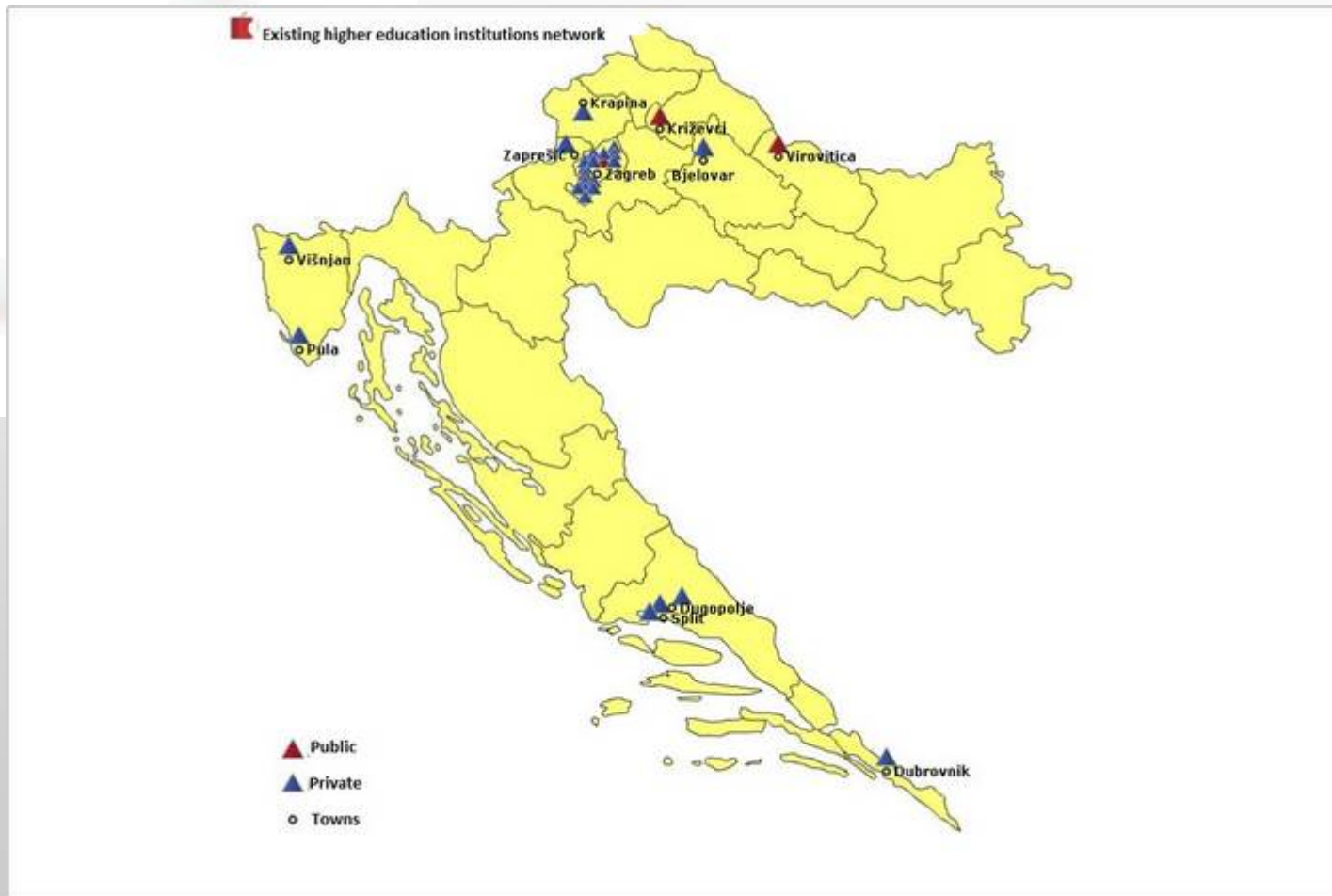
Croatian Universities



Croatian Universities of Applied Sciences



Croatian University Colleges of Applied Sciences



Bologna in numbers

- 2005 3+2+3 - restructuring
- 2005 - **828** programmes accredited – undergraduate, graduate and professional – with the help of international reviewers and an IT system
- 2005 – first generation of Bologna students enrolled
- 2005-2009 - **102** doctoral and **175** postgraduate professional programmes accredited

Resourcing of higher education

- Increase over 47% in HE state budget 2004-2008 (almost 12% annual increase)
- Additional 400 million € secured in loans since 2004 for construction of new campuses in 6 cities (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Zadar, Osijek, Dubrovnik)
- Over 2566 (20%) new full-time equivalent positions opened 2004-2009
- Increased regional development of higher education system in cooperation with the Development and Employment Fund



New higher education institutions since 2005

- Around 30 new higher education institutions founded in the past five years
- Mostly private colleges and public universities of applied sciences,
- New universities
 - One public
 - Three private universities

Implementation difficulties

- “Formal” Bologna alignment
- Unsuitable legal framework:
 - Agency not fully independent
 - Overtly generalized criteria for establishing new higher education institutions and study programmes
 - External quality assurance procedures poorly defined

2009 Quality Assurance Act

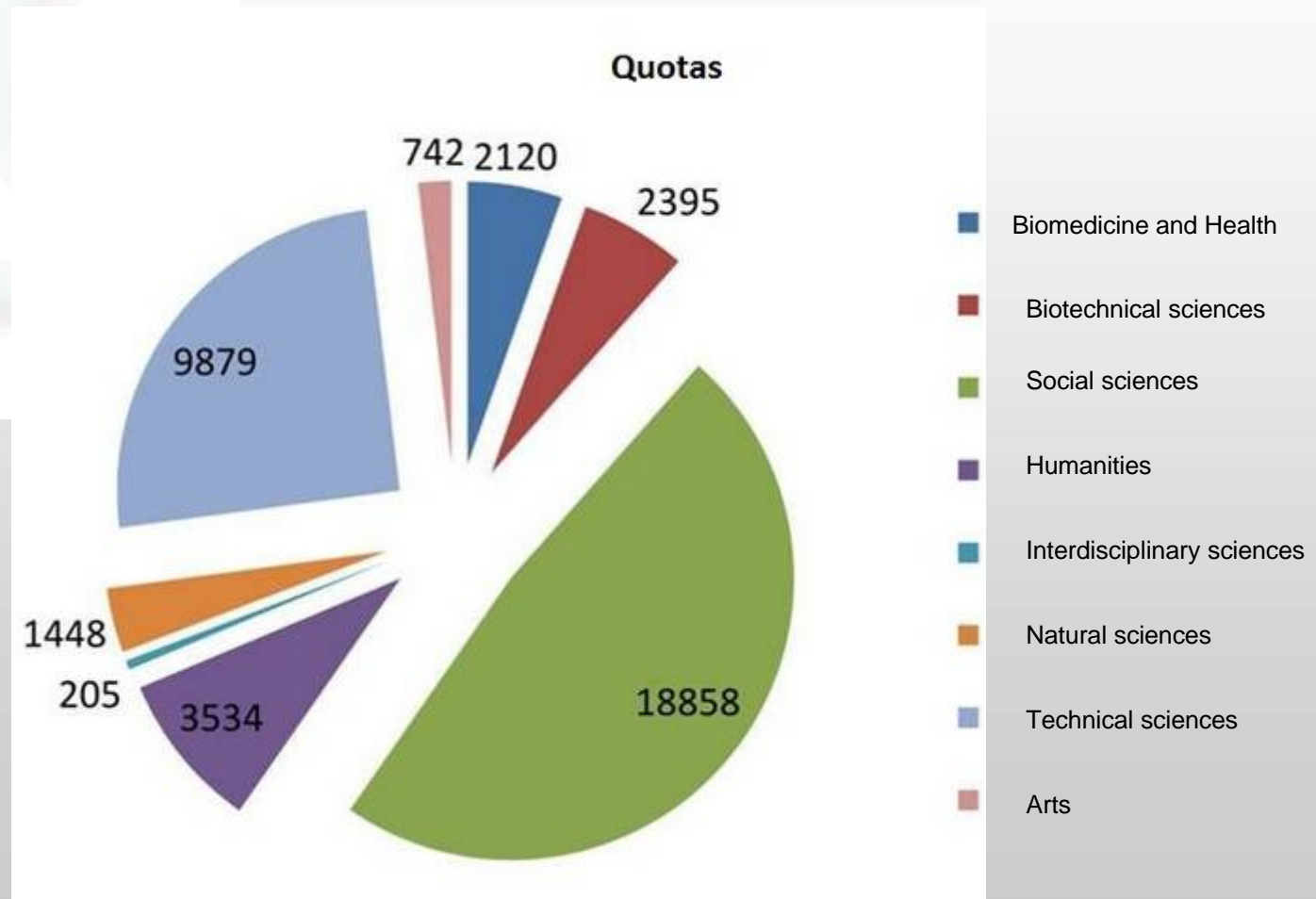
- New, enhanced role of ASHE
- Establishment of new higher education institutions – completely changed – a system of “mentorship” introduced
- Quantitative accreditation criteria
 - Teacher/ student ratio– 1/30
 - Students/ space ratio – 1/1,26 m²



Educational structure

- Students enrolled at higher education institutions:
 - 2007/2008: 143 410 students
- Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of high school graduate enter higher education
- In the past 15 years the number of students almost doubled

Structure of students enrolled, by disciplines



Network of higher education institutions and study programmes in the Republic of Croatia

- Based on:
 - Regional strategic priorities and economic trends
 - National strategic priorities
 - Number of the unemployed
 - Number of high school graduates
 - Number of existing higher education institutions and study programmes
- All stakeholders involved in the development of the network

Agency for Science and Higher Education

- Established in 2005
- 2009 – redefinition of its role (Quality Assurance Act) and strengthening of its independence
- Unifies various activities related to the science and higher education system

ASHE past activities

- Initial accreditation 2005-2010:
 - 1200 study programmes
 - 30 HEIs
- Re-accreditation 2008-2010:
 - 20 HEIs
 - 20 scientific organisations
- Audit 2008
 - 3 HEIs
- Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications
 - 4062 foreign higher education qualifications

ASHE future activities: the next 5 years

- Re-accreditation of 130 HEIs and 70 scientific organisations
- Initial accreditation
- Audit of all HEIs and scientific organisations
- Recognition of higher education qualifications
- Central Applications Office– introduction of the state graduation examination

Accreditation

- Accreditation serves as a guarantee of the level of a qualification awarded by an accredited study programme which in the end results with printing national coat of arms on the diploma documents
- We can say that a higher education institution awards the national qualification to a person in the name of the state

Accreditation in higher education

USA

- Beginning of accreditation 1905
(Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching)
- 1944 in law -> the state finances education only in accredited higher education institutions

Accreditation in Europe

EUROPE

Different tradition from the USA: agencies were established in mid-1980 (by state); the first is Comite National d'Evaluation (CNE) and Conseil National de l'Enseignement Superieur et de la Recherche (1985) -> no repercussions on public financing

1997 QAA (Great Britain) – independent institution financed by higher education institutions -> no repercussions on public financing

Differences in approach to accreditation

- European - **regulatory** approach
(checking minimum requirements and inputs)
- American – **evaluatory** approach
(evaluating the level of quality and outputs)

Accreditation in Croatia

- New Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education
- **Initial accreditation** – conformance with the minimum criteria
- **Re-accreditation** – quality grade apart from minimum criteria

Ordinance on conditions for initial accreditation and re-accreditation

Quantitative criteria:

- Teacher/student ratio
- Size of teaching space
- Coverage of courses with own teachers

Teacher/student ratio

- Ordinance: teacher/student ratio 1/30
- UNESCO data on teacher/student ratio:
- World average 1/15,7
- North America and Western Europe 1/13
- Highest average Arab countries and sub-Saharan Africa 1/25,1



Quality Grade

- Institutional management
- Study programmes
- Teachers
- Students
- International activity
- Scientific activity
- Space, resources, finances

Transparency tools

- External quality assurance procedures in line with the ESG, as well as European and international best practices
- Foreign reviewers in the review panels
- Business representatives and students included in the Management Board, Accreditation Council and review panels
- An NGO representative included as a member of the Accreditation Council
- Public reports



Goals

- Integration of the Croatian science and higher education system with the European systems
- Integration with the European Higher Education Area
- Improved mobility
- Recognisability and credibility of Croatian higher education qualifications
- Access of persons with foreign higher education qualifications to the Croatian labour market
- Equitable access to higher education system





Lessons learned

- Continuing education of employees
- Bring about changes– “bottom-up initiatives”
- International good practice – but implemented in the national context (“no recipe”)
- *Fair and equitable* treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional higher education institutions)
- Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing changes and carrying out activities
- The Ministry clearly committed to independence of the national agency

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- Thank you for your attention!

